



UNIVERSITY OF
BIRMINGHAM
SCHOOL

University of Birmingham School

EAL Policy

JUNE 2026

University of Birmingham School

English as an Additional Language Policy

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At University of Birmingham School, we refer to Pupils (who are in Years 7-11 and aged 11-16) and Students (who are in Years 12/13 and aged 17-18)	

1. Introduction

1.1 The term EAL (English as an Additional Language) is used to refer to pupils whose main language at home is other than English.

1.2 University of Birmingham School acknowledges that pupils with EAL, from complete beginners to those with considerable fluency, will have varying degrees of difficulty in accessing the full curriculum and in achieving their full potential.

1.3 Research¹ has shown that those completely new to English will acquire conversational fluency in two years but will need a minimum of five years to achieve competence in academic English. Such pupils will need language support if they are to reach their full potential. The provision of this support fulfils the requirements of the Race Relations Act of 1976 and the Equality Act of 2010 which seeks to promote Equality of Opportunity and to eliminate discrimination in the provision of education.

1.4 Research² has also advocated that pupils with EAL are best served in mainstream provision. University of Birmingham School fully supports the inclusive teaching of all pupils, including those with English as an Additional Language, and will actively serve to ensure all pupils have full access to the curriculum.

2. Aims and objectives of EAL provision at University of Birmingham School

2.1 The objectives of our EAL provision at University of Birmingham School are:

- To welcome and value the cultural, linguistic, and educational experiences that pupils with EAL bring to the School.
- To implement School-wide strategies to ensure that pupils with EAL are supported in accessing the curriculum.
- To help pupils with EAL to become confident and to acquire the English language skills they need to be able to fulfil their academic potential.
- To ensure we can assess the skills and needs of pupils with EAL and to provide for their needs.
- To equip teachers and teaching support staff with the knowledge, skills and resources to be able to support and monitor pupils with EAL.
- To monitor pupils' progress systematically and use the data to inform classroom management, curriculum planning and the setting of targets.
- To maintain pupils' self-esteem and confidence by acknowledging and giving status to their skills in their own languages.

¹ <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/09500782.2012.682580>

² <https://ealresources.bell-foundation.org.uk/eal-specialists/eal-provision>

3. School support for pupils with EAL

- 3.1 University of Birmingham School will support a positive and effective language ethos. There will be an understanding that a limited knowledge of English does not reflect a lack of ability or a lack of literacy in a pupil's mother tongue. Appreciating and acknowledging a pupil's ability in their own culture is crucial for their self-esteem. Diversity will be valued and classrooms will be socially and intellectually inclusive.
- 3.2 Primarily, the language development of all students is the responsibility of all teachers and teaching support staff. There will be liaison between subject departments and the **Assistant SENDCo or another designated member of staff** to discuss language development within the structure of the lesson.
- 3.3 As much prior information will be given to teachers as is possible. This will include prior School information where possible. All pupils will undergo baseline testing when they first attend. This will provide all teachers with a reading age and standardised scores in English and mathematics. Teachers can use this knowledge to inform their curriculum planning and classroom teaching.
- 3.4 Where necessary, pupils will be loaned a device with a language translation app for use in their lessons.
- 3.5 As necessary, additional support will be provided by 1-1 or small group classes with **support staff**. Specific programmes through Lexonik Leap and Lexonik will be used as required to support and accelerate the basic understanding of vocabulary as required. Resources from the Bell Foundation will also be utilised if relevant. If needed, pupils with EAL may join the Nurture Group for a period of focused support.
- 3.6 University of Birmingham School will make every effort to link pupils with EAL with a speaker of their first language and provide opportunities for mentoring, either formal or informal. If possible, we will strive to match a pupil in the same class as somebody who speaks that first language.

4. Teaching and Learning considerations for pupils with EAL

- 4.1 To ensure that we meet the needs of pupils with EAL, staff will consider:
- Seating plans; to ensure whether the EAL learner is seated appropriately and able to see and hear properly and pick up visual clues from facial expressions, and so pupils hear helpful models of English.
 - Resources; to ensure complex language is appropriately broken down.
 - Instructions; to ensure communication is clear and explicitly taught.
 - Expectations; are high for all.
 - Inclusion; that EAL learners feel actively part of the lesson and valued member of our community.
- 4.2 See Appendix 2 for a list of more specific advice and techniques for teaching pupils with EAL.

5. Appendix 1: EAL resources

For free downloadable EAL resources for teachers across a range of subjects/ topics:

<https://www.bell-foundation.org.uk/resources/teaching-resources/>

Online resources which may be used directly by pupils with EAL:

- Cambridge Learner's Dictionary – an excellent online dictionary with definitions aimed for young people. Also offers a chance to hear how the words sound:
<https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/learner-English/>
- Learn English Teens– for more generic skills based around grammar and vocabulary:
<http://learnenglishteens.britishcouncil.org/>
- Quizlet– a free log-in is needed, but this provides images and resources across a range of topics:
<https://quizlet.com/login>.
- Google Translate.
- Flash Academy – a website subscribed to by the School specifically designed to support EAL.

6. Appendix 2: advice for teaching and learning of pupils with EAL (adapted from the Bell Foundation)

- Maintain high expectations, expect pupils to participate in all classroom activities/tasks.
- Group pupils so that pupils with EAL hear good models of English.
- Sit the learner with EAL near the front, where they can see your face straight on. This will ensure they can hear properly and pick up visual clues from facial expressions.
- Involve the learner in routine classroom tasks (handing out books, etc.).
- Keep paper/mini-whiteboard to hand for quick drawings, sentence-drafting, oral prompts, key words, etc.
- Print slides from the whole-class teaching screen so the learner with EAL can refer to them.
- Train the learner to put date, title, underline, etc.
- Speak to the learner using normal speed, stress and intonation (or a little slower if you tend to speak quickly).
- Use your facial expression, tone of your voice, your body (gestures, quick mimes) to make meaning clear.
- When speaking at length, repeat and recap the main points.
- Use a limited range of instruction language and question forms. Keep instructions clear and to the point.
- Use concrete examples to talk about abstract ideas or concepts.
- Allow thinking time to elicit a more detailed/accurate response.
- Provide opportunities to speak and respond to questions even if the learner is not talking (a non-verbal period is normal).
- Target the learner for simple differentiated Yes/No questions.
- When explaining and responding to questions from the learner, use this as an opportunity to extend the learner's range of language and model new language.
- During group work, remind peers to use accessible language, speak clearly and give the learner opportunities to speak.
- Correct inaccurate attempts to use more complex language by repeating what the learner has said using the correct language form, e.g. 'I not have pen.' 'You don't have a pen? Look, I've got three pens.'
- Where appropriate, use collaborative activities as a way of encouraging exploratory talk and thinking between students. Activities that may help scaffold talk could be sorting/matching/spotting/sequencing activities, or use of graphic organisers.
- Use speaking frames or substitution tables as support for joining in, e.g. brainstorm, whole-class discussions, and plenaries.
- Include active listening tasks in lessons as a starter, e.g. true or false, odd one out.
- Encourage active listening that reflects real life situations and involve the listener playing a key part in shaping the conversation. Activities might include giving the learner a list of key information to listen for or asking them to paraphrase what they have heard.
- Provide opportunities to listen with a purpose, e.g. take notes, complete a diagram, and fill in gaps.

- Use supportive lesson resources, e.g. cards to match, picture-sorting, sentence-ordering to familiarise the learner with key vocabulary that will appear in the text they are about to listen to.
- Use any available comprehension supports such as images, artefacts and textbook diagrams.
- By using flipped learning pupils can undertake some of the learning outside of the classroom, allowing more time in class to focus on key lesson content.
- Ensure any key words for a lesson are taught, translated, accompanied by pictures or looked up in a dual-language dictionary before the lesson.
- Provide plenty of visual support for writing, e.g. pictures to describe, or a storyboard to recount events.