



# JOHN SCOTTUS NATIONAL SCHOOL

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## **EAL (English as an Additional Language) Policy**

**BOM approved March 2018; next review: September 2021**

### Rationale

An EAL policy is needed because of the relatively large number of pupils in the school for whom English is an additional language. (At 30 September 2017 there were 24 pupils who had EAL.)

### Relationship to characteristic spirit of the school

At JSNS we aim to be as inclusive as possible, so it is essential that potentially vulnerable pupils are integrated without delay

### Objectives

The objectives of the policy are

- to develop EAL pupils' ability to participate as fully as possible in all aspects of school life, as quickly as possible
- to help new EAL pupils to settle in as quickly as possible

### Guidelines (content of policy)

- Role of the Special Education teacher
- Collaboration between the Special Education teacher and the class teacher
- Organisation of language support
- Identification of pupils requiring language support
- Assessment of language proficiency
- Programme planning
- Recording and monitoring of pupils' progress
- Communication with parents
- Individual teachers' planning and reporting

### Role of the Special Education teacher (with regard to EAL pupils)

"In collaboration with parents and mainstream class teachers, EAL support teachers identify pupils requiring additional language support, assess pupils' proficiency in English using the assessment materials, devise appropriate language programmes, deliver the programmes and record and monitor pupils' progress. They share their expertise with mainstream class

teachers and assist in developing and disseminating good practice to support the development of students' English language proficiency." (Circular 0015/2009)

"The primary responsibility of the language support teacher is to promote the pupil's development of English language proficiency so that he or she can gradually gain access to the curriculum, ultimately achieving the same educational opportunities as English-speaking peers. This is achieved by: • Working in collaboration with the mainstream class teacher to set relevant and achievable learning targets for each pupil. • Preparing the pupil, on an on-going basis, to access mainstream learning, initially in part and later more fully. • Helping the pupil to develop appropriate strategies and skills to support future formal education in general. The responsibility of the language support teacher is to deliver a programme of English language tuition which is based exclusively on the primary curriculum (see the English Language Proficiency Benchmarks on pages 41–54) and which prepares and supports the child in:

- Accessing classroom learning.
- Socializing with peers.

"The principal objective of the language support programme is to integrate the pupil as quickly as possible into all mainstream learning and activities of the school." (Up and Away)

The language support teacher, however, cannot teach the curriculum and this remains the role and responsibility of the mainstream teacher. Pupils spend the greater part of their time in the mainstream classroom and attend language support for a small proportion of specialized class time. The benefit of this time, which is focused on English language learning, can be maximized through liaison and a flow of information between the mainstream teacher and the language support teacher. (Up and Away) Infant children also participate in the Aistear programme, a key element in learning oral language.

### Collaboration between the language support teacher and the class teacher

Newcomer children often develop confidence first in the secure environment of the language support class. Therefore, the language support teacher will have many insights into a child's progress, interests, concerns, etc. The class teacher will face the challenge of involving the child in mainstream learning. Therefore he/she can communicate information about how the child is reacting in class, what the class is doing, where the child appears to encounter difficulties, etc. By working together, teachers can ensure that the child is helped integrate into the learning environment and the social life of the school. The joint objective is to:

- Ensure that the newly arrived pupil can understand and use the basic language of the classroom (e.g. hello, toilet, quiet please, copy from board, etc.).
- Equip the pupil with knowledge of the rules and procedures of the school so that he or she does not unwittingly infringe them.

- Help the pupil to understand different norms of behaviour that may exist in the new culture/society (in classroom, school, playground, etc.).
- Help to build the confidence and self-esteem of the pupil who may feel different, excluded and less able than those around him or her.

If the class teacher informs the language support teacher about forthcoming themes, units, etc. then it will be possible for the child to gain some access, even in part, to what is planned for the class. If the class teacher can also keep the language support teacher informed about how the pupil is reacting in class, coping with classroom language, interaction, etc. then these matters can also be addressed in language support sessions.

The class teacher and the language support teacher will formally collaborate on planning

#### Organisation of language support in this school

New EAL pupils are allowed time (2-3 weeks) to settle into their new class and school. The Language Support teacher does not engage with the new pupil during this time, but is in contact with the class teacher and may observe the new pupil in class and outside. Often, the pupil presents with a silent period, not speaking at all.

After these introductory weeks, the Language support teacher will have an initial interview with pupil and complete the Initial Interview questionnaire (UP and Away , p21). The class teacher will feed back about the new pupil using the Up and Away questionnaire (p22).

In collaboration with the class teacher the new pupil will join an existing EAL group receiving explicit language support, meeting twice a week for 35-40 minutes for up to 2 years, as necessary.

The programme for language development follows the curriculum framework as stated in 'Up and Away'. The programme starts with the following units

1. My self and my family
2. Our school
3. Food and meals in our school

After that there are a further 10 units, the choice of which depends on the needs of the pupils, time of the year and school events.

Oral language activities are based on the specific unit the children are working on, using games, posters, pictures, songs, short outings and worksheets. These are used to help pupils to listen to English and to speak English as they learn to communicate with each other and their teacher. All worksheets are kept in a folder which is used to measure progress.

Support models will include withdrawing pupils from class, in-class support and team teaching and will be determined by the needs of the pupils.

## Identification of pupils requiring language support and assessment of the language proficiency of pupils for whom English is an additional language

Pupils requiring LS are usually identified first when they register - there is a question on the registration form. In any case, the class teacher assesses all new pupils, informally at first and more formally, SET assess the new pupil shortly afterwards.

### Assessment of Language Proficiency

Assessment tools for new pupils:

Up and Away Initial Interview (p2-25)

Checklist for observing during the silent period

Feedback forms to guide Class Teachers

Observation and engaging pupil in class and in EAL group

The Primary School Assessment Kit (Circular 0015/2009) is used to assess pupils' proficiency in English, in the four language skills of listening, speaking, reading and writing. Due to the time consuming nature of this kit, it is only used, once a year, usually in the Summer term.

When pupils require language support beyond two hours, it is done as part of Learning Support.

### Programme Planning

- Programmes of work will be devised in consultation with the class teacher
- Class teacher and language support teacher will meet to plan programmes of work

### Recording and monitoring of pupils' progress

All documentation in relation to the administration of tests is retained by the school for audit/inspection purposes, as per Circular 15/2009.

The class teacher retains responsibility for assessing and recording pupils' progress and development.

### Individual teacher planning and reporting

EAL pupil's needs are specifically incorporated into fortnightly planning. Language Support teachers will prepare a monthly Cuntas Míosúil.

The EAL teacher will meet with parents regularly:

often informally when they drop off and collect children and

when necessary in a formal setting with the Class teacher (and an interpreter, if required)

Parents are encouraged to make contacts with the Class teacher and/or the EAL teachers with any concerns or questions they may have.

### Success Criteria

The EAL pupil is confident in his/her communications with peers and teachers

The pupil demonstrates satisfactory progress in English and the other curriculum subjects.

The pupil is happy to be at school.

### Roles and Responsibility

The Principal is primarily responsible for ensuring the implementation of EAL policy.

### Implementation Date

This policy will apply from September 2018

### Reference Section

- § Circular 15/2009 Meeting the needs of pupils learning English as an Additional Language, DES
- § Intercultural Education in the Primary School, Guidelines for schools, NCCA, 2005
- § Primary School Assessment Kit, DES, 2007
- § Toolkit for Diversity in the Primary School, 2007
- § Up and Away, IILT, 2006
- § Intercultural Guidelines for Schools, INTO
- § Circular 138/2006 Supporting Assessment
- § Primary Language Curriculum 2016