EAL policy

The Elms Academy
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Introduction

All students need to feel safe, accepted and valued in order to learn. For students who are learning English as an additional language, this includes recognising and valuing their home language and background. As a school, we are aware that bilingualism is a strength and that EAL students have a valuable contribution to make.

The function of the EAL department is based on the Thomas / Collier triangle (shown below), so we have a holistic approach. Our aim is to enable EAL students to access the curriculum by providing support for their acquisition of English and their learning in other subjects, and to provide mentoring if necessary, to help them adapt to life in England and to deal with any issues which they may have brought with them which could impede their learning.

Safe inclusive learning environment
The Thomas/Collier triangle

Social needs

Keep the child in the centre

Language needs

Learning needs

All three needs must be met and balanced

Rationale:

This policy aims to raise awareness of the school's obligations and to support the planning, organisation, teaching and assessment procedures, and the use of resources and strategies to meet the needs of students who have English as an additional language (EAL) and so to raise student achievement.

The Elms Academy context

- There are currently around 30 home languages spoken by The Elms Academy students, the most common being Portuguese, Somali and Spanish.
- In The Elms Academy, EAL students come from a variety of backgrounds. Some are from well-established communities such as Portuguese, while others are new to the language and culture of this country.
- Many students have attended school and are literate in their home language on arrival whereas some may have had no previous formal education.
- A few of our students may have experienced trauma and this will have an impact on their learning.

Information is gathered about:
- students' linguistic background and competence in other language/s
- students' previous educational experience
- students' family and biographical background

EAL policy

Key Principles of additional language acquisition

- EAL students are entitled to the full National Curriculum programmes of study and all their teachers have a responsibility for teaching English as well as other subject content.
- Access to learning requires attention to words and meanings embodied in each curriculum area. Meanings and understanding cannot be assumed but must be made explicit.
- Language is central to our identity. Therefore, the home languages of all students and staff should be recognised and valued. Students should be encouraged to maintain their home language and use in the school environment wherever possible.
- Although many students acquire the ability to communicate on a day-to-day basis in English quite quickly, the level of language needed for academic study is much deeper and more detailed, and can require continuing support for more than 7 years.
- Language develops best when used in purposeful contexts across the curriculum.
- The language demands of learning tasks need to be identified and included in planning.
- Teaching and support staff play a crucial role in modelling uses of language.
- Knowledge and skills developed in learning the first language aid the acquisition of additional languages.
- A clear distinction should be made between EAL and Special Educational Needs and Disability in accordance with Code of Practice.

Assessment & monitoring

- All EAL students are entitled to assessments as required. These may be undertaken by the EAL coordinator, the EAL support teacher, or the member of Lambeth's CYPS who is the EAL support specialist.
- Progress in the acquisition of English is assessed and monitored, and stages of English (represented by one of the 5 National English Proficiency Level codes as specified by the DfE) are checked annually to ensure that accurate information is sent to Lambeth for their data.
- Additionally, in September, February and June / July mainstream staff are to undertake assessments of EAL students who are coded A or B on the DfE scale, to allocate them levels on the NASSEA EAL Framework.
- Consideration and sensitivity is given to the appropriateness of testing EAL students at the earlier stages of English acquisition.
- Lower-level EAL students can be set targets to be reviewed at regular intervals. These may be EAL-specific (language-based), subject-specific and / or social.

Teaching & Support Strategies

- When EAL in-class support is timetabled, the class teacher should provide the relevant EAL support teacher with access to the lesson plan for that lesson, at least 24hours in advance, so that accurately-targeted support can be provided.
- Classroom activities should have clear learning objectives and use appropriate materials and support to enable students to participate in lessons.
- Key language features of each curriculum area, e.g. key vocabulary, uses of language, forms of text, should be identified.
- Enhanced opportunities should be provided for speaking and listening, including both process and presentational talk, and use should be made of drama techniques and role play. Students should have access to effective staff and peer models of spoken language.
- Additional visual support should be provided, e.g. posters, pictures, photographs, objects, demonstration, use of gesture.
- Additional verbal support should be provided, e.g. repetition, modelling, peer support.

- Use should be made of collaborative activities that involve purposeful talk and encourage and support active participation.
- Where possible, learning progression should move from the concrete to the abstract, and discussion should be provided before, during and after reading and writing activities.
- Scaffolding should be provided for language and learning, e.g. talk frames, writing frames.

Special Educational Needs and Disability and Gifted and Talented Students

- Most EAL students needing additional support do not have SEND.
- Should SEND be identified, EAL students have equal access to school's SEND provision.
- If EAL students are identified as Gifted and Talented, they have equal access to school's provision.

Parental/Community Involvement

Staff should strive to encourage parental and community involvement by:

- using plain English; and translators and interpreters, where appropriate and available, to ensure good spoken and written communications.
- identifying linguistic, cultural and religious background of students and establishing contact with wider community where possible.
- celebrating and acknowledging the achievements of EAL students in the wider community.
- recognising and encouraging the use of first language.
- helping parents understand how they can support their children at home, especially by continuing the development of their first language

Monitoring and general support

- One member of each faculty should be responsible for making sure that EAL resources are being created and used in that faculty and that there is ongoing communication with the EAL Department.
- The EAL Department will distribute an EAL strategy document to all faculties to facilitate better understanding of EAL students' needs and ensuring their complete access to the school curriculum.
- Low-level EAL students will be provided with a vocabulary book to help them in specific subjects and to record new vocabulary, in order to improve their English language acquisition.
- The EAL Coordinator will meet with subject teachers who teach EAL students on a regular basis to give advice on the EAL students and the resources they specifically need.
- The EAL Coordinator will monitor the progress of the students attending withdrawal lessons in the EAL department.
- For CPD purposes the EAL Coordinator will run a training session for the different faculty representatives and any other interested staff on how to design and prepare EAL resources for stage 1 and 2 students.
- The EAL Coordinator will observe regularly how staff are supporting and challenging the EAL students through lesson observations and learning walks.