

EAL Policy (English as a Foreign Language)

St Brigid's National School, Greystones, County Wicklow

EAL Policy

'English Language Support in primary education strives to empower students from many different communities to access the same educational opportunities as their English-speaking peers and to become fully-integrated members of the community of the school and the wider social community, while respecting and valuing the richness of cultural and linguistic diversity.'

(Integrate Ireland Language Programme)

St. Brigid's Primary School Greystones is committed to making appropriate provision of teaching and resources for students for whom English is an Additional Language and for raising the achievement of those students who are at risk from under-achievement.

The school will identify individual students' needs, recognise the skills they bring to school and ensure a quality of access to the curriculum.

Introductory Statement

This policy was devised following a consultative process with all interested parties and is guided by the relevant Department of Education & Science publications and circulars. (DES Circulars 07/2012, 0056/2011 & 0015/2009, Primary School Assessment Kit- DES 2007, Toolkit for Diversity in the Primary School-2007, Intercultural Education in the Primary School- Guidelines for schools, NCCA 2005 and Up and Away IILT 2006)

Rationale

The purpose of this policy is to provide guidelines to school staff on the delivery of English as an additional language and also on how best to accommodate and fully include EAL students.

Relationship to Characteristic Spirit of the School

In keeping with the inclusive ethos of St. Brigid's National School, Greystones, this EAL policy wishes to recognize, affirm and in so far as possible provide for cultural diversity.

Aims

We aspire to achieve the following by through this policy:

To enable students of ethnic minorities to have a sense of belonging.

To provide a framework for supplementary teaching and additional support and resources for those students for whom English is an additional language.

To promote EAL students' development of English Language proficiency so that they can gradually gain access to the curriculum.

To maximise the progress, academic attainment and personal achievement of EAL students.

To promote a recognition of and respect for ethnic and cultural diversity in the school thus ensuring that EAL students feel valued and affirmed.

To promote effective home school links and increase parental involvement among parents of EAL students.

Organization of EAL Language Support

Recent Department of Education & Science Guidelines have directed that specific Language Support if provided be subsumed within general resource allocation. "Schools now have the autonomy on how to deploy resource between language support and learning support depending on their specific needs". (Circular 07/2012). Decisions regarding language teaching for EAL students will be made on a yearly basis with due regard being given to the needs of EAL students and the availability of time.

In allocating support time particular attention will be paid to older students who may have little or no English. Support may take the form of in-class or withdrawal, whichever is deemed most beneficial. Oral Language in Infant classes benefit EAL students for that reason EAL will begin in Senior Infants rather than Junior Infants. That way the students have some time to settle in.

All teachers with responsibility for EAL students will endeavour to promote the English language proficiency.

Teachers of EAL students will encourage EAL students to speak English while in school, be aware of the language demands of the Curriculum, including subject specific vocabulary in subjects such as Maths, Geography, History & Science differentiate planning and teaching to take into account the

Learning needs of EAL students provide opportunities to engage in pair/group work with English speaking peers who will provide useful role models where necessary support understanding through the use of gestures, visual clues etc., use concrete materials to promote the understanding of mathematical concepts and be aware of the need to constantly reinforce the language of Mathematics speak clearly and at a steady pace to ensure that EAL students can follow directions and material being taught, with repetition if required provide constructive and affirmative feedback for student work as is good practice

Current interventions to assist EAL students include;

Induction language programme for Junior Infant EAL students with emphasis on basic vocabulary needed to function in school environment.

Irish Exemptions *"There is no evidence that younger students have any problem with learning Irish with their peer group"*, (Up and Away pg 9). The normal criteria for Irish exemptions apply to EAL students. According to the Department of Education and Skills, students aged 11 years or over coming to Ireland whose education was received outside Ireland are entitled to an exemption in Irish.

Standardized Testing

In general EAL students are expected to sit the yearly standardized tests.

However with reference to Circular 0056/2011 "Students may be excluded from standardized testing if in the view of the school principal they have a learning or physical disability which would prevent them from attempting the tests or, in the case of migrant students, where the level of English required in the test would make attempting the test inappropriate" and the Education Act 1998 which entitles each student to

some form of assessment, those who are unable to participate in standardized testing at their class level may avail of testing at lower levels. It is generally accepted that students who have not reached level A1.3 (see PSAK guidelines) of the language proficiency benchmarks need not be tested with standardized test. Standardized testing for EAL students is at the class teacher's discretion.

Interculturalism

Cross curricular guidelines on how best to create an intercultural and inclusive school as provided in Intercultural Education in the Primary School(NCCA, 2005), Information as provided by IILT (Integrate Ireland Language & Training) publications and guidelines from 'Up and Away' language programme are used to inform the schools efforts to foster appreciation of inter-culturalism and promote integration of EAL students.

Signs at gate and Reception area are in English and Polish. EAL students are invited to read prayers/sing in first language at school gatherings. Other countries and cultures are studied during SESE time slot. Every effort is made to make EAL students feel welcomed and valued. See school policy on Equality/Interculturalism.

Communication with Parents

St. Brigid's National School, Greystones acknowledges the importance of communication with and involvement in school of parents of EAL students. School efforts in this regard are once again informed by IILT publications and 'Up and Away' language programme. A welcoming school environment facilitates parental contact with the school. Appointments can be made to speak with Principal, Class/Resource Teachers. Parental involvement in school events is sought and appreciated.

Where discrete EAL Language Support is provided

Role of the Language Support Teacher:

"In collaboration with parents and class teacher, support teachers identify students requiring additional language support, assess students' proficiency in English, decide on appropriate language programmes, deliver the programmes and record and monitor students' progress. They

collaborate with class teachers to ... support the development of students' English language proficiency." Circular 0015/2009.

The responsibility of the support teacher is to deliver a programme of English language tuition which is based on the primary curriculum and which prepares and supports the student in accessing classroom learning and in socializing with peers. "The principal objective of the language support programme is to integrate the student as quickly as possible into all mainstream learning and activities of the school." (Up and Away p. 20)

Programme Planning

Thirteen units of work of the EAL 'Up and Away' Language programme are where possible aligned with the themes being covered seasonally in the child's class.

These units are:

1. Myself
2. The local and wider community
3. Time
4. People and places in other areas
5. Animals and plants
6. Caring for my locality
7. Seasons, Holidays and Festivals
8. Our school
9. Food and clothes
10. Colours, Shapes and opposites
11. People who help us
12. Weather
13. Transport and travel

The language of maths and literacy is also important at all levels. In Middle and Senior classes the vocabulary of SESE, History, Geography and Science is also significant.

With older student EAL support time may be used to introduce classroom work at a slower rate thus enabling the EAL student to engage more fully when material is covered in class.

Recording and Monitoring of Students' Progress

With reference to Circular 0015/2009: *'All documentation in relation to the administration of tests must be retained by the school for audit/inspection purposes.'*

IPLPs are attached to student files on Aladdin. With regard to EAL students in Streamed/Resource/Class settings, recording and monitoring of progress will follow school policy for other non-EAL students in these groupings.

Individual Teacher Planning and Reporting

Where there is discrete Language time allocated EAL support teacher will maintain a fortnightly teaching plan and a monthly progress record detailing work covered

from 'Up and Away' / alternative programme. An overall yearly plan for this class will also be completed. Teachers with responsibility for streamed /resource groups will detail work on a weekly/fortnightly and monthly basis also with an overall yearly scheme specifically catering for the needs of their target group including EAL students.

Staff Role and Responsibilities

The role of the Learning Support teachers who teach English as a Foreign Language is a collaborative responsibility shared by all: The Board of Management, Principal, Class teachers, Learning Support teachers, parents and children

Role of Board of Management

- To oversee the development, implementation and review of the provision of Language support in the school.
 - Ensure adequate classroom accommodation and teaching resources are provided for the EAL (English as a Foreign Language) teachers.

Role of Principal

- Assume overall responsibility for the development and implementation of the school's language support policy.
 - Monitor the implementation of the school plan on an ongoing basis.
 - Assume direct responsibility for coordinating language support and special needs services where appropriate to a particular student.

Role of the Class Teacher

The class teacher has primary responsibility for the progress of all students in her class including those in receipt of Language support. In supporting the development and implementation of the school plan on language support the class teacher should:

- Share their planning with the language support teacher to identify the language needs of the individual students.
- Differentiate the classroom programmes for the EAL student in keeping with the agreed targets and activities.
- Modify presentation and questioning techniques to maximise the involvement of students with English as a second language.
- Place emphasis on oral language development across the curriculum.
- Set learning targets at an appropriate level.
- Ensure a high level of consultation and co-operation with the language support teacher.

Role of the Language Support Teacher

The main role of the Learning/Language Support Teacher is to support the student's development of English language proficiency so that he or she can gradually gain access to the curriculum, ultimately achieving the same education opportunities as English speaking peers by:

- Working in consultation with the class teacher to set achievable targets for each student.
- Preparing the student, on an ongoing basis, to access mainstream learning.
- Helping the student to develop appropriate strategies and skills to support their learning.

The responsibility of the Learning/Language Support Teacher is to provide a programme of work based on the primary curriculum.

Each student is entitled to two full years of language support from the time they start at school.

When a student has additional difficulties, it may be appropriate for him or her to receive learning support.

For students entering our school at the Infant level, it is expected that they will develop literacy, classroom language, vocabulary etc at not a greatly dissimilar rate to their peers.

Students entering our school at Senior Primary level can experience a greater challenge. Therefore, there is a need for a systematic and on-going needs analysis to support the acquisition of language on that level.

Assessment, Monitoring and Review

- Ongoing observation of the language and literacy to identify the needs of each student.
- Assessment using tools like The Renfrew Language Scales (Word Finding Vocabulary Test), the Bus Story Test (Test of narrative speech) and Primary Schools Assessment Kit
 - Implement the school policies on screening and selecting students for supplementary teaching when appropriate.
 - Record Keeping: Keep appropriate records on each student to ensure continuity from year to year.

Liasing with Parents

Effective communication with parents is essential to the success of a language support programme..

- To be accessible to parents in a supportive role.
- Meet parents at organised parent teacher meetings either with the class teacher or individually to discuss their student's progress.

Success Criteria

Level of inclusion of EAL students in St.Brigid's National School, Greystones.

Knowledge of and respect for cultural, ethnic & linguistic diversity

Academic progress of EAL students as indicated in standardized and diagnostic test results

Feedback from school principal, teaching staff, SNAs, parents, DES inspectors