

EAL POLICY

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1. Introduction

The purpose of this policy is to outline The Mount School's approach to identifying and meeting the needs of pupils who have English as an additional language (EAL).

This policy applies to all pupils, including children in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS).

The school is committed to ensuring that pupils with EAL have equitable access to a broad, balanced and appropriate curriculum, make progress from their individual starting points and are able to participate fully in school life.

Having EAL is not, in itself, a special educational need or disability. Pupils with EAL may nevertheless also have SEND, and the school will ensure that difficulties arising from learning English are not confused with SEND.

2. Definition

For the purposes of this policy, a pupil is regarded as having EAL where English is not their first or home language, including pupils who are bilingual or multilingual and pupils at any stage of acquiring English.

EAL pupils may include children newly arrived in the United Kingdom, children educated previously in English-speaking schools overseas, children born overseas who moved to the UK before starting school, and children born in the UK whose home or first language is not English.

The level and type of support required will vary considerably. The school will avoid making assumptions about a pupil's attainment, cognitive ability or learning potential on the basis of their proficiency in English.

3. Principles and Recognition

The Mount School seeks to ensure that all pupils can access a broad, balanced and relevant curriculum. English is developed most effectively through meaningful participation across the curriculum, alongside targeted support where this is necessary.

EAL learners will ordinarily be educated alongside their peers. Teachers will adapt teaching so that pupils can access subject content while continuing to develop spoken and written English.

The school environment will promote language and communication through high-quality adult interaction, vocabulary-rich teaching, reading, discussion, modelling, visual support and purposeful opportunities to speak and listen.

Bilingualism and multilingualism are viewed positively. A pupil's home language, culture and prior educational experience are assets which should be recognised and valued.

The school will work in partnership with parents and carers and, where necessary and practicable, take steps to make important information accessible to families who may have limited English.

4. Identification and Initial Assessment

Identification and assessment are undertaken to establish a pupil's starting points and the provision required to enable successful access to learning.

Information may be drawn from the application and admissions process, discussion with parents or carers, previous school or setting information, teacher observation, age-appropriate baseline or curriculum assessment, and information about the pupil's previous education and use of languages.

Assessment should distinguish, as far as possible, between a pupil's knowledge and understanding and their ability to express that knowledge in English. Staff should not assume that limited spoken or written English indicates limited understanding.

Where appropriate, assessment will involve the class teacher, EAL Coordinator/SENCO, pupil and parents or carers. Progress will be reviewed over time rather than relying on a single assessment.

5. English Proficiency and Internal Monitoring

The school may use an internal five-stage A–E framework to describe a pupil's developing proficiency in English and to support consistent planning and review. These descriptors are an internal monitoring tool; they are not a current Department for Education school census reporting requirement.

Stage A – New to English: the pupil may use their first language, be silent for a period, copy or repeat words and phrases, understand some everyday expressions and require considerable support to access learning.

Stage B – Early acquisition: the pupil begins to use English socially, follows simple instructions and narratives with support, develops early reading and writing skills and acquires subject-specific vocabulary. Significant support may still be required.

Stage C – Developing competence: the pupil participates with increasing independence and can communicate orally, but may still show structural inaccuracies. Ongoing support may be needed for complex texts, academic language and writing.

Stage D – Competent: oral English enables successful participation across the curriculum and the pupil can understand a wide range of texts. Some support may remain necessary for subtle meaning, sophisticated vocabulary and complexity in written English.

Stage E – Fluent: the pupil can operate across the curriculum with English proficiency broadly comparable to peers who use English as their first language. Staff will continue to monitor curriculum access and achievement in the same way as for all pupils.

6. Provision and Teaching

Class teachers retain responsibility for the progress and participation of pupils with EAL. EAL provision is part of high-quality inclusive classroom teaching and is not solely the responsibility of the EAL Coordinator or SENCO.

Appropriate strategies may include explicit vocabulary teaching; modelling of spoken and written language; visual prompts, objects and demonstrations; structured talk and partner work; sentence stems and writing frames; careful checking of understanding; pre-teaching or revisiting key language; accessible texts; and opportunities to rehearse language before responding.

Teachers should maintain appropriate curriculum ambition. Adaptation should enable access to the same important curriculum content rather than unnecessarily narrowing the curriculum.

Where assessment identifies a need, targeted individual or small-group support may supplement classroom teaching. Withdrawal from lessons will be used carefully and only where the likely benefit outweighs the loss of curriculum learning.

Where appropriate, pupils should be encouraged to use their home language as a resource for thinking, learning and communication.

7. Early Years Foundation Stage

For children in the EYFS whose home language is not English, practitioners will recognise and value the importance of the home language and will take reasonable steps to provide opportunities for children to develop and use it in play and learning while supporting the development of English.

Practitioners will work with parents and carers to understand the child's language experience and will support families in maintaining language development at home.

When assessing children, practitioners will consider whether a child understands a concept even where they cannot yet express that understanding fully in English. Home language may be used to demonstrate learning in appropriate areas of the EYFS.

For the EYFS Profile, judgements for Communication and Language and Literacy are based on competency in English or British Sign Language, while children may use their home language to demonstrate learning in other areas of learning and development.

Children with EAL should be supported to participate in statutory assessment arrangements where applicable, with decisions and adaptations made in accordance with the relevant current assessment guidance.

8. Monitoring, Recording and Responsibilities

The class teacher will maintain an up-to-date understanding of each EAL pupil's needs, plan appropriate classroom provision and monitor progress across the curriculum.

The EAL Coordinator role is fulfilled by the SENCO, who will maintain or oversee the school's EAL register, support staff with assessment and provision, review patterns of progress and identify where additional intervention or professional advice may be appropriate.

For pupils requiring substantial additional support, particularly those at the early stages of acquiring English, the school may use an individual support plan or equivalent record. The form of record will be proportionate to need and reviewed regularly; an IEP is not automatically required solely because a pupil has EAL.

Leaders will monitor whether EAL pupils are accessing the curriculum, developing foundational language and literacy, achieving appropriately from their starting points and receiving effective support.

9. EAL and Special Educational Needs and/or Disabilities

EAL is not a special educational need. Most pupils learning English as an additional language do not require SEND provision simply because they are developing proficiency in English.

Where there are concerns about possible SEND, staff will consider evidence from a range of contexts and, where possible, information about the pupil's skills and development in their home language. The school will consider the length and quality of exposure to English, previous education, attendance, progress over time and response to appropriate EAL teaching.

If a pupil with EAL is identified as having SEND, they will have equal access to the school's SEND provision in addition to appropriate EAL support, in accordance with the school's SEND Policy.

10. More Able Pupils

Pupils with EAL may also demonstrate high prior attainment, particular strengths or talents. Limited proficiency in English must not prevent staff from recognising high ability or providing

suitable challenge. Identification will be based on a broad range of evidence rather than English proficiency alone.

11. Communication with Parents and Carers

Parents, carers and school staff will work together in the best interests of pupils with EAL. The school will seek relevant information about languages spoken at home, previous education and the child's strengths and needs.

Parents and carers will receive information about progress through the school's usual reporting and consultation arrangements. Where a pupil has an individual support plan, relevant strategies and progress will also be discussed.

Where necessary and practicable, the school will consider appropriate support to enable parents or carers with limited English to understand important information concerning their child.

12. Staff Knowledge and Leadership Oversight

Leaders will ensure that staff understand that EAL is distinct from SEND and have access to appropriate guidance and professional development to support EAL pupils effectively.

Leaders will ensure that teachers have, or develop, the expertise needed to teach the pupils and phases for which they are responsible, including adapting teaching appropriately for pupils facing language-related barriers to learning.

The effectiveness of this policy will be considered through normal school monitoring, including curriculum access, pupil work, assessment information, pupil voice, parental communication and the progress of pupils receiving additional support.

13. Relevant Guidance and Sources

This policy should be read alongside the school's Curriculum Policy, SEND Policy, Equality/Equal Opportunities Policy, Admissions Policy, Assessment arrangements and relevant EYFS policies.

Key external references at the date of review include: the Early Years Foundation Stage statutory framework for group and school-based providers; Department for Education Independent School Standards guidance (April 2026); current statutory assessment guidance; Ofsted's education inspection toolkit and inspection information applicable from September 2026; and professional EAL guidance, including NALDIC.

Statutory and inspection guidance changes over time. The school will apply the current version of relevant guidance where this is updated before the next scheduled policy review.

Review

This policy will be reviewed annually, or earlier where there is a significant change to statutory requirements, inspection arrangements or the needs of the school.