

St Edmund's Junior School

Policy for the Education and Welfare of Pupils with EAL

Aim

To raise the level of English of foreign pupils as quickly as possible to enable them to fully access the curriculum, and to continue to raise the quality of their use of English.

Assessment

Pupils for whom English is an Additional Language are carefully assessed prior to commencing support in learning English.

This assessment may not occur immediately upon their arrival at St. Edmund's School, as the true extent of their knowledge of English may be masked by the effects of the upheaval of moving to a new country, a new culture, a new educational system – and possibly boarding away from home. After the initial settling in period these pupils are more sure of themselves in their new situation and are therefore more likely to show realistically how much English they already know.

The assessment will cover the four language skills of reading, writing, listening and speaking, as well as consulting with colleagues to find out how well the pupil is coping in the different academic subjects. Consideration will also be given to their linguistic background, as language learning will be affected by the very different structures between, say, another European language and East Asian languages.

Following assessment, a program of support in language learning will be devised. This may vary from total concentration upon language learning, to curriculum support when the pupil has a good command of the language from a grammar / everyday vocabulary viewpoint but lacks the specific vocabulary or cultural knowledge to fully understand the subject matter.

Consideration will also be given to day pupils whose first language at home is not English. They may need support at school. Boarders on the other hand have the opportunity to practise use English in a social context.

Program of Study:

Any pupil with insufficient English for effective learning will be given EAL lessons, the quantity of which will depend on their specific needs. As RHK also teaches French, if it is recognised that they should not also learn French then KL will give as many lessons of EAL as possible during French lesson time. RHK will top up these lessons with extra lessons including help on cultural issues.

For pupils coming from another European country, most of their learning will be English language based, as the cultural background will be familiar. They will often find it possible to learn French too because of the familiarity of the language structures, in which case RHK will be responsible for their EAL learning.

For Asian or African pupils, it will normally be necessary not only to teach EAL but also to focus on cultural, historical and religious issues for them to access the curriculum fully. Unless they are already familiar with learning in English and with the range of subject material expected of our pupils they should not learn French. Pupils may come from a different educational background and may never have encountered certain subjects prior to coming here (for example, Chinese students rarely have any knowledge of geography even when they enter the school at Year 8). Lack of knowledge does not mean lack of intelligence, and they can usually

catch up with their peers if they are given appropriate learning opportunities. They can be given specific help with key concepts if the EAL teacher is made aware of what is needed.

Points to consider by all academic teachers:

1. The ability of these pupils to take part in the National Curriculum may be ahead of their communication skills in English. Teachers should provide the support they need to take part in all subject areas.
2. Learning opportunities should be planned to help pupils develop their English.
3. There should be careful monitoring of each pupil's progress in subject knowledge and understanding to confirm that no learning difficulties are present.
4. Ensure that vocabulary work covers both the technical and everyday meaning of key words, metaphors and idioms.
5. Provide a variety of reading material to help pupils understand the society and culture of this country.
6. Use accessible texts and materials that suit the pupil's age and level of learning.
7. Provide support using visual or audio materials and encourage the use of translators or dictionaries. (Asian pupils are often very reluctant to be seen looking up words they don't understand. Loss of 'face'?)

Teaching resources

RHK's room contains a wide variety of EAL materials:

- the full range of New Headway course books and tapes (for Year 7 & 8 pupils)
- the full range of Hotline course books and tapes (for younger pupils)
- a variety of grammar / vocabulary books
- books to develop the different language skills
- books with grammar games
- books covering idioms / proverbs, etc.
- a wide variety of PrimEd books to further develop language skills
- non-fiction books on a wide variety of topics, including general and history encyclopaedias
- various easy readers (fiction)

There are also a lot of graded EAL readers in the Library.

Welfare

Children from overseas have always been welcomed into the St Edmund's family by staff and pupils and the school celebrates the diversity of its community. Staff responsible for children with EAL are sensitive to the potential deficit in their understanding and should be particularly alert in situations where sequences of instructions are issued or in situations where health and safety are paramount (eg trips away from school, at the swimming pool etc).

Every effort is made to find out about the child before his/her arrival. At the application stage an EAL pupil is asked to write a page of notes in English about him/herself, his/her family, his/her interests etc. Before joining the parent/guardian must complete the new pupil Point of Entry Questionnaire, which gathers information about the child's likes and dislikes, their interests and experience of school, their academic record and educational history, any medical or emotional circumstances to be taken account of. The family must also complete and return the standard School Medical Form. Medications must be delivered to school with the instructions translated into English for our medical staff.

On the child's arrival at school, if it is deemed that some cultural orientation is required, this will be laid on. For instance, a child from urban Hong Kong will be unfamiliar with the everyday life in East Kent and some guided trips around Canterbury and environs are organised to help the child understand their new surroundings. In fact this is sometimes done by an accompanying parent, who brings the child to school and might remain in Canterbury during the settling in period. Equally, it is understood that our western diet may be strange and both EAL staff and boarding staff are sensitive to the need to translate and explain menus.

For boarders in School House there are 'International Days' from time to time, when different nationalities are celebrated through an exploration of various facets of their culture. On these occasions members of the House are permitted to invite a day pupil friend to sleep over in the boarding house to share the experience. This is an opportunity for boarders, including EAL boarders, to integrate with the day community.

Boarders from religious traditions other than Christianity are encouraged to celebrate their own religious festivals. Allowance is made for them to have time off school if parents request it. Our Gurkha boarders, for instance, are given leave from school to attend the Nepalese festivals of Dashain and Tihar (the Festival of Light) with their families at home. Children of different faiths can be excused attendance at Chapel on the request of their parents. In such cases, the children are expected to sit quietly with their own religious text during Chapel time.

Where necessary EAL children who are finding life difficult because of their poor English or limited experience of English culture are discussed at the JS Pastoral Committee and placed on a Welfare Plan to raise staff awareness and to monitor progress.

RHK/RGB
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