

Guidance for Assessing English as an Additional Language using the Lambeth Stages of English

Who are the children developing EAL? The DfE states:

'A first language, where it is other than English, is recorded where a child was exposed to the language during early development and continues to be exposed to this language in the home or in the community.'

*Where a child was exposed to more than one language (which may include English) during early development, **the language other than English is recorded, irrespective of the child's proficiency in English.***

So a child may not speak the language other than English, but if exposed to it, is still considered to have EAL.

- Languages recorded for pupils with EAL should reflect the language that is NOT English, regardless of which language is used the most or the pupil is most proficient in. If parents insist that their child must be recorded as English-Only speaking, then schools are obliged to record it as such, but schools are permitted to enquire with parents for reassurance on the use of this data or to clarify the understanding of the 'language'.
- Ensure data is checked by EAL teacher/lead before submission in the Lambeth English Proficiency Survey.

General guidance:

- On average it takes 5 -7 years to achieve fluency and sometimes longer, so don't try and move pupils through stages quickly or over-assess to show progress. It won't benefit pupils in the long run.
- Depending on age and background, most will move through stages A and B in a couple of years and then stay on C and D for a long time.
- Stages A, B and C pupils will not be attaining age-related expectations in English. Comparing the stage descriptors and the English curriculum expectations will demonstrate this. Some pupils at stage D might be working at typical levels, because they will be working above expectations once fluent in English (code E).
- EYFS – weight towards oral language development.
- EYFS - a comparison between the stage descriptors for stages A & B and the EYFS outcomes, will show that it is not possible to achieve them in the EYFS at the early stages of English
- EYFS - all children in the EYFS are at the very early stages of language development. It is only as they move into KS1 and 2 that they face the real challenges of academic language. Thus although they may appear to be fluent speakers of English in the EYFS, issues only become apparent as the demands increase. It is therefore likely that the majority of children with EAL will be at stages A-C in the EYFS.
- Need a rounded picture drawn from many contexts across the curriculum
- Use the principle of 'best fit' to make sense of disparate information – a pupil can be allocated a stage without achieving all the descriptors for that stage
- Take note of the qualifiers in the framework ie *some, beginning, with support/scaffolding, mostly ...*
- Needs to be related to their English monolingual peers and age related expectations
- Be aware of delay in language development which may arise from SEN, rather than EAL
- Compare with attainment levels - those at Stages A & B **will not** be achieving the expected levels in English curriculum. Even if a pupil is at stage C in KS1/2, a comparison between stage descriptors and English outcomes will show a mismatch.
- Should be an on-going process – ideally updated termly and built into school's assessment cycle
- Who has access to the assessment stages? All staff working with a pupil need this information.
- Is it used to inform planning and teaching – identifying areas for support?

Oral Language

- Observe in academic as well as social contexts – ask the child to explain or justify – and in different curricular areas
- Planned activity must allow for use of focus language
- Take note of breadth as well as range of vocabulary ie not just how many words they know but also understanding the different ways a word may be used and its meaning in different subjects
- Comparison of oral and written language informs assessment of development and possible targets
- Need context in which collected – ie did objects allow them to use deictic language - *here, this, like this?* In this case, did they demonstrate a wider knowledge of English if the context or objects were removed ie *on top of the box (here), the round magnet (this), pulled it about one metre (like this)*

Reading

- Pupils with EAL often use phonics successfully, becoming good decoders, but the understanding doesn't develop at the same rate. This can be misleading.
- Ensure 'think about questions' are used to probe and assess understanding
- Does unfamiliar vocabulary create a barrier to understanding?
- Stage D – similar to monolingual peers, but may have some difficulty with idioms/culturally specific references and complex inference

Writing

- Assess **independent** writing in different curricular areas to include the more academic language structures – ie not just stories, but science.
- Take note of breadth as well as range of vocabulary ie not just how many words they use but also the understanding of the different ways a word may be used and its meaning in different subjects
- Consider how much support/scaffolding/rehearsal there was prior to task
- Take a top down approach, consider overall text first ie purpose, genre, voice, cohesion then sentence structure, tenses and vocabulary
- Research shows that pupils with EAL have difficulties specific to their language acquisition, for example in grammar – familiarity with these helps distinguish whether their errors are due to developing EAL or a specific learning need?
- Don't focus on handwriting, spelling and punctuation.