

# Strategies for Home Learning

(A summary from *The Impact of School Closure on Pupils with English as an Additional Language: Lambeth Survey<sup>1</sup>*)

## Summary

83% of the respondents to the Lambeth survey on the impact of covid on EAL learners, found it challenging to support their EAL learners during school closures, especially those in the early stage of learning English. Almost half believed that their curriculum learning had been negatively impacted and 60% commented on a lack of progress or even regression in their development of English skills.

With rapidly growing numbers of covid cases and the threat of home learning for some pupils or even school closures, this aim of this document is to share the teaching strategies used during previous closures.

**An important point to note is that many schools identified pupils who were new to English as vulnerable and invited them to attend in-school classes.**

The greatest challenge identified was communicating with families, whether this was to explain the use of new technology or the learning and tasks for their children. **Regular phone calls** were mentioned frequently and appeared to be key to success. One teacher described their strategy as *'Regular contact with eal families to identify any struggles - checking in on them so they know we are still there. System making sure no family is left uncontacted'*. This was sometimes by a member of staff who shared the family language.

Other methods used to enable families to engage were:

- Liaising with parents through bilingual staff
- Setting up EAL parent support groups and establishing networks, so parents could support each other
- Parent WhatsApp group to support EAL parents
- School blog converting to home languages
- School Twitter and social media platforms
- Newsletters, but these tended to be 'wordy', so unless translated were often challenging for parents
- Regular text messages to parents
- Parental virtual meetings e.g. on MS Teams
- Use of the learning portals to communicate with parents e.g. Seesaw

## Teaching Strategies

The table below shows the percentage of teachers using a broad range of strategies for their early stage EAL learners during school closures. However, some were deemed to have more impact than others.

Strategy	Primary teachers using %	Impact 1= greatest 10 = least
Extra teaching support on an individual basis (online)	46%	1
Extra teaching support on a group basis (online)	44%	2
Telephone support to pupils and families with a staff member fluent in their language	56%	3
Online English language materials/activities	65%	4
Television lessons e.g. BBC bitesize	62%	5
Online lessons translated into different languages	22%	6

Online translator (e.g. google translate)	35%	7
Online software from 3rd party providers	31%	8
Paper lesson resources untranslated	50%	9
Paper lesson resources translated into different languages	18%	10

The most used strategies were not necessarily those that had the greatest impact. Those considered to be most successful were **extra teaching support on a group or an individual basis, home language telephone support and online English language activities.**

Least impact was considered to be from **online paper lessons both translated and untranslated, use of online software from 3<sup>rd</sup> party providers and use of online translators.**

However, this may have been influenced by extraneous factors: for example, one to one lessons were arranged more frequently in secondary (71%) than in primary schools (46%), possibly because there are fewer EAL specialist staff in primary schools. Similarly translating tools/materials are of less use with younger children, who may not yet be literate.

Elaborating further, teaching strategies described by schools were:

#### **Increased efforts to contextualise teaching through the use of:**

- Pictures, realia and symbols,
- Additional resources on google classroom or website in English, but with picture support
- Video and audio clips including those of school staff modelling activities and language, but also use of online tools such as ShowMe
- Modelling was mentioned by many teachers, both of tasks and language, so that the children knew what was expected of them
- Activities like ‘My turn, your turn’ which models through repetition
- Translated pages and visual tutorials posted on Google Classroom

#### **English language focus work**

- Pre-teaching of key vocabulary (sometimes sent home)
- Small group interventions with focus on vocabulary development
- Small group support through breakout rooms
- Vocabulary development through activities such as ‘Word of the Day’ and topic lessons
- Explicit grammar teaching through literacy lessons
- English language resources and activities on school website

#### **Differentiation through:**

- Tasks - different methods of completing work, for example tick boxes, lines joining answers, labelling, sequencing and scribble tool
- Extra online reading and talking time
- Daily catch-up chats with a small group
- *“Having specific picture related work for the EAL children such as a book that is very picture related and the story is easy to follow that all the EAL children in the school could do as text. Plan lessons on that book that will cater for all the different stages of EAL children.”* (EAL Coordinator)
- Use of sentence starters
- Learning packs to supplement live lessons
- Language software and translate functions
- Immersive reader on Microsoft Teams to help children translate where needed

#### **Online resources and Apps**

- Flash academy
- Seesaw app
- Learning Village
- Languagenut

Finally, the plea from the parent survey was for more live teaching sessions!

Many thanks to all the staff who shared their experiences in this survey. Amanda Bellsham-Revell (EAL Consultant) & Andy Hau (Schools Research and Data Manager, Schools' Research and Statistics Unit, LB Lambeth)