

Investigating concerns

about children learning English
as an Additional Language
(EAL) who may have Special
Educational Needs.

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English as an Additional Language covers children and young people who are new to English and those advanced learners who still need support developing academic language and grammar. Research shows that a child who is new to learning English will take approximately 2 years to become fluent in conversational English and a further 5-7 years to become competent in the full use of academic English.

For new arrivals, it is important to find out as much as possible about a bilingual learner's home language such as word order in sentences etc. as children will transfer what they know about how home languages work to their acquisition of new languages. Further guidance on English as an Additional Language in EYFS, New arrivals at Key Stage 1 and 2, Key Stages 3 and 4 and Advanced Learners can be found on the Local Offer <https://localoffer.cumbria.gov.uk/kb5/cumbria/fsd/advice.page?id=Mq3v-a2bPYI>

It is also important to find out as much as possible about young children's development in their home languages as any delay in home language development will affect their progress in learning English as an Additional Language and could indicate an underlying speech language and communication difficulty. There is a parent questionnaire in various home languages on the local offer to assist school staff investigating early language development. <https://localoffer.cumbria.gov.uk/kb5/cumbria/fsd/advice.page?id=Mq3v-a2bPYI>

Staff should measure pupil progress using appropriate EAL assessment levels such as The Bell Foundation <https://www.bell-foundation.org.uk/eal-programme/teaching-resources/eal-assessment-framework/> or the NASSEA EAL assessment <https://www.nassea.org.uk/product/nassea-eal-assessment-framework-tracker/>

If there are concerns regarding progress or potential Special Educational Needs, advice from the Specialist Advisory Teacher for English as an Additional Language and other professionals can be accessed through the Early Help form which can be found on the Cumbria Safeguarding Children website under the Professional Section.

<https://www.cumbriasafeguardingchildren.co.uk/professionals/>



SEN Triggers for concern

English as an Additional Language covers children and young people who are new to English and those advanced learners who still need support developing academic language and grammar. Research shows that a child who is new to learning English will take approximately 2 years to become fluent in conversational English and a further 5-7 years to become competent in the full use of academic English.

Statements in bold are linked to further guidance on speech and language difficulties.

- Low levels in first language as any delay or difficulty in developing the home language/s will have an effect on a child's development of English.
- Parental concerns over development
- Poor listening and attention skills
- Difficulties with English language development
- Language acquisition at a slower rate compared to EAL peers or family members (NASSEA assessment framework or Bell Foundation Assessment Framework)
- Slow rate of work compared to peers
- Difficulties also apparent in other subjects
- Poor verbal comprehension and expression and limited vocabulary, despite the classroom being a language rich environment and extra support for language development provided.
- Emotional and behavioural difficulties not linked to stress from being a new arrival or from racism
- Remaining silent longer than expected when beginning to learn English
- Limited non-verbal communication
- Difficulty acquiring basic number concepts
- Difficulty acquiring literacy skills
- Limited unaided writing despite good oral language



Steps to Take

<p>1</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● On admission, collect background information on the family’s language background and pupil’s previous education via language maps and information including: ● Previous countries lived in. ● Previous educational experience. ● Age child started formal school as this varies between countries. ● Are there any significant gaps in the pupil’s education or absences through illness? ● For younger pupils, do parents have any concerns about the child’s development and use of the home language/s (Poorly - developed speaking and listening skills in home language/s will impact on the rate of acquisition of EAL and may be an indicator of speech language and communication difficulties or Developmental Language Disorder.) <p>Examples of language maps and proforma questionnaires can be found on the English as an Additional Language section on the CCC Local offer. https://localoffer.cumbria.gov.uk/kb5/cumbria/fsd/advice.page?id=Mq3v-a2bPYI</p> <p>A home language questionnaire for parents can be found under the Home Languages section .</p> <p>EYFS is under the Early Years section in the Developing good EAL Practice in the Early Years Foundation Stage document.</p> <p>Primary in the document entitled New Arrivals for KS1 and KS2</p> <p>Secondary in the document entitled New Arrivals Support Pack</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● (See further guidance on Speech language and Communication difficulties and EAL)
<p>2</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Record your reasons for concern and how this presents in the classroom. ● Consider the length of time the pupil has been learning English.
<p>3</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Document what you have done so far to meet the needs of the pupil e.g. scaffolding, differentiation, modelling, small group interventions.
<p>4</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Document the pupil’s strengths and areas in need of development. ● Collate samples of work.

<p>5</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Investigate the child's progress across all curriculum areas using the school's normal assessment process alongside an appropriate means of assessing and measuring the progress of acquiring English as an Additional Language. <p>NASSEA EAL assessment framework http://www.nassea.org.uk/eal-assessment-framework/ Or the Bell EAL assessment https://www.bell-foundation.org.uk/eal-programme/eal-assessment-framework/</p>
<p>6</p>	<p>Investigate possible reasons for the pupil's lack of progress:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Poor attendance ● Absence due to extended visits to visit relatives in the home country ● Does the pupil have any problems with hearing or eyesight? ● Is the pupil happy and settled in school or are there any social, emotional or behavioural issues which could be affecting the pupil's ability to learn. ● Are there any issues outside school which could impact on progress? ● Is the pupil having difficulty accessing the curriculum due to lack of appropriate scaffolding and EAL friendly strategies? ● Has EAL support been withdrawn too early? <p><i>Conversational fluency in English, known as Basic Interpersonal Communicative Skills (BICS) is acquired within 2 years of starting to acquire EAL whereas it takes several years longer for pupils to develop The more complex use of English in school and academic situations where there is reduced context Cognitive and Academic Language Proficiency known as CALP takes much longer to acquire. Check that there is appropriate scaffolding, Content and Language Integrated Learning, plenty of opportunities for speaking and listening and differentiated tasks which match the pupil's level of language proficiency.</i></p>
<p>7</p>	<p>Is the pupil appropriately grouped with able children who can provide good models for language and learning?</p> <p>Are appropriate EAL friendly strategies being used? https://www.bell-foundation.org.uk/eal-programme/guidance/effective-teaching-of-eal-learners/great-ideas/</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Collaborative learning activities ● Content and Language Integrated learning ● Language friendly inclusive environment ● Visual support ● Plenty of opportunities for oral rehearsal before writing ● Speaking frames, graphic organisers etc.
<p>8</p>	<p>Comparing the pupil's rate of progress and Acquisition of English with other EAL learners with similar educational experiences who started school at the same time can be useful when examined alongside observations and parental and pupil views. Don't forget each child is an individual!</p>

Use the information gathered from the suggestions above along with the CCC SEN/EAL filter questions to make a decision.

<https://cumbria.gov.uk/elibrary/Content/Internet/537/955/6075/6263/6313/44001102336.PDF>

<https://localoffer.cumbria.gov.uk/kb5/cumbria/fsd/advice.page?id=Mq3v-a2bPYI>

EAL NEEDS ONLY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Continue to monitor progress using the NASSEA assessment framework or the Bell Foundation EAL assessment Framework ● Continue to use EAL friendly strategies in order to develop CALP and any other support already used in school
UNSURE WHETHER SEN/ EAL	<p>Investigate possible reasons for the pupil’s lack of progress:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Investigate further and monitor strategies used, effectiveness of any school interventions and progress through NASSEA or Bell Foundation EAL assessment frameworks ● Refer for Specialist advice from Specialist Advisory Teacher for English as an Additional Language via the Early Help form.
SEN NEEDS in addition to EAL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Continue to provide EAL friendly strategies and follow the SEND Code of Practice when reviewing IEPs ● Refer for specialist advice, if required, using the Early Help form (insert link)

Further information on English as an Additional Language and a link to Distinguishing the difference SEN or EAL? An Effective Step-by -Step Procedure for Identifying the Learning Needs of EAL Pupils. Causing concern from Birmingham Advisory and Support service can be found on the Bell Foundation website EAL Programme

<https://www.bell-foundation.org.uk/eal-programme/guidance/diversity-of-learners-who-use-english-as-an-additional-language/learners-with-special-educational-needs-or-disabilities/>

Translation Services

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