Rivers International School

English as an Additional Language (EAL) Policy.

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Rationale

Rivers International Primary School welcomes children from diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds. Some of these children speak very little, or no English.

As English is the language of instruction, we have developed a flexible programme of learning to enable these children to gradually access the curriculum and engage in all social and enrichment activities at the school at their own pace.

On arrival at Rivers International School, children are assessed on their level of English and placed in an appropriate stage of the EAL programme. This might be in the beginners Phonics Station, in a small group withdrawn several times from class, or in the mainstream class but with regular support and monitoring by the EAL and classroom teachers.

English is taught in individual or small group sessions, in a safe, stress- free environment.
We consider the needs of each child with the aim of building self-confidence and the ability to communicate in English in addition to their first or second language.
We know that the first language is important in the acquisition of an additional language.

Learning a New Language

We know that children learn English more effectively when they:

- Feel comfortable and safe in a relaxed environment.
- Make connections between languages they already know and the new language.

We also know that:

- Basic social language can take 1 -2 years to acquire.
- Complex academic language can take 5 -7 years.

Aims :

- To develop each child's proficiency in English to enable them to effectively participate in all areas of the curriculum.

- To develop the confidence and skills necessary to become fully integrated in the social life of the school.
- To provide support for the social and emotional needs of EAL learners.
- To support class teachers with differentiation in class work.

Language Levels of EAL Learners

Following consultation between EAL and class teachers, EAL students move out of the programme when their language skills allow them to fully participate in classroom activities.
Most of the children who follow our EAL programme are beginner learners or complete beginners. When these children reach an intermediate level / transition stage (determined through assessment by the NASSEA Assessment Framework Overview) they move out of the EAL support group.

As a guide to determine this, we take into account the levels listed below:

Beginner learners

New arrivals or learners in the early stages of English acquisition progress at different rates according to their educational background and the effectiveness of the support they receive.

Intermediate learners

When we refer to 'Intermediate' learners, as a general rule, we are talking about EAL learners who have been learning English for between two and five years.

Advanced learners

Advanced learners are defined as pupils who have had all or most of their school education in English but whose productive skills may still show distinctive features relating to their mother tongue or previous language background.

The EAL Programme Lower School

For the four year olds that are just joining Reception and are new to English, the aim is to keep the child in class as much as possible as we feel that it is most important to their wellbeing for them to feel comfortable and safe in their new environment. EAL support focuses on acclimatising the learner to the classroom and environment, with the emphasis on class vocabulary and the ability to express basic needs.

In reception, Year 1 and 2, the children who require extra English support are placed in an EAL 'Phonics station'. This group meets every day during the Early Years Phonics sessions and follows the Letterland EAL guideline. Focus in these sessions is on letter sounds and vocabulary. The group setting allows for plenty of communication and as they are a set group, it is a familiar and safe environment.

In-Class Support

Children in the Early Years who are just starting school and those whose level of English is approaching the norm of the mainstream classroom are monitored and supported in class once or twice a week. The EAL teacher works in specific lessons with the classroom teacher to support the children in developing successful learning strategies.

The EAL Programme: Middle and Upper school

Children enter the school at different stages and ages. Our EAL strategy has to be flexible to accommodate their needs. We are mindful of their wellbeing, fears and restrictions imposed by cultural backgrounds. We aim to put them at their ease and help them enjoy their new environment.

Each child has two EAL sessions per week. Survival language and basic sentence structure form the basis of the initial lessons, along with phonics, conversation, games and role-play to encourage and build self-confidence in using English.
In the early stages of language learning, the emphasis is on listening and speaking skills, before moving on to grammar, reading and writing, all of which are taught using a variety of appealing resources. Children learn better when they are enjoying themselves.

From Year 3 to Year 7, the children also work with the Learning Village which provides targeted blended learning for English language-learners in schools where English is the language of instruction.
The Learning Village is designed to help teachers support EAL learners of every language background access the mainstream classroom. It helps learners understand everyday language in a programme that ranges from teaching learners the basics of classroom and real-world interaction to supporting them with curriculum content and phonics. Children are extremely enthusiastic and have access to the programme at home if they wish to continue learning after school.

Resources

In addition to the main teaching programmes, we have a variety of EAL resources that are available all week to support learning.

Monitoring and Assessment

When a new child arrives at Rivers International School and the class teacher and/or admissions show that the child may need EAL support, the EAL staff observe the child in class and have a short, friendly conversation (where possible) to gauge the child's knowledge of English.

Once a child has been flagged as needing EAL, an initial assessment is carried out to assess their level of English.
Each child is then grouped according to their ability / previous knowledge of English and placed on a programme of learning.

Although a child may no longer require direct EAL support, we continue to monitor their progress through SWST and/or other testing results.

The EAL and class teachers work closely together sharing information about projects in order to prepare learners and pre-teach vocabulary allowing EAL children to participate in classroom activities whenever possible. Experience has shown us that communication and collaboration with classmates in project work is essential for the acquisition and application of new vocabulary.

Evaluation and assessment are carried out continuously throughout the lessons via observations of the activities. By collecting and analysing work, by having conversations in small groups and during individual talks, we receive a broad overview of the child's development of the English language. Within the language domain, we assess the used vocabulary, pronunciation, spelling and punctuation, grammar and sentence structure and coherence of spoken and written text. Besides the class observations, for English, we use the Learning Village which provides a weekly report on the learners' progress.