



St Swithun's Prep School including EYFS ENGLISH AS AN ADDITIONAL LANGUAGE (EAL) POLICY

Policy History	
Reviewed	January 2026
Date of next Review	January 2028

This policy can be accessed on the school's website at www.stswithuns.com

This policy should be read in conjunction with:

- [Special Educational Needs \(SEND\) Policy](#)
- [Curriculum Policy](#)
- [Admissions Policy](#)

Values

At St Swithun's Prep School we recognise, respect and cherish the diverse backgrounds of all children. We value the knowledge and philosophical understanding of other languages, linguistic codes, countries and cultural heritage, which pupils with English as an additional language bring to school life.

Aims

In line with our aspirations for all children in the St Swithun's community, we want EAL pupils:

- to learn in a language rich environment.
- to access a broad, balanced & relevant curriculum.
- to be able to use English effectively and clearly for a range of audiences and purposes, in all school subjects.
- to participate easily in all aspects of school life (including sport, music, drama and extracurricular activities).
- to understand that multilingualism is a trait to be promoted and celebrated, and that diversity in language and culture enriches the community as a whole.

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to outline the School's approach to identifying and meeting the needs of pupils for whom English is an additional language (EAL).

Definition

'A pupil is recorded as having English as an additional language if she/he is exposed to a language at home that is known or believed to be other than English.' ([DfE, English proficiency of pupils with English as an additional language, February 2020](#))

Commented [SB1]: There should really be a person identified as having primary responsibility for EAL. If this is also the SENDCo, that is fine, but the absence of any identifiable person can lead to concern that there is not enough focus on these children's rights under the Equality Act

EAL pupils may be:

- Newly arrived from a foreign country and school;
- Newly arrived from a foreign country, but an English-speaking school;
- Born abroad, but moved to the UK at some point before starting school; or
- Born in the UK, but in a family where the main language is not English.

The vast majority of children identified as EAL at St Swithun's Prep fall into the third and fourth categories above, and are either completely fluent in English as well as one or more languages spoken within their family groups, or are approaching such complete fluency. There may, however, occasionally be some pupils whose English requires support for them to access aspects of the school's curricular and extra-curricular activities.

Commented [SB2]: aspects?

A pupil's level of proficiency in English is inversely proportional to the level of provision and / or support required. It is largely determined by which language(s) are regularly spoken at home, and the age at which the pupil enters the UK education system. We refer to the DfE's five-point scale to inform our judgements and outcomes of this referral are recorded in the EAL register:

Commented [SB3]: delete

Commented [SB4]: UK not English!

A: New to English: May use first language for learning and other purposes. May remain completely silent in the classroom. May be copying/repeating some words or phrases. May understand some everyday expressions in English but may have minimal or no literacy in English. Needs a considerable amount of EAL support.

B: Early acquisition: May follow day-to-day social communication in English and participate in learning activities with support. Beginning to use spoken English for social purposes. May understand simple instructions and can follow narrative/accounts with visual support. May have developed some skills in reading and writing. May have become familiar with some subject specific vocabulary. Still needs a significant amount of EAL support to access the curriculum.

C: Developing competence: May participate in learning activities with increasing independence. Able to express self orally in English, but structural inaccuracies are still apparent. Literacy will require ongoing support, particularly for understanding text and writing. May be able to follow abstract concepts and more complex written English. Requires ongoing EAL support to access the curriculum fully.

D: Competent: Oral English will be developing well, enabling successful engagement in activities across the curriculum. Can read and understand a wide variety of texts. Written English may lack complexity and contain occasional evidence of errors in structure. Needs some support to access subtle nuances of meaning, to refine English usage, and to develop abstract vocabulary. Needs some/occasional EAL support to access complex curriculum material and tasks.

E: Fluent: Can operate across the curriculum to a level of competence equivalent to that of a pupil who uses English as his/her first language. Operates without EAL support across the curriculum.

Roles and Responsibilities within the School.

The registration process identifies children for whom English is an additional language. The Registrar, Mrs Sara Mathieson, transfers any information which parents supply relating to EAL, to the teaching staff, Learning Support Assistants and SENDCo.

The SENDCo oversees the provision for pupils with EAL. Whilst EAL provision is managed within the same department as Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) ensuring effective oversight, consistency in monitoring, and clear lines of responsibility, the school recognises that EAL is not a SEND need and that pupils with EAL require provision that is distinct in purpose and approach.

All teaching staff retain full responsibility for ensuring that pupils with EAL can access the curriculum in every lesson.

Supporting EAL pupils in class

In line with maximising curriculum access for all children, staff:

- use appropriate teaching resources especially visual supports (such as posters, pictures, photographs, artefacts) and demonstration where appropriate.
- identify the language demands of the lessons and provide a range of opportunities for speaking and listening activities in English with peers and adults who can model good use of language.
- use repetition and alternative phrasing to support language development.
- provide, where possible, texts that reflect their level of proficiency.
- encourage children's immersion in play as a means of developing language, particularly in EYFS & early KS1.
- ensure vocabulary work covers the meanings of technical words and common key words, metaphors and idioms, particularly in older years.
- take account of the linguistic, cultural and religious backgrounds of all children.
- identify opportunities for pupils to access ICT to facilitate and reinforce learning.
- are positive about a pupil's language development, building self-esteem and confidence.

All staff recognise that:

- limited knowledge of English does not automatically reflect a lack of ability and that seeking assessment in a pupil's first language may be necessary to ascertain their underlying ability.
- the school places enormous value on linguistic, cultural and religious diversity present within the school community.
- it is important that children do not feel under pressure to speak until they feel confident.
- it takes time to become fluent, with a good command of the range of language needed for academic success, in an additional language.
- newly arrived young children need time to absorb English and there is a recognised "silent period" when children understand more English than they use- this will pass as their self-confidence is maintained and developed through increased familiarity in their new educational setting.
- English should not replace the home language. English is best learned in addition to the language skills already learned at home and the development of abstract language is significantly harder if this has not been acquired in their first language.

Commented [SB5]: Indeed it is proven that a child cannot acquire mastery in abstract language use in a second language if this has not been acquired in their first language!

Additional provision

Pupils who have a proficiency level of ‘new to English’ or ‘early acquisition’ are likely to require additional support. Pupils who are ‘developing competence’ or ‘competent’ on the proficiency scale may require some/occasional EAL support to access more complex curriculum material and tasks. Whilst this is coordinated via the SENDCo, Learning Support Assistants may deliver the support sessions, individually or in a small group.

There is a separate policy for SEND. As mentioned above, the school recognises that a pupil should not be regarded as having a learning difficulty solely because the language in which they are taught at School is different from the language which is, or has been, spoken at home. Most children for whom English is an additional language do not have a Special Educational Need. However, should such a need be identified the child has equal access to the school’s SEND provision.

An EAL register is maintained separately from the SEND register to ensure this distinction.

Ongoing assessment

EAL children are fully assessed in line with the school’s Assessment Policy. In addition to the initial information gained at the point of entry, we continue to monitor a child’s ‘best fit’ level of proficiency through observation and tracking of their expressive and receptive language. This continues until a child is deemed ‘fluent’ and able to operate without EAL support across the curriculum.

Review and development

EAL policy and provision are regularly reviewed. Provision is evaluated by:

- monitoring of classroom practice by the SENDCo and class teachers
- analysis of pupil data and assessment results

This policy has regard to the guidance issued by the Secretary of State and is in line with the Aims of the school.

St Swithun’s Prep School policies are approved, ratified and reviewed regularly by SLT, staff and the Governing Body in the light of statutory requirements.

January 2026	Joanne Copley	SENDCo & EAL Lead
	Liz Norris	Prep Head
Ratified by Governors February 2026	Dr S Bailey	Chair of Education Committee