



EAL Strategy



EAL (English as an Additional Language) pupils are those that are learning English, but already speak one or more other languages, although not necessarily fluently.

EAL learners benefit from the support they receive.

Providing EAL support, leads to the following benefits:

Increased academic achievement

When our pupils feel supported – and when they are helped to understand and use the language of the curriculum – they are more likely to achieve at the expected level (or above).

Higher self-esteem

A consequence of feeling supported and being properly included in lessons is higher self-esteem for the pupil.

Helping to eliminate discrimination

At Torre, we recognise that we have a legal obligation not to discriminate against any particular group of children. We put strategies in place to help EAL pupils to have equal opportunities to achieve the highest possible standards. EAL pupils will always be seen and treated as integral parts of our classrooms, not just additions to them. By doing this, we tackle any potential achievement gaps, and build life chances.

Different perspectives

Pupils from other countries bring different cultures and experiences to the classroom, which helps their peers to better understand other perspectives. This leads to everyone feeling safe and valued in the classroom, and diversity of all kinds being celebrated.

Positive home-school relationships

If parents feel that their children are being supported in school, they are likely to have a better relationship with us. This has potential academic benefits for our EAL children – their parents become more involved in their education, and help them to continue learning at home.

It is important to keep in mind that most EAL pupils *do* need our support, even if they appear to be fine. In general, children can become conversationally fluent in a second language in two to three years, but they can take four to eight years to catch up with monolinguals in academic contexts (Paradis et al., 2011).

What are the Barriers to Learning for EAL Pupils?

As educators, it is our goal – and responsibility – to break down any potential barriers to learning. EAL pupils often face barriers when they first join a school. At Torre, we have identified and, are aware of, the following potential barriers:

Learning the language

As well as acquiring vocabulary, picking up pronunciation, and understanding grammar, pupils also need to be able to learn *through* the language. This requires them to comprehend the language well enough that they can grasp new, complex concepts expressed through it. Then, they must be able to ask questions, analyse ideas, and use academic language (such as the passive tense and formal vocabulary). This can be extremely difficult for those whose grasp on a language is not yet very firm.

Developmental differences

Children who grow up bilingual or multilingual reach language development milestones in a slightly different way to monolingual children. They do meet the milestones, but only when you consider their speech in *both* their languages combined (Bialystok & Feng, 2011; Hoff et al., 2012). This is because they hear less of each language than monolingual children do – their time is split between two languages.

Stigma or misinformation

Because EAL pupils may not initially be able to communicate very well, some people may believe that they are less intelligent. They think that the pupils don't understand the concepts discussed in lessons, rather than simply the language they are discussed with. At Torre, we understand this is untrue – EAL pupils are often even more capable than monolingual pupils, because learning another language gives them cognitive advantages.

Misunderstandings about their behaviour and cultural norms

Cultural differences can lead to EAL pupils feeling confused and uncomfortable with the expectations of an English classroom. Teachers often don't realise that things they consider to be 'normal' are not commonplace for pupils from other countries. For example, in China, teachers are authority figures – there is little teacher-pupil interaction, and talking to the teacher is seen as daring (Wan, 2001; Zhang & Xu, 2007). As a result, it could make a pupil uneasy if you force them to interact with you and express their own thoughts and ideas.

A sense of discomfort leading to challenging behaviour

When pupils feel frustrated or embarrassed that they cannot understand or be understood, it may lead to them acting out in class. They might mean that they

disengage, misbehave, or simply refuse to do any work. This can have a huge effect on their ability to learn.

By being aware of these potential barriers to learning, we can better empathise with our pupils.

Effective teaching strategies are selected to achieve the best outcomes for our EAL learners.

EAL Teaching Strategies

To help our EAL pupils at Torre overcome the challenges that they face in the classroom, we use these **14 teaching strategies** as a guide for bilingual and multilingual pupils.

1. Use visual learning

For EAL pupils who are struggling to process spoken language, visual learning can be extremely helpful. We often use labelled images to illustrate our lessons, so that when we introduce new concepts, everyone understands what we're referring to. Our Learning Organisers have key images for pupils to refer to. Everyday items are labelled in the classroom.

Other ways to use visual learning are to use gestures and facial expressions to engage and aid our pupils. This has the additional advantage of benefitting non-EAL pupils too – multiple modalities give everyone maximal opportunities to increase their understanding.

2. Sit them near the front

So that our EAL pupils can better hear and see during the lesson, we may consider sitting them near the front of the classroom. We also consider who they are sitting next to: a native English speaker with a high attaining pupil (i.e. one who uses a wide vocabulary and complex sentence structures) will be a good language role model for those learning English.

3. Collaborative work

Working collaboratively increases pupils' engagement, and gives EAL pupils a chance to practise speaking in a less intimidating context. They may not be confident speaking out in front of the whole class, but might feel able to contribute to a small group discussion. As teachers, we choose peers who are supportive and good language role-models to be in a group with EAL pupils. This also helps to facilitate friendships, giving the pupils further opportunities to develop their language outside the classroom.

4. Adapt our teaching style

To enhance pupils' understanding of lessons, speaking slowly and pronouncing every syllable in every word is helpful. When we ask a question,

we give EAL pupils an extra three to five seconds to think before we call on them. They need this time to translate the question into their first language, think of the answer, and translate back – and it could help them to build up their courage.

As teachers, we are aware of phrases that might be particularly different for those trying to learn the language. Idioms (such as ‘that’s the last straw’ or ‘I’ll let you off the hook’) as well as slang and words that are specific to English-speaking cultures (think of ‘brolly’, ‘wellies’, or a ‘Sunday roast’) might need an explanation. This is another place where we could use pictures to help EAL pupils to understand.

We see ourselves as language teachers; thinking of ways that we can help our pupils to increase their progress. For example, we could have a ‘word of the day’ that could boost our pupils’ vocabulary, or regularly use synonyms in our teaching (e.g. ‘the climate – the weather – is very warm’). This not only clarifies the meaning of difficult words, but also widens pupils’ vocabulary, and teaches them which words are interchangeable.

Finally, we use sentence frames to scaffold our pupils’ responses. Frames such as ‘I disagree with what ____ said, because...’ show pupils how to structure formal, academic sentences. For younger children, we often have ‘who/what/where/when’ question words on display to support their learning.

5. Let them use their first language

It is become increasingly accepted that we don’t need to separate a learner’s languages to encourage fluency. In fact, their first language is a useful foundation to build on – it gives them an opportunity to compare words and sentence structures, and understand more quickly. In the early days of language-learning, the classroom can be extremely intimidating. Allowing EAL pupils with the same first language to speak it together can help them to relax, and engage with concepts at a higher level.

Additionally, if a pupil is struggling with the language, and unable to complete a written task that we have given the class, we let them to try it in their first language. This makes them feel included and less self-conscious.

Why use a pupil's first language?

Supports a positive attitude towards school and learning

Supports a better understanding of the curriculum

Helps learners to feel accepted and included in the school community

Gives pupils the chance to transfer decoding and inference skills between languages

Supports pupils to communicate their basic needs and understand school routine

Helps learners to build new knowledge on existing knowledge in their first language

Knowledge taught in the first language is retained by the pupil and can be transferred to English later, when they are more proficient



How can I use an EAL learner's first language to support them?

To support EAL learners who are new to English, you may consider using the following pointers:

Use their first language in the environment around them

Being aware of the basic needs of the child is a good place to start, just as you would with any pupil new to the school. Ensure that they understand where things are, such as the toilet, their drawer, seat and coat peg, and also who the adults they will be working with are. Providing pictures or labels with their first language on will support the pupil to know this information and also help them transition into a new education setting.

Using their first language alongside English to create bilingual resources means that EAL learners are exposed to both languages and, once they have mastered the English vocabulary, any first language resources can be removed.

Allow the pupil to use their first language, even during English lessons; letting them get their ideas down in their first language and then translating to English later removes the block of having to instantly translate during the writing process. Encourage them to bring in books in their first language to share with other pupils in the class. If they are able to, ask them to read some aloud to their peers to share their first language with the rest of the class. Be guided by the child and what they are comfortable with - some EAL learners may enjoy sharing with their peers and others may shy away from this.

Give praise and feedback in their first language

Learn how to say a few phrases in the pupil's first language to offer praise, recognition of effort and possibly even feedback. If you are not confident speaking the language, consider using a translation app on a tablet or other device; however, learning to say it yourself and communicating with the pupil will help to build your relationship and also demonstrate empathy as they will observe you working to learn a new language too. Companies can provide stickers and stampers in a variety of languages that you can use to provide praise, feedback and encouragement in an EAL learner's first language; using these in all children's books will help to make any EAL learner feel included and raise the profile of their home language with their classmates.

Use videos in their first language to support learning

Consider using videos in their first language to support learning; for example, if you are delivering a lesson on how shadows are formed, find a video that explains the process in the child's first language. This knowledge is still learnt and retained and once the child has developed their English vocabulary, they will be able to translate the concept without the need for it to be retaught in English.

Create bilingual resources

If you are supporting a pupil who is able to read in their first language, try translating resources into this alongside the original English text to provide them with a bilingual resource. You can use websites, such as Google Translate, to quickly and easily translate instructions or information on a sheet, subject-specific vocabulary or learning intentions and success criteria. This will help the learner to understand what they need to do in any given task or instruction. For younger children, you could create visual flashcards with pictures and bilingual text to help them learn key vocabulary.

6. Allow preparation before each lesson

If our EAL pupils are given the learning materials in advance – for example, an article to read, a link to a video that you will be watching in class, or a list of key terms and phrases – it increases the likelihood that they will understand the lesson. Their confidence will also be boosted. This often forms part of our 'Ready' approach to Home Learning.

7. Don't force them to talk

At Torre, we recognise the importance of understanding that language learners go through several stages on the path to fluency. They can often comprehend language – through listening and reading – before they can produce it themselves, through speaking and writing. We accept that it is normal for EAL pupils to go through a silent period, and let them speak when they feel confident to.

8. Learn about their name and their culture

At Torre we make an effort to get EAL pupils' names right, and encourage our pupils to do so too. This shows them that we respect their language and identity, and helps them to feel accepted. Similarly, we take time to learn exactly where they come from, and research the religion and culture in that area. This helps us to accommodate for our pupils' needs. For example, in Japanese culture it is preferential not to express opinions in public. Japanese pupils might, as a result, feel uncomfortable participating in debates and discussions. Additionally, in many East Asian and Middle Eastern cultures, eye contact is disrespectful. We don't force all our pupils to look us in the eye, and are aware of other cultural differences.

Any new EAL pupil to Torre, from Year 1-6 will be encouraged to complete an 'All About Me' booklet. [All About Me.docx](#)

9. Give feedback

Providing feedback, both positive and corrective, is extremely important. It shows the learner what they are doing right, building on their self-esteem, and gives them models for what they should improve. Strategies for giving feedback on **spoken language** may include:

- Repeating what the pupil has said, but with the correct sentence structure or pronunciation.
- Asking for clarification if we don't understand what they have said.
- Questioning whether they think the sentence is well-formed or not – for example, 'is that the right word order?'. Let them rephrase it themselves.
- Talking about how to structure similar sentences to the one the pupil said, without directly correcting them. This could help to preserve their self-esteem in front of the class.
- Praising them for good attempts at difficult structures, or trying something new, even if it isn't quite right. We understand that we don't have to feel the need to correct every error.

Strategies for giving feedback on **written language** may include:

- Acknowledging their effort and what they have done well.
- Giving acknowledgement for good content, even if there are grammar, punctuation or spelling errors.
- Pointing out their use of correct sentences in the wrong context. We try to explain which contexts they would use this structure in. For example, when they're writing instructions in a recipe, they would use command words. They would not tend to use them in a formal letter.
- Writing clear examples of structures that the learner is struggling with so that they can practise.

10. Understand that the child may act out

It can be tiring, frustrating, and sometimes embarrassing to feel that you are unable to communicate or understand what is going on in the classroom. As a result, EAL pupils might display challenging behaviour. By empathising with the challenges they are facing, recognising how well they are doing, and using effective techniques to deal with the behaviour, we can encourage them to keep trying.

11. Signpost learners to resources

Our pupils may not be aware of all the resources that are available to them. As well as age-appropriate dictionaries and thesauruses – and Google Translate – we introduce them to Simple English Wikipedia, Learn English Kids, and use websites like Twinkl with dedicated EAL resources. Appropriate websites are included within 'Learning Links' set up on our Chrome Books for pupils to access.

12. Communicate with home

If our pupils' parents understand what they are doing at school, it gives the pupils an advantage. We aim to ensure that we are communicating effectively with home by making letters clear and accessible. This means using short sentences, no jargon, and translating them into the parents' first language if necessary. We encourage them to come to parents' evenings.

13. Have regular EAL training

At Torre, our EAL leader offers or organises CPD for teachers to partake in EAL training. This might involve a short session where teachers share their experiences and recommendations for good practice. We may set time aside to research the latest resources and advice.

14. Use our assessment framework: 5 Stage Proficiency in English Scale

EAL learners' achievement is monitored and tracked.

5 Stage Proficiency in English Scale

New to English

A child may:

- Use first language for learning and other purposes.

- Remain silent in the classroom.

- Copy/repeat some words and phrases.

- Understand some everyday English expressions but have minimal or no English literacy.

- Follow day-to-day social communication in English.

- Begin to use spoken English for social purposes.

- Understand simple instructions and follow narrative/accounts with visual support.

- Develop some skills in reading and writing.

- Become familiar with some subject specific vocabulary.

A child at this stage needs significant support.

Early Acquisition

A child may;

- Participate in learning activities with increasing independence.

- Express themselves orally in English but structural inaccuracies are still apparent.

- Requires ongoing support in literacy, particularly for understanding text and writing.

- Follow abstract concepts and more complex written English.

A child at this stage requires support to access the curriculum fully.

Developing Competence

A child may:

Developing oral English well, allowing successful engagement in activities across the curriculum.

Read and understand a wide variety of text.

Written English may lack complexity.

Demonstrate evidence of errors in grammatical structure.

A child at this stage needs support to access subtle nuances of meaning, to refine English usage, and to develop abstract vocabulary.

Competent

A child at this stage can operate across the curriculum to a level of competence nearing to that of a pupil who uses English as his/her first language. They may still make grammatical errors and need support to develop their linguistic skills.

Fluent

A child at this stage can operate across the curriculum to a level of competence equivalent to that of a pupil who uses English as his/her first language.

If required, language interventions are set up to enable EAL pupils a greater opportunity to participate in structured conversations with adults and peers.

An EAL child who is new to Torre from Year 2-6, will have an Early English Language assessment to establish which stage they are working within.

[Early English Language Assessment - Child recording sheet.docx](#), [Early English Language Assessment - Child Visual Aids.docx](#), [Early English Language Assessment - Teacher recording sheet.docx](#)

Proficiency in English Scale

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/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

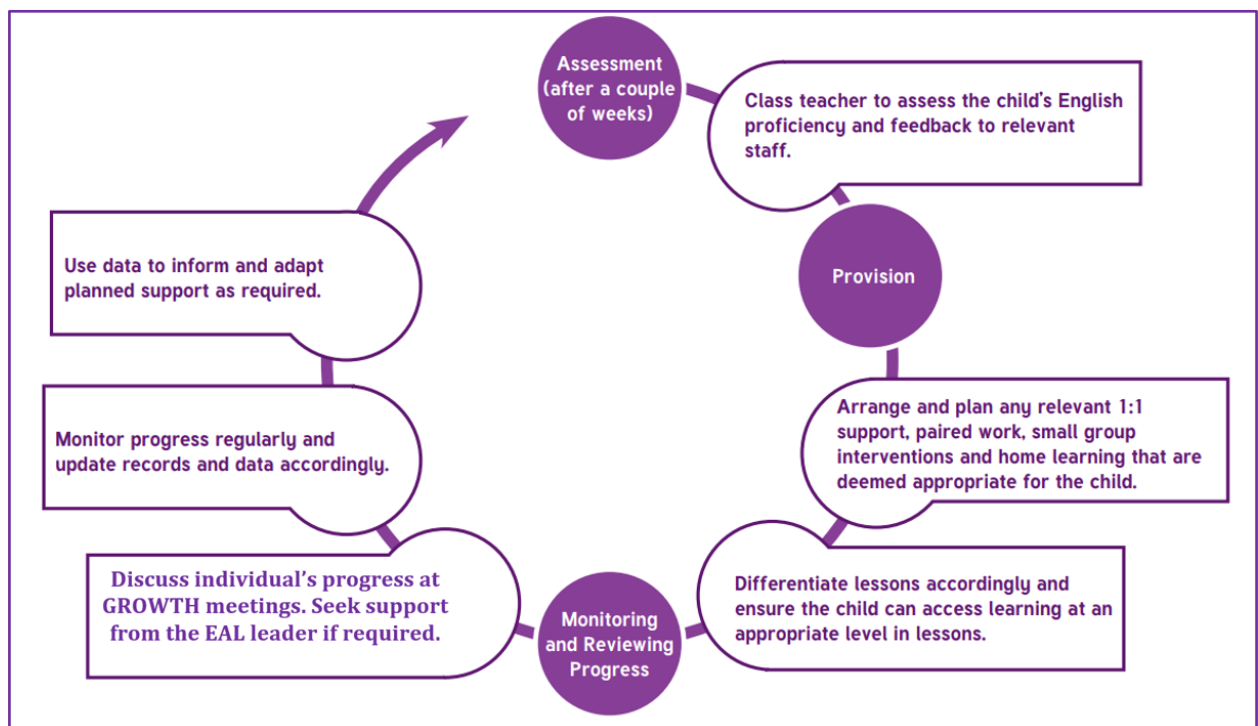
Competent

- 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

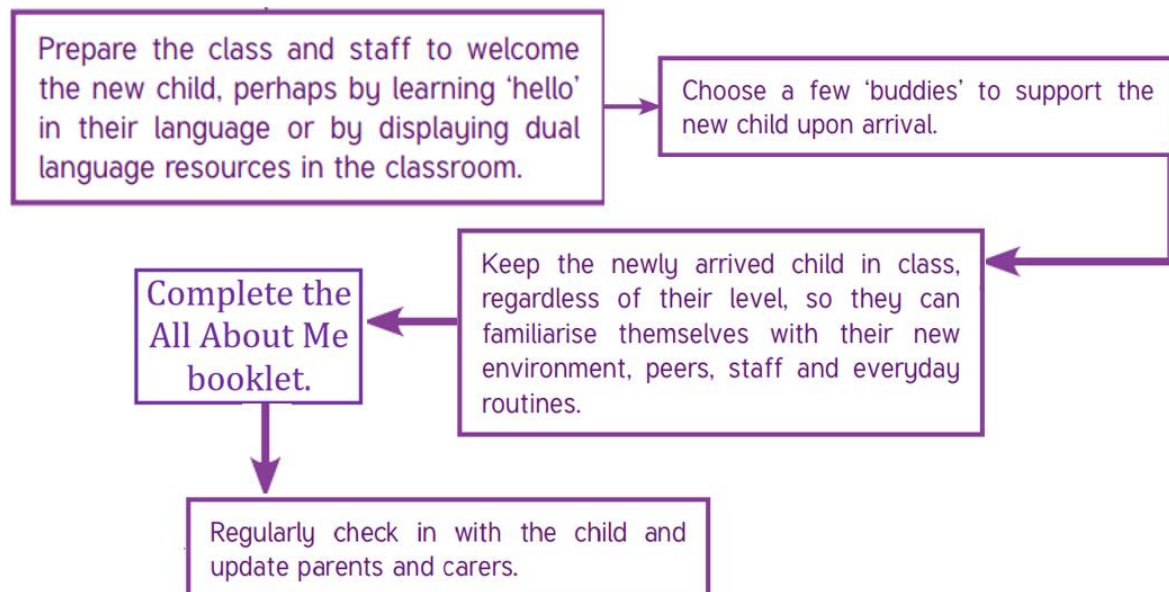
- Can operate across the curriculum to a level of competence that is equivalent to a pupil who uses English as his/her first language.
- Operates without EAL support across the curriculum.



EAL does not mean that a child has SEN. Children with EAL should not be assessed using p-scales and they should not be put on the SEN register unless they have been identified as having an additional need. However, it is important that children with EAL are carefully tracked and monitored so that any possible additional difficulties are not missed.

New arrivals to Torre with EAL settle quickly.

Prior to Arrival and Early Days



Every half term, EAL children are given the opportunity to get together with each other to form connections and socialise.