

EAL Support & Progression at Dunchurch Boughton CofE Infant Academy & Nursery



Rationale:

At Dunchurch Boughton CofE Infant Academy and Nursery, we are proud to be an inclusive school where every child is welcomed, valued, and nurtured. Some of our children join us with little or no English, and we recognise that language is central to their ability to learn, build friendships, and feel a true sense of belonging in our school community.

Our vision, 'roots to grow, wings to fly,' shapes the way we support our EAL learners:

- *Roots* — we provide the foundations of safety, routine, and key words to help children feel secure and grounded.
- *Wings* — we give children the tools, confidence, and opportunities to use English, enabling them to access the curriculum, develop independence, and flourish both academically and socially.

The EAL Progression Framework & Checklist ensures that all staff have a clear and consistent approach to supporting EAL children, while celebrating their progress and ensuring no child is ever left isolated.

Intent:

- To create an inclusive environment where all children feel they belong, regardless of their starting point in English.
- To provide a structured and supportive pathway of language development, from survival words to academic vocabulary.
- To equip staff with practical tools to ensure that inclusion is at the heart of daily classroom practice.

- To celebrate every step of progress so children can grow in confidence and reach their full potential.
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Implementation:

- On arrival, children's needs are assessed sensitively through observation and interaction, focusing on how they communicate and what they already understand.
 - Staff use the EAL Progression Checklist to identify priority words and phrases, ensuring a balance of survival language, social interaction, and academic vocabulary.
 - Daily routines, visuals, modelling, repetition, and play-based opportunities embed new language in inclusive classroom practice.
 - Teachers and TAs ensure children are supported by peers, promoting collaboration and social inclusion.
 - The checklist is used both as a planning tool and progress tracker:
 -  tick when a word is understood
 -  circle when a word is used independently
 - Record dates for evidence of progress
 - Children progress to the next stage when secure in most areas, while continuing to consolidate earlier vocabulary.
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Impact:

- EAL learners acquire the survival language needed to feel safe, supported, and included.
- Children grow in independence and confidence, forming friendships and accessing learning alongside peers.
- Staff can demonstrate and celebrate progress, ensuring accountability and consistency in inclusive practice.
- Over time, children move from **roots** (security, belonging, inclusion, survival language) to **wings** (confidence, academic language, and independence).
- Inclusion is strengthened across the school, ensuring that every child is able to participate fully and thrive as a member of the Dunchurch Boughton community.

Recognising Additional Needs:

We understand that while most children new to English will make progress through the stages of the EAL Progression Framework, some may not move forward at the expected pace. This may be due to additional learning needs rather than solely language acquisition.

- Progress is carefully monitored and reviewed by class teachers, TAs, and the SENCo.
- Where a child shows limited progress despite high-quality EAL support, we will consider whether there may be underlying Special Educational Needs and/or Disabilities (SEND).
- Our school SENCo, Hannah Owen, also oversees EAL in her role as Inclusion Lead, which ensures strong oversight and joined-up support for children.
- In such cases, children will be assessed in line with our SEND policy to ensure they receive the right support.
- Our commitment to inclusion means that no child is left behind — we work in partnership with families and outside agencies where needed to ensure every child has the opportunity to thrive.

Progression Framework:

The Golden Thread of EAL Support



- Visuals + Gestures + Modelling → always pair spoken English with a picture, object, or action.
- Peer buddies → children learn fastest from other children; pair them thoughtfully.
- Repetition and consistency → repeat words daily in real contexts (e.g., “toilet”, “drink”, “sit down”).
- Predictable routines → safety and structure reduce anxiety, making space for language learning.
- Celebrate small steps → a single new word is a success; build confidence first.
- Home language matters → value and use the child’s first language where possible (it supports English, not hinders it).
- Keep input simple, but rich → short, clear sentences with expressive tone, gesture, and real-life context.

Stage:	Target:	Staff role:	Support strategies:	Priority words/phrases:	Ready to progress key markers:
0- Settling and feeling safe	Child feels safe in school and starts to recognise routine words.	Focus on routines, gestures, visuals, buddy system.	Use a buddy (ideally same language if possible, otherwise a kind peer). Learn and use the child’s name correctly. Use gestures, pointing, visuals (photos/symbols for toilet, lunch, play).	• Hello / Goodbye • Toilet / Water • Sit / Stand / Come / Stop / Wait • Teacher / Miss / Sir (key adults’ names)	Child follows simple routine words with actions/gestures.

			Keep language simple: 1–2 words with gestures. Establish predictable routines (lining up, snack time, story time). Give the child time to observe without pressure to speak.		
1- Everyday survival language	Child communicates basic needs in class and around school.	Use visual aids, repeat and model words, reinforce attempts.	Use visual prompts for key words (toilet, water, help). Model and repeat survival phrases in context (“I need water”). Praise and reinforce attempts at English words (smiles, thumbs up). Pair spoken words with actions (e.g., show drinking	• Yes / No • Help / Finished / More • Hungry / Drink / Tired • Book / Pencil / Chair / Bag • Happy/ Sad/ Angry	Child uses single words/gestures to ask for needs and joins basic routines.

			when saying “drink”)		
2- Social interaction language	Child uses simple social words to interact with peers in play.	Encourage play-based interaction, model turn-taking language.	Set up structured play games (ball games, board games, turn-taking). Teach/model simple social scripts: “My turn / Your turn.” Use role-play toys (dolls, cars, blocks) to rehearse social words. Encourage peer buddies to invite child to join in. Use praise in the moment when the child uses social words.	• Friend / Play / Ball / Blocks / Doll / Car • My turn / Your turn • Please / Thank you / Sorry • Come here / Look	Child uses words/short phrases with peers and responds to simple social questions.
3- Classroom learning language (simple)	Child begins to join in class learning with key words and instructions.	Break down tasks, use actions, visuals, songs, repetition.	Give visual instructions (cards with “listen”, “write”, “draw”). Break down tasks into 1–2 steps only. Use choral repetition (whole class	• Look / Listen / Write / Draw / Colour / Cut / Stick • Numbers: 1–10 • Colours: red, blue, yellow,	Child follows simple instructions and joins in with group/class using words.

			says colours, numbers, days). Incorporate songs, chants, and rhymes for days of week, numbers, weather. Provide word banks and visual labels around classroom. Celebrate non-verbal participation (pointing to weather picture, showing number with fingers).	green, etc. • Shapes: circle, square, triangle • Days of week (Monday –Friday) • Weather : sun, rain, cloudy, cold, hot	
4- Expanding vocabulary and simple sentences	Child communicates in short phrases and simple sentences.	Scaffold with sentence frames and visuals, model full phrases.	Use sentence frames: “I like...”, “Can I have...?”, “This is a...”. Provide visuals + word cards for body parts, family, animals. Encourage the child to answer with a phrase rather than	• I want... / I like... / Can I have...? • This is a... / I can see... • Family: mum, dad, sister, brother • Body parts: head, hand, foot,	Child speaks in short sentences and answers simple questions with support.

			one word (e.g., not just “dog”, but “This is a dog”). Use pair work (e.g., “Ask your partner: What do you like?”). Correct gently by modelling back correctly (child: “I like cat”; adult: “Yes, you like the cat”).	eyes, ears - Animals : dog, cat, bird, fish - Question words: who, what, where	
5-Bridging academic language	Child uses curriculum-related language in sentences across subjects.	Teach tier 2 vocabulary explicitly and subject-specific words with visuals.	Pre-teach key vocabulary before lessons (maths: add, more; science: plant, grow). Use visual word banks and sentence starters during lessons. Encourage explanations with connectors (“because”, “but”, “so”).	- Conjunctions: because, but, so - Classroom actions: explain, describe, show, choose - Maths: add, take away, more, less, equal Subject-specific vocabulary linked to the topic being taught (see	Ongoing: Child uses subject vocabulary in context and expresses ideas in full sentences with scaffolding.

			Pair with supportive peers for group work. Use talk frames in lessons: “I think... because...”, “The answer is... so...”. Continue scaffolding but gradually increase independence.	<i>Curriculum knowledge organisers/ progression maps*)</i>	
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Across all stages: Use visuals everywhere (labels, flashcards, pictures), Keep instructions short and supported with actions, Encourage peer interaction daily, Give lots of praise and encouragement for small steps, Value the child’s home language alongside English (encourage bilingual peers, ask parents for key phrases).

Assessment Checklist:

Name: _____ Class: _____

D.O.B: _____ Starting date: _____

Stage 0 — Settling & Feeling Safe

- ☐ Understands **hello/goodbye**
 - ☐ Understands **toilet / water**
 - ☐ Understands routine instructions (**sit, stand, come, stop, wait**)
 - ☐ Recognises names of key adults
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Stage 1 — Everyday Survival Language

- ☐ Says **yes / no** appropriately
 - ☐ Asks for **help**
 - ☐ Uses **finished / more**
 - ☐ Names **basic needs** (hungry, drink, tired)
 - ☐ Names **classroom items** (pencil, book, chair, bag)
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Stage 2 — Social Interaction Language

- ☐ Uses **friend / play / ball / blocks / car / doll**
 - ☐ Says **my turn / your turn**
 - ☐ Uses **please / thank you / sorry**
 - ☐ Follows or uses **come here / look** with peers
 - ☐ Names emotions **sad/ happy/angry**
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Stage 3 — Classroom Learning Language (Simple)

- ☐ Follows instructions (**look, listen, write, draw, colour, cut, stick**)
 - ☐ Counts **1–10**
 - ☐ Names colours (**red, blue, yellow, green, etc.**)
 - ☐ Names shapes (**circle, square, triangle**)
 - ☐ Names days of week
 - ☐ Names weather words (**sun, rain, cloudy, hot, cold**)
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Stage 4 — Expanding Vocabulary & Simple Sentences

- ☐ Uses sentence frames (**I want... / I like... / Can I have...?**)
- ☐ Uses description frames (**This is a... / I can see...**)

- ☐ Names family members (mum, dad, sister, brother)
 - ☐ Names body parts (head, hand, foot, eyes, ears)
 - ☐ Names common animals (dog, cat, bird, fish)
 - ☐ Understands and uses **who, what, where** questions
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Stage 5 — Bridging to Academic Language

- ☐ Uses conjunctions (**because, but, so**)
 - ☐ Uses classroom actions (**explain, describe, show, choose**)
 - ☐ Uses maths words (**add, take away, more, less, equal**)
 - ☐ Uses subject-specific vocabulary linked to knowledge organisers
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How to use:

- Tick  when child understands a word/phrase.
- Circle  when child can say/use it independently.
- Date entries to show when milestones are met.
- Move to the next stage when most items are secure (not all need to be perfect).