

THE ALTERNATIVE SCHOOL GROUP LTD

EAL Policy (English as an Additional Language)



Learn
Progress
Achieve
Success

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Context:

The Alternative School is a non-denominational independent school for boys and girls aged from 5 -18 years who, for various reasons, are not accessing mainstream education. The school aims to provide an alternative experience for those young people in the area who are not attending mainstream provision and would have therefore left school without any qualifications. The school aims to take a more holistic approach and to support both the personal and educational needs of young people, helping them to overcome a wide range of barriers to learning, and to develop themselves into confident, articulate and well-rounded young individuals who leave school with a range of appropriate qualifications and a clear transition plan to further education and/or training.

Our Inspiration and Vision

This policy is developed in line with **Our Inspiration and Vision** that:

The Alternative School is inspired by a belief that we can make a difference to every young person we work with by listening to them and raising their aspirations. We believe in the potential of every young person, no matter who they are, what they have done or what they have been through.

Background:

Our pupils come from diverse backgrounds and may have a wide range of language skills.

- TAS caters for an increasing multilingual community
- TAS has an Open-Door Admissions policy, which means we welcome all young people to 'give us a trial' to see if we can meet their needs
- TAS does not discriminate on any grounds, previous history or special need that a young person may have

Our Aims:

As a school we aim to:

- Provide support to pupils with EAL needs
- Plan and teach lessons using learning styles most appropriate to EAL learners
- Provide an inclusive curriculum
- Complete our 10-point initial assessment with every new pupil in order to set targets appropriate for the individual
- Ensure pupils are making progress and are able to access the school curriculum
- Signpost to other agencies as appropriate
- Celebrate pupils' achievements in school as well as in extra-curricular activities

This policy aims to support our planning, organisation, teaching and assessment procedures and to support the use of resources and strategies, in order to meet the needs of pupils who have English as an Additional Language (EAL). Our goal is to promote language awareness and raise pupil attainment, progress and achievement.

What is EAL?

EAL means English as an Additional Language – when a pupil speaks a home language other than English.

We are committed to providing appropriate and personalised support for all our pupils, including those with EAL. We give all pupils the opportunity to improve their fluency in speaking, reading, writing and understanding English.

Definitions of an EAL Learner:

“First language is the language to which the child was initially exposed during early development and continues to use this language at home and in the community. If a child acquires English subsequent to early development then English is not their first language no matter how proficient in it they become” *DFES Guidance 2007*.

Bilingual Learner:

“Bilingual here is taken to mean all pupils who use or have access to more than one language at home or at school – it does not necessarily imply fluency in both or all languages” *DFES Guidance 2007*

Advanced Bilingual Learner:

“Advanced Bilingual learners are pupils who have had all or most of their school education in the UK and whose oral proficiency in English is usually indistinguishable from that of pupils with English as a first language, but whose writing may still show distinctive features related to the language background” *DCFS 2009*.

Planning and Teaching for pupils with EAL needs:

Teachers consider the needs of bilingual learners in their planning and teaching. Each pupil at TAS has an Individual Education Plan (IEP). The pupil’s IEP will highlight any areas in which the pupil needs additional support. Pupils are encouraged to work independently, in groups and as a whole class, as well as explore their learning styles. Pupils are encouraged to share languages with their peers.

Key Principles for pupils with EAL needs:

- Language is central to our identity. Therefore, the home language of all pupils and staff should be recognised and valued. Pupils are encouraged to maintain their home language and use it in the school environment.
- Where possible use other pupils/adults who use the same home language as pupils with EAL needs.
- Language develops best when used in purposeful contexts across the curriculum.
- Ensure that pupils with EAL needs are supported with good English-speaking role models.
- Use as many visual prompts as possible and communication friendly practices.

Strategies for working with pupils new to English:

- Provide lots of hands on experience so that pupils can learn the new language through participating in activities that support cognitive development.
- Teach pupils with limited English useful words and phrases to help them communicate.
- Provide additional visual support for pupils with EAL needs such as picture cards, visual timetables and posters.
- Have clear learning objectives in lessons and use appropriate resources.
- Display positive images of people from ethnic minorities.