

EAL Policy

Date last reviewed	1 September 2026
Committee Responsible	Governing Body
Designated member of staff	Richard Clements
Date of next review:	1 September 2027

This policy has been fully updated to align with the 2025/2026 Ofsted Inspection Framework, specifically addressing the standalone "Inclusion" evaluation area and the newest DfE 2026 guidance regarding AI translation software in schools.

Statement of Intent

In this policy, the term 'English as an Additional Language' (EAL) refers to students whose main language at home is a language other than English. This conforms strictly to the DfE definition of an EAL student: *any student who has been exposed to a language other than English during their early years and continues to be exposed to this language in the home or in the community.*

We celebrate the fact that many of our students speak more than one language. Some are from well-established communities, whilst others may be new to the language and culture of this country. In our school, the teaching and learning, achievements, attitudes, and well-being of all students are of paramount importance.

Students learning EAL have skills and knowledge about language similar to monolingual English-speaking students. Their underlying cognitive ability and capacity to participate in the curriculum may be significantly in advance of their communicative skills in English. While many students acquire day-to-day communicative English quite quickly, the level of academic language needed for deep study requires prolonged, structured support. Maintaining a home language is a distinct advantage for academic achievement, and because language is central to identity, the home languages of all students and staff are recognized, visible, and valued.

This policy has been established to ensure all students with EAL at Grey Court are given the best chance possible to reach their full potential by taking account of each student's life experiences and specific language proficiency.

Grey Court aims to:

- **Celebrate Plurality:** Welcome, celebrate, and reflect the cultural, linguistic, and educational experiences that students with EAL contribute to the school through a language-rich environment.
- **Guarantee Inclusion:** Ensure robust strategies and adaptive teaching structures are embedded so EAL students can fully access the National Curriculum alongside their peers.
- **Raise Academic Attainment:** Enable students with EAL to become confident, maintain their home languages, and acquire the deep academic literacy needed to reach their full potential.

Our strategic objectives are to:

- **Provide an Exemplary Welcome:** Maintain a nurturing induction process for newly arrived students and families, incorporating structural peer support (buddies) and targeted social spaces.
- **Conduct Holistic Assessments:** Gather accurate information regarding students biographical backgrounds, previous educational history, and linguistic baseline proficiencies in both English and their home language.

- **Empower the Workforce:** Equip teachers and support staff with the necessary skills, resources, and evidence-based adaptive teaching methods to address the specific language demands of their subjects.
- **Implement Tiered Interventions:** Track and monitor students progress systematically using a tiered structure, matching targeted support to their assessed stage of English acquisition.
- **Value Faith and Community Integration:** Ensure strong lines of communication with parents while proactively supporting diversity, intersectionality, and religious observances (e.g., providing prayer spaces and structural consideration during Ramadan).

1. Legal framework

This policy has due regard to all relevant legislation and statutory guidance including, but not limited to, the following:

- Childcare Act 2006
- Education Act 2002
- Education and Inspections Act 2006
- The Equality Act 2010 (including the Public Sector Equality Duty)
- The UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR)
- Data Protection Act 2018
- DfE 'The Equality Act and schools'
- DfE 'Promoting the education of looked after children and previously looked after children'
- DfE 'Mental health and wellbeing provision in schools'
- Ofsted State-Funded School Inspection Framework (Inclusion and Report Card Regulations)

This policy operates in conjunction with the following school policies:

- Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Policy
- Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) Policy
- Supporting students with Medical Conditions Policy
- Admissions Policy
- Looked After Children (LAC) Policy
- Anti-bullying and Behaviour Policies
- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy

2. Roles and responsibilities

The Governing Board will:

- Have overall structural and financial responsibility for the implementation and monitoring of this policy.
- Ensure the school effectively breaks down barriers to learning to meet the requirements of Ofsted's standalone *Inclusion* judgement area.

The Headteacher will be responsible for:

- Ensuring that those who teach or work with students with EAL are fully aware of their specific language needs and have classroom accommodations in place.
- Ensuring that teachers monitor, record, and review students linguistic progress across the academic year.
- Appointing a qualified member of staff to lead on the school's approach to EAL.
- Providing the EAL Lead with sufficient administrative support, resources, and dedicated non-contact time away from teaching.
- Ensuring school procedures, daily routines, and curriculum frameworks do not directly or indirectly discriminate against EAL students or families.
- Prioritizing staff and leader wellbeing when designing EAL workloads and intervention tracking.

The EAL Lead will be responsible for:

- Managing the pastoral and academic induction of newly arrived students.
- Conducting initial, multi-modal baseline language assessments and assigning a Stage of English Language Acquisition.
- Delivering targeted small-group interventions and offering specialised in-class coaching.
- Liaising with teaching staff, conducting learning walks, and disseminating high-impact adaptive teaching strategies.
- Informing Form Teachers and Learning Support Assistants (LSAs) about an incoming student's linguistic, educational, and cultural background.
- Overseeing the EAL Buddy System and coordinating the EAL student Lunch Club, and parents lunch club.
- Encouraging first-language maintenance.
- Developing trust-based relationships between the school, community groups, and EAL parents.
- Securing evidence-based CPD in collaboration with the Inclusion Lead on diversity, language acquisition, and intersectionality.
- Managing EAL assets such as dual-language texts, context cards, and translation technology.
- Working closely with the SENCO to establish a legally compliant, distinct boundary between EAL needs and SEND provisions.

All Staff Members will be responsible for:

- Recognizing that language development is a collective, whole-school responsibility.
- Incorporating both core curriculum content and EAL-specific linguistic objectives into their short- and medium-term planning.
- Ensuring all written tasks address the technical requirements of language (vocabulary, syntax) alongside subject meaning.
- Providing a consistently clear, accurate model of spoken and written English.
- Designing form-time or classroom activities (e.g., cultural spotlights, regional quizzes) that frame diversity as an educational opportunity for the entire class.

- Promptly identifying EAL students who are experiencing learning or emotional barriers, collaborating with Student Support Officers to flag wider safeguarding concerns (such as students missing education risks).

3. Support & Interventions

To align with the school's general inclusion architecture and target teaching resources effectively, EAL provision is arranged into three tiers:

Induction Class Framework (Tier 3)

Where a student is assessed as being "New to English" (Stages 1–2), support is provided via a six-week induction framework focusing on functional, survival, and everyday school English.

- To prevent isolation, support student wellbeing, and maintain high cognitive expectations, induction students remain fully integrated with their peers for practical and visual subjects, including PE, Art, Design & Technology, and Mathematics.
- As communicative competence increases, the student is smoothly transitioned into full-time mainstream classes with integrated Tier 2 support, whilst retaining regular touchpoints with their intervention teacher.
- Post 16 EAL provision: In the Sixth Form, where academic demands shift significantly towards advanced, independent analytical writing and subject-specific literature, EAL support transitions towards high-level academic literacy coaching. Subject teachers and tutors will work collaboratively with the EAL lead to scaffold complex source materials, support university or career pathway applications, and ensure students are familiar with formal examination access arrangements (such as the permitted use of bilingual translation dictionaries where eligible).

4. The 5 Stages of English Language Acquisition

Progress, lesson planning, and targets will be benchmarked against the recognized 5-stage model of language acquisition. Staff must use these stages to explicitly shape their classroom expectations and adaptive delivery:

1. Stage 1: New to English
 - *Characteristics:* May use a first language for learning or go through a 'silent period'. Can copy words, respond to non-verbal cues, and understand simple everyday expressions.
2. Stage 2: Early Acquisition
 - *Characteristics:* Can follow simple instructions and phrase short sentences. Standard grammatical errors are common. Vocabulary is expanding but heavily reliant on visual support.
3. Stage 3: Developing Competence

- *Characteristics:* Can communicate safely in everyday social situations. Writes longer sentences with growing grammatical accuracy, but struggles with abstract concepts and dense academic text.
- 4. Stage 4: Competent
 - *Characteristics:* Reads and writes independently with high competency. Can engage with the curriculum effectively but requires guidance with nuanced, culturally embedded, or highly technical subject vocabulary.
- 5. Stage 5: Fluent
 - *Characteristics:* Operates at a level equivalent to an native English-speaking peer across all curriculum areas. Fully bilingual.

5. Inclusion & Diversity

The school utilizes an asset-based strategy of inclusion, aligning with Ofsted's enhanced focus on breaking down systemic barriers:

- Cognitive Ability: There is an explicit understanding across the entire school that a developing command of English does not reflect a lack of cognitive ability, prior knowledge, or intelligence.
- Linguistic Pride: Appreciating and utilizing a student's ability to speak their first language is essential for building self-esteem and identity. Classrooms must be socially inclusive, and linguistic plurality should be actively visible.
- Balanced Integration: Where large groups of students speak the same home language, the school encourages a strategic balance—supporting home-language interaction to process difficult concepts, while structurally engineering wider integration to advance English fluency.
- Zero Tolerance for Discrimination: Staff receive ongoing diversity training to appreciate the complex identity intersection of our students. Any issues relating to linguistic or cultural discrimination will be addressed swiftly via the school's Behaviour and Diversity Policies.
- Restorative approach and EAL Integration. In keeping with Grey Court's restorative culture, any communication barriers or cultural misunderstandings involving EAL students will be approached through a non-judgemental, reflective framework. This ensures that language acquisition challenges are never conflated with behavioural issues, fostering an environment of mutual respect, listening, and supportive conflict resolution.

6. Initial assessments

On entry to the school, a holistic and welcoming data-gathering process is initiated with the family:

- Information is gathered regarding the student's linguistic background (competence in home languages), previous educational history, and family/biographical background.

- The EAL Lead conducts a timely initial assessment to gauge the students' English reading, writing, speaking, and listening abilities.
- This assessment is carried out informally and sensitively to ensure the student does not feel isolated, tested, or inferior. Where possible, their proficiency in their home language is also reviewed to screen for wider educational strengths or hidden learning needs.
- Completed assessments are logged on the school system. Mainstream teachers, LSAs, and form tutors are granted immediate access to this data to proactively shape lesson plans, seating arrangements, and scaffolded resources.
- Parents and the student retain the right to view and discuss these profiles at any time.

7. Classroom practice & Scaffolding Strategies

Teachers must hold high expectations for all EAL students, utilizing the “Say less and stress, go slow and show” methodology alongside robust scaffolding strategies:

Communication Principles:

- Face-to-Face Engagement: Ensure you are positioned face-to-face and have explicitly gained the students attention before delivering instructions.
- Say Less and Stress: Use short, simple, grammatically complete sentences. Use vocal modulation to make key keywords stand out.
- Go Slow and Show: Speak clearly, building deliberate pauses to allow for cognitive processing time without introducing competing language input. Accompany all speech with actions, gestures, concrete objects, and visual aids.

Scaffolding & Adaptive Teaching:

- Visual & Technical Support: Use dual-language textbooks, bilingual dictionaries, context cards, and translation tablets where available.
- Pre-empting Misconceptions: Explicitly plan for and clarify language barriers in subject contexts (e.g., explaining that '3 x 3' uses 'x' as a function, not the letter 'x').
- Structured Writing Output: Provide writing frames, sentence starters, vocabulary banks, and graphic organizers across all subjects.
- Collaborative Grouping: Utilize mixed-ability peer grouping. Ensure each group contains "expert" readers or language models. Allocate a trained peer buddy to guide the student through structured "ladder steps" of a task.
- Layers of Participation: Structuralize tasks so EAL students have low-stakes entry points (e.g., observing a process, sorting visual cards, or responding non-verbally) before progressing to verbal or written production.
- Environment: Ensure classroom displays actively feature dual-language keywords and reflect linguistic and cultural diversity.

Responsible Use of Translation Technology (2026 DfE Update):

- When using digital tools or AI to translate learning materials, staff must tailor the level of support to the students' explicit English proficiency and their native literacy level.
- Support should range from full-text translation (for beginners) to targeted crib sheets of core subject vocabulary (for advanced learners).
- To ensure accuracy and protect data privacy, staff must never input sensitive or identifiable student personal data into open-source translation tools. Translations must be reverse-checked or verified by a fluent speaker where possible.

8. Access to the curriculum

The language and learning demands of the National Curriculum must be systematically analysed during departmental planning. Subject leaders and teachers will ensure that:

- Learning intentions focus on both the subject content and the specific language structures required to express it.
- Schemes of work are adapted to accommodate developing levels of English without watering down the academic rigor or cognitive challenge of the topic.
- Opportunities for students to use their first language to discuss, process, and map complex concepts are intentionally designed into lessons.
- Assessment methods are flexible enough (e.g., practical demonstration, matching exercises, or oral explanations) to allow students to showcase their true knowledge in all subject areas, unhindered by language barriers
- Prior to any one-to-one or pull-out intervention session, the student is fully briefed on the specific learning objectives so they understand its connection to their core curriculum.

9. Distinction between EAL and SEND

Statutory Guidance Note

A child must not be regarded as having a learning difficulty or disability solely because the language or form of language of their home is different from the language in which they are taught. (Children and Families Act 2014 / SEND Code of Practice).

- The Core Distinction: EAL is a matter of language acquisition, not a cognitive learning difficulty. Most EAL students needing language support do not have SEND.
- Early Identification: A proportion of EAL students may have co-occurring SEND. It is vital to identify this early to ensure equal access to the school's SEND provision.
- Collaborative Assessment: If a teacher suspects a student has underlying SEND, investigations will be carried out jointly by the EAL Lead and the SENCO.
- First-Language Assessment: Where appropriate and available, the school will arrange for cognitive or diagnostic assessments to be conducted in the child's home language to differentiate accurately between a language barrier and a learning difficulty.

- Parental Partnership: Carers and parents of EAL/SEND students will be fully involved at every stage, with communication adapted to meet their linguistic needs.

10. Working with parents

Liaison with parents is vital to establishing a strong home-school partnership. To make our school accessible and welcoming for families, we will:

- Welcoming Environment: Maintain an open-door policy, providing an induction process that actively puts parents at ease and values their insights.
- Accessible Communications: Ensure all letters, school policies, and updates sent home are written in plain, clear English. Where necessary and available, high-priority school documents will be professionally translated.
- Interpreters & Translators: Provide professional or community interpreters where possible for parents' evenings, annual reviews, and transition meetings.
- Home Learning Partnership: Provide bilingual parent information booklets regarding homework routines and extracurricular opportunities where possible. Actively guide parents on how to support their child's learning at home by continuing to speak, read, and develop their home language.
- Inclusive School Events: Host regular whole-school multicultural evenings and community celebrations. Parents will be invited to share their expertise, volunteering for class activities, cooking, reading schemes, or school trips.
- Cultural Consideration: Calendar dates for school meetings, trips, and parent events will be planned sensitively to ensure they do not clash with major religious or community commitments.

11. Monitoring and review

The Headteacher and EAL Lead will review this policy on an annual basis. The review will take into careful account:

- Feedback from teaching practitioners and learning support assistants regarding the effectiveness of Tier 1, 2, and 3 provisions.
- Data trends regarding the progress and attainment of EAL student cohorts, keeping clear records of strategies and language support plans ready for Ofsted Report Card inspections.
- Any updates to national legislation, DfE guidance, or statutory requirements.