

Information for Parents of Bilingual Children

The functions and roles of EAL support staff

EAL Staff work collaboratively with schools' management, staff, parents and other agencies to support learning across the curriculum for bilingual pupils.

Learners who require support from the EAL Service

Total beginners in English

Bilingual speakers who speak well in their mother-tongue, but whose English language skills are at an earlier stage of development.

Bilingual speakers who show evidence of the following:

- spoken English skills hindered only by difficulties of pronunciation
- English adequate for most school situations but they display gaps in subject specific vocabulary and phrases
- non-native errors that can be recognised as a normal part of the developmental process of acquiring a second language

EAL staff work in a range of ways:

Strategic support

- Liaison with the school to identify barriers to the achievement of bilingual learners and to work with managers, teachers, other staff and parents to remove these barriers, as part of the process of school planning.
- Working directly with staff in a consultative or collaborative way to establish good practice in supporting bilingual learners.
- Advice on appropriate curriculum and topic development and on the use of resources.

Operational support

- Support class/subject teachers with assessment and planning for individual bilingual learners or groups of learners and undertake regular reviews of pupil progress with relevant staff. Where a bilingual pupil is thought to have an additional support need not linked to development in EAL, EAL staff are involved with other staff in the identification, planning and review process.
- Direct teaching of bilingual learners individually or in groups with native speakers of English.

Bilingual parents/carers should be involved in their child's learning at home and in schools. They can introduce and reinforce concepts in the home language that can be consolidated in English at school.

Research shows that a strong basis in the home language is a key factor in enhancing bilingual learners' achievement and self esteem. Bilingual parents/carers are often the only people available who are able to provide this kind of support.

Interpreters and translators are available from the EAL service. Please ask in your children's school if you need this service.