



St Mary's NS

**EAL (English as an
Additional Language)
Policy**

October 2025

Introductory Statement

The purpose of this policy is to provide guidelines to St Mary's NS school staff on the delivery of English as an additional language.

This policy will provide a basis of consistency and quality while allowing for flexibility in the delivery of EAL service.

The aim of our EAL policy is to ensure that pupils develop the competence to use English confidently as a means of learning across the range of curriculum areas.

The EAL policy should be read in conjunction with the school's language policy. Children with EAL needs are taught within the overall context of the Primary Language Curriculum with due regard to any additional and specific language needs created by their status as EAL pupils.

St Mary's NS is a Champion School of Sanctuary (since 2022) and was also involved in the TEAL project in conjunction with Mary Immaculate College from 2019-2024. We strive to be a school that is welcoming and inclusive. We also strive to respect and embrace the diverse cultures and experiences that may, at any time, be represented in our school.

We host a "Sanctuary Day" annually (since 2022) and encourage all children to talk about their customs, beliefs and traditions.

Rationale

At St Mary's NS, we acknowledge children's differing culture, backgrounds and language.

The teaching of children with EAL needs enables students whose primary language or language of the home is not English to develop their individual potential and integrate fully in an inclusive school, while respecting and valuing their mother tongues and cultural heritage.

Aims and Objectives

At St Mary's NS, we are committed to the provision of appropriate teaching and resources for pupils for whom English is an additional language and for raising the achievement of all pupils.

We aim to:

- Identify children who have English language needs.
- Identify and respond to the individual needs of each EAL learner.

- Integrate the EAL learners into all mainstream learning and activities of the school.
- Support EAL learners and their parents in adapting to a new culture while maintaining the connection with their own language and culture.

Role of SET

The primary role of SET is to promote the pupil's development of English language proficiency so that he or she can gain access to the curriculum. The pupil remains the responsibility of the mainstream class teacher who will work closely with the SET and in collaboration with parents / guardians and other relevant and involved personnel.

- Pupils requiring additional language support are identified through informal observation and discussion.
- Written consent from parents/guardians sought for assessment. Support will be provided by the HSCL Teacher for parents/guardians in the completion of the consent form if necessary.
- Pupils' proficiency in English using the assessment tasks from Primary School Assessment Kit/Up and Away.
- Support provided by SET for the child both in class and in small groups, as required.
- An appropriate language programme will be devised and delivered.
- The SET will record and monitors the pupil's progress.
- The SET will assess the pupil using the Primary School Assessment Kit (DES 2007) at the end of an agreed period of instruction.
- The HSCL Teacher will encourage the involvement of newcomer parents in school activities.
- Identification and assessment of pupils requiring language support.
- We determine the child's oral proficiency in English through teacher observations and initial assessments from the Up and Away programme. Following the child's entry into the school, the SET acts as a support for both the mainstream class teacher and the EAL pupil, ensuring that the pupil understands:
 - The routine of the school day.

- The rules of the classroom and the school.
- Procedures in the class and the wider school e.g. going to the toilet, going to the yard.

Approaches such as a 'Welcome pack', visual timetables, peer support (where possible with a child with same native language) and tours of the school for both the pupil and their family are available to help all newly arrived pupils settle in. Once the child has settled into their classroom, the SET will assess the child's proficiency in English using the Up and Away programme. The assessment tasks from the Up and Away programme test a pupil's proficiency across the four language skills (listening, speaking, reading and writing) and allow for a profile of the child's initial proficiency and an appropriate plan to be developed to meet the needs of the individual child. Children with EAL needs entering senior primary classes can sometimes experience a greater challenge, which can often act as an obstacle to them being fully integrated in their new school and/or fully accessing the school curriculum. In these cases, the SET team will collaborate with the class teacher to decide how best to support the child.

Organisation of Language Support in the School

- The proficiency of the EAL pupils' English language is assessed.
- SET team meet to discuss and arrange a timetable to ensure that all qualifying children are receiving language support.
- The planning for lesson content takes a themed approach month by month – this aims to develop the child's basic vocabulary through topics central to their own experiences (e.g., myself, my family etc.).
- The class teacher will inform his/her SET about forthcoming themes or units of work in different subject areas where additional help is required.
- Flexibility in the delivery of language support is required and various models of support are delivered, depending on the child's age, class and learning requirements.
- Children are usually withdrawn in small groups and English language support is based on their needs in relation to school work and social interactions required at the time. In-class support can also take place when appropriate.
- The class teacher will keep his/her SET informed about how the pupil is progressing in the class and coping with interaction with peers.
- Standardised testing: In reference to Circular 0138/2006: "Pupils may be excluded from the test if in the view of the school principal they have a learning or physical disability which would prevent them from attempting the

test, or in the case of newcomer pupils where their level of English is such that attempting such a test would be inappropriate.” It is generally accepted that pupils who have not reached level A1.3 of the Language proficiency benchmarks may not be tested with standardised tests.

Recording and Monitoring of Pupils’ Progress

The SET will record and monitor pupils progress by:

- Initial assessment (Up and away programme).
- Teacher observations.
- Teacher questioning.
- Pupils work samples.
- Meeting with class teacher to discuss progress both in the support setting and in the mainstream class.
- Parent/teacher meetings.
- End of year assessment/ progress assessment (Primary School Assessment Kit).
- Success Criteria.
- Progress of EAL pupils’ social skills and integration into St Mary’s NS.
- Progress of EAL pupils in accessing the curriculum.
- Feedback from principal, staff and parents.
- Resources.
- Up and Away programme by IILT.
- Primary School Assessment Kit by the Department of Education.
- Jolly Phonics Scheme/Sounds like Phonics.
- Aistear.
- Toys, props, costumes, role-play structures and items relating to the practical and interactive instruction and learning of the English language.
- Language games/apps/websites.
- Visual dictionary.

- Wide range of workbooks.
- Library books related to different countries, Dual language Books.
- Library books in different languages.

This is not a complete list as teacher discretion is allowed in the selection of resources.

Ratification and Review

This policy has been ratified by the Board of Management and will be reviewed every two years.

Signed: Dr. Betty Baker Chairperson Board of
Management

Date: 15 / Oct / 2025