Westfield Nursery School English as an Additional Language (EAL) Policy

Date policy last reviewed: May 2026

Signed by:

_____	**Headteacher**	**Date:** _____
_____	**Chair of governors**	**Date:** _____

May 2026
-Added percentage for Autumn 2025
-Updated current languages
-Updated date of review

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Statement of Intent
In this policy, the term 'English as an Additional Language' (EAL) refers to pupils whose language at home is a language other than English. Pupils' aptitude for English will vary, but some will face barriers to learning, accessing the curriculum, and reaching their full potential. Pupils with EAL must learn in and through another language. In addition, they may come from different cultural backgrounds to their peers and face different expectations of language, education, and learning. This policy has been established to ensure all pupils with EAL at the school are given the best chance possible to reach their full potential.

At Westfield Nursery we aim to deliver against our vision 'Inspired beginnings, outstanding future.'

Principles:
- Language develops best when used in purposeful contexts
- Staff have a crucial role in modelling the use of language
- All children have an entitlement to access the curriculum
- All languages, accents and cultures are valued

Background:
For beginner EAL learners it takes 1-2 years to become fluent in everyday spoken English.

Aims:
- To welcome the cultural, linguistic and educational experiences pupils with EAL contribute to the school
- To promote equality of opportunity for all learners for whom English is an additional language
- To ensure strategies are in place to support pupils with EAL
- To support children to use English confidently
- To provide a welcoming atmosphere for pupils with EAL
- To provide a language rich environment
- To equip teachers and support staff with the necessary skills, resources and knowledge to support pupils with EAL
- To maximise opportunities to model the use of English

Context of Our School
A growing number of children attend our setting have English as an Additional Language.
Autumn term 2020 30%
Autumn term 2021 34%
Autumn Term 2022 35%
Autumn Term 2023 42%
Autumn Term 2024 60%
Autumn Term 2025 44%
Currently 28 Languages (April 2026) Afrikaans, Albanian, Amharic, Arabic, Begali, Bulgarian, Czech, Dutch, Ewe, Hebrew, Farose, German, Gujarati, Hungarian, Igbo, Italian, Kurdish, Lithuanian, Punjabi, Pashto, Polish, Portuguese, Romanian, Spanish, Tamil, Ukrainian, Urdu and Zulu)

1. Legal Framework

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

- Childcare Act 2006
- Education Act 2002
- The UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR)
- Data Protection Act 2018
- DfE (2014) 'The Equality Act and schools'
- DfE (2018) 'Equality Act 2010: advice for schools'
- DfE (2018) 'Mental health and wellbeing provision in schools'

This policy should be read in conjunction with the following school policies:

- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Policy
- Admissions Policy
- Behaviour & Anti-bullying Policy

2. Roles and Responsibilities

The Governing Board will have overall responsibility for the implementation of this policy and naming a link governor (Inclusion) who conducts a monitoring visit and reports back to the full governing body

The Headteacher will be responsible for:

- Ensuring those who are teaching or working with pupils with EAL are aware of their needs and have arrangements in place to meet them
- Ensuring leaders monitor and review pupils' progress during the academic year
- Appointing a member of staff to lead on the school's approach to supporting pupils with EAL
- Providing the EAL lead with sufficient administrative support and time away from teaching to enable them to fulfil their responsibilities
- Ensuring procedures and policies for the day-to-day running of the school do not directly or indirectly discriminate against pupils with EAL
- Ensuring the approach to the curriculum includes how it is made accessible for pupils with EAL
- Securing and providing training to ensure staff development
- Acting as a consultant to staff on language-related issues

The Class Leaders will be responsible for:

- Conducting initial assessments of pupils with EAL
- Liaising with teaching staff on support for pupils with EAL
- Advising on strategies to support and include pupils with EAL and on ways to adapt work for pupils with EAL
- Developing relationships between the school and parents/ carers of pupils with EAL
- Working closely with the SENCO to develop individual transition plans tailored to the specific needs of children with additional needs

All staff members will be responsible for:

- Providing a good model of spoken English
- Ensuring the inclusion of pupils with EAL in their classrooms
- Identifying pupils with EAL who are experiencing difficulties and ensuring intervening measures are taken to aid the pupil

3. Support

- Starting somewhere new can be a worrying experience for anyone but may be an especially anxious time for children for whom English is an Additional Language. At Westfield bilingualism is viewed an asset
- Initially children with EAL may be shy and uncertain. They may take longer to settle in and to be ready to allow their parent/carer to leave. Sometimes asking a child who speaks the same language to be their friend or buddy can help. Adults learning a few words in the child's home language both values that language (and the child) and helps with communication
- Maintaining use of their home language aids conceptual development
- Learning a new language takes time and often an EAL child may listen and observe before joining in. This is called the latent period
- Whilst their home language is respected and valued children with EAL are encouraged to learn English. At Westfield there is a strong emphasis on spoken communication, and this benefits the child with EAL as words are learned and practised naturally and in context. Adults speak clearly and are experienced at 'modelling' the language as well as using visual clues and gestures to support language acquisition
- Children's intellectual ability and grasp of concepts are not judged by their use of English.
- We provide pupils with access to resources which are age appropriate, at an appropriate language level, and are linguistically and culturally appropriate
- Cultural and religious considerations are important as part of the child's identity. At Westfield we aim to ensure that every child feels valued. Children are encouraged to share and talk about their experiences from home. We endeavour to ensure that the resources we have on offer, such as clothes, books, cooking equipment etc. reflect the multicultural society we live in. A variety of religious and cultural festivals are celebrated throughout the year. Children are encouraged to recognise similarities and differences, within an ethos of respect. Liaison with parents/carers is vital. Parents/ carers often help us to further our understanding of different cultural and religious traditions and beliefs. A genuine concern for each child as an individual, results in a flexible approach and two-way communication
- Where required, we provide all staff with high-quality professional development to develop their knowledge and skills for teaching EAL learners
- We plan and teach specific theme and continuous provision related vocabulary using objects and pictures to reinforce understanding
- Provide learning environments rich in oral experiences
- Translation apps are used where required
- A 'Pocket Talk' device is available for translation purposes

4. Inclusion

The school utilises a strategy of inclusion, and the positive and effective use of language. The strategy includes the following principles:

- There is an understanding throughout the school, for both staff and pupils, that a limited knowledge of English does not reflect a lack of ability or knowledge. Appreciating a pupil's ability to speak their own first language is essential for building their confidence and self-esteem
- The language development of pupils is the responsibility of the entire school community
- Diversity will be valued, and classrooms will be socially inclusive
- Staff will be knowledgeable about pupils' abilities in English

- Where large groups of pupils with EAL speak the same language, the school encourages wider integration to promote inclusion and to improve pupils' understanding of English

5. Assessments

We use 'Learning English as an Additional Language (EAL) in the Early Years' assessment when children start as a baseline and to monitor and support language acquisition- see below

6. Classroom Practice

Teachers have high expectations of all pupils. Classroom environments are arranged to support independence so children can self-access what they need. Child-initiated activities are open-ended. Routines are embedded to support understanding for learners.

7. Working with Parents/ Carers

Liaison with parents/ carers is vital to the creation of a strong home and school partnership, which can ensure the development of pupils with EAL. To aid this partnership, the school will:

- Actively seek to put parents/ carers at ease by providing a welcoming environment
- Support transition into Nursery by asking what language parents/ carers speak at home, what language children speak at home and how much English children can speak (e.g. 1-2 words/ 3-4 words/ simple sentences)
- Ensure the language used in letters to parents is clear and straightforward
- Encourage parents/ carers to attend consultations and participate in school functions
- Use translation devices or buddying up parents/ carers where appropriate

8. Pupils with SEND

A child is not regarded to have SEND solely because their home language is different from the language in which they are taught at school. A proportion of pupils with EAL may have one or more types of SEND and it is imperative this is identified at an early stage. The school will ensure the parents/ carers of a pupil with SEND are not prevented from presenting their views throughout the process and are clearly informed at every stage

9. Monitoring and Review

The headteacher will review this policy on an annual basis, considering feedback from practitioners on the effectiveness of the identified support for transition and in light of changes to the law or statutory guidance, and will make any changes necessary.

We believe this policy will celebrate the rich diversity of language whilst support children's acquisition of English to enable them to access all learning opportunities.

The next scheduled review date is May 2027.

Westfield Nursery School
Learning English as an Additional Language (EAL) in the Early Years

Name……..Date of Birth……Date of entry……

	Listening, understanding and speaking	beginning	almost	competent	Observational notes
Pre stage 1	Will look at adult/child or resources whilst with parent/carer. After a while may allow parent to leave for 5 minutes if sitting with significant adult engaged in something, they enjoy such as the ipad; may have a short period without crying.				
Stage 1	Makes contact with another child in class. Joins in with other children but may not speak. Uses non-verbal gestures to indicate meaning. Watches carefully what other children are doing and often imitates them. May talk in first language.				
Stage 2	Listens attentively for short periods of time. Uses nonverbal gestures to respond to greetings/ questions about self. Joins in repeating language in story or rhyme. Echoes words and phrases of other children and adults. Uses one-word utterances (usually nouns).				
Stage 3	Begin to construct their own phrases and sentences using learnt words e.g. 'me bike garden'. Uses non-verbal gestures alongside speech to help clarify their meaning. Understand simple conversational English. Understand more words than they can express. Listen and respond to classroom instructions where there are non-verbal clues and illustrations. Copy talk that has been modelled and begins to use short phrases. Use pronunciation can generally be understood. Name a range of common objects in home/ school environment.				
Stage 4	Show increased confidence in using English and begin to				

	use simple sentences and extended phrases. Apply structures of their home language to English. Use English to initiate conversations, give simple instructions and convey a simple message. Can speak about matters of immediate interest in familiar settings using 4-5-word sentences. Can answer simple questions about self and objects. Uses some pronouns correctly e.g. she/he. Increasing confident in taking part in activities with other children through English. Uses some common prepositions correctly e.g. in, under, on, next to, behind, in front.				
Stage 5	Uses basic sentences with a widening range of vocabulary and some correct e.g. articles (a, the), plurals, possessive adjectives (her, his). Able to follow and understand what others say in a group discussion. Can speak confidently to individual friends and small groups about things that are of interest. Can ask questions to clarify understanding. Can describe an event/ personal experience using simple sentences.				
Stage 6	Can tell a familiar story in simple language and in correct sequence to a small group. Is beginning to use appropriate tenses in speaking. Uses connectives such as when or because to express relationships between ideas and sequences of events. Can make verbal inferences. Uses languages to solve problems aloud. Can explain why something happened or might have happened. Can justify predictions and decisions.				

	What you can do to help:
Pre-stage 1	Imagine what it must be like being left in a strange environment with a stranger who doesn't even speak your language. Use pictures or first language to comfort. Be flexible- the child may want a cuddle or may want nothing to do with you- try being absorbed in something that will attract them- look at interests in home school pack. They may slowly come to see what you have. If they speak to you in their home language maintain eye contact and show you are listening. Try to guess what they are saying or ask them to show you.
Stage 1	Look at the child, say the child's name first, remove distractions and praise good listening. During play observe, wait and listen, let the child take the lead. Take turns in conversation, listen more than you talk. Adapt level of language. Give thinking time. Use visual clues. Check understanding. Use a running commentary on behalf of yourself or the child. Use games which involve taking turns, introduce new activities, new concepts, encourage social language, provide motivation to listen and speak. Use games such as musical corners, duck duck goose, pairs and sound lotto. Use language in context, use visual clues whenever possible, pick up on non-verbal clues, do not pressure child to speak until confident but involve them in circle games, turn taking games etc. Children may need extra support with sharing until they develop the appropriate language. Reinforce phrases from routines such as 'Wash your hands'.
Stage 2	Use stories and songs with repetitive refrains and storylines, with pictures/ photos, alongside concrete visual support e.g. puppets or soft toys from other cultures including that of pupil in class, in dual language format, for retelling use gesture, body language and tone of voice. Extend language e.g. if the child says 'Bear,' the adult says, 'Cuddly bear.' Model language e.g. if the child says, 'Look doggies,' the adult says 'Yes I can see the dog.' Respond positively to all attempts at speaking English. Keep talking and involving the child in activities with other children and adults. Give extra time for child to respond. Provide opportunities for repetition for a few core songs/ rhymes and stories. Choose stories that have good visuals and a repeated refrain. Share on-going activities with parents/ carers to support concept development in mother tongue.
Stage 3	Comment, comment, comment, comment, question. Describe what the child is doing. Talk about the here and now. Recast. Child may say 'Teddy felled,' adult would say 'Yes teddy fell down.' Accept all that the child says and remodel without criticism. Respond positively to all attempts at speaking English.
Stage 4	Ensure the child has good/ correct language structures modelled during adult: child interactions. Model conventions of politeness in English. Emphasise descriptive language in conversations, play, stories. Ensure the child has access to a range of simple story books with some repetitive text. Plan for song/ rhyme time using props where possible. Maximise opportunities for social language. Use circle time to reinforce language structures- leave EAL child until they have heard some replies modelled. Provide opportunities for children who speak the same language to play and talk together. Think of which language structures can be reinforced through certain practical activities. Ensure children are exposed to a variety of language e.g. positional language, descriptive language, instructional language, narrative language, sequencing language and comparative language.
Stage 5	Provide lots of opportunities for talk where children can practice their English skills. Model how, who, when and where.
Stage 6	Ensure children experience more detailed/ correct vocabulary. Continue to plan and use more complex tense structures. Use open ended questions. Model conversational language with other children. Think about where you position children at group times.

(Based on NALDIC working paper 4 1998)