EAL children in Nursery School:
Promoting inclusion and learning

Before the pupil starts Nursery:
- Contact MDT: (01952 380828/ multicultural.development@telford.gov.uk). The team will be able to provide immediate support and guidance over the phone/ by email where needed, and signpost nurseries to appropriate resources. An initial assessment of children's linguistic skills in English and their first language will be arranged by an advisory teacher once the child is settled.
- At the initial interview, try to find out as much as possible about any previous kindergarten or nursery experience and the languages they understand/ speak at home.
- If parents/ carers are not confident in English, communication may be improved using Google Translate or other online translation.
- Parents/ carers may need additional information about the UK education system.
- Alert staff and children that the new child arrival will need additional help, and make sure everyone knows how to pronounce his/ her name and which country they come from.

When the pupil first starts Nursery:
- Talk to the other children about the fact that the new arrival speaks another language and is now learning English. Talk about ways that they can help the new child settle in.
- Newbury Park School have an excellent website for learning key words, greetings and responses, and numbers up to twelve, in many languages. This can also be used to teach the whole class words and simple phrases in all of the different languages represented in the classroom, and can help other children appreciate the new child's skills in speaking another language.
- If there are other pupils who share the new arrival's language (even in different year groups), use their skills to help him or her settle in.
- Make sure the child and parents know the name and face of an individual member of staff that s/he can go to with any questions or problems, and where they can be found, particularly those able to speak (even a little) of the child's first language.

In the longer term:
- Learn as much as possible about the languages, cultures and traditions of the communities represented in the Nursery.
- Encourage all children's interest in and respect for other cultures, faiths and languages. Explore similarities and differences between people in an open and positive way.
- Ensure that the Nursery reflects the cultures and languages of all its children. Where possible, ask parents to help. Provide dual language books for parents to share with their children (available for loan from MDT and the Library Service).
- Work with parents and/ or bilingual staff to establish a clear picture of children's understanding and skills in their first language – see EYFS guidance below.

Recommended strategies to promote additional language learning in EYFS:

Children new to a language will often go through a 'silent period' lasting a few weeks or a few months. This is an important stage, when they are absorbing the patterns and rhythms of the new language. The following approaches allow adults to support children during this period:

- Continuing talking even when children do not respond
- Persistent inclusion in groups
- Varied questioning
- Inclusion of other children as focus of conversation
- Use of first language
- Acceptance of non-verbal responses and of responses in first language
- Praise of even minimal effort
- Continuing to expect a response (non-verbal or verbal)
- Encouragement of child-to-child interaction
- Encouragement of language practice through story and role play

Other strategies:

- Use plenty of eye-contact and non-verbal communication to help the pupil feel at home.
- Involve him/ her in nursery organisation e.g. giving out snacks
- Use visuals constantly: objects, images, video; facial expression, gesture and mime. Encourage children to find visual ways of communicating.
- Make expectations of behaviour clear visually.
- Ensure the child sits near the front of any large group.
- Use a running commentary to provide language around children's activities.
- Share songs and rhymes in home language to reinforce similarities in patterns of languages and foster links with home.
- Use simple, clear English and be prepared to repeat/ re-phrase. Avoid unnaturally 'simplified' English and encourage other children to do the same.
- Emphasise the intonation and rhythm of English, and foster enjoyment of language patterns, rhymes and rhythms.
- Share plenty of books, especially 1-1 and in very small groups, to allow the child to absorb the story at their own rate. Encourage parents to share through first language at home.
- Give the child 'time out' from English, and space to think their own thoughts
- Encourage pupils to repeat greetings and key words in appropriate contexts
- Ask questions that check understanding non-verbally – yes/no, pointing, choosing, matching, drawing
- Provide stimulating, open-ended activities and situations that make children want to talk.
- Encourage outside play. Most children tend to be less inhibited in their language use in an outdoor environment and children commonly make at least five times as many utterances outdoors as they do inside.
- Accept the child's own oral responses and re-phrase or extend them, as appropriate
- Build in thinking time when asking questions to the whole class
- Encourage children who share the same first language to share that language together in play. Parents may be able to facilitate this
- It may be useful to talk to parents about the importance of maintaining children's first language, and using first language to support their child's learning. Useful parents' booklets in a variety of languages for Early Years are available at Reading with Your Child and Babcock Education.
- For further information and guidance, see http://www.naldic.org.uk/eal-teaching-and-learning/outline-guidance/early-years

Extract from EYFS Profile Handbook (2014)

3.2 Children for whom English is not their home language

The communication skills of children for whom English is not their home language are not all the same. These children will be at different stages of learning English and one or more other languages. Learning English as an additional language is not a special educational need. Practitioners need to find out as much as they can about a child's prior language experience and any education experienced elsewhere. Parents, as the first educators, are an important source of information.

Underpinning the EYFS Profile assessment is the understanding that language is central to our sense of identity and belonging to a community, and that linguistic diversity is a strength that is recognised and valued. Practitioners may need to help parents understand that a child's home language development will help them learn English.

Parents also need to know that it is perfectly acceptable, even desirable, for the child's home language to be used in the setting. Practitioners will need to observe the child over time and raise questions with the parents, and/or bilingual support assistants, to be confident about what the child knows and understands.

There are three aspects specific to the assessment of children for whom English is not their home language:

> development in their home language;
> development across areas of learning, assessed through their home language; and
> development of English.

Within the EYFS Profile, the ELGs for communication and language and for literacy must be assessed in relation to the child's competency in English. The remaining ELGs may be assessed in the context of any language – including the child's home language and English.

This has implications for provision. The principles of good practice for children learning English are the principles of good practice for all children. Children must have opportunities to engage in activities and first-hand experiences that do not depend solely on English for success, and where they can participate in ways that reveal what they know and can do in the security of their home language. For children to grow in confidence, and hence demonstrate their embedded learning, their environment must reflect their cultural and linguistic heritage and their learning be supported by a wide range of stimuli and experiences.

3.3 Children from minority groups

The ethnicities of children within a setting can be diverse, particularly in urban settings. The children may be refugees or asylum seekers, their families may have histories of persecution and trauma, or they may have had positive experiences but different cultural conventions governing behaviours and gender roles. This cultural background may also determine how early education is perceived, and how much experience of school or another Early Years setting the child may have had prior to their EYFS Profile assessment.

Children may come from settled communities or travel frequently. This latter consideration affects minority groups such as Gypsy, Roma and Traveller children as well as children with armed forces, embassy and global corporate backgrounds.

Practitioners must take particular care that the environment echoes children's own positive experiences. Children will be able to demonstrate their attainment when opportunities such as role play, cookery, celebrations and visits to special places or events are linked to their cultural experience. This will also be captured in the narrative relating to characteristics of learning, where the child's ability to begin their play and exploration with things which are familiar and build new knowledge and learning from this starting point, are expressly considered (Playing and exploring: using what they know in their play).

The relationship with parents is crucial to developing the practitioners' knowledge of the child and their ability to make an accurate assessment. Parents can help practitioners understand the different values that explain their child's responses to the environment and social situations. A child will find it easier to express their feelings and feel confident in their learning if practitioners listen and respond in ways that show understanding.