

# Language development: a focus on children with EAL

## CONTEXT AND QUERIES

1. How many at Christ the Sower have English as an additional language (EAL)? Depends how you calculate it, but it is likely to be about 40-50%.
2. If child is from an ethnic background but they have and always have spoken English at home, they are still classified as EAL!!
3. Which ability group should EAL children work in? Higher ability, where the best English speakers are!!
4. EAL children work best when they have withdrawal to support language acquisition. This is untrue, and only rarely and in short interventions has this been shown to work.
5. Should first language use in school be encouraged? Why not? It is part of who children are.
6. Should pupils be encouraged to speak English at home rather than their first language? No. One of the big problems is that the quality of spoken English at home might be poor. We need to honour the family home as the source of first language expertise. We have the expertise as English speakers, providing we pronounce it well!

## OUR PHILOSOPHICAL APPROACH

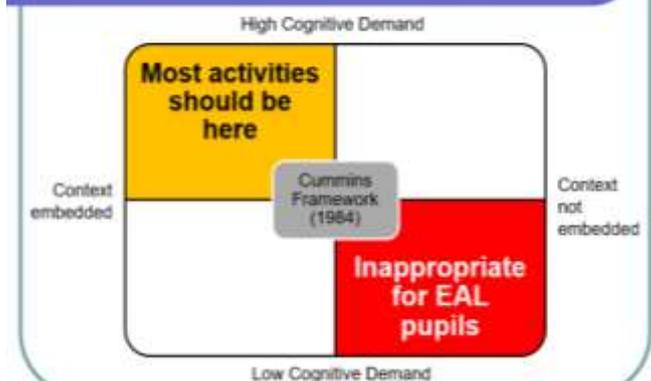
1. Are BME children all EAL? We should think of them and support them in that way.
2. Main challenge in EAL practice in England is NOT children new to English (NTE) but getting those who have “functioning” English to the level of complexity that their non-EAL peers have. So....
3. ...we need to differentiate between:
  - “beginners” yet to develop competence
  - “advanced” yet to develop full proficiency
4. Therefore, EAL children should be grouped with highest ability, not lowest ability, speakers of English.
5. Teacher talk must be clear, not rushed, with all consonants pronounced. This is the most effective teaching tool for EAL children, by far..
6. What is good for EAL children is good for ALL children: clarity of language, clarity of planning, clarity of expectations ALWAYS.

## Challenges for practitioners

### Beliefs and dispositions – do you.....?

|   |   |  |
|---|---|--|
| ...think of learners in terms of what they could become       | ↔ | ...think of learners in terms of what they can't do                                    |
| ...focus less on content and more on “uncovering the subject” | ↔ | ...believe that the classroom is for content delivery                                  |
| ...reflect on your classroom pedagogy                         | ↔ | ...consider EAL pupils need to “start over” and bring little of value to the classroom |
| ...think of the culturally diverse classroom as a resource    | ↔ | ...think of EAL pupils as language deficient   |

## Challenges for practitioners



## NEWLY ARRIVED CHILDREN

1. Any child takes at least 2 weeks to settle into new environment
2. Pupils with EAL often experience a “silent period” during initial stages of learning English
3. Children arriving with No/limited English take much longer.
4. Confident buddy
5. Support and advice to teachers
6. Adapted NASSEA assessment
7. Phonics ...? Not yet!

## ROLE OF EAL SPECIALISTS

1. Offering advice for teachers.
2. Supporting children who are finding different aspects of their learning a challenge. For some it can be to talk, joining in with circles, putting their hand up to answer or ask a question, etc...
3. As children go further up the school, the language becomes a challenge, so we can pre-tutor selected children, go through key vocabulary, and talk about the topic using pictures to help them. These are the sort of interventions that Ranbir can support with, on occasion.
4. It is also possible to lead groups developing speaking and listening skills.

## CLASSROOM APPROACHES THAT WILL BEAR FRUIT

### *Focus on literate talk*

#### 1. Speaking frames – *Sue Palmer*

- **Listen** – Children need opportunities to hear **literate language** as often as possible to become familiar with rhythms and patterns of sentences and of specific phrases and constructions linked to purpose
- **Imitate** – chance to produce literate language patterns from their own mouths; to know how more sophisticated vocabulary and phraseology feels and to respond physically to the ebb and flow of the well-constructed sentence.
- **Innovate** – opportunities to innovate on those patterns, expressing their own ideas and understanding through the medium of literate talk. See <T:\Staff Resources\English\speaking listening\Speaking Frames>



### *Focus on vocabulary building*

How do you develop children's vocabulary? What do you do to **teach** children NEW words? Students must use a word **between six and fourteen times** before they are capable of using it independently (Billmeyer, 2001), so they need multiple opportunities to interact with words.

- If you are using T4W in the Early Learning Phase, you can use VOCAB CHECK, with the traffic light colour coding for words.
- Make sure (as you would with other children) that you use new words in context – e.g. using sketch stories – 3 minutes using new vocab.
- Using the CLARIFY approach and all the strategies advocated for reading comprehension (Sept 2017 INSET) will also support EAL learners.
- Grammatical aspects that may require direct teaching include *he/she, irregular past tense, irregular plurals*

## RECORDING

Any provision in addition to normal classroom practice should be listed on the 6 weekly provision map. Keeping an eye on children using the adapted NASSEA forms will help you a. recognise and define the issue and b. give you strategies to teach to fix it!