Educate U

English as an Additional Language Policy

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English as an Additional Language Policy

1. Introduction

At Educate U, we believe that every child and young person deserves to feel safe, understood, valued and included within their school community.

We recognise that language is central to communication, relationships, learning and a sense of belonging. For pupils who have English as an Additional Language (EAL), developing confidence in English is an important part of accessing education, building relationships and participating fully in school life.

Educate U is an independent special school providing highly personalised education for children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND). Our approach is relational, trauma-informed and centred around understanding each pupil as an individual.

We recognise that pupils with EAL bring valuable linguistic, cultural and personal experiences to our school community. We celebrate these differences and recognise bilingualism and multilingualism as strengths.

We also understand that learning English takes time. Whilst some pupils may develop conversational English relatively quickly, the language required to understand complex concepts, access academic learning and express detailed ideas can take considerably longer to develop.

Our responsibility is to ensure that pupils are supported to develop their English language skills whilst continuing to access a broad, balanced and appropriately challenging curriculum.

For pupils with both EAL and SEND, we recognise that language acquisition and additional learning or communication needs may interact. Support must therefore be carefully planned to ensure that pupils' needs are understood and addressed appropriately.

Above all, our aim is to ensure that every pupil feels that they belong, that their voice matters and that they have the opportunity to achieve their potential.

2. Aims

- This policy aims to:

- Ensure that pupils with EAL feel welcomed, safe, valued and included within Educate U.
- Recognise and celebrate the linguistic and cultural diversity of pupils and their families.
- Ensure that pupils with EAL have equitable access to the curriculum, therapeutic provision and wider school opportunities.
- Develop pupils' confidence and competence in understanding, speaking, reading and writing English.
- Ensure that language barriers do not prevent pupils from demonstrating their knowledge, skills and abilities.
- Identify and respond appropriately to the individual needs of pupils with both EAL and SEND.
- Provide consistent, effective classroom strategies that support language acquisition and learning.
- Promote positive relationships and effective communication between school and home.
- Support pupils to develop independence, confidence and communication skills in preparation for adulthood.
- Monitor language development and educational progress to ensure that provision remains appropriate and effective.

3. School Context

Educate U provides specialist education for children and young people with a range of special educational needs, including social, emotional and mental health needs, autism, communication difficulties and additional learning needs from age 5-18.

Our pupils benefit from small teaching groups, personalised learning, therapeutic support and a nurturing environment where positive relationships are central to our practice.

We recognise that pupils joining Educate U may have different linguistic, cultural and educational backgrounds.

Where a pupil has English as an Additional Language, the Executive Headteacher and SENCO will work collaboratively with the pupil, their family, teaching staff and relevant professionals to identify appropriate support during the admissions and transition process.

Support will be personalised and informed by the pupil's:

- Home language and linguistic background.
- Previous educational experiences.
- English language proficiency.
- Communication strengths and needs.
- Identified special educational needs.

- EHCP outcomes and specified provision.
- Emotional wellbeing and individual circumstances.

EAL provision will be integrated into the pupil's wider educational programme rather than treated as a separate or isolated area of learning.

4. EAL and Special Educational Needs

Educate U recognises that having English as an Additional Language does not, in itself, constitute a special educational need.

It is important that staff distinguish between difficulties associated with acquiring an additional language and those arising from an identified learning, communication or developmental need.

A pupil's proficiency in English must not be used in isolation to make judgements about their cognitive ability, learning potential or special educational needs.

Where a pupil has both EAL and SEND, staff will:

- Consider the pupil's communication and language abilities across all languages they use, wherever possible.
- Work collaboratively with the SENCO, teaching staff, Speech and Language Therapists and other relevant professionals.
- Ensure that assessments take account of language proficiency and communication needs.
- Use practical, visual and non-verbal approaches where appropriate to enable pupils to demonstrate their understanding.
- Consider the impact of sensory processing, emotional regulation, processing speed and working memory on language acquisition.
- Ensure that support for EAL complements the provision identified within the pupil's EHCP.
- Avoid assuming that difficulties with understanding or expressing English necessarily indicate an additional learning difficulty.

Where concerns arise regarding a pupil's language development, these will be considered holistically, taking account of their linguistic background, previous educational experiences and identified needs.

5. Admissions, Transition and Initial Assessment

We recognise that starting a new school can be a significant experience for any pupil, particularly where there are additional language, communication or emotional needs.

Our transition process aims to ensure that pupils and their families feel welcomed, informed and supported from the outset.

Where a pupil with EAL joins Educate U, information will be gathered to develop an understanding of their language and communication needs.

This may include:

- Languages spoken and understood at home.
- Confidence in speaking, listening, reading and writing English.
- Literacy and communication skills in their home language, where known.
- Previous educational experiences, including any disrupted schooling.
- Communication preferences and identified SEND needs.
- Cultural considerations relevant to the pupil's education and wellbeing.
- Family views and aspirations.

Where appropriate, an initial assessment of English language proficiency will be undertaken using a suitable EAL assessment framework.

This assessment will inform classroom planning, targeted support and the identification of individual language development priorities.

An EAL Pupil Profile may be developed alongside existing pupil information, including the EHCP, provision map and individual learning targets.

The profile will identify:

- Communication strengths.
- Areas requiring support.
- Effective classroom strategies.
- Key vocabulary and language priorities.
- Appropriate resources and adaptations.
- Arrangements for monitoring progress.

The profile will be shared with relevant staff to ensure a consistent approach.

6. Teaching and Learning

At Educate U, all teachers are responsible for supporting the development of language and communication across the curriculum.

We recognise that pupils learn most effectively when teaching is meaningful, appropriately challenging and accessible to their individual needs.

For pupils with EAL, teaching must provide opportunities to develop English language skills whilst ensuring that they can continue to engage with subject knowledge and concepts.

Staff will use a range of strategies, including:

- Clear, concise and consistent language.
- Visual timetables, symbols, pictures and practical demonstrations.
- Explicit teaching of key vocabulary.
- Repetition and revisiting of important language and concepts.
- Modelling of spoken and written language.
- Sentence starters, talk frames and writing frames.

- Bilingual resources and appropriate translation tools.
- Practical and multisensory learning opportunities.
- Additional processing and response time.
- Opportunities for paired and small-group learning.
- Appropriate use of technology to support language development.
- Regular opportunities to practise speaking and listening in meaningful contexts.

Staff will recognise that pupils may understand more than they are able to express verbally.

Teaching must therefore provide different ways for pupils to demonstrate their understanding, including practical activities, visual responses, matching, sequencing, demonstrations and alternative communication methods.

Pupils will be encouraged to use their home language where this supports understanding, learning and confidence.

7. Minimum Expectations for Classroom Practice

All teaching staff are expected to make appropriate adaptations to ensure that pupils with EAL can access learning and participate meaningfully.

As a minimum, staff will:

- Identify important vocabulary and language demands within lesson planning.
- Introduce and explain unfamiliar vocabulary using appropriate visual and practical supports.
- Provide clear instructions, broken down into manageable steps.
- Model language and demonstrate tasks before expecting independent responses.
- Allow appropriate processing time.
- Check understanding without relying solely on verbal questioning.
- Provide opportunities for pupils to rehearse and practise language.
- Use visual, practical and multisensory approaches to reinforce learning.
- Encourage participation without placing unnecessary pressure on pupils to speak.
- Provide appropriate scaffolding for reading, writing and communication tasks.
- Maintain high expectations for learning whilst adapting the level of language support provided.
- Review the effectiveness of strategies and make adjustments where necessary.

Language support must be purposeful and should promote increasing confidence and independence over time.

Staff must avoid unnecessarily simplifying curriculum content where a pupil's difficulty relates primarily to language rather than their understanding of the subject.

8. Trauma-Informed and Emotionally Supportive Practice

Educate U recognises that some pupils with EAL may have experienced significant transitions, changes in family circumstances, disrupted education or other challenging experiences.

However, we do not assume that pupils with EAL have experienced trauma. Our approach is always informed by the individual pupil's circumstances and needs.

Our trauma-informed practice places relationships, emotional safety, trust and understanding at the centre of learning.

Staff will:

- Prioritise positive relationships and a sense of belonging.
- Provide predictable routines and clear expectations.
- Create calm, supportive and accessible learning environments.
- Recognise that unfamiliar language and situations may increase anxiety.
- Allow pupils time to develop confidence before expecting extended verbal participation.
- Avoid drawing unnecessary attention to language differences.
- Recognise and celebrate progress in communication and engagement.
- Provide opportunities for pupils to express themselves through practical, creative and non-verbal approaches.
- Use appropriate emotional regulation strategies where needed.

We recognise that some pupils may initially communicate very little in English, particularly in unfamiliar situations.

Staff will respond sensitively whilst remaining alert to any additional communication or emotional needs requiring further assessment or support.

9. Developing Speaking, Listening, Reading and Writing

Language development is supported across all areas of the curriculum.

Speaking and Listening

Pupils will be provided with regular opportunities to develop confidence in understanding and using spoken English.

This may include structured conversations, practical activities, role play, paired learning, discussion and opportunities to rehearse vocabulary in meaningful contexts.

Reading

Staff will support pupils to develop vocabulary, comprehension and confidence in accessing written information.

Resources may include adapted texts, visual prompts, bilingual materials, explicit vocabulary teaching and appropriate reading interventions.

Writing

Pupils will be supported to develop written communication through modelling, sentence structures, vocabulary banks, writing frames and appropriately adapted activities.

Where pupils experience additional difficulties with handwriting, literacy or written expression, suitable alternatives and assistive technologies will be considered.

Communication Across the Curriculum

Language development will not be limited to English lessons.

Staff will identify opportunities to develop subject-specific vocabulary and communication skills across academic, vocational, therapeutic and practical learning experiences.

10. Use of Home Languages

Educate U values the languages spoken by pupils and their families.

We recognise that a pupil's home language is an important part of their identity, relationships and cultural background.

Knowledge and skills developed in a pupil's home language can support their understanding and acquisition of English.

Staff will:

- Encourage pupils to maintain and develop their home languages.
- Use bilingual resources where appropriate.
- Recognise and celebrate different languages and cultures.
- Encourage families to communicate with their children in the language they feel most confident using.
- Avoid discouraging pupils from using their home language to support understanding or communication.
- Recognise the importance of home language in maintaining family relationships and cultural identity.

Pupils will never be made to feel that speaking another language is a disadvantage.

11. Targeted Language Support and Interventions

Where assessment identifies that a pupil requires additional support to develop English language proficiency, appropriate targeted provision will be considered.

This may include:

- Small-group or individual language development activities.
- Pre-teaching and revisiting key vocabulary.
- Structured speaking and listening activities.
- Additional support with reading comprehension and written expression.
- Bilingual learning resources.

- Appropriate digital language-learning tools.
- Specialist advice or external support where required.

Interventions will be planned according to the pupil's individual needs and reviewed regularly.

Where a pupil also has identified speech, language or communication needs, EAL support will be coordinated with relevant SEND provision and therapeutic recommendations.

Targeted language support must not unnecessarily restrict access to the wider curriculum or opportunities for social interaction.

12. Assessment, Monitoring and Progress

Educate U recognises that progress in language acquisition is individual and may develop at different rates.

Progress must be considered in relation to each pupil's starting point, previous educational experiences, SEND profile and opportunities to use English.

Assessment will consider development in:

- Listening and understanding.
- Speaking and communication.
- Reading and comprehension.
- Writing and written expression.
- Use of vocabulary across different contexts.
- Confidence and participation.
- Independence in accessing learning.
- Ability to demonstrate knowledge and understanding.

Where appropriate, a recognised EAL assessment framework may be used to support assessment and monitoring.

Staff will recognise that progress may not always be demonstrated through written work or verbal recall.

For some pupils, progress may be evidenced through practical application, increasing comprehension, reduced reliance on adult support or greater confidence in unfamiliar situations.

Evidence may include:

- Teacher observations and assessments.
- Annotated examples of pupil work.
- Practical learning activities.
- Photographic evidence with appropriate learning annotations.
- Communication assessments.
- Pupil voice.

- Discussions with families and relevant professionals.

Progress will be reviewed through existing school assessment procedures, including termly Individual Education Plans, EHCP annual reviews and school reporting arrangements.

Where progress is limited, staff will review the effectiveness of provision and consider whether additional assessment or support is required.

13. Working with Parents and Carers

At Educate U, we recognise that positive relationships with families are essential to supporting pupils' education, wellbeing and development.

We value the knowledge that parents and carers have of their children and recognise their important role in supporting language development.

Where parents or carers have limited confidence communicating in English, the school will make appropriate arrangements to support meaningful communication.

This may include:

- Providing translated information where necessary and reasonably practicable.
- Arranging professional interpreters for important meetings.
- Using clear, accessible language.
- Avoiding unnecessary educational terminology.
- Providing opportunities for families to share information about their child's language and communication.
- Encouraging families to continue using their home language.
- Ensuring that parents and carers understand relevant school procedures and available support.

Professional interpreters should be used where accuracy, confidentiality or safeguarding considerations make this necessary.

Children and young people must not be relied upon to interpret sensitive or confidential information for adults.

We aim to ensure that all families feel included, listened to and able to participate fully in their child's education.

14. Cultural Awareness, Inclusion and Belonging

Educate U is committed to creating an inclusive school community where pupils and families feel respected and valued.

We recognise that language, culture and identity are closely connected and that pupils should feel proud of their backgrounds.

Staff will:

- Demonstrate respect for different languages, cultures and traditions.

- Ensure that curriculum materials reflect a diverse range of experiences and perspectives.
- Challenge discriminatory language, stereotypes and racism.
- Promote positive relationships and understanding between pupils.
- Recognise individual cultural considerations where these are relevant to learning and wellbeing.
- Ensure that pupils with EAL are included in school activities, educational visits and wider opportunities.

Pupils must not be treated differently or have their aspirations limited because English is not their first language.

15. Preparation for Adulthood and Post-16 Provision

Educate U recognises the importance of communication and language development in preparing young people for greater independence and life beyond school.

For pupils accessing Key Stage 4 and Post-16 provision, language support will be integrated into their individual educational pathways.

This may include developing confidence in:

- Communicating needs, preferences and opinions.
- Understanding instructions and information in everyday situations.
- Accessing qualifications and vocational learning.
- Participating in work experience and employment-related activities.
- Communicating appropriately in workplace environments.
- Understanding personal safety, rights and responsibilities.
- Accessing community services and opportunities.
- Developing independence in everyday communication.

Support will be personalised according to each young person's aspirations, identified needs and EHCP outcomes.

Where pupils undertake accredited qualifications, appropriate access arrangements and reasonable adjustments will be considered in accordance with awarding organisation requirements.

EAL alone does not automatically entitle a pupil to examination access arrangements. Any arrangements must reflect the relevant qualification rules and the pupil's established needs.

16. Roles and Responsibilities

Executive Headteacher

The Executive Headteacher has overall responsibility for ensuring that the school's approach to EAL is inclusive, effective and consistent with Educate U's values and statutory responsibilities.

SENCO

The SENCO will support the identification of individual needs, coordinate appropriate provision and ensure that EAL support complements identified SEND provision.

Heads of School

Heads of School will support the consistent implementation of this policy within their areas of responsibility and ensure that appropriate classroom adaptations are in place.

Teachers and Tutors

Teachers and tutors are responsible for planning accessible learning, identifying language demands, implementing appropriate strategies and monitoring progress.

Learning Support Staff

Learning support staff will implement agreed strategies, support communication and language development and provide feedback to teachers regarding pupil engagement and progress.

Therapeutic Professionals

Where appropriate, therapeutic professionals will provide specialist advice to support pupils who have both EAL and identified communication, sensory or developmental needs.

All staff share responsibility for creating an inclusive environment where pupils' linguistic backgrounds are respected and their communication needs are understood.

17. Staff Training and Professional Development

Educate U recognises that staff knowledge and confidence are important in ensuring effective support for pupils with EAL.

Where appropriate, professional development will support staff to understand:

- The stages of English language acquisition.
- The distinction between EAL and SEND.
- Effective classroom adaptations and language scaffolding.
- The use of visual, practical and bilingual resources.
- Culturally responsive and trauma-informed practice.
- Appropriate assessment and monitoring of language development.
- Effective communication with families.

Additional advice and training will be sought where the needs of individual pupils require more specialist knowledge.

18. Monitoring and Review

The Executive Headteacher and SENCO will oversee the implementation of this policy annually.

The effectiveness of EAL provision will be considered through:

- Pupil progress and assessment information.
- Review of individual support strategies and interventions.
- EHCP reviews and individual learning targets.
- Teaching and learning monitoring.
- Pupil and parent/carer feedback.
- Staff discussions and professional development needs.

Where monitoring identifies barriers to learning or participation, appropriate adjustments will be made.

This policy will be reviewed annually, or sooner where changes to legislation, statutory guidance or school practice make this necessary.

19. Related Policies

This policy should be read alongside:

- SEND Policy
- Curriculum Policy
- Teaching and Learning Policy
- Assessment Policy
- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Equality and Diversity Policy
- Admissions & Discharges Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- Accessibility Plan
- GDPR Policy
- Confidentiality Policy