

KEY STAGE 4 EXAM CLASSES FOR PUPILS WITH ENGLISH AS AN ADDITIONAL LANGUAGE

Generally, by the time EAL pupils reach Year 10, they will not be complete beginners.

Such pupils would generally fall into two groups:

- Pupils who have entered the British Education system in lower secondary or upper primary and will have already acquired a wide range of language skills and an understanding of our education system.
- Pupils who have recently arrived into the country but have studied English as a foreign language, in some cases up to 7 years. Often these pupils are reluctant to speak initially but their receptive language and understanding is greater than their reproductive English, misleading us into believing that they can't understand. Recent arrivals should have highly developed cognitive and literacy skills in their home language. This will enable them to carry out subject relevant research in their home language on the internet and use a dual language dictionary appropriately. As their confidence in English also improves they will be able to transfer knowledge and prior learning.

There will of course be exceptions to the rule!

Why should these pupils be in exam classes?

Recent legislation, particularly The Additional Support for Learning Act and the Equality Act 2010, reinforces bilingual learners' legal rights to full inclusion and access to mainstream education.

Research around the globe shows that the most effective way for pupils to acquire language is in class, where they are exposed to relevant, subject specific language which they can build on.

EAL learners should not automatically be placed in lower level or SEN groups.

Temporary lack of English does not mean lack of intelligence and pupils should be placed in groups according to their potential.

If not sure where to place a bilingual learner a mid-level class would be suitable in the interim.

Pupils will acquire good language skills if they are exposed to articulate and competent native speakers.

BILINGUAL LEARNERS ON A REDUCED TIMETABLE

Some EAL pupils may be on a reduced timetable, which means they have free periods during the week. Each school has different systems for managing this time but here are suggestions on how those free periods can be used to support the curriculum.

- **Consolidation of work** – giving pupils the time to go over work covered in class and an opportunity for more in-depth understanding.
- **Pre-teaching/pre-reading activities** - It is very helpful for EAL pupils to have access to materials which will cover the next topic/unit in class. This gives them an opportunity to look at key vocabulary/concepts and therefore have a greater understanding in class.
- **Homework activities / research / folio work** - Many EAL pupils don't have any support for English at home so the ability to do some of these activities at school is invaluable.

Pupils can either work independently or with support which can be individual, as part of a small group or with 6th formers who can be a mentor as part of their school service.

- **Internet** - there is a wealth of interactive language/maths activities on the internet which can be fun and educational. Pupils can also carry out subject specific research in their own language by changing the language options on Google. This is particularly useful for science and geography.