



NORTH BIRMINGHAM ACADEMY

ENGLISH AS AN ADDITIONAL LANGUAGE (EAL) POLICY

This Policy is concerned with bilingual learners (hereafter referred to as bilingual EAL learners) at North Birmingham Academy (NBA) who have a home language other than English and who are in the process of learning to use English as an additional language for educational purposes.

****Bilingual ... the term is currently used to refer to students who live in two languages, who have access to, or who need to use two or more languages at home and at school. It does not mean that they have fluency in both languages or that they are competent and literate in both languages (Cited in Hall, D 1995, - Assessing the Needs of Bilingual Students, London, Fulton).***

1. NBA aims for EAL provision

- To create a welcoming and supportive environment, which encourages EAL students to participate fully, in all areas of school life.
- To value and respect the cultural and linguistic identities of EAL students and use these to enrich the learning of all students.
- To develop the oral and literacy skills of EAL students so that they can understand and use English confidently and competently across the curriculum and maximise their potential in all areas of school life.

We believe that students learning English as an additional language are entitled to the full National Curriculum programmes of study and all teachers have a responsibility to develop the use of the English language within their subject context.

2. NBA achievement objectives

- To ensure that all bilingual EAL learners participate in and gain access to mainstream and National Curriculum provision.
- To support bilingual EAL learners in their acquisition of English language skills, across the curriculum.
- To ensure that bilingual EAL learners attain National Curriculum levels appropriate to their intellectual ability.
- To assess and monitor progress in the acquisition of English as an additional language for all bilingual EAL learners at secondary levels.
- To provide training for subject/class teachers in strategies that will address the needs of bilingual EAL learners.
- To develop home/school/community links.

3. Context

Bilingual EAL learners at NBA come from a range of ethnic backgrounds and have a variety of language and literacy backgrounds. Some students have arrived at school having had a certain amount of exposure to the English language and the local culture; others are newcomers to both. Some students have developed literacy skills in their home language; others are pre-literate. Some students have comparable schooling to their age equivalent peers; others may have experienced interrupted or no previous education.

4. EAL and SEN

Having a home language other than English is not a learning difficulty. Special Educational Needs and the needs of bilingual EAL learners are not identical neither are they mutually exclusive.

5. Governors

Governors have an obligation to take positive action to 'provide persons of a particular ethnic group with special access to facilities or services to meet the particular needs of that group'. (1976 Race Relations Act). Governors have a responsibility to meet the requirements of the 1944, 1981 and 1988 Education Acts. (See Statutory Framework Section 4).

6. Assessment/competency

It should be recognised that bilingual EAL learners can make rapid progress in acquiring English but also to be fully competent in the use of academic language for learning can take up to 10 years (**see Collier '97**). The level of competency (particularly of literacy) in the home language(s) directly affects the time taken to acquire English as an additional language. Careful assessment should be undertaken by EAL support staff to ensure that the learning needs of all bilingual EAL learners are met. Other assessment should comply with procedures used for all other academy students. Care should be taken to ensure that assessment is not culturally biased against students from particular ethnic groups or influenced by unconscious assumptions about relative abilities and characteristics of different ethnic groups. Care should also be taken when assessing bilingual EAL learners who might also have Special Educational Needs (SEN). The numbers of these students should be in the same proportion as found in the monolingual population.

7. Language, Learning and Progress

All students have curriculum learning needs. Bilingual EAL learners also have language learning needs. Language is best learned in a meaningful context - the mainstream classroom. Bilingual EAL learners should be encouraged, to use their home language in the learning environment. The richness of linguistic diversity should be celebrated through the curriculum. Knowledge and understanding of other cultures can be enhanced for indigenous students by drawing on the experiences of bilingual EAL learners and integrating it into the curriculum. The best progress in language learning is made when subject/class teachers and EAL support teachers work closely together and with the co-operation of the students themselves and their parents. It is evident that the progress of bilingual EAL learners is significantly influenced by school and community ethos and by teacher attitude and

expectation. It is therefore important that schools value and celebrate cultural and linguistic diversity.

8. Admission procedure

Parents requesting a place for their child are invited to interview during which an informal assessment of the student's English is made and the relevant background and cultural information is collected. When the student starts school, further bench mark testing takes place and, if appropriate, an interpreter will conduct a first language assessment. It is essential that a student's prior educational experience is noted. An individual student profile is subsequently put in place with appropriate targets.

Every EAL student participates in an Induction Programme of up to four weeks with a language focus on the classroom routine and school situation. It has been proven that students learn English most effectively by working alongside English speaking students and therefore, at the end of the Induction period, students start the transition to mainstream lessons. This is often a reduced timetable in the first instance with a gradual increase in lessons. Relevant data and information is distributed to teaching staff at this point.

9. Support:

Students continue to be monitored and supported by the EAL team in a variety of ways during their time in school. There are currently 80 students on the EAL register of which 53 receive TA support in lessons. The team also conducts small group literacy sessions and offers a lunchtime club. We recognise the importance of the role of parents and the need to communicate with them in their first language where appropriate and practical. The school is also supported on a weekly basis by the Refugee and Asylum Seekers Mentoring Team in Birmingham. We recognise that although students become conversationally fluent in 2 years, it will take a further 3-5 years at least for them to gain enough academic language to achieve their full potential within the classroom. Teaching staff need advice and guidance on strategies to support teaching and learning in the classroom relating to our EAL students and to produce differentiated resources.

10. Respect

We value and respect the first language of our EAL students and have a designated base (E12) providing a range of notices, posters, dual language texts and bilingual dictionaries. Where appropriate, students are entered for GCSE examinations in their mother tongue.

Approved by NBA Governors

Date of Next Review:

Lead Manager: