

English as an Additional Language (EAL) Policy

Introduction

Policy is concerned with EAL learners in St. Mary's who have a home language other than English and who are now learning primarily through English.

Context of School

- Our students come from a range of ethnic backgrounds.
- There are a variety of language and literacy backgrounds. The majority come to us with at least an elementary ability in English and an understanding of Irish culture. The majority have comparable schooling to their age-equivalent peers.
- The majority of our EAL learners have settled permanently in Dublin and it is their intention/hope to stay in Ireland.

Objectives

- To ensure all bilingual EAL learners participate in and gain access to mainstream and national curriculum provisions.
- To ensure EAL learners attain national curriculum levels appropriate to their intellectual ability.
- To access and monitor students' progress in acquisition of English.
- To accommodate social and learning needs to enable integration.
- To liaise with parents through the means of parent-teacher meetings and organise private meetings when appropriate.
- To develop resources – will develop linguistic skills and reinforce class learning as well as enrich their learning.

Statement of Intent

St. Mary's EAL department helps students integrate and access the national curriculum to reach their academic potential and aid their social and personal development. It is our intention to deliver this within the caring/pastoral role that is typical of St. Mary's.

Identification and Assessment

- All 1st year non-national students are assessed using the Oxford quick placement test.
- Support staff are aware that Special Education Needs ratios in EAL are similar to those in a mixed ability class – they will differentiate accordingly.

Curriculum Planning

- All subject teachers are responsible for the language development of students.
- Language is best learned in a meaningful context, so EAL teaching is closely linked to curriculum subjects.
- Students are encouraged to use their home language to translate their school learning and therefore understand their learning in a fuller capacity.

- As a team we acknowledge dates/days of significance in other cultures represented in the school as well as celebrating Cultural Awareness Day on the 16th of March.
- On an ongoing basis, the EAL team meet and assess progress and modes of teaching, adjusting accordingly (to meet students' needs effectively).

Conclusion

- To be fully competent in the use of academic language can take up to 10 years. Level of competency in home language directly affects time taken to acquire EAL.
- A wide range of cultures and linguistic backgrounds enriches the student population.
- The best progress in language learning is made when subject/class teachers and EAL teachers work closely together (and with the co-operation of students and their parents).
- It is evident that the progress of bilingual EAL learners is significantly influenced by school and community ethos and by teachers' attitudes and expectations. Therefore it is important that schools value and celebrate cultural and linguistic diversity.