



EAL POLICY



APRIL 2021

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> 1. Overview

Merrywood Education is a special independent school that caters for children with social, emotional and mental health needs. Our ethos is to provide children with additional needs the opportunity to achieve academically, socially, emotionally and behaviourally and therefore believe that the development of language and literacy skills is of the highest priority, as language is the main tool of learning and communication in all aspects of school life and the world beyond. We will support the additional needs of our children in a holistic and innovative learning environment. We celebrate children who are bi-lingual, and some multi-lingual children are able to participate fully in all areas of the curriculum and our schooling community. However, a number of children may join the school in various year groups from various parts of the world, for a variety of reasons and with a variety of levels of competence in English. These children are assessed upon entry with our NASSEA EAL Assessment tool. We also consider the background information gathered during the initial intake and other important factors that may impact on the child's learning and knowledge; e.g.

Proficiency and child achievement in first language

- Prior schooling experience
- Trauma due to other factors
- Health, physical and other characteristics that may impact learning
- Involvement of parents and carers
- Family and cultural values

Merrywood is an inclusive school, set up to remove barriers from a child's ability to learn, push them achieve personal success and ensure they feel like a valued member of our school, the community and society as a whole. Children learning English as an Additional Language are entitled to Merrywood's full curriculum. In Merrywood, the teaching and learning, achievements, attitudes and well-being of all our children are important. We encourage all children to achieve the highest possible standards and we do this through taking account of each child's life experiences and needs.

Children who are learning English as an additional language have skills and knowledge about language similar to monolingual English-speaking children. Their ability to participate in the full curriculum may be in advance of their communicative skills in English.

> 2. Aims / objectives

Merrywood is committed to making appropriate provision of teaching and resources for children for whom English is an additional language and for raising the achievement of ethnic minority children who are at risk from under-achievement. Merrywood will identify individual child's needs, recognise the skills they bring to school and ensure equality of access to our curriculum. The aim of Merrywood's EAL Policy is to ensure that children develop the competence to use English confidently as a means of learning across the range of curriculum areas.

The main aims are to ensure that all staff are able to:

- Support EAL learners and ethnic minority learners effectively in accessing and engaging in Merrywood's Curriculum.
- Identify and respond to the needs of children for whom English is an additional language;
- Raise the achievement of EAL and ethnic minority children and to promote ethnic, cultural and social diversity.

> 3. Strategies

At Merrywood we want every EAL child's experience to be a full immersion within the language and are taught with the existing children. EAL children will receive additional phonics, reading and handwriting sessions during the week.

Merrywood teachers take action to help children who are learning English as an additional language by various means.

Developing their spoken and written English by:

- ensuring that vocabulary work covers the technical as well as the everyday meaning of key words, metaphors and idioms;
- displaying key vocabulary;
- explaining how speaking and writing in English are structured for different purposes across a range of subjects;
- providing a range of reading materials (online and hard copy books) that highlight the different ways in which English is used;
- ensuring that there are effective opportunities for talking, and that talking is used to support writing;
- encouraging children to transfer their knowledge, skills and understanding of one language to another;
- building on children's experiences of language at home and in the wider community, so that their developing use of English and other languages support one another;

Ensuring access to Merrywood's curriculum and assessment by:

- using accessible texts and materials that suit children's ages and levels of learning;
- providing support through ICT, video or audio materials, dictionaries and translators, readers and amanuenses;
- using the home or first language where appropriate;
- setting targets in literacy for targeted children

3.1. Merrywood Curriculum access

All children at Merrywood follow our gap learning and accelerated core subject catch up sessions (delivered daily). Children with English as an additional language do not produce separate work, unless within a focused target intervention group.

We will, at times, withdraw children from lessons to receive EAL support in order to support those children who are targeted and in need of additional small group work.

3.2. Taking into consideration our children's accessibility due to special needs

Merrywood is proactive in removing barriers to learning, staff are trained in a variety of specialist areas and children have access to a vast amount of expertise of subjects from teachers. Play and wilderness learning play a big part in raising our children's confidence, self-esteem and ability to trust others.

Merrywood aims to increase and promote access for SEN children into mainstream secondary schools. We do this through working through our trauma informed practice, therapy, adapted curriculum and accelerated gap learning. We take into consideration a child's historical and current traumas, vulnerabilities and educational health care plans and special needs. All children have the opportunity to participate in after lunch time clubs, leisure and cultural activities, school visits and community functions.

> 4. Roles

4.1. EAL Lead

Lauren Hockey has overall responsibility for leading and managing EAL strategically across Merrywood. The role of the EAL lead is to discuss the induction of a newly arrived EAL child with appropriate teachers and staff to provide practical guidance on strategies of how to raise achievement.

After an initial assessment (NASSEA EAL Assessment tool) children will be assessed on the following scale:

1. New to English
2. Early acquisition
3. Developing competence
4. Competent
5. Fluent

Staffing levels will ensure that EAL pupils receive substantial individual support to make rapid progress in language and access all areas of the curriculum. EAL children's progress will be tracked throughout the school, in discussion with teachers and parents. This will take into consideration the therapeutic and communication needs of a child.

4.2. Merrywood staff are expected to:

- Promote a learning environment where children feel secure enough to use their newly acquired language skills.
- Acknowledge the importance of a child's home language(s) and cultural background, understanding any vulnerabilities that may be present from trauma's, family circumstances and/or Looked after children.
- Encourage and support the involvement of parents/carers in their children's education.
- Create a learning environment which promotes respect, co-operation and mutual support beneficial to all individuals and to not tolerate racist or biased attitudes and behaviour.
- Ensure children feel safe and at ease in the playground through the use of lunchtime clubs, exploration of nature and staff supervision.
- Value the contribution made by all children.
- Use teaching methods and styles that take account of the needs of EAL children from different ethnic groups.
- Ensure planning identifies the language demands of Merrywood's Curriculum and provides differentiated learning opportunities matched to EAL child's needs.

- Encourage and give opportunities to use formal written and spoken English as well as developing colloquial English.
- Use texts to help develop the structure of English and to provide opportunities for discussion.
- Provide supportive contexts for learning by ensuring that learning builds on previous knowledge and by using a range of strategies for scaffolding language and learning.
- Ensure groupings for EAL children provide opportunities to hear and participate with fluent and high achieving English speakers.
- Have high expectations of children but take into consideration the emotional difficulties children may be experiencing both at the school as a new environment, and society as a whole.
- Provide opportunities for speaking and listening for a range of purposes and audiences across the curriculum.
- Maximise opportunities to develop social and personal confidence.
- Use ICT to aid an EAL/EMA children's development and achievement.
- Use bilingual resources and teaching aids to develop an EAL child's understanding and confidence with language.
- Make ongoing assessments and keep a record of progress initially using, 'A Language in Common'.

> 5. Monitoring and evaluation

The EAL Lead uses all available assessment data to monitor and track progress of EAL/EMA children, initially through termly EAL assessments and teacher assessments. These results are used to track and target specific EAL/EMA children for the following term such as literacy support groups, language enrichment groups and conversational groups. Children's social, emotional and mental health needs will be assessed alongside their academic performance, to ensure the correct therapeutic support is being carried out to reach optimum academic performance. All assessments will be used for educational health care review at the end of the academic year.

This is achieved through:

- Collecting information about all EAL children, which includes basic background details including home language and stage of English language acquisition.
- Monitoring the progress of the EAL/ethnic minority children by analysing attainment data from termly teacher assessments.
- Using the data to set priorities and to strategically plan to meet the needs of groups of underachieving children.
- Monitoring of the use of funded support.
- Using feedback from schools, parents/carers, minority ethnic groups, Ofsted reports and other agencies.

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