



Guidelines to Support Bilingual Learners

Background

These guidelines have been drawn up following consultation through an EAL Steering Group comprising representatives of the EAL service, primary and secondary Head Teachers and the teaching unions. They have been advised by national legislation, Aberdeenshire Race Equality Policy and Guidelines, Aberdeenshire's Accessibility Strategy and HMLe quality indicators. They have also taken account of feedback from the questionnaire sent to all schools.

1. Introduction

- Aberdeenshire is home to an increasing number of families for whom English is not their first language. Therefore the number of bilingual children in schools and other educational establishments is growing and will continue to increase. More than 60 different languages are spoken.
- People who speak more than one language are described as bilingual. We acknowledge that English is their second or additional language. However the term bilingual does not imply an equal proficiency in two or more languages.
- Monitoring of ethnicity and race, which includes bilingual pupils is undertaken through the Aberdeenshire Education, Learning & Leisure Service admissions procedures and quality assurance processes.
- The acquisition of English as an additional language is best achieved through the normal activities of the classroom. Levels of English language acquisitions are monitored annually through information gathering for ScotExed.
- Supporting all learners including bilingual learners is the responsibility of all staff as part of the Education, Learning & Leisure approach to inclusive education. However, Aberdeenshire's peripatetic English as an Additional Language (EAL) Service can assist schools to support their bilingual learners.
- Aberdeenshire Community Learning and Development service provides ESOL (English for Speakers of other Languages) courses, and general support to live and work in Scotland, for family members and adults.

2. The Role of The School

In supporting bilingual pupils and their families schools are expected to:

- Adopt a whole school approach. School policy and practice should be informed by the authority staged procedures as outlined in Pathways to Policy and by HMLe quality indicators. Where there are large bilingual populations, support strategies should be taken forward through the Community School Network (CSN) development planning linking with other Aberdeenshire services and other agencies as appropriate. This should include the development of pastoral support. In the case of very young children, links should be made with pre school partners and other early years providers in the network.
- Welcome parents and their children by providing school information in an appropriate format. Ideally, you would do this for all pupils and examples of school information packs are on Arcadia. Core information translated into several languages and which can be

issued to parents is also available through Arcadia. Parents should also be made aware of the importance of maintaining their first language at home.

- Identify a member of the school staff to manage induction and to support and monitor pupil progress. In the nursery / primary school this will usually be the Head Teacher or member of the management team with a remit for pupil support. In the secondary school this is likely to be the senior manager responsible for pupil support.
- Draw up an induction programme to welcome and support the pupil, for example, peer support /buddy systems.
- Follow the advice for the enrolment of bilingual learners included in this pack. This will ensure that they and school staff are supported appropriately. The member of staff with responsibility for EAL issues should oversee the enrolment of bilingual pupils.
- Liaise with the EAL Service as part of a joint planned approach.
- Fully involve bilingual pupils in all classroom activities.
- Recognise the prior achievement of all children and their families and their contribution to school life and ethos.
- Familiarise all staff with these guidelines and address staff development through Aberdeenshire PDRS, PRTL (nursery staff) and CPD programmes.
- Ensure that an age appropriate placement is made in line with Authority procedures.
- Be aware of the availability of interpreters. Language Line is an instant telephone interpretation service for use in an emergency or for brief meetings. A Language Line training support pack is available from the Employee Development and Training Unit. An alternative to Language Line is Aberdeen City Translation Service.
- Be aware of the services offered by Community Learning & Development which includes a range of provision and support for families. In addition to the many ESOL classes provided by Community Learning & Development in all three areas of Aberdeenshire there are also drop in facilities where families can access advice from a variety of agencies as well as informal English tutorials.
- Arrange for the translation of information and materials specific to the pupil, taking into account any advice from the EAL Service.
- Ensure that antibullying and reporting of racist incidents policies are followed.
- Ensure that all pupils admitted to school from another country are being referred to the school nurse who will action health records and immunisation.
- Use the appropriate HMIE Quality Indicators to ensure equality of opportunity for bilingual pupils to access the curriculum.

3. Role of the EAL Service

In supporting pupils, families and schools this service may:

- Assist schools in developing a planned approach to induction and pupil support.
- Advise schools on pupil placement, teaching strategies, transitions, curriculum content and resources and assessment.
- Provide training and awareness raising sessions to school staff and other agencies through the Authority CPD programme.
- Provide support and advice to schools as they develop their capacity to manage and sustain continued improvement, with a particular focus on the progress and achievement of bilingual learners.
- Work with schools to ensure equality of opportunity for bilingual pupils to access the curriculum, for example, English Language support to pupils where appropriate, with reference to HMLe Quality Indicators for bilingual pupils.
- Provide team teaching support where appropriate.
- Further advise schools on multicultural education and race equality.
- Advise schools about Alternative Assessment Arrangements and where necessary, support schools in the preparation of pupils for specialist examinations which may be required for entrance to university.
- Work with schools to develop support programmes as appropriate for pupils referred to the service through the Authority staged procedures.
- Work with pre-school partner providers, schools, community school networks, colleagues in Community Learning and Development and other agencies to develop wider support for pupils and families within their local communities.
- Provide advice and training on the ScotExed returns on the levels of English Language Acquisition for Bilingual pupils.

4. Referral to the EAL service

- Referral procedures for this service are underpinned by:
 - Aberdeenshire Support for Learning: Pathways to Policy
 - Additional Support Needs legislation
 - Aberdeenshire Accessibility Strategy
 - HGIOS Quality Indicators for Schools
 - Aberdeenshire Admissions Procedure
 - Aberdeenshire Race Equality Policy and Guidelines
- EAL specialist staff can jointly assess with school staff the level of support required and arrange to meet with relevant staff and parents as appropriate. Where additional targeted support is agreed, over and above input by EAL staff an IEP (Individualised Educational Programme) should be drawn up jointly by school and EAL staff.
- At all stages EAL staff may require to undertake several assessments of pupils' language competence across a wide range of curricular areas.
- EAL input is subject to ongoing monitoring and annual review by relevant school and EAL staff.

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