



Chatham Nursery School

English as an additional language Policy

Mission statement

Our nursery school community is dedicated to teaching every child to be a happy, confident and independent learner. We create a caring, inclusive and enriching environment where each child feels safe, supported and valued.

Aims

This policy aims to outline the steps staff at the school/setting will take to support children for whom English is an additional language.

Our objective is to ensure consistent practice by all staff working with children with EAL. This policy will be used as part of the induction process for all staff and will be shared with the parents/carers of all EAL children prior to them taking up their place.

Ethos

At Chatham Nursery School, we are proud to be recognised as both a **Centre of Excellence for Inclusion** and a **School of Sanctuary**. We actively celebrate the rich diversity that families bring to our nursery and are committed to supporting each family in a way that respects and values their unique backgrounds.

We understand that many children joining our setting may already be developing one or more languages and are now beginning to acquire English. We embrace this multilingual journey by offering **extra space, time, patience, and support** to these children. Their skills in their home language are acknowledged and celebrated, as we believe this recognition fosters confidence and strengthens self-esteem.

We reassure parents that maintaining and developing their child's home language is not only beneficial but essential. We encourage families to engage in meaningful interactions in their home language, knowing this supports their child's overall development.

Parents are invited to share their language and cultural heritage with staff and children through visits, storytelling, and participation in nursery activities. To ease the transition into nursery life, we welcome families to provide key words and phrases in their home language, along with translations where possible.

All staff are equipped with iPads and use translation tools to enhance communication with families and children, ensuring that every voice is heard and understood.

How EAL Children Learn Best

Children learning English as an additional language benefit from multi-modal support that combines:

- **Visual Support:** Use of pictures, symbols, gestures, facial expressions, and real objects to reinforce meaning. Visual timetables, labelled resources, and illustrated instructions help children navigate routines and tasks.
- **Contextual Support:** Embedding language learning in meaningful, hands-on activities (e.g., cooking, role play, art). Providing clear routines and predictable structures to reduce cognitive load and support comprehension.
- **Linguistic Support:** Repetition, modelling, and scaffolding of key vocabulary and sentence structures. Opportunities for sustained language, scaffolding sentence starters, talk partners, and guided group work.

Valuing Home Languages and Cultural Identity

We celebrate the diversity of our nursery school by ensuring that children and families see and hear their home languages in the learning environment—through books, signs, greetings, and classroom displays.

Where possible, bilingual support is provided, by:

- Involving parents, carers, and bilingual staff in creating multilingual resources.
- Encouraging families to share their experiences, stories, songs, and traditions from their cultures.

This not only supports language development but also fosters inclusion, pride, and a sense of belonging at Chatham.

In Practice

At Chatham we support children for whom English is an additional language by:

- providing sufficient, well planned, interactive activities where speaking and listening has a high profile;
- being aware that children will often understand more than they are able to say, especially when supported with gesture, facial expression and other visual aids;
- pair EAL learners with peers who are more confident in English and empathetic. Encourage collaborative play and shared tasks to foster natural language development.
- lots of songs and nursery rhymes - repetitive and rhythmic language with matching actions to help children internalise sentence structures and vocabulary. Include songs in both English and children's home languages where possible.
- recognising the importance of children seeing and hearing their home languages, as well as English, in the learning environment. We include books in children's home languages alongside English books. Invite families to donate or recommend titles from their cultures.
- where possible maximising bilingual support (e.g. inviting parents/carers/bilingual teaching assistants to help make multilingual resources).
- Language Experience Approach - giving children many opportunities to participate in hands on activities, trips and visits (e.g., baking, nature walk).
- celebrate festivals and traditions from children's backgrounds. Encourage children and families to share stories, food, music, and clothing.

Assessment and Support for EAL Learners in Communication, Language & Literacy

In accordance with the EYFS Statutory Framework (September 2025), assessment of children's Communication and Language and Literacy skills is conducted in English, as this is the required language for statutory reporting and monitoring.

To support this, we use the **Wellcomm Screening Tool** to assess children's language development at key points throughout the year:

- Baseline assessment on entry
- Mid-year review
- End-of-year assessment

These assessments help us identify children who may benefit from additional support and inform our planning for targeted interventions.

Language Development Through Provision and Intervention

Language development is embedded within our **continuous provision** and supported through:

- **Language intervention groups** tailored to individual needs
- **Long-term curriculum maps** that plan for progressive language development across a child's time with us

- The **NELI Preschool Programme (Nuffield Early Language Intervention)**, which delivers structured vocabulary teaching over a 20-week period, focusing on oral language skills and early literacy foundations

Supporting Home Language and Identifying Needs

Where a child is assessed as having limited proficiency in English, we take a holistic approach to understanding their language development:

- If staff members speak the child's home language, they may engage with the child to explore their skills in that language.
- We work closely with parents/carers to gather insights into the child's language use at home and to determine whether there may be concerns about language delay rather than just second language acquisition.

Referral and External Support

If concerns persist and further support is deemed necessary, we will:

- Make referrals to appropriate external agencies (e.g., speech and language therapy)
- Ensure that all referrals are made with the informed consent of parents/carers. Where we can, we will do this with the help of a translator.

Monitoring and review

This policy was ratified on 26th November and will be reviewed every two years as a minimum. The next review date is October 2027.

In between updates, the policy will be updated when necessary to reflect local and national changes.