



Scoil Phádraic Cailíní, Donabate, Co. Dublin

English as an Additional Language - EAL Policy

Scoil Phádraic Cailíní

October 2021

Introductory Statement

This policy was originally formulated in 2016 by Ciara Greene (Principal), Una Kelly (SEN Coordinator), Alison Reidy (SET) and Agnes Fitzgerald (SET). It was reviewed and redrafted in by Ciara Greene (Principal), Una Kelly (SEN Coordinator), and the SEN team. It was made available for review by staff and parents prior to ratification by the Board.

Rationale

We, in Scoil Phádraic Cailíní, promote and facilitate the inclusion of all pupils in our school. We acknowledge our pupils' diverse cultural backgrounds and languages. We strive to enable pupils, whose primary language and language at home is other than English to develop their individual potential. We endeavour to support our pupils in developing their individual voice within the school context.

Aims

The overarching aim of this policy is to foster and create an inclusive school environment which reflects and affirms the linguistic ethnic and cultural diversity of the pupils and the Catholic ethos of Scoil Phádraic Cailíní. In addition, the policy aims to facilitate the integration and inclusion of the pupils into the mainstream learning setting and to support their access to the curriculum. The school recognises the importance of developing home-school links in this regard. The school aims to support our pupils in acquiring a level of linguistic competency in English, which allows them to actively engage with the curriculum.

The Role of the Language Support Teacher

In reference to Circular 0015/2009, 'In collaboration with parents and mainstream class teachers, EAL support teachers identify pupils requiring additional language support, assess pupils' proficiency in English using the assessment materials, devise appropriate language programmes, deliver the programmes, and record and monitor pupils' progress. They share their expertise with mainstream class teachers and assist in developing and disseminating good practice to support the development of students' English language proficiency'.

The primary responsibility of the language support teacher is to promote the pupil's development of English language proficiency so that she can gradually gain access to the curriculum. The language support teacher's role is not to teach the curriculum - this remains the role of the mainstream teacher. Good liaison between both teachers supports this learning. The introduction of non-English speaking pupils into the class is a challenge. It requires cooperation between the language support teacher, the mainstream teacher, the principal and the parents of the pupils. This liaison allows for language learning activities to be provided for use in the mainstream classroom during initial period in this school. Pupils may be exempted from Irish in special circumstances (see circular 0052/19 which is a revision of circular 0012/96).

Scoil Phádraic Cailíní strives to create an inter-cultural and inclusive school community through multi-lingual posters and notices on display throughout the school. On arrival an initial assessment will be made of the pupil's proficiency in the English language. It is important to allow a settling down period before attempting this. The ability of any pupil to perform in the classroom will be viewed in relation to the performance of the native speaking peer group.

Collaborative Practice

At Scoil Phádraic Cailíní we acknowledge that the benefit of individualised language support will be realised and maximised through collaboration between the language support teacher and both the class teacher and parents/guardians. Collaboration will be facilitated by the following:

- The language support teacher will assess proficiency in English using the Primary School Assessment Kit (PSAK)
- Following assessment an appropriate language programme will be devised by the language support teacher with input from the class teacher - for example information regarding thematic planning in various subject areas.
- Regular meetings (including formal monthly meetings) will take place between the learning support teacher and the class teacher in order to:
 - Plan and evaluate pupil learning
 - Review/evaluate/assess pupil integration in mainstream class, for example, the classroom teacher may provide information about how the pupil is reacting in class and coping with interaction with peers.
 - Identify any area of concern regarding progress as an English Language learner.
 - There are agreed checklists (*School Support Checklist* and *My Thoughts about School*) that will be used when observing the strengths and challenges faced by the pupil during the settling in period.
 - The joint objective is to:
 - Enable pupil to understand and use the functional language of the classroom.
 - To equip the pupil with the knowledge of the rules and procedures of the school.
 - Help the pupil to understand different norms of behaviour within the new school culture.
 - Help build the confidence and self-esteem of the pupil.

Identification of pupils requiring language support and assessment of the language proficiency of pupils for whom English is an additional language.

- As part of the registration and enrolment process in Scoil Phádraic Cailíní, parents/guardians will complete a form informing the school of the language of the home.
- The SET will liaise with mainstream class teachers at the start of the school year, to identify children who may need additional support in English language. When identified, parents will be given an Observation Window and Consent Form, authorising the school to carry out additional assessments and withdraw the child from the mainstream setting if appropriate, to access additional support in the English Language.
- All newcomer pupils must complete the 'Placement Test' of the Primary School Assessment Kit. Language support teachers will carry out initial interviews and relevant assessments and communicate the findings of these tests to guide the class teachers in their planning for the pupils.
- The Primary School Assessment Kit will then be used to create a profile of the pupil's proficiency across the four language areas (listening, speaking, reading and writing), as referenced in *English as an Additional Language in Irish Primary Schools, NCCA Guidelines for Teachers* (pp.51-59) and *Assessment in the Primary School Curriculum, NCCA Guidelines for Schools*.
- The language support programme is organised with reference to the English Language Proficiency Benchmarks and the 13 units of work based on the Primary Language Curriculum as referenced in *Up and Away* pp. 36-56. The Primary School Assessment Kit (see Circular 0015/2009) set of tests, based on IILT's English Language Proficiency Benchmarks will be used to assess pupil progress through the three levels of A1 - Way Stage, A2 - Breakthrough, and B1 - Threshold. When a pupil has received level B1 in all language skills, i.e. receptive language skills of listening and reading and the productive skills of spoken interaction, spoken production and writing (*Up and Away* p.36), **then the pupil has achieved the necessary proficiency to access the curriculum in the mainstream classroom.**
- This language support programme includes 13 Units of Work which represent the strands of the primary curriculum. These units cover topics such as *Myself, Colours, Shapes and Opposites* and the *Local and Wider*

Community. The pupil will be guided through the units which include elements of understanding, speaking and writing within each unit.

- The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages - Self-Assessment Grid will be used in this context to assess pupil progress.
- Allocation of additional support for pupils who require language support for more than two years is considered with reference to DES Circular 0015/2009.
- Pupil's progress will be monitored and assessed at appropriate intervals through completion of the Primary School Assessment Kit (see Appendix).
- The inclusion of EAL pupils in routine standardised testing in school is managed with reference to Circular 0138/2006, 'Pupils may be excluded from the test if in the view of the school Principal they have learning or physical disability which would prevent them from attempting the test, or in the case of newcomer pupils, where their level of English is such that attempting such a test would be inappropriate'. Any decision to exempt a pupil will be taken in consultation with parents/guardians.
- When completing the NNRIT in 2nd and 5th Classes, pupils in receipt of language support will also complete the Non-Verbal Reasoning Test (NVRT), if deemed appropriate.
- The Education Act 1998, places a statutory obligation on the Principal and teachers to 'regularly evaluate students and periodically report the results of the evaluation to the students and their parents.'
- Communication is facilitated with parents/guardians whose mother tongue is not English through the use of interpretive/translation services (Google translate) where applicable. Written communication with parents/guardians will be facilitated by the use of similar means, as needed.
- During Parent-Teacher meetings, teachers will use pictorial representations of pupil progress, as needed. Samples of pupil's work will be shown.

Organisation of English Language Support in Scoil Phádraic Cailíní

- Language support pupils are assessed regarding their level of proficiency in the English language.
- The SET, in collaboration with the class teachers, arranges a timetable for pupils to receive language support, which will facilitate pupils' access to non-language based curriculum areas as far as possible.
- In line with best practice, there is flexibility within the delivery of language support with varying models of support delivered to best meet the pupil's needs.

Programme Planning

- Language support programme is organised in relation to the English Language Proficiency Benchmarks and the 13 Units of Work based on the Primary Language Curriculum (Up & Away pp. 36-56).
- Language support is delivered in small groups of 3-5 pupils.
- On a daily basis little and often is more effective than a longer session less frequently.
- Where appropriate, the timetable of language support is organised to include flexi periods which will focus exclusively on a particular problem area.
- Programmes of work are collaboratively devised through consultation between class teacher and learning support teacher during their regular meetings.
- Materials for language support will include; class books, activity books, storybooks, games, picture-photo dictionaries, sets of cards, phonic series, projects, computer software, et cetera. Teachers and pupils can access additional language resources through individual iPads.
- Scoil Phádraic Cailíní has devised its own language programme material to support the language curriculum. This language programme is specific to the school. It contains teaching materials to support the units for junior and senior level.
- Resources will be selected throughout the school to reflect diversity in culture, language and customs within the context of the school's Catholic ethos.
- The school celebrates a Culture Day each spring term, which represents the cultural and linguistic diversity of the school community.

Recording and Monitoring of Pupil progress

With reference to Circular 0015/2009, all documentation in relation to the administration of standardised assessment tests is retained by the school for audit inspection purposes.

The language support teacher will record and monitor pupil progress through:

- Teacher observation and questioning.
- Observations and progress are recorded in the Cuntas Míosúil. This informs future planning.
- This record is stored securely in the principal's office.

Individual Teacher Planning and Reporting

In Scoil Phádraic Cailíní, we have a whole-school approach to planning. There are agreed templates for planning for language support. In addition, an agreed Cuntas Míosúil template is used.

Success Criteria

1. Pupils gradually gain access to the curriculum by becoming more proficient in English as an additional language.
2. Pupils are enabled to grow in confidence secure in their knowledge of the social norms of the school community, which is inclusive and intercultural.
3. Pupils achieve level B1.3 in listening, speaking, reading and writing of the English language as per the Primary School Assessment Kit.

Roles and Responsibilities

The policy is coordinated by the SEN coordinator, Una Kelly, as part of her role as Deputy Principal. Each member of the SET is allocated a defined class grouping. Thus, EAL pupils are supported by the designated class SEN teacher. The SEN teacher will assess the pupils on arrival in Scoil Phádraic Cailíní to ascertain their level of proficiency in English as an additional language.

The primary responsibility of the language support teacher is to promote the pupil's development of English language proficiency so that she can gradually gain access to the curriculum. This is achieved by:

- Working in collaboration with the mainstream class teacher to set relevant and achievable targets
- Preparing the pupil to access mainstream learning
- Helping the pupil to develop appropriate strategies and skills for future, formal education
- Accessing classroom learning
- Socialising with peers

It remains the role and responsibility of the mainstream class teacher to teach the curriculum.

Implementation Date

This current policy document will be ratified by the BOM of Scoil Phádraic Cailíní in June 2021 and will be implemented thereafter.

Timetable for Review

This policy will be reviewed in the school year commencing September 2025. This future review will be coordinated by the SEN coordinator in Scoil Phádraic Cailíní. This policy document has been circulated and communicated to members of the school community.

Ratification and Review

This policy was ratified at a Board of Management meeting on 6th October 2021.
It will be reviewed as the need arises.



Signed by:

Lisa English (Chairperson)



Signed by:

Ciara Greene (Principal)

Date: 6th October 2021

Reference Section

Circular 0015/2009, Meeting the Needs of pupils learning English as an Additional Language (DES)

Intercultural Education in the Primary school, Guidelines for Schools (NCCA, 2005)

Primary School Assessment Kit (DES, 2007)

Toolkit for Diversity in the Primary School (2007)

Up and Away (IILT, 2006)

Intercultural Guidelines for Schools (INTO)

Circular 138/2006 Supporting Assessment in the Primary School (DES)

Assessment in the Primary School Curriculum, Guidelines for Schools (DES, 2007)