English as an Additional Language Learning Policy

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Our Vision:

A British curriculum school, rooted in the values of the UAE, creating the leaders of tomorrow. A premium community school, empowering learners to achieve excellence and make a difference.

Our Mission:

Nurturing by including all learners, prioritising their safety and happiness and promoting their character development rooted in the national values of the UAE. Empowering by providing an exciting, enriching and ambitious learning experience where students excel by fulfilling and exceeding their academic potential.

1   Introduction

1.1   Rationale: At GEMS Al Barsha National School, we believe that it is our responsibility to ensure the cognitive challenge should remain high for all students – the curriculum content should not be simplified. Gibbons (2015, p. 3) identified that high expectations of English as an Additional Language (EAL) learners is key, and teachers have the responsibility of treating students as the 'learners they can become' so that they are able to access the curriculum and perform academically. We believe in the importance of a consistent approach for adapting the curriculum and environment and that this is part of a good education for all students, especially EAL students. Appropriately adapting the teaching methodology, pedagogy and curriculum for EAL students is important to raise student achievement. We believe that supporting English as an Additional Language learners is the role of all teachers at GEMS Al Barsha National School, not just English language teachers and that the same consistent strategies and resources being applied, as appropriate, will support the development of language proficiency. This requires careful planning and integration into the scheme of work of each curriculum area and a commitment from teachers to support these learners.

1.2   Defining EAL: In defining EAL (English as an Additional Language) Learners, we have adopted the following definition: 'An EAL student is a student whose first language is not English. This encompasses pupils who are fully bilingual, and all those at different stages of learning English'. EAL students are often referred to as ESL (English as a Second Language), EFL (English as a Foreign Language) or ELL (English Language Learners). For this policy, we will continue to use the term EAL, although many of the above are also accurate.

1.3   EAL students have diverse backgrounds and require varying levels of support and provision. See Appendix 1.

1.4   For links to additional research, including research related to the specific challenges faced by Arabic speaking students' learning English, see Appendix 2.

2   Aims of the English as an Additional Language Learning Policy

2.1   To provide guidance on how we identify an EAL student and carry out an assessment of their language needs.

2.2   To provide guidance on how we support EAL learners in the classroom setting.

2.3   To give guidelines on how to adapt your learning environment to meet the needs of EAL learners.

2.4   To ensure parents act as partners in developing their child's EAL needs and know how to support at home.

2.5   To meet the social and emotional needs of EAL learners.

2.6   To clearly differentiate between EAL, Gifted and Talented and Additional Educational Needs. Once a student has settled into class and becomes more comfortable, it may become evident that the student requires support due to a language barrier or an additional need. In this case the class teacher will refer the student to the inclusion department to determine the level and need of support.

3   Foundation Stage Expectations

3.1   In the Foundation Stage, students are initially assessed through an informal observation of play and where appropriate an assessment of language, letter names, common nouns and colours.

3.2   The Foundation Stage dual language approach enables adults to skillfully build upon each child's language knowledge and widen children's exposure to vocabulary through questioning and extension.

3.3   In the Foundation Stage the use of English and Arabic languages is respected - key words/phrases by adults are modelled through the dual language approach.

3.4   English and Arabic teachers advocate for each child's language needs in both English and Arabic.

3.5   Foundation Stage adults skillfully narrate play, using intonation, descriptive and varying language to support the development of spoken language in a variety of contexts.

3.6   The Foundation Stage dual language model facilitates both English and Arabic speakers. If a child has neither of these languages, a 1:1 support may be explored.

3.7   The Early Learning Goals for communication and language, and for literacy, are assessed in relation to the child's competency in English. The remaining ELGs are assessed in the context of any language.

4   Primary Phase Expectations

4.1   Students entering Year 2 and above are required to take a CAT4 test with the admissions team before an offer is made. The CAT 4 test assists us in determining if a student needs language support.

4.2   The results of the CAT 4 test are carefully analysed by the relevant teachers and leaders.

4.3   All Class teachers have access to the CAT 4 information to inform planning and teaching.

4.4   Students with a low verbal score of 81 and below (Stanine 1 or 2) and high verbal deficit of greater than 10 will be referred to the inclusion team for a more detailed assessment.

4.5   Class teachers carry out baseline assessments during the first two weeks of Term 1, or the first two weeks of a new EAL student arriving.

4.6   Class teachers use The Bell Foundation Assessment Rubric (see Appendix 1) to determine where a child is in terms of their speaking, listening, reading and writing of English. This baseline will determine whether further support is needed from the Inclusion Department.

4.7   Students who are assessed to be at the 'Entering English language' phase of code 1 or 2 on the assessment framework will receive additional support from the inclusion department (see Appendix 1).

4.8   Students who are at 'Entering English language' must have an IEP and may need 1:1 support depending on their age and stage.

4.9   Classroom environments are purposeful and mindful of EAL learners. This includes working walls, tiered vocabulary, dual language labels and dictionaries. (See Section 7 and Appendix 6 for more detail).

4.10   Students will be exposed to tiered vocabulary across all subjects, which is supported by visuals using Widget and supported by the dual language (Appendix 4 and 5).

4.11   Students will be exposed to an age-appropriate level of Pie Corbett to support story recall and planning, as appropriate.

4.12   Student will have consistent agreed symbols on display during lessons in both English National Curriculum and Ministry of Education Lessons. This will support students with recognising and understanding expectations at core parts of the lesson (Appendix 7).

4.13   Students are taught an enriching thematic curriculum with writing links across Arabic and English, where possible. This provides opportunities for students to embed key ideas and vocabulary.

4.14   As part of the Additional Home Learning Policy, students in Phase 2 will be encouraged to submit bi-termly oracy projects to develop their linguistic confidence and skills.

4.15   During some external assessments, additional time may be allowed for students with EAL. These additional timings will come directly from the assessment guidelines received by the school.

5   Key Stage 3 Expectations

5.1   Differentiated Delivery: Provide tailored instruction and materials to meet the diverse needs of EAL (English as an Additional Language) students. This may involve using visuals, hands-on activities, and simplified language to support comprehension. Offer additional support through small group or one-to-one instruction to reinforce understanding.

5.2   Language Support: Implement strategies to enhance language development. This could include promoting vocabulary acquisition through word walls, flashcards, and interactive games. Encourage peer interactions and collaborative learning opportunities to practice language skills. Utilise bilingual resources when available to bridge the gap between the students' first language and English.

5.3   Scaffolded Instruction: Break down complex tasks into smaller, manageable steps to support EAL students' understanding. Provide visual aids, graphic organizers, and sentence frames to guide their thinking and language use. Gradually release responsibility, allowing students to gain confidence and independence in their learning.

5.4   Peer Support: Foster collaboration and peer interactions among EAL students and their classmates. Pair EAL students with peers who can act as language models and provide support. Encourage cooperative learning activities where students can work together to solve problems, discuss ideas, and practise English communication skills.

6   Key Stage 4 and 5 Expectations

6.1   Exam-focused Language Practice: Provide targeted practice materials and resources specifically designed to develop the language skills required for GCSE exams. Offer practice questions, past papers, and sample responses to familiarise EAL students with the format and language expectations of the exams.

6.2   Vocabulary Building: Emphasise vocabulary acquisition by incorporating subject-specific terminology and key phrases into lessons. Implement activities such as word walls, flashcards, and vocabulary games to help EAL students expand their vocabulary and develop confidence in using subject-specific language in their exam responses.

6.3   Exam Techniques and Strategies: Teach EAL students effective exam techniques and strategies, such as time management, careful reading of instructions, and structuring responses. Provide guidance on how to approach different question types and model how to analyse and respond to exam prompts effectively.

6.4   Mock Exams and Feedback: Administer regular mock exams to familiarise EAL students with the exam conditions and assess their progress. Provide detailed feedback on their performance, highlighting areas for improvement and offering strategies for enhancing their exam responses. Support them in developing exam-taking skills, such as critical thinking and effective communication, through targeted feedback and practice.

7   Responsibilities of Teachers at GEMS Al Barsha National School

7.1   Supporting EAL learners of all levels is the responsibility of the class teacher with support from the Inclusion department. All students must be enabled to have access to a broad, balanced and relevant curriculum. (See Appendix 2 for Quality First Teaching).

7.2   We recognise that support may be necessary beyond the time a pupil appears orally fluent such as tiered vocabulary, sentence stems, visuals, drama.

7.3   Guidelines on how to adapt your learning environment to meet the needs of EAL learners.

7.4   Quality first teaching and a high-quality learning environment is an expectation for all teachers. We believe the environment is the third teacher. (See Appendix 6). Classrooms are to be arranged to be socially and culturally inclusive. English and Arabic language is carefully thought through and displayed on relevant working walls.

7.5   All subject specific vocabulary is tiered out to aid understanding and displayed on working walls. (See Appendix 4 and 5).

7.6   Value is given to the student's wider world and culture – every student should be able to see themselves and their culture in their learning environment e.g., Arabic and English books/texts

7.7   Opportunities are given to share Additional Home Learning and projects with the class.

7.8   Language is used in a very intentional way that promotes deeper thinking and checks for understanding.

7.9   Where possible links between Arabic and English teachers are created and formed through our bespoke, adapted curriculum to ensure students have the option to learn an unknown word in their mother tongue e.g., they know the word adjective or verb in English and Arabic.

7.10   Bilingual dictionaries are available for students from Year 3 and above.

7.11   Commit to on-going research and professional development to further enhance provision for EAL learners at GEMS Al Barsha National School.

8   Responsibilities of Students at GEMS Al Barsha National School

8.1   Students are responsible for actively participating in their learning and engaging with the curriculum to the best of their abilities.

8.2   Students are expected to respect their classmates and teachers, creating a positive and inclusive learning environment.

8.3   Students should take responsibility for their own progress and use the resources available to them, seeking help or clarification when needed.

8.4   Students should strive to communicate effectively in Arabic and English, both verbally and in writing, trying to improve their language skills.

8.5   Students are expected to embrace diversity and appreciate diverse cultures, fostering a respectful and inclusive school community.

**9	Responsibilities of Parents at GEMS Al Barsha National School**

9.1	Parents are responsible for supporting their child's education. During the enrolment process parents should disclose the need for language support.

9.2	Parents should actively engage in their child's learning journey, maintaining open communication with teachers discussing any concerns about their child's/children's language needs.

9.3	Parents are encouraged to create a conducive home environment that promotes language development in both English and Arabic.

9.4	Parents should collaborate with teachers to reinforce learning at home and assist with additional home learning projects, where appropriate.

**10	Assessments**

10.1	All EAL students are assessed in line with National Curriculum levels using whole school assessment procedures.

10.2	All EAL students undergo an additional assessment in line with The Bell Foundation International EAL Assessment Framework. This is broken down into FS, Primary and Secondary and therefore allows a consistent shared language of EAL Bands as the student progresses across the phases.

10.3	Following the initial assessment, if an EAL need is identified, students will be assessed regularly with the tracker updated termly. Support strategies will be identified and recorded here also.

10.4	EAL students in Phase 2 will be given support in writing assessments by reading and extra time when required.

10.5	Formative assessment of EAL students tracking their progress through the phases of language learning is maintained until the student reaches age-appropriate language levels.

10.6	It is acknowledged that children make progress in acquiring English as an additional language in different ways and at different rates.

10.7	Assessments should be carried out wherever possible in a situation which is familiar to the learner.

10.8	Teachers should use their professional judgment regarding the assessment procedure and should ensure that the assessment does not cause distress or discomfort to the learner.

10.9	Assessment of EAL needs is necessary to ensure that these needs are adequately and rapidly met, and students are not misdiagnosed as having low cognitive needs.

**11	Related Policies**

11.1	Admissions Policy

11.2	Teaching and Learning Policy

11.3	Additional Home Learning Policy

11.4	Assessment Policy

Appendix 1: GEMS Al Barsha National School EAL Framework based on The Bell Foundation.

- Students' language needs fit into 5 bands for speaking, listening, reading, writing and comprehending.
- The 5 bands are progressive with A being the most emergent with the greatest need and E showing the most linguistic competency and fluency.
- Within each band there are 10 progressive codes to mark improvements within each phase of development.
- Following primary, the same consistency is replicated in the secondary assessment framework model and supports with transition.
- The Bell Foundation EAL International Framework Overview
- Primary Assessment Rubric
- Secondary Assessment Rubric

Appendix 2: Additional Research, including the specific challenges faced by Arabic speaking students' learning English

- Breen (2010) identified the specific challenges of Arabic speaking students' acquisition of English due to the vast linguistic differences between the two languages.
- Research shows that the differences between both languages are so extreme that *'reliance on Arabic competence for building English competence would be severely limited'* (Abdo and Breen 2010, p. 41).
- There is a severe impact on achievement and outcomes for EAL students depending on their arrival time to the language. Hutchinson (2018) refers to this as 'an attainment penalty' and stresses it must be a consideration for leaders and external bodies.

Appendix 3: Teaching strategies to support EAL learners

• Recognising that EAL pupils may need more time to process answers.

• Ensuring that there are effective opportunities for talking, in either language or developing an environment where talking is used effectively to support writing.

• Encouraging pupils to transfer their knowledge, skills and understanding of one language to another. Carefully planned links throughout the curriculum can support this.

When writing schemes of work and medium-term plans, teachers should consider the following questions:

1. What opportunities are there to explore ideas orally and collaboratively?
2. How can teachers (or additional adults or other children) model the key subject language needed? E.g., visuals, drama, action, or bilingual student leaders.

3. What specialist vocabulary do pupils need to understand new concepts and how can this be presented to them in an accessible way? – tiered vocabulary triangle (see Appendix 3)
4. Are lessons planned to ensure that any additional adult has a clear role in developing literacy?

• Enable pupils to draw on their existing knowledge of another language/s

• Encourage and use bilingual support from other students and staff

• Use translated materials and bilingual dictionaries

• Allow students time to practice new language

• Use visual support of all kinds (diagrams, maps, charts, pictures)

• Provide key vocabulary and sentence stems to support with oracy in the classroom

Developing language and literacy skills

To be fully literate, pupils need to be able to understand how we adapt our everyday speech into formal, written texts.

Learning through talk

- 1. Using speaking to clarify and present ideas
- 2. Using active listening to understand a topic
- 3. Hypothesising, evaluating and problem solving through discussion

Teaching strategies

• Allow students to do some assessments orally

• Ask students to rehearse answers with a partner before answering

• Use additional adults to support discussion groups

Learning from text

Teaching strategies

• Make the purpose of reading explicit

• Read aloud to pupils

• Teach pupils how to navigate textbooks and use index, contents, etc.

• Show pupils how to write questions before starting research

• Ask pupils to transfer information from text to diagrams

- Make sure pupil are clear about the purpose and audience for their writing

- Point out the differences between speech and writing

- Help pupils use appropriate level of formality

- Give pupils model texts before asking them to write

- Support extended writing with frames, visuals and key connectives to link ideas.

- Ask pupils to evaluate, correct and redraft their writing

Appendix 4: Tiered vocabulary across ENC subjects to support new vocabulary acquisition through visuals and the use of Arabic.

Key Vocabulary	What does it mean?	
Cruel فظ	Causing **pain** or **suffering** to others	cruel dream
Dream حلم	a series of **thoughts**, and **images**, occurring in a person's mind during sleep.	
Plan يخطط	a **method** for achieving an end	plan
Demise زوال	a **person's death**	demise stumbled
Stumbled تعثرت	trip or **momentarily lose one's balance**; almost fall	
Insisted أصر على	**demand** something **forcefully,** not accepting refusal:	insisted hatched
Hatched فقست	conspire to **create** (a plot or plan)	

Appendix 5: Use of WIDGET to support EAL learners and story recall of key events.

Innovated Story - Dubai

oil | construction | buildings
scorpion | camel | falcon
sand cat | gazelle | oryx
dunes | desert | dusty

nutrients | absorbed | digest
digestive system | rectum | small intestine
large intestine | enzymes | Circulatory system

Our story starts in the Middle East, in a city called Dubai.

Dubai is a busy city full of tall towers and people working.

It is also home to a wonderful, huge desert.

Appendix 6: Use of Working Walls, visuals, expected standard examples, vocabulary and core ideas on working walls in Phase 2.
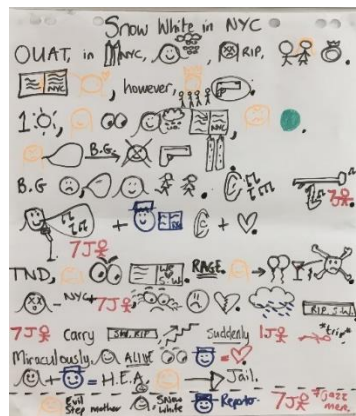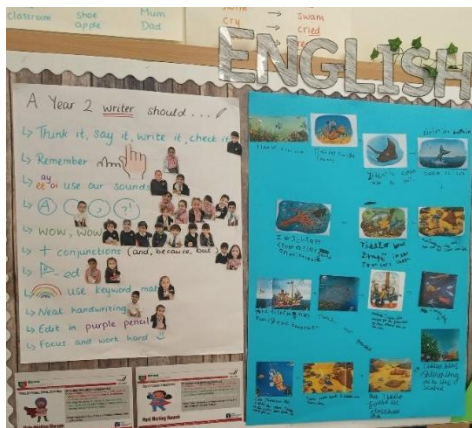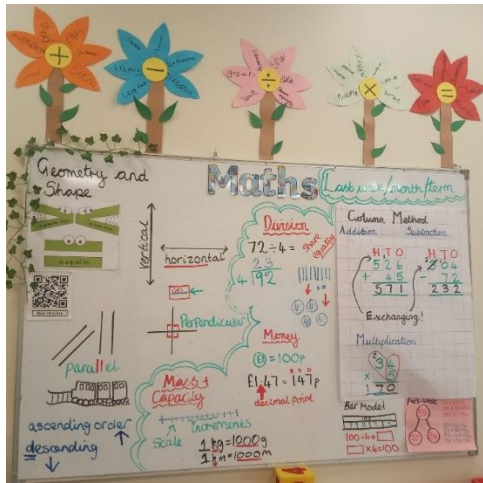
Appendix 7: Agreed symbols and visuals for Primary learning slides to support understanding the expectations at different parts of the lesson.

Key Slides	Symbols	STP requirements
1. Starter Page – Hook/Thinking		Big Question. Input AfL strategies (5)
2. Recap Slide		None needed
3. LO/Date/Routes/Vocab		**Date, LO, Routes, tiered key vocabulary, Key Questions/Misconceptions, UAE/Other Cultures/Real-life link (8)**
4. AfL and Assessment		Introduction (10)
5. Modelling Prompt		None needed
6. Checking for Understanding		Independent Learning AfL strategies (16)
7. Routes		Independent group task and independent learning(17)
8. Plenary and AfL Progress Check		Plenary and Progress Check (18)

	Symbols
HPL (interweaved throughout and **specific**)	
4Cs (interweaved throughout)	