



RADLETT LODGE SCHOOL LOCAL PROCEDURE FOR:
ENGLISH AS AN ADDITIONAL LANGUAGE

Introduction

A number of our pupils and their families have English as an Additional Language (EAL). As is documented across all educational settings, the proportion of pupils and families with EAL continues to grow and the range of home languages spoken by our students or their families is increasingly diverse. This diversity is viewed positively by all at RLS as an opportunity to open up pupils, staff and families to new cultural experiences and break down social barriers. We recognise the additional support needs that may exist for pupils and families with EAL and aim to address these proactively.

Our Key Principles:

1. All pupils are entitled to equal access to the curriculum
2. Forming and maintaining strong links with parents is fundamental to our pupils learning and development
3. Learning and using more than one language is an asset and opens up a learning opportunity for our pupils and staff
4. Promoting development in a pupil's home language will have a positive impact on their development in other languages

Potential difficulties when working with pupils with EAL and autism

1. Distinguishing English language difficulties that are consistent with typical EAL development from those that represent disordered communication development. Whether or not they have EAL, all pupils at RLS experience some form of communication impairment, consistent with their diagnosis of autism. Accurate assessment of a pupil's receptive and expressive language skills must take into account EAL status and good practice guidelines.
2. Supporting pupils with complex communication needs and EAL to understand the language of the classroom and express their wants, needs, feelings and opinions. Pupils who are EAL may have English language difficulties that impact on their ability to understand instructions, information or conversation and to express themselves clearly to English speaking adults and peers. All of our pupils have autism and related communication difficulties which may be compounded by learning EAL. Many of the methods used to develop communication skills across the whole school will support those pupils with EAL.
3. Families of children with additional needs may have come across outdated advice regarding stopping use of the home language. All staff at RLS must reassure families that current guidance says families should provide the best language model by speaking the language in which they are most fluent.
4. Establishing strong links with families in spite of a language barriers. A child with autism is best supported when families and school work together and the school is constantly striving to maintain, develop and strengthen our links with families. When working with families with EAL, existing language barriers must be addressed in order to optimise the pupil's progress.

How we support our EAL families and pupils

Data Gathering

As part of the entry procedure to RLS, parents/guardians are asked to disclose their child's ethnicity, home language, first language and religion. This enable the school to support families and the pupil to the best mean possible. For up to date data please see section 1 of this folder.

Respecting Diversity

RLS places huge value on a child developing as an individual according to their religious, cultural and personal beliefs and aims to work with children and their families to support this. RLS can develop understanding of awareness their own and other pupils' linguistic and social cultures through a range of events including:

- Cultural Days and Theme weeks in school and the Lodge (eg: Japan Day , Black History Week)
- Culturally diverse assemblies/plays.
- Trips to culturally related places in the community (eg: local temples, synagogues, mosques etc).
- Working closely with parents of pupils to understand their perception of Autism in their culture.
- Displaying work done by pupils in Cultural Days and theme weeks so learning about different languages and social cultures is constantly showcased in the School.
- Responsible to ensure resource used in classes and lodge activities reflect a range of ethnicity (eg: ensuring the library has a range of books in various languages).

Recruitment

The school employs staff irrespective of their home language and staff are not required to disclose their home language. All staff are interviewed prior to employment at which point it is ascertained whether their proficiency in English is suitable for the post. A number of staff are using EAL and may be able to converse with a child/family in a different language if needed. They act as positive role models for children who may be self-conscious that English is not their first language.

Translators and translation services

When required RLS has access to the following translation services:

The National Autistic Society Telephone interpretation service: 0808 800 4104

And the following translation software:

Google Translate

Through links with the local communities and families we also have available information on recommended local contacts who may act as translators for pupils and families if considered appropriate

Parents/guardians are also welcomed to involve personal translators (either professionals or friends/family members) in the support of their child. Often personal translators accompany families to annual reviews and parents evening to support the communication between parents and school.

The National Autistic Society also has a number of information leaflets available in different languages.

Supporting children with Autism and EAL on a daily basis at RLS. In terms of supporting children who are developing English as an additional language within the classroom, many of the strategies recommended by advisory bodies are similar to that of good Autism Practice. The Department of Education and Education Scotland have both produced comprehensive working documents on how best to support pupils for whom English is an additional language. The documents detail a series of strategies to teach language meaningfully, moving from the early stages of language development through to complex linguistic concepts. The themes throughout both documents are in line with the strategies used in RLS as part of the daily planning and delivery.

Examples of the recommended strategies:

- *Use gesture/visuals/object:-* At RLS a range of appropriate visual supports are used to enhance pupils' understanding and learning. Visual systems are in place throughout the school using both symbols and photos which do not rely on a child's understanding of a specific language. All staff are trained on the importance of using and developing visuals during induction training and refresher workshops.
- *Modelling social conventions:* Social skills are focused on as part of a pupils' daily experience at Radlett Lodge. Teachers pro-actively plan for social learning opportunities in their lesson plans and all staff capitalise on naturalistic events to make social learning ongoing and meaningful for the pupils. Social Stories are also created and used with individual pupils or groups of pupils to further develop understanding of social rules.
- *Ensuring the pupil knows your name:* every day pupils are encouraged to greet staff members by Christian name, there are photo displays matching the staff's name to photos and all staff at RLS wear name badges at all times of the day.
- *Ask Oral gap-fill:* The method of Backwards Chaining is a teaching method in use across lessons and functional learning at RLS. Specifically, it is also used to develop verbal language in Phase VI of PECS with a number of our pupils who are learning English as an additional language.
- *Differentiate lessons to each pupil's language capability:* Due to the wide range of cognitive and communicative needs of our pupils, Teachers at RLS are actively encouraged to differentiate a lesson for all pupils in their class through planning sheets. As experienced autism practitioners, teachers at RLS are specifically skilled at using a range of multisensory learning to enable a pupil to access a lesson through other means than verbal language. This is not only good Autism practice but provides effective support for pupils who are learning English as an additional language.

For further strategies please refer to the document "Strategies for supporting Primary school pupils for whom English is an additional Language" (2012) by Education Scotland¹, "Supporting children learning EAL" (2012) by the Department of Education² and cross reference with the RLS Communication Training package, LSA workshops, teachers planning sheets and SPELL training package.

¹ Documents available in the "Documents & Guidelines" section of this folder or sourced from:

http://www.education.scot.nhs.uk/resources/e/genericresource_tcm4545206.asp?strReferringChannel=supportinglearners&strReferringPageID=tcm:4-616500-64&class=13+d134408

² <http://media.education.gov.uk/assets/files/pdf/s/supporting%20children%20learning%20eal.pdf>