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Powerstown Educate Together National School

EAL Policy

Patron: Educate Together

This policy has been formulated by Powerstown ETNS to assist staff deliver a comprehensive English Language Programme to students. It also aims to inform parents of the benefits of developing fluency in children's first language and explain the language learning process in the school.

Contents

Introduction

Powerstown Educate Together is an equality-based primary school that values diversity and celebrates cultural differences. This policy aims to complement the school's continuum of support & inclusion policy, and emphasises the focus on language development, especially for pupils for whom English is an additional language to ensure successful inclusion of all pupils throughout the school.

Department of Education (DE) provision for pupils with EAL in Powerstown ETNS is variable. Each year Powerstown ETNS receive an allocation of ZERO EAL teachers. However, in 2021/2022 we were allocated 6 EAL teachers on appeal, in 2020/2021 we were allocated 5 EAL teachers, 2019/2020 5 EAL teachers. We have created a 3 year+ EAL support programme for our pupils and adapt this programme annually based on DE allocation of EAL staff to the school.

Powerstown ETNS is a 16 classroom primary school with 3 ASD classes and 1 DLD class. Our school community speaks 57 different languages and are connected to 64 different countries. We understand the enormous benefits these languages and cultures bring to children's understanding of themselves and the world. Alongside our teaching of English and Gaeilge, we use children's home languages to create a

challenging and motivating multilingual environment where every child is celebrated as an individual with their own set of experiences, skills and interests. In our school, we want our children to be proud of the languages they speak and to see how those languages are connected and how the skills learned in one language can be applied and used to build our understanding of another. This understanding encourages our children to see themselves as global citizens and builds their sense of cultural identity and intercultural awareness.

In Powerstown ETNS all our teachers are "language teachers." We aim to develop confident, curious, highly proficient and enthusiastic readers, writers, speakers and listeners. We want to teach language in meaningful contexts. We take a thematic and enquiry-based approach across all classes, encouraging children to make connections, to explore and to investigate.

We want children in our school to see themselves represented in our school – in the books we read, the resources we use and the learning choices we make. We include children's languages in our displays and have a wide range of books that celebrate diversity, including dual-language texts.

Across all subject areas there is a strong emphasis on language development (phonetics - speech sounds, phonology - phonemes, morphology - words & vocabulary, syntax - phrases & sentence structure including grammar, semantics - literal meaning of phrases and sentences and pragmatics- meaning in context of disclosure) and this is evident in teacher planning. The work of the classroom teacher greatly supports our EAL programme.

Aims

The main aim of this policy is to support our inclusive school environment which reflects and affirms linguistic, ethnic and cultural diversity and the ethos of Educate Together. We aim to provide our pupils with a safe and supporting environment that values diversity and celebrates cultural differences and strongly emphasises language development.

Powerstown Educate Together strives to achieve this by

- Providing E.A.L. children with supplementary teaching, additional support and resources to support their learning.
- Using children's home languages to create a challenging and motivating multilingual environment where every child is celebrated as an individual with their own set of experiences, skills and interests.
- Providing a thematic learning environment that has a strong emphasis on language development.
- Promoting the well-being of E.A.L. pupils by raising awareness of the ethnic, religious, cultural and linguistic diversity within the school and celebrating these differences.
- Supporting the well-being of our "new-comer" families through our Well-Being/Nurture Principles (see Nurture Policy).
  - Children's learning is understood developmentally.
  - The classroom offers a safe base.
  - Nurture is important in the development of wellbeing.
  - Language is understood as a vital means of communication.

- ○ All behaviour is communication.
- ○ Transitions are significant in the lives of children.
- ● Supporting our pupils of ethnic minorities to develop their self-esteem and to ensure they have a sense of belonging within the school community.
- ● Working towards achieving full access to the curriculum and to be fully competent and confident in the English language.
- ● Providing pupils with real experiences, and meaningful interactions that will allow them to become independent learners.
- ● Promoting collaboration between teachers, children and parents.

It is the aim of Powerstown ETNS that every child with EAL needs is enabled to:

- ● Access all areas of the curriculum.
- ● Reach their full potential.
- ● Work with a growing degree of confidence.
- ● Continue to use their first language with pride and confidence.
- ● Use a range of language genres including everyday English (conversational language) and technical and scientific language (academic language).
- ● Express themselves confidently in a range of situations on a variety of subjects to different audiences.
- ● Express themselves in both spoken and written English (and their mother tongue.)
- ● Rely on the support of adults within the classroom and in small groups where and when they need it.
- ● Have access to a range of resources which will aid their learning (including bilingual resources and resources in their mother tongue)

It is the aim of Powerstown Educate that every member of staff:

- ● Has read a copy of this policy and implements it to the best of their ability.
- ● Participates in regular EAL continuous professional development.
- ● Is aware of the EAL students in each teaching group and their priority learning targets.
- ● Ensures the lessons and materials are accessible to all students (through differentiation including visual aids, multilingual resources etc.)
- ● Encourages and supports a multilingual learning environment and encourage pupils to develop their mother tongue

Context

The use of the term EAL in the Irish context refers to children for whom English is not their home language. In using this term, the NCCA takes cognisance of the child's prior home language and literacy learning and recognises that this language is neither Irish nor English. The focus is on providing children with the language necessary to enable them to participate to their fullest potential in experiencing the Primary School Curriculum in the mainstream classroom. (NCCA, English as an Additional Language in Irish Primary Schools Guidelines for Teachers June 2006)

Powerstown ETNS opened on the 1st of September 2011 and has always been a diverse and inclusive school. While English & Gaeilge are our common language, in April 2022 our school community speaks 57 different languages and are linked to 64 countries worldwide (See Appendix 1).

As a school located within a diverse community, with much rented accommodation, we continuously have children enrol into our school throughout each academic year who are new to the area and/or country. We also have regular school leavers who find more permanent accommodation elsewhere and/or return to their home country.

In September 2022, it is estimated that 74% of our pupils are not proficient English speakers.

Pupils with less than B1 (level 3) proficiency who will have received less than 1 year EAL support by 31 August 2022:	95
Pupils with less than B1 (level 3) proficiency who will have received between 1 and 2 years EAL support by 31 August 2022:	106
Pupils with less than B1 (level 3) proficiency who will have received more than 2 years but less than 3 years EAL support by 31 August 2022:	40
Pupils with less than B1 (level 3) proficiency who (will) have received 3 years or more EAL support by 31 August 2022	49

Key principles for second language acquisition
EAL pedagogy is underpinned by the following principles:

  (a) Bilingualism and multilingualism are an asset – the ability to use more than one language is a valuable skill that learners who use EAL bring with them, regardless of whether they are New to English or not. Learners actively use the languages they already know to learn English.
  (b) Cognitive challenge should be kept appropriately high – high expectations around cognitive challenge should be maintained. Access to the curriculum is needed, but this does not imply the "dumbing down" of the content. For example, a learner from Greece might be highly skilled at Maths but using English as the language of instruction might be preventing them from engaging fully in the Maths lessons in Powerstown ETNS.
  (c) Learners' proficiency in English is closely linked to academic success – Research has found that proficiency in English is the strongest predictor of academic achievement (Strand and Hessel, 2018)

Given the principles underpinning EAL pedagogy, effective practice for learners using EAL in our school include:

Activating prior learning

Activities that enable learners to activate their prior knowledge of the topic of the lesson facilitate greater understanding and engagement. Example strategies include taking advantage of the learner's first language and finding out what the learner knows through questioning.

Providing a rich context

EAL learners benefit from being provided with additional contextual support to help them make sense of the information conveyed to them in English. The use of images and graphic organisers (e.g. diagrams, grids, charts, timelines) are used for this purpose.

Making the English language explicit in the classroom

Within the context of the curriculum, learners with EAL are encouraged to notice the language used and understand how it is used. This implies pointing out key forms and structures that allow pupils to meet the language demands of the tasks. Strategies include providing oral and written models and scaffolding speaking and writing through speaking and writing frames.

Developing learners' independence

The independence of learners who use EAL is fostered by developing their organisational, thinking and social skills (for instance, working cooperatively with others, taking turns and asking for help). In terms of organisational and thinking skills, teachers provide learners with opportunities to model and extend what has been taught and support them in developing note taking and summary-writing skills. Social and cultural norms in the classroom are made explicit to the learners. Pupils might be used to different rules and codes of behaviour in school in other countries; for instance, in Japan it is inappropriate to look a teacher in the eye whilst many teachers will expect it in an Irish school. Teachers convey information about school social skills by translating simple lists or presenting them pictorially for the learners. Providing a new arrival learner with a buddy speaking the same language, who can explain these different cultural school norms, is another way we support this.

Supporting learners with EAL to extend their vocabulary

EAL learners at all levels are given opportunities to grow their English vocabulary range. This is done by taking advantage of their first language(s) through translation, the use of flashcards and images. We develop the learner's academic language skills, for instance by focusing on the differences between formal and informal vocabulary.

Home Language Maintenance

Research shows that it is beneficial to provide opportunities for learners to use all their languages to both access the curriculum and to develop their proficiency in English as an Additional Language (EAL). This is because learners' expertise in their first language/s, for instance, grammatical knowledge, can be used to develop expertise in English also.

Knowing more than one language is a great skill and asset, to be valued and viewed positively; there are many research findings about the benefits of being bilingual linked to creativity (Marian & Shook, 2012), the delay of brain ageing (Bialystok et al, 2004) amongst others. Maintaining and developing skills in the learner's first language will aid the acquisition of English. The first language and other languages that they

know provides a means for learners New to English to develop new concepts. Bilingualism (and multilingualism) has a positive effect on educational attainment when all languages are developed to an academic level.

In Powerstown ETNS we take a whole-school approach to the promotion of home languages. We create explicit opportunities across the curriculum for children to include their home languages in their learning and display this learning proudly.

Here are some examples of how we promote home languages in our school:

Young Interpreters

Our Young Interpreters are a team of children who are trained to support their peers with language learning. The programme uses a mixture of formal and informal strategies to support children who are new to English when they arrive at our school. Informally, newly-arrived children are paired with children in their class who speak the same language and act as a guide and friend for their first few days, explaining routines and helping them find their feet. Many children remember their first few days and are keen to help out new children.

The more formal programme matches older children with children in the younger classes who speak their language, over a longer period of time. The children meet together weekly and spend time getting to know one another, talking about their experience at school, sharing stories and writing their own texts in their home language and often in English too. The Young Interpreters team meet regularly with an EAL teacher to share ideas and identify any issues and also lead on language promotion across the school.

Dual Language Books and Books in Home Languages

Providing children with access to high-quality books in their home language so that they can make connections between the languages they are learning is very important. We have an extensive range of dual-language books in children's home languages in both the school library and in class libraries. Children often create their own dual-language texts too and share them in our libraries. We have a range of picture dictionaries and 'talking pen' resources and the older children use apps like 'Google Translate' to support their academic learning.

Events and Celebrations

We celebrate different events annually to acknowledge all of the languages spoken in our school including European Day of Languages and Intercultural May. We also use the languages spoken in our school during events or other celebrations, like reciting poems in different languages or introducing a performance in several languages or including different languages in an anti-bullying rap for Anti-Bullying Week. Our Intercultural May celebrates many languages and cultures of our community

Parental and Community Involvement

We organise many events throughout the year whereby we encourage parents, guardians and friends to come into the school to share their language with us e.g. Shared reading in mother tongues, Maths for Fun in different languages. Parents are invited as guest speakers to share language and cultures linked with thematic units taught by class teachers throughout the year. Parents and guardians are actively involved in all Intercultural May activities, sharing their expertise, language, culture, traditions and food.

Linking with language opportunities in the community

We actively support opportunities for children to develop skills in their home language by providing information to parents/carers about heritage language classes and clubs available in Dublin 15 and the greater Dublin area e.g. (Tyrrlestown Community Centre, Mulhuddart CC, Blancharstown Area Partnership etc.) Our school facilitates an Arabic school and a Polish school at weekends onsite and we have strong links with the Romanian community through our neighbours Betania. We are currently working with Betania to source a Romanian speaking teacher for our pupils.

Our Erasmus+ programme allows the children to meet with children and teachers from schools across Europe and interact with groups, who speak a variety of languages, online and through face-to-face visits.

Linking language with identity, culture, diversity and inclusion

We know that our languages are a core part of our identity. Our school planning reflects the global nature of our school community and we make conscious efforts to choose books, resources and learning themes that are reflective of that diversity. We engage with several programmes and events to celebrate the diversity in our community and to explicitly teach our children about discrimination and racism and ways to tackle them, be upstanders and respect one another's differences.

EAL learners enrolling

In Powerstown ETNS our EAL pupils enrol following the guidance procedures outlined in our Admissions Policy.

Junior Infant enrollees

All new Junior Infant pupils are invited to share their nationalities and mother tongues with the school. A questionnaire is sent to all parents, that can be translated into their mother tongues, in June of each year (prior to starting school). This enables the school to forward plan for EAL provision for Junior Infants for September.

September Enrollees (SI - 6th class)

Parents and pupils are invited to a group meeting with the EAL teacher (and principal where possible), whereby they get a tour of the school, introduced to relevant staff and the school day/structure and expectations are explained.

Parents (and the child where appropriate) are encouraged to complete a questionnaire in their mother tongue.

Previous school reports and progress/attainment scores are requested. Where possible the EAL teacher will communicate with the child's previous school.

Mid-year enrollees

On enrolment in Powerstown ETNS, parents and pupils are invited to a meeting with the EAL teacher (and principal where possible), whereby they get a tour of the school, introduced to relevant staff and school day/structure and expectations are explained.

Parents (and the child where appropriate) are encouraged to complete a questionnaire in their mother tongue.

Previous school reports and progress/attainment scores are requested. Where possible the EAL teacher will communicate with the child's previous school.

Assessment and record keeping

In line with DE guidance, children who score below B1.3 in PSAK (and who don't have an AEN diagnosis, or English as a first language) meet criteria for EAL support in Powerstown ETNS.

In Term 3, 2022, the Baseline Assessment was carried out by the EAL Team on EAL pupils. Pupils were then plotted on the Bell Foundation Framework (which correlates with DE guidance documents). These results were used to appropriately group EAL pupils and prioritise EAL teacher allocation for 22/23 school year.

Annually in September the PSAK assessment is completed by the EAL team (Oral Language, and from 1st class Reading and Writing). This is a requirement of DE.

New arrivals complete required assessments (PSAK & Baseline Assessment) once "settling in" period finished and they have ability to partake meaningfully in assessments.

Where possible first language informal assessment **may take place** to ascertain a child's attainment.

Bell Foundation Framework is used continuously throughout the year to inform learning targets of EAL pupils and are formally used for EAL review plans in October and February.

Class based assessments, teacher designated tasks and tests as well as previous school assessment records are recorded on Aladdin and in the child's individual EAL file, which is stored in a locked cabinet in EAL teacher's room.

EAL Teaching & Learning

Powerstown ETNS allocates EAL teachers based on the needs of children; this is deciphered after the compilation of PSAK assessments and Baseline Assessment. We follow the Bell Foundation Framework that we correlated with DE PSAK levels. This ensures comprehensive assessment of children's language skills and supports staff set specific, measureable, attainable, realistic and timely targets for pupils.

Staff have participated in training provided by ESCI, ELSTA, Learning Village & Across Cultures, Talk Boost and the Bell Foundation to ensure comprehensive understanding of our specifically designed EAL programme in Powerstown ETNS

For 2022/2023 school year we have 6 EAL teachers. Our EAL teachers support our pupils in a 3 year+ cycle (further explained in Appendix 2) which incorporates a very specific language and literacy programme.

- Year 1 & 2 EAL support (Infants)
- Year 3 EAL support (1st class+)
- Newcomer EAL support ($2^{nd} – 6^{th}$ class)
- Year 3 EAL support ($2^{nd} – 6^{th}$ class)

It is important to emphasise that EAL pupils are **not on the Continuum of Support (COS)** and **do not have Additional Education Needs (AEN).** An EAL file is opened for a child who is learning English, where a specific EAL plan is drafted by the EAL teacher.

There is a 3 tiered approach to EAL in the school, Universal, Targeted and Specialised.

- Referral to PCT – SLT / Psychology
- Referral to AON / EIT
- Transfer to COS
- Assessing using PSAK & Baseline Assessment
- Target setting using Bell Framework
- Survival English – Learning Village
- Functional Language checklists
- Thematic / academic language support (Up & Away)
- Talk Boost Programme
- Happy Talk Programme
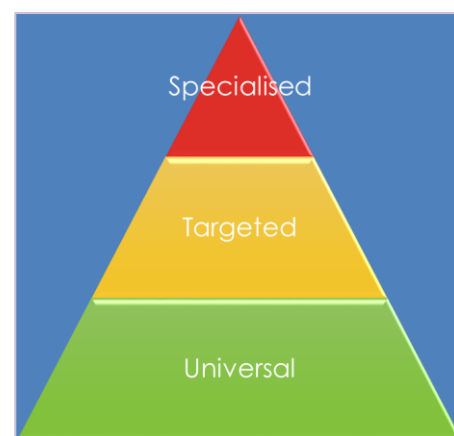
- Language station in English – Elklan language builders
- Language station in Maths – word, text, sentence level
- Language station in Aistear

EAL teachers will use PSAK results, baseline assessments and Bell Foundation plotting to prioritize SMART targets for each EAL pupil. This information is used to update the child's EAL support file. Long - term targets are reviewed with parents and pupils (where appropriate) bi-annually in October and February. Short term targets are set monthly and are detailed in teachers planning documents and/or child's file.

The Bell Foundation Framework is used continuously to track the child's progress and ensure appropriate targets are in place during withdrawal EAL sessions. Withdrawal sessions also include the use of (but not limited to)

- Learning Village
- Up & Away programme
- TalkBoost programme
- Elklan (Blanks)
- Black Sheep Press Language resources
- Pre teaching of monthly class themes

In class support is a prominent feature in our EAL support programme due to the undisputed benefits of language immersion for language learning. In-class language support for our EAL pupils involves

- Happy Talk programme (Junior Infants)
- Talk Boost Programme (1 whole class lesson per week)
- Language station in Aistear (infant classes)
- Language station in English
- Language/word problem station in Maths.

This aims to support our EAL pupils to access the mainstream curriculum, support the expectations of class teachers, assist in the classroom organisation of language learning and support our high achieving EAL learners.

Monitoring and evaluation for EAL

EAL teachers are responsible for maintaining comprehensive assessment folders that inform their planning and teaching. Said folders should contain (at minimum)

- Regular observations
- Continuous assessment
- Checklists
- Programme plotting e.g. Bell Framework, Talkboost
- PSAK

- Baseline Assessment (from term 3 in 1st class+)
- Individual EAL folders for each child with parent feedback / questionnaire
- Thoughts about school – if relevant – multilingual
- Child's Language Portfolio (scrapbook)

Special Educational Needs and Gifted and Talented Pupils

In Powerstown ETNS, children presenting with AEN are supported through our Continuum of Support programme, even when they are EAL learners. Please see COS policy here.

When a child presents as Gifted & Talented (high achieving) and is an EAL learner, they will continue to be supported to proficient levels within our EAL programme. Where timetables/staffing allow, a child will continue to receive EAL support until they reach step D on the Bell Framework. **See Appendix 4.**

Powerstown ETNS does its utmost to ensure the fair allocation of EAL support to all our EAL pupils.

Resources

Powerstown ETNS continues to value the importance of developing school resources for EAL learners

- EAL teachers support pupils via in class & withdrawal support,
- EAL teachers provide visual supports & bilingual aid etc. as required
- Bi-lingual dictionaries are available in numerous languages and we will continue to invest in same as required
- Dual language resources (library books, readers) are available throughout the school
- Peer support available to our pupils (e.g. Young Interpreters & language Explorers in operation)
- Continuous Professional Development in EAL is strongly encouraged

Key responsibilities and staff development

Aisling O'Neill is our EAL Coordinator (Senior cycle) and is supported by Anita McGuiness (Junior cycle)

Aisling and Anita have specialised in EAL best practice and have completed numerous courses from ELSTA, ECSI, Bell Foundation, Learning Village and NEPS.

Our EAL team meet weekly to upskill and discuss best practice. Newly qualified EAL teachers are supported via the Droichead programme and those new to EAL are supported by a mentor.

EAL staff provide regular feedback and updates to the teams they work with and engage with curriculum planning with relevant class levels.

EAL teams provide regular feedback at staff meetings.

Monitoring, review and evaluation of the policy

This policy will be reviewed by EAL Team in May 2023 and whole staff in June 2023.

Appendix 1: Powerstown ETNS EAL Assessment Framework

Class Appropriate Assessments

Teacher autonomy on appropriate programmes for each individual / group of children and will complete relevant assessments as outlines in support plans.

	Junior Infants	Senior Infants	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	5th	6th
1	PSAk Listening & Speaking	PSAk Listening & Speaking	PSAk Listening & Speaking, Reading & Writing	PSAk Listening & Speaking, Reading & Writing	PSAk Listening & Speaking, Reading & Writing	PSAk Listening & Speaking, Reading & Writing	PSAk Listening & Speaking, Reading & Writing	PSAk Listening & Speaking, Reading & Writing
2	Baseline Listening & Speaking	Baseline Listening & Speaking	Baseline Listening & Speaking	Baseline Listening & Speaking	Baseline Listening & Speaking	Baseline Listening & Speaking	Baseline Listening & Speaking	Baseline Listening & Speaking
3	Infant Literacy Screener (Term 2)	Infant Literacy Screener	Infant Literacy Screener	Infant Literacy Screener	Infant Literacy Screener*	Infant Literacy Screener*	Infant Literacy Screener*	Infant Literacy Screener*
4	Plot Children on the Bell Framework	Plot Children on the Bell Framework	Begin Advanced Literacy Screener (T2)	Advanced Literacy Screener	Advanced Literacy Screener	Advanced Literacy Screener	Advanced Literacy Screener	Advanced Literacy Screener
5	Generate Specific Targets	Generate Specific Targets	Writing Baseline Assessment 1&2	Writing Baseline Assessment 1&2	Writing Baseline Assessment 1&2	Writing Baseline Assessment 1&2	Writing Baseline Assessment 1&2	Writing Baseline Assessment 1&2
6			Reading Baseline Assessment Sessions 1-88	Reading Baseline Assessment Sessions 1-88	Reading Baseline Assessment Sessions 1-88	Reading Baseline Assessment Sessions 1-88	Reading Baseline Assessment Sessions 1-88	Reading Baseline Assessment Sessions 1-88

Infant Literacy Screener only completed on new-enrollees where deemed necessary

Appendix 2: The BELL Framework

This framework is used to track the children's progress of learning during their time whilst entitled to EAL support. It provides a broad target overview broken down into Listening, Speaking, Reading & Viewing and Writing which is divided into 5 bands from A to E. It's then broken down again into levels from 1-10 starting at 'early development' working up to 'getting closer to the next band' however children are not expected to achieve all in order.

For a child with EAL in Powerstown ETNS is it hoped that this framework will support teachers in tracking the progression of students throughout their years here as they demonstrate and develop their English language acquisition.

PSAK Vs The BELL Alignment

	Listening		Speaking	
	PSAK	BELL	PSAK	BELL
Levels	A1.1	A1-6	A1.1	A1-6
	A1.2	A7-10	A1.2	
	A1.3	B1-3	A1.3	A7-10
	A2.1	B4-7	A2.1	B1-4
	A2.2	B7-10	A2.2	B5-10
	A2.3	C1-3	A2.3	
	B1.1	C4-10	B1.1	C1-6
	B1.2	D1-5	B1.2	C7 -D-2
	B1.3	D6-10	B1.3	D3-10

Phonics assessment (PETNS Literacy Screener) will be used from Junior and Senior Infants (information already input on Aladdin) as well as the NEW PETNS Advanced Literacy Screener which will be used from 1st class upwards.