



Little Learners

NURSERY GROUP

EAL

Reviewed: June 2025

To be reviewed: July 2026

This policy links to:

The Early Years Foundation Stage (DfE 2024) Statutory Framework – Setting the standards for learning, development and care for children from birth to five years old.

LANGUAGE LEARNING

We understand that some children may join our setting already speaking one or more languages and are now beginning to learn English. We always provide these children with extra time, space, patience, and support. We value and celebrate the skills they bring from their home language, as we believe this helps boost their confidence and self-esteem.

The Nursery also wants to reassure parents that children benefit greatly from using, maintaining, and developing their home language. We encourage parents to continue engaging with their child in their home language at home.

We warmly invite parents to share their home language and cultural background with our staff and other children through visits and participation in nursery activities. Parents are also encouraged to provide us with key words, phrases, or translations that will help support their child's transition into Nursery.

If helpful, we can use the Nursery iPads to record videos of key words, phrases, and favourite stories in the child's home language to support their learning and emotional comfort. We also encourage parents to share stories, nursery rhymes, and everyday interactions in their home language through our observation app, **Family**.

The Nursery aims to incorporate the child's home language into daily routines and learning. This might include bilingual books, familiar songs, key vocabulary, and phrases used naturally within activities and play.

SOCIAL SKILLS

Children who share the same home language are encouraged and enabled to spend time together in the nursery to communicate.

Staff ensure that they make their teaching as visual as possible through the provision of pictorial and additional resources to assist EAL children and to enable them to fully access the inclusive learning environment.

Staff ensure that they use natural body language, gestures, facial expressions and

explanatory actions together with the use of objects to explain each part of an activity.

INTRODUCTION

Upon entry to the nursery the family is welcomed by the Nursery Manager and the child's Key Person, who seeks to find out as much as possible about the child and their individual needs. This includes details such as their correct name and pronunciation, dietary needs, and previous early years setting experience. Parents note the languages spoken at home on their Registration Form.

Staff will liaise with the family and ensure that they receive information and newsletters in a form that is accessible to them and that they are able to communicate their views and concerns to the staff without difficulty.

Translators will be called upon if staff are unable to communicate with parents. Many of our staff speak the home languages of the children who attend the setting.

Pre-teach materials can be sent home ahead of a new topic to support home learning.

LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT

Staff use strategies to engage pupils with EAL which includes a strong emphasis on role play, singing, exploring the environment and modelling language. Adults encourage social interactions with other children.

We use WIDGIT to find visuals for the class.

We differentiate between those children who speak English as an Additional Language or those who are Bilingual by using the following definitions as provided by the Department of Education. **EAL** stands for English as an Additional Language and recognises the fact that many children learning English in schools in this country already know one or more other languages and are adding English to that repertoire. **Bilingual** is used to refer to those children who have access to more than one language at home and at school. It does not necessarily imply full fluency in both or all of their languages.

Pre-school children who need extra support with language—whether due to a speech and language delay or language barriers—join an intervention group designed to promote and develop their communication skills. In the toddler room,

children work closely with their key workers to build vocabulary and focus on aspects 1, 2, and 3 of Phase 1 phonics.