



Outcomes
First Group

The Holden School

English as an Additional Language (EAL) Policy (Sept 2026)

THE HOLDEN SCHOOL**English as an Additional Language (EAL) Policy****"Every Voice Matters, Every Language Matters"**

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1. Policy Statement

At The Holden School, we believe that every child brings a unique set of experiences, strengths, languages, cultures and perspectives that enrich our school community.

We are committed to creating a welcoming, inclusive and emotionally safe environment where pupils who speak English as an Additional Language (EAL) feel valued, understood and supported to thrive academically, socially and emotionally.

We recognise that language is closely connected to identity, belonging and wellbeing. Our approach is therefore rooted in trauma-informed, relational practice that empowers pupils to maintain pride in their home language while developing confidence in English.

We view bilingualism and multilingualism as strengths and valuable assets that enrich both individual learners and our wider school community

2. Purpose

This policy outlines how The Holden School identifies, supports and celebrates pupils who use English as an Additional Language.

The policy aims to ensure that all pupils:

- Feel welcomed and included from the moment they join our school.
- Have equitable access to learning opportunities.
- Receive support tailored to their individual strengths and needs.
- Develop confidence in communication and self-expression.
- Maintain positive connections with their culture, language and identity.
- Are supported to achieve their full potential across all areas of school life.

3. Definition of EAL

A pupil is considered to have English as an Additional Language (EAL) if their first language is not English.

This includes pupils who:

- Are fluent in more than one language.
- Have recently arrived in the United Kingdom.
- Were born in the UK but use another language within the home.
- Are at any stage of learning English.

We recognise that pupils' experiences of language learning vary significantly and that support should always be personalised rather than based on assumptions.



4. Our Vision

At The Holden School, we strive to create a culture where:

Pupils feel safe

Children learn best when they feel emotionally secure, understood and connected. We prioritise relationships and belonging before academic progress.

Pupils feel seen

We celebrate each young person's culture, language, heritage and lived experiences.

Pupils feel successful

We recognise and build upon strengths, creating opportunities for meaningful success and participation across the curriculum.

Families feel valued

Parents and carers are experts in their children. We work collaboratively with families to understand each child's communication strengths, experiences and aspirations.

5. Aims

The Holden School aims to:

- Remove barriers to learning and participation.
- Promote equality, inclusion and belonging.
- Celebrate linguistic and cultural diversity.
- Support pupils to become confident communicators.
- Enable pupils to access a broad, balanced and ambitious curriculum.
- Foster positive relationships between school and home.
- Support pupils' emotional wellbeing during periods of transition and change.
- Ensure that all staff are equipped to meet the needs of EAL learners effectively.
- Maintain high expectations while providing appropriate levels of support.

6. The Holden School Approach

We recognise that many pupils arrive at The Holden School having experienced disruption, transitions, unmet needs, exclusion, anxiety or educational challenges.

For pupils who are also learning English, these experiences may create additional barriers to communication, confidence and participation.

Our approach therefore prioritises:

Safety

Creating predictable, welcoming environments where pupils feel secure.

Relationships

Building trusting relationships with pupils and families.

Regulation

Supporting emotional wellbeing and reducing communication-related anxiety.

Participation

Ensuring pupils can engage meaningfully in learning from the outset, regardless of English proficiency.

Strengths-Based Practice

Recognising existing knowledge, skills, talents and language abilities as foundations for future success.

7. Identifying and Assessing Need

Information about a pupil's language background is gathered through the admissions process and ongoing partnership with families.

This may include:

Languages spoken at home.

Previous educational experiences.

Literacy skills in first language.

Previous support received.

Strengths, interests and aspirations.

Communication preferences.

Assessment information will be used to inform planning, support and provision rather than to label or limit opportunities.

Where appropriate, schoolwork and assessments may initially be accessed through home language support, translation tools or alternative communication methods to ensure pupils can demonstrate their understanding.



8. Teaching and Learning

All staff share responsibility for supporting EAL learners.

Effective practice at The Holden School includes:

Creating Accessible Learning Environments

Staff will:

Use visual supports.

Provide concrete examples and demonstrations.

Break information into manageable steps.

Use clear and consistent language.

Check understanding sensitively.

Supporting Communication

Staff will:

Allow processing time.

Encourage discussion and collaborative learning.

Use modelling and repetition.

Support vocabulary development across the curriculum.

Recognise alternative ways of communicating understanding.

Building on Existing Strengths

Staff will:

Encourage use of home languages where appropriate.

Value bilingual and multilingual skills.

Draw on pupils' existing knowledge and experiences.

Celebrate cultural diversity throughout school life.

Maintaining Ambition

All pupils will access an appropriately adapted curriculum that maintains high aspirations and expectations.

Support is designed to remove barriers, not lower expectations.



9. Working in Partnership with Families

The Holden School values the essential role that families play in supporting language development and wellbeing.

We aim to:

Develop positive and trusting relationships.

Share progress regularly.

Seek parental views and expertise.

Provide accessible communication wherever possible.

Support families to understand how learning is delivered at school.

Encourage families to continue developing and celebrating home languages.

We believe that maintaining a child's first language supports identity, confidence and long-term learning outcomes.

10. Roles and Responsibilities

Headteacher

The Headteacher will:

Ensure this policy is implemented effectively.

Promote an inclusive and welcoming school culture.

Monitor the quality of provision for EAL learners.

Ensure appropriate resources and training are available.

SENDCO

The SENDCO will:

Support staff in meeting the needs of EAL learners.

Monitor progress and outcomes.

Work collaboratively with families and external professionals where required.

Ensure provision remains responsive and effective.

Teachers

Teachers will:

Create inclusive learning environments.

Plan effectively to meet individual needs.

Monitor progress and participation.

Develop pupils' communication and literacy skills.

Work collaboratively with families and colleagues.

Maintain strengths-based, trauma-informed approaches.

Support Staff

Support staff will:

Promote participation and belonging.

Encourage independence where appropriate.

Support communication and understanding.

Share observations that contribute to planning and review.

11. Monitoring and Evaluation

The effectiveness of EAL provision will be monitored through:

- Pupil progress reviews.
- Curriculum monitoring activities.
- Learning walks.
- Voice of the child activities.
- Parent feedback.
- Staff discussions and professional reflection.

Monitoring will focus on both educational outcomes and pupils' sense of belonging, inclusion and wellbeing.

12. Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

The Holden School is committed to promoting equality of opportunity for all pupils.

We actively celebrate diversity and strive to ensure that every member of our community feels respected, represented and valued.

No pupil will be disadvantaged because of their language background, ethnicity, culture, religion or nationality.

13. Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed annually by the Headteacher and SENCO to ensure it continues to reflect:

- Current legislation and guidance.
- Best practice in EAL provision.
- Trauma-informed and neurodiversity-affirming approaches.
- The ethos and values of The Holden School.
- The needs of our pupils and families.

14. Legislative and Regulatory Framework

- The Holden School is committed to ensuring that all pupils, including those who speak English as an



Additional Language (EAL), have equitable access to education and opportunities to thrive. This policy has been developed in accordance with the requirements of the Equality Act 2010, which places a duty on schools to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between individuals from different backgrounds. The school recognises its responsibility to provide an inclusive environment in which pupils' linguistic, cultural and ethnic identities are respected, valued and celebrated.

- The school's approach is further informed by the Children and Families Act 2014 and the SEND Code of Practice: 0-25 Years, which emphasise the importance of identifying and responding appropriately to individual learning needs. The Holden School recognises that learning English as an additional language is not a special educational need in itself; however, some pupils may require tailored support to access learning, participate fully in school life and achieve positive outcomes.
- As an independent specialist school, The Holden School also operates in accordance with the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014. In particular, the school is committed to providing a high-quality education that promotes pupils' linguistic development, supports their personal development and wellbeing, and prepares them positively for life in modern British society. School leaders and governors maintain oversight of EAL provision to ensure that statutory responsibilities are met and that all pupils are supported to feel safe, included, respected and able to achieve their full potential.
- The implementation of this policy is also supported by the principles contained within Keeping Children Safe in Education and the Human Rights Act 1998, recognising that effective communication, inclusion, cultural identity and a sense of belonging are fundamental to safeguarding, wellbeing and educational success. The school will work in partnership with pupils, families and professionals to ensure that language is never a barrier to safety, participation or achievement.

15. Linked Policies

- Teaching and Learning Policy
 - SEND Policy
 - Assessment Policy
 - Behaviour and Relationships Policy
 - Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
 - Accessibility Plan
 - Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy
 - Careers Education Policy
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- RSE Policy
- PSHE Policy

16. Document Information

Item	Detail
School	The Holden School
Policy Title	Curriculum Policy
Policy Owner	Deputy Headteacher – Curriculum and Quality of Education
Author	Lyn Hackett
Version	1.0
Date Approved	September 2026
Review Cycle	Annually
Next Review Date	September 2027

The Holden School Commitment

"At The Holden School we believe every child deserves to feel understood, valued and empowered to communicate in ways that work for them. We celebrate the richness that different languages, cultures and experiences bring to our community and are committed to ensuring that every pupil develops the confidence, skills and sense of belonging needed to flourish."



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