EAL Assessment

General principles

An EAL assessment and evaluation framework should support an evidence-based approach to assessing progress and to promote learning, where evidence comes from multiple sources, including formal and informal assessment. Evans, Jones, Leung & Liu (2015)
Find out more here - [EAL Assessment and Evaluation Framework](#)

Background information

- It is important to collect as much background information as possible for new pupils, especially those arriving mid-phase. This information is often held by parents/carers, contained within records passed on by previous schools and medical information from public/private bodies, whether UK based or not
- Be aware that interpreters may be needed for parent conferencing to ensure that all the appropriate information is gathered. There will be confidentiality issues, so it is important to find an independent adult where possible.
- Find out about [Bilingual Conferencing](#)

Standardised testing

- Most EAL learners do not perform to their true academic potential in standardised tests due to the linguistic and cultural challenges bound up within them. EMTAS recommends that outcomes from these types of test DO NOT inform decisions about grouping, setting and intervention
- Formal screening programmes are unlikely to provide a reliable picture either, potentially indicating SEND where there is none; consequential interventions are therefore likely to be inappropriate
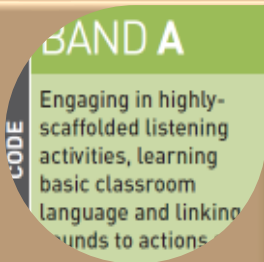- Read our [Position Statement](#) for more information.

First Language Assessment
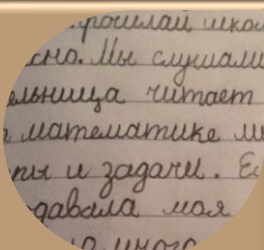
Schools need an efficient system for establishing and disseminating the proficiency in first and other languages of their EAL learners. The EMTAS Position Statement about first language explains why this is important and how teaching staff can capitalise on these proficiencies. Proficiency in first and other languages can vary enormously between children. Schools can utilise age-appropriate or better proficiency in these languages as a tool for learning across the curriculum. For more information visit our [guidance library](#).

EMTAS bilingual assistants are available for early profiling which includes an assessment of first and other languages. If the assessments have already been conducted in another setting then the information should be passed during transition, ready for dissemination to appropriate staff. Where a same language speaker is unavailable, it can be more difficult to gather this information. However, EMTAS [E Learning](#) is available to help staff understand how to conduct an assessment without sharing the same language as the child.

EAL Assessment

Proficiency in English (PiE)

BAND A

CODE Engaging in highly-scaffolded listening activities, learning basic classroom language and linking sounds to actions

- All teaching staff should know the DfE PiE band for each of their EAL learners
- Schools should implement a recognised assessment framework in order to track the ongoing progress in EAL for their learners across the curriculum – EMTAS recommends the BELL Foundation EAL Assessment Framework
- Be aware that EAL learners often have spikey profiles of achievement across the curriculum
- Rates of progress will depend on a range of factors including: age of entry into the UK education system, whole school provision and quality of teaching and learning, a pupil's general aptitude for learning and their proficiency in first language, the amount of support available from within the home situation and whether a pupil has any additional SEND.

SEND:EAL Assessment
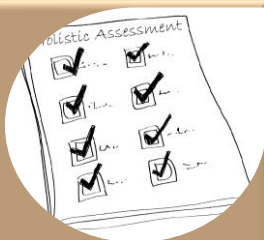
Sometimes EAL learners don't make expected rates of progress and this may raise potential concerns of an underlying SEND. However there can be many reasons why children struggle and it is therefore important to collect a range of evidence over time before making any firm conclusions.

- Talk with parents about the child's early development and find out if there has been any involvement from outside agencies, in the UK or abroad
- Rates of progress in English acquisition will vary between individuals and it can take up to ten years for some EAL learners to catch up with their peers
- Find out if the child's proficiency in first language is age-appropriate
- Assess PiE within the full range of curriculum subjects over time
- Check there are no external factors such as unstable housing or racism in the community that may be impacting performance at school.

Transition

Requesting records about pupils from a previous school and passing on meaningful information to a receiving school or college is critical to ensure the most effective practice and provision is put in place for every EAL learner. Effective passing of information will help staff think beyond what children can currently do, encouraging a more aspirational view, thereby recognising the potential of their EAL learners in the longer-term.

Links and Resources

- L1 Assessment Blog
- L1 assessment E-learning
- SEND:EAL E-learning
- Information - SEND or EAL?
- EMTAS SEND:EAL Phoneline
- Bilingual Conferencing E-learning
- BELL EAL Assessment Framework

- How do I assess an EAL learner?
- EAL MESHGuide
- Supporting the achievement of deaf children who use EAL
- Assessing the learning of EAL pupils during and after school closures (webinar)

Hampshire Services EMTAS