



Assessment and Progress

Towards the end of the Spring Term, your school administers an early language screening test to all children in Year R. A number of learners with EAL have performed extremely poorly and been placed into intervention catch-up groups along with non-EAL peers. Having reviewed the progress of these learners with EAL over a 2 month period, you are unsure if it is having the desired result.

What issues around EAL practice and provision do you need to consider here?



Screening tests are usually standardised on the monolingual population and often contain linguistic barriers along with cultural bias. Results are therefore unreliable for learners with EAL, especially those in the early stages of acquiring English. Here are some important questions to ask:

Have the children had first language (L1) assessments to ascertain whether there are language development difficulties in L1?

How much exposure to English have these children had prior to joining?

Have the children had pre-school experience in the UK?

Strong language role models are needed for learners with EAL, so there may be issues in grouping them with monolingual children who are experiencing speech and language difficulties. The context and content of the intervention programmes are unlikely to be appropriate for pupils in the early stages of learning English. Moreover, the children will miss out on the learning experiences being offered in class if they are withdrawn for intervention sessions. Research shows that children with EAL will acquire English quicker if they have access to the rich language rooted in concrete contexts available to them in the classroom.