



Education  
and Training

# The EAL Handbook

Advice to schools on programs for  
supporting students learning  
English as an Additional Language



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## Purpose

The purpose of this handbook is to provide schools with advice for planning and implementing effective programs for a school's English as an additional language (EAL) student cohort.

A DET EAL Regional Program Officer is available in each region to support Victorian government schools to develop and implement effective EAL programs.

Support for students learning EAL should be designed to reflect the needs of learners at key points along the EAL pathway. This pathway and the appropriate teaching and learning foci are outlined in the [EAL Companion to the AusVELS](#) and the [EAL Developmental Continuum P-10](#). A new Victorian Curriculum F-10 EAL is currently under development. It will be published in 2017 for use in schools from 2018.

Information about policy and funding for EAL programs in Victorian government schools and links to contact details for EAL Regional Program Officers, resources and other services are provided on the [EAL section of the Department of Education and Training web site](#).

## EAL learners in mainstream schools

EAL learners are a diverse group, and their learning needs vary. EAL learners include students:

- beginning school in Australia at any year level
- born overseas or in Australia
- beginning school with little, some or no exposure to English
- with schooling equivalent to that received by their chronological peers
- with little or no previous formal schooling in any country, or with severely interrupted education in their first language.

Students learning English as an additional language are faced with a number of challenges.

To make progress and to achieve the same level of educational success as other students they must develop literacy in English by:

- learning to speak English
- learning to read and write English
- continuing their learning in all learning areas through English, at the same time as they are learning English
- learning about the Australian school system.

They also need to develop new cultural understandings, in both the educational context and in the wider community.

All programs in which EAL learners participate need to provide optimal conditions for learning English. EAL learners in EAL index funded schools will be learning their English through specialist EAL support programs as well as through EAL-informed classroom support. In schools that do not receive EAL index funding, EAL learners spend their time in mainstream classrooms, and need appropriate EAL-informed teaching. Classroom teachers must understand and be equipped to meet the educational needs of their EAL learners.

Schools should therefore consider the following:

- a whole-school approach to EAL programming and provision, including EAL policy development
- the development of a specialist EAL program
- the ways in which EAL needs in mainstream classrooms are met
- the professional learning needs of staff.

## A whole-school approach to EAL programming and provision

Catering for the language and literacy development of EAL learners is a long-term, shared school community commitment. The most effective EAL provision involves a whole-school approach. This means that EAL learners and their families are acknowledged, consulted, included, and active participants in the school community. It also means:

- targeted EAL programs are provided for students with the greatest learning needs
- all teachers are aware of the learning needs of the EAL cohort
- strong EAL pedagogy is evident in classroom programs, planning, teaching and assessment practices
- teachers use the *EAL Companion to the AusVELS (the Companion)* as the basis for curriculum planning
- teachers use the *EAL Developmental Continuum P-10* to broaden their understanding of the EAL standards in the *Companion*, to validate assessments of students' progress and to design appropriate learning experiences
- Principals use the EAL Achievement reports from the School Information Portal to review and monitor the progress of students against the *EAL Developmental Continuum* and to inform program planning
- EAL programs and provision are regularly reviewed to ensure they continue to meet EAL learners' needs
- the School Strategic Plan, the Annual Implementation Plan, school policies and systemic practices document the school's support for and provision of quality EAL programs.

## Framework for Improving Student Outcomes

The Framework for Improving Student Outcomes (FISO) for Victorian government schools includes self-evaluation, review, planning, reporting and sharing exemplary practice across the system. Within FISO there are opportunities for documenting, setting goals and developing strategies for, and reviewing EAL provision within the school.

The School Strategic Plan (SSP) and the Annual Implementation Plan: for Improving Student Outcomes (AIP) emphasise the importance of setting goals for improved student outcomes, and selecting key strategies to bring about improvement for all students.

EAL learners follow a different pathway of English language learning from students for whom English is a first language. This EAL pathway is described in the *EAL Companion to the AusVELS*, and the EAL standards found in it should be used as the basis for developing realistic and accessible goals and teaching programs for EAL learners.

Strategies to bring about improvement in the outcomes of EAL learners can be specifically outlined in the SSP and the AIP.

The SSP sets the strategic direction for the next four years for the school, expressed through goals, targets and key improvement strategies. It could include aspects such as:

- how the school's EAL program will be organised, developed and managed
- assessment and reporting policies for EAL learners
- staffing strategies
- monitoring and review of the EAL program.

The AIP describes how the key improvement strategies in the SSP, and other significant projects, will be put into operation during the year and how they will be monitored. It can include aspects such as:

- specific goals for the learning of particular groups and individual students
- the way in which student progress will be assessed and monitored
- professional learning plans.

EAL provision should also be included in the annual school self-evaluation or as part of any review process undertaken.

## EAL policy development

An EAL policy, approved by the school council, should be developed to inform and guide the development of the most appropriate program for the EAL learners and the school context.

The school community needs to have input to the school's EAL policy if it is to inform and support the EAL program. It is important that the whole school community has an understanding of the particular needs of EAL learners, and the way in which the school intends to meet these needs.

A typical EAL policy will include a rationale for the program, objectives, provision and review arrangements.

The rationale should include information about the school's EAL learner cohort and their particular needs for support in learning language.

The objectives of the EAL program need to be clearly stated. The objectives must include learning objectives and assessment practices consistent with the *EAL Companion to the AusVELS* and the *EAL Developmental Continuum P-10*.

Other objectives may also include educational and community aims, such as meeting student welfare needs and maintaining students' heritage or other additional languages.

The provision section of an EAL policy will be developed as program arrangements are established, and could include:

- the type/s of support or classes to be offered
- timetabling
- the eligible students
- how the specialist aspects of the program will be staffed
- how students will be supported in mainstream classes
- roles and responsibilities of staff
- transition policies or arrangements
- strategies for engaging with parents and families of EAL learners
- resources available
- professional learning goals and plans.

The EAL policy should also include a schedule for regular review and a commitment to evaluate the program, consistent with the evaluation of other learning areas and in line with school improvement processes.

## The development of a specialist EAL program

An EAL Regional Program Officer is available in each region to support Victorian government schools to develop and implement effective EAL programs.

Contact details for [EAL Regional Program Officers](#) are available on the Department's website.

The EAL Regional Program Officer will be able to help identify appropriate steps to developing a program which suits the school context and needs of the particular EAL learner cohort.

## Student information

To provide appropriately for the EAL learners in the school, it is essential to know their learning histories and achievements in their first language, any additional languages, and in English. Learning history includes any participation in a new arrivals program, such as intensive EAL tuition in an English language school or centre, prior to enrolling in a mainstream school.

Much information about a student's cultural, linguistic and educational background is collected on enrolment. It may be necessary to use an interpreter to be sure that accurate information is collected. Government schools can access free interpreters within guidelines.

Information collected and stored on CASES21 includes:

- whether or not students speak English as their main language at home
- the number of years of schooling students have had, in their home countries
- whether their schooling has been disrupted
- date of arrival in Australia
- participation in a new arrivals program.

CASES21 reports that show this information include ST21034 and ST21031.

This information can form a basis for planning but needs to be supplemented with further information. Many schools develop a sociolinguistic profile of their students. Information collected from parent/teacher interviews, from students themselves, reports from previous schools including transition reports from intensive English language programs, past school reports and/or academic records from other countries add to the profile schools have of their students, their experiences and learning needs.

EAL and classroom teachers can better provide for their students if they know:

- how long each student has been learning English, in Australia or overseas
- each student's level of literacy in their first and any subsequent language/s
- each student's assessments against the EAL standards
- whether or not students are making acceptable progress in learning English
- how students are progressing in other domains
- students' access to English outside of school hours
- whether or not students attend classes in their home language.

Examining data beyond student results for English and Mathematics can provide valuable insights into EAL learners' needs and strengths. Attitude, attendance and retention data are also important data sources.

NAPLAN assessments provide data on students against national benchmarks. The principal may grant an exemption from NAPLAN to students who have been learning English in Australia for less than one year.



## Student learning needs

The needs of the EAL learner cohort across the school should be the first consideration for developing a program.

Questions to be considered include:

- What is the range of needs across the EAL learner cohort?
- Which students are in need of a specialised EAL program?
- Which students could be adequately supported in mainstream classrooms?
- Who will be targeted for a specialist EAL program?
- Are any students preliterate or beginning readers and writers who need to become literate in English as well as develop language skills?
- Do students need to develop 'learning to learn' skills or become familiar with classroom routines and behaviours?
- Are there any students from a refugee background who may have significant pre-migration, migration or settlement issues impacting on their capacity to learn?
- Have students encountered the technology used in the classroom before?
- Does the school have adequate and appropriate resources for the learners, in terms of literacy, language and content level, as well as culturally appropriate content and imagery?
- Does the school have resources in the students' first or additional languages?

## Program decisions

There are many factors which will influence the way an EAL program is staffed, timetabled and organised. As well as considering which teaching contexts are most appropriate to meet the needs of student groups within the specialist EAL program (see [Program options](#)), schools must consider the available resources and other logistics in determining the details of the program. In addition, all members of a school's staff should be aware they have a role to play in the delivery of a high quality EAL program (see [Staff roles in EAL provision](#)).

Aspects of the program's delivery which form part of the school's EAL policy, such as assessment and reporting, and parent engagement, must also be determined. The following questions should be answered to inform program decisions.

### Resources and logistics

- How many students need EAL teaching and/or support?
- Which year levels are those students in and what stages of English language development have they reached?
- What is the most effective way to group the students?
- What is the school's level of EAL index funding and what additional funds could be allocated to support EAL learners?
- How will staff roles and responsibilities for EAL be allocated?
- Which teachers have EAL qualifications, extensive professional learning in EAL, or experience in teaching EAL learners?
- How will MEAs support the program?
- What teaching spaces are available?
- Will the groupings or program options be flexible enough to change from term to term or semester to semester if student needs change?
- What timetabling considerations need to be taken into account, for example which classes will EAL classes be blocked against in a secondary program?

### **Assessment**

- Which assessment tools will be used throughout the school?
- Which assessment tasks are appropriate for EAL learners?
- Who will assess the English language learning needs of EAL learners?
- How will information about the English language proficiency levels of EAL learners be used to inform and support their teachers in mainstream classes?
- How will the school ensure teacher judgement data for EAL students is imported to CASES21 for Semester 1 and 2 each year, so it becomes part of their permanent record.

### **Reporting**

- How will the school report EAL learner progress to parents and other teachers?
- How will EAL learners' development in learning English be reported to the system?

The Department provides advice to support decisions about appropriate assessment and reporting on its website.

See: [Assessment and reporting](#)

### **Parents and families**

- How will parents' language needs be catered for?
- How will parents be informed about and engaged with school programs?
- How will parents or guardians be engaged in their children's learning or involved in assessment?
- How will communication enable all parents to participate in the life of the school?
- Which contexts will provide opportunities for parents to understand the way in which the EAL program works?
- What opportunities will parents have to express their needs and expectations?

## Program options

Schools can use many different organisational strategies and student groupings to maximise their ability to cater for the diverse learning needs of their EAL learners. These include team teaching, flexible groupings, and specialist programs. These options are not mutually exclusive, and some or all can operate, depending on considerations including students' needs, school size, staffing, and resources.

The way in which EAL needs are being met in the mainstream classroom can influence program choices. For example, a classroom teacher trialling a new program to support EAL learners may benefit from team teaching with the EAL teacher to establish the program.

Schools also need to consider the availability of suitable locations for flexible groupings, such as parallel teaching needs, with either the classroom teacher or the EAL teacher using an alternative location. Locations may need to be found for activities that require space or quiet.

Where beliefs about teaching and teaching styles differ, some programs will be more practicable than others. It may be beneficial to plan collaboratively but use a separate teaching location.

It is also important that, wherever possible, similar-needs EAL groups are not timetabled at the same time as specialist programs. Physical education or technology activities, for example, are excellent opportunities for English language learning, and students may feel they are missing out on something special if they are not included in such programs.

## Collaborative planning

Collaborative planning can involve a single teacher and an EAL teacher working together, or a team of teachers and an EAL teacher working together. Planning can be done at the syllabus or unit planning level, and take place during the implementation of the program, to allow for changing student learning needs. A common format may be used for unit planning, and this can be copied for all members of the planning team. Planning is a key element in the implementation of an EAL program. In collaborative planning, classroom teachers and EAL teachers plan together, each of them bringing important information to the planning session.

Collaborative planning is most successful when the roles and expectations of classroom and specialist teachers are clear. If the EAL teacher is also involved in parallel or similar needs teaching, collaborative planning ensures that both teachers are working towards the same learning goals. It allows for flexibility in implementing the program and sharing knowledge about the learner's progress.

Classroom/subject teachers have knowledge of:

- the content and methodology through which to teach the area content
- the EAL learners, who they have been able to observe working in many different learning contexts.

EAL teachers bring knowledge of second language acquisition and EAL teaching to:

- identify the stage of language development of the EAL learner
- set reasonable learning goals and identify effective strategies which will enhance English language learning
- plan assessment activities aligned with the stages of the *EAL Developmental Continuum P-10* that identify the learner's competence and needs.

Where the EAL teacher's time allocation is limited, or EAL learners are spread across several year levels, collaborative planning may represent the optimal use of an EAL teacher. It provides EAL-informed input into the ongoing classroom program, and may therefore have greater overall effect than a brief teaching session directly with the EAL learners. Collaborative planning is also particularly effective when new programs or teaching approaches are being implemented.

## Team teaching

Team teaching is an effective strategy for EAL provision. In this model, the classroom teacher and an EAL teacher share responsibility for assessing students and planning, teaching, and evaluating the EAL program. It is crucial that collaborative planning is undertaken. Part of the planning session should involve deciding on the tasks in which students may benefit most from having two teachers, and the tasks in which EAL learners may need most support.

Team teaching may be most useful in:

- activities where EAL learners are introduced to new tasks or are working in cooperative groups on a challenging task
- introducing EAL learners to new information to prepare them for a future task.

Team teaching is most successful when both the EAL teacher and the classroom teacher have shared beliefs about language teaching and learning. The role of both teachers may change from week to week, depending on the needs of the students and the demands of the curriculum. Team teaching provides the flexibility to use a range of effective classroom organisational options which may be demanding for the classroom teacher to implement alone. These may include small group work, conferencing, or clinic teaching that focuses on particular language items, or on preparing EAL learners for a new topic or activity.

## Parallel teaching

Parallel teaching involves both the classroom teacher and the EAL teacher presenting the same content to students, but with an EAL teacher teaching the EAL learners and focusing in particular on the language demands of the task. While they are likely to use separate teaching locations and different activities, teachers need to plan collaboratively to ensure that they share goals, and that all students are covering the basic classroom curriculum.

Parallel teaching may be particularly effective at the start of a new unit, when EAL learners may need to learn new vocabulary and concepts, or when a task is particularly demanding linguistically, for example, writing a report where students need to revise the structures and features of the text type.

In secondary schools, EAL classes for a subject area may run parallel to, and in place of, mainstream English classes, or in subject areas such as Science, Mathematics or Humanities. Parallel classes work particularly well when there are multiple students in a particular year level or operating at a particular stage of EAL development.

## Similar-needs classes

Similar-needs classes may be organised in response to particular EAL learner needs.

In similar-needs classes, content is chosen that is most appropriate to the students at their level of development.

Similar-needs classes may be used to prepare students for the language demands across the curriculum or to recycle language that still requires more practice. Similar-needs classes should be based on English language learning needs and can include clinic groups, and students from more than one class. This kind of provision is also suitable where small numbers of EAL learners, at similar stages of development in classes at the same year level (or across year levels) are brought together to maximise the time they can spend in a targeted EAL program. Similar-needs classes are particularly effective for newly arrived students.

Planning between the EAL teacher and classroom teachers is an essential element of such classes, and ensures that the EAL program remains relevant to the mainstream classroom program.

## The mainstream classroom program

EAL learners spend the majority of their school time with their classroom teacher in primary school, or with subject teachers in secondary school, even though they may have additional support from an EAL teacher. Therefore, the main responsibility for ensuring that EAL learner needs are met will always be the day-to-day responsibility of the classroom teacher or subject teachers.

The main way in which this responsibility can be met is through planning and implementing a teaching program that caters to the EAL learner's particular needs.

EAL teachers can assist classroom and subject teachers to develop appropriate programs for their EAL learners. This can include assisting them to:

- identify the English language skills and needs of EAL learners across the learning areas and planning learning experiences that cater for them
- choose resources that reflect the diverse nature of Australian society and are culturally sensitive
- choose resources that are accessible for all students in terms of the language used, or plan activities that prepare EAL learners for these resources
- plan 'EAL-friendly' teaching strategies and approaches that model language and processes and scaffold demanding tasks.

## EAL electives in secondary schools

EAL can be offered as an elective subject on the school timetable. The purpose of this class would be to:

- offer targeted support to EAL learners, when there is no stand-alone EAL program and students attend mainstream English classes, or
- offer additional language support to students who attend an EAL specialist program, but require extra teaching time for skill development.

Careful consideration should be given to the subject/s against which EAL is blocked, so that students choosing the elective are not disadvantaged by limiting their other options for further study.

## The professional learning needs of staff

In the early stages of developing an EAL program it is worthwhile to build an informed view of EAL learning and teaching within the school.

The EAL Regional Program Officer will be able to assist with identifying professional learning needs and opportunities for mainstream teachers, EAL specialists and MEAs.

To successfully deliver a whole-school EAL program, all teaching staff should have an understanding of:

- how an additional language is learnt
- the teaching and learning conditions that best promote the learning of English as an additional language
- the language and literacy demands of classroom activities
- EAL teaching strategies they can use in their classrooms
- the stages of EAL learning as described in the *EAL Companion to the AusVELS* and the *EAL Developmental Continuum P-10*
- the particular learning needs of the full range of EAL learners.

Appropriate professional learning for all staff, including school support staff may be:

- working effectively with interpreters
- cultural background information sessions
- developing intercultural understanding
- cross-cultural competency training
- understanding the refugee experience
- information sessions about situations in students' countries of origin.

Opportunities for teachers to mentor, coach and learn from each other should also be investigated.

## Staff roles in EAL provision

All the members of a school community have a role to play in the development and delivery of the school's EAL program. Staff roles in schools vary according to the size of the school and EAL learner cohort. The following descriptions list possible responsibilities for each role.

### Leadership team

The Principal or school leader:

- ensures that accurate data is collected through enrolment procedures, interviews and meetings with parents, so that statistical information about the school population can be collated, and so that important factors that may influence students' learning are known
- ensures interpreters or MEAs are used to obtain accurate information about the learner from parents
- ensures resources including EAL index funding are directed to the EAL program
- ensures teachers have access to information about their students that is relevant to the teaching and learning program
- provides opportunities for teacher professional learning to ensure that there is an awareness in the school community of:
  - the implications of additional language acquisition for learning and teaching
  - the latest information about EAL methodology and resources
  - how to work effectively with interpreters and MEAs
  - the refugee experience and recovery goals to support student learning and wellbeing
- provides support for MEA professional learning
- promotes a culture that values diversity and ensures that multicultural perspectives are incorporated into all aspects of school life
- encourages home-school partnerships and parent engagement.

### Curriculum or literacy leaders

The curriculum or literacy leader:

- ensures that policies and learning programs in all learning areas are formulated and implemented with the language learning needs of all students in mind and with an emphasis on building student language acquisition across all modes: speaking, listening, reading, viewing and writing
- develops an approach that promotes access to the curriculum for all students including EAL learners
- builds teachers' knowledge of the explicit literacy and language demands of their teaching areas
- ensures that curriculum policies require multicultural perspectives to be incorporated in all learning areas
- liaises with the EAL coordinator to identify effective ways MEAs can contribute to classroom planning and the delivery of lessons
- ensures that assessment in all learning areas is able to measure a student's capacity to engage with the literacy and language demands of the curriculum
- supports teachers in using assessment information to scaffold student's learning in literacy and language through the learning areas
- builds staff capacity in using appropriate assessment for EAL learners.

## EAL specialists

The EAL coordinator, leader or teacher:

- provides specialist EAL teaching that increases students' capacity to participate successfully in mainstream classroom activities and to achieve the goals of the mainstream curriculum
- keeps abreast of the latest information in the EAL field, e.g. through professional learning opportunities and shares this with staff as appropriate
- works with teachers in curriculum areas to identify the language and literacy demands of the content and identify specific EAL-informed teaching approaches to address learner needs
- assists the classroom teacher in assessing EAL learners' competence in English, formulating practical goals and objectives for EAL learners and planning a program that caters for the needs of all EAL learners
- establishes relationships with neighbouring schools and participates in EAL networks
- oversees the MEA timetable for scheduled classes to support EAL learners and their teachers
- works with the leadership team to analyse school data related to EAL learners and its implications for whole school provision
- works with curriculum and professional learning leaders to implement appropriate staff development in EAL assessment and reporting
- collaborates with other staff on EAL relevant initiatives such as career development and refugee support initiatives.

## Classroom or subject teachers

The classroom teacher in a primary school or subject teacher in a secondary school:

- identifies the language learning needs of EAL learners when planning activities across all areas of the curriculum
- plans curriculum that takes account of the understanding that EAL learners are acquiring English while learning about English, through English and learning how to read, write and speak at the same time
- makes the language and literacy demands required for success in each lesson explicit to all students
- scaffolds students' language and literacy learning through the curriculum explicitly by using EAL strategies and teaching approaches
- develops classroom activities that relate to and build upon the experiences that students bring to the learning situation
- uses assessment strategies that allow all students to express the understandings they have gained
- keeps assessment records that indicate the growth of understandings and skills in both English and EAL
- informs parents of student progress in EAL as well as in the learning areas other than English
- provides opportunities for all students to share the diversity of their experiences
- ensures that multicultural perspectives are incorporated in all aspects of the social and learning environments
- attends relevant EAL professional learning.



## Multicultural Education Aides (MEAs)

The Multicultural Education Aide:

- supports EAL learners by explaining concepts or directions in the learners' first language, or simplified English
- facilitates the participation of EAL learners in group work
- liaises with family members and members of the community to foster communication and to encourage parents to participate fully in the life of the school
- provides staff with insights into the culture and language of students and their families
- assists teachers to communicate with parents and other family members
- supports teachers with resource development.

## Professional learning coordinators

The professional learning coordinator ensures staff have access to EAL professional learning, including that which develops their understanding of:

- the cultural, linguistic and faith backgrounds of their students
- how English as an additional language is learnt
- the teaching and learning conditions that best promote the learning of English as an additional language
- the language and literacy demands of classroom activities
- EAL teaching strategies they can use in their classrooms
- the stages of EAL learning as described in the *EAL Companion to the AusVELS* and the *EAL Developmental Continuum*
- the particular learning needs of the full range of EAL learners
- where appropriate, the refugee experience and approaches to support and promote the wellbeing of students from refugee backgrounds.

## Transition coordinators

The transition coordinator:

- supports transitions and the development of pathways for children and young people at vital points in their education
- liaises with Transition Coordinators and Officers in new arrivals programs
- understands that EAL learners and students from refugee backgrounds may have experienced multiple changes in their lives, including country of residence, education, languages learnt and cultures encountered, all of which can impact on their learning and capacity to learn
- supports students and families with educational transitions
- makes available information in languages other than English
- ensures interpreters are used to convey important messages
- ensures teachers have access to relevant information about students contained within Transition Learning and Development Statements, exit reports from English language schools/centres, past school reports and/or academic records from other countries
- coordinates parent information sessions providing interpreters as appropriate.

In managing transition from early childhood to Prep/Foundation, the Transition coordinator:

- collaborates with the school enrolment officer to ensure the enrolment process is culturally appropriate and that relevant and accurate information is collected, using interpreters where necessary
- uses the information in Transition reports to inform planning to meet the needs of the EAL learners entering the school
- refers all overseas born students entering Prep who have been in Australia less than 18 months to an intensive English Language program.

## Librarians and resources coordinators

The school librarian or resource coordinator:

- provides a range of accessible resources for EAL learners at different stages of EAL development (e.g. for classroom units of work, for their own reading)
- provides access to a range of factual and fictional materials in students' home languages, including through borrowing from the [Languages and Multicultural Education Resource Centre \(LMERC\)](#)
- ensures that available materials reflect the diversity of Australian society
- makes teachers aware where resources contain racist and stereotypical references
- supports teachers to access up-to-date materials on second language acquisition and EAL teaching methodology.

## Careers practitioners

The careers coordinator implements the school's career development program which includes:

- implementing the Victorian Careers Curriculum Framework, including making use of the EAL Guidelines and EAL Career Action Plans contained within, as appropriate
- providing students with culturally appropriate advice and information about careers and courses through a combination of classroom activities and group and individual counselling
- supporting parents to assist in their child's career development using the Engaging Parents in Career Conversations framework (EPICC), including making use of the EAL Guidelines and customised resources contained within
- making available information about career development and study options in a range of languages, available from Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority and the [myfuture](#) website
- supporting Year 12 students to make Special Entry Access Scheme and scholarship applications to the Victorian Tertiary Admissions Centre
- supporting EAL learners to undertake workplace learning opportunities, including work experience, Structured Workplace Learning and School Community work (volunteering)
- guiding EAL learners to identify and participate in relevant careers expos and university and TAFE open days.

## Primary school approaches

In primary schools, the development of the EAL program is mainly influenced by the percentage of students at the different year levels and stages of EAL development, and the time allocation of the EAL specialist teacher/s.

The case studies below outline the approaches taken by two schools in developing and implementing their EAL programs, including the timetable developed by the EAL specialist teacher/s.

### Case study 1: High Street Primary School

The following case study shows the kinds of programming decisions which were made in one school, and how the role of the EAL teacher developed and changed over the year according to the changing needs of the school.

#### **School profile**

High Street Primary School has an enrolment of 205 students.

Specialist art, library and information technology classes are offered.

About 75% of the students use languages other than English at home, including Italian, Greek, Lebanese, Dari, Arabic, Tagalog, Vietnamese and Chinese (Mandarin).

58 per cent of the students (about 120) attract EAL funding.

Of these 120 students, 80 were prioritised for specialist EAL assistance, (including all the EAL learners in Prep/Foundation) in addition to that provided by mainstream classroom teachers, many of whom are very experienced in teaching EAL learners.

27 of the EAL learners were enrolled in Prep/Foundation, 15 other students had been learning English for less than 2 years, and a further 78 had been learning English for between 2 and 5 years.

The school's SFO weighting is 1.4.

#### **EAL learner profile**

The EAL learners have diverse needs.

Fifteen students are recently arrived, and have been learning English for less than 12 months (many of the students have attended a New Arrivals outpost program for 6 months, and have returned to the mainstream school at the beginning of the year).

The other EAL learners have been learning English for longer than this and use English confidently for social purposes, but they need support when producing texts required for academic purposes.

The twenty seven students enrolled in Prep/Foundation have a range of proficiency in English, although all speak a language other than English as their main language at home. Their exposure to English varies enormously: five children did not attend kindergarten and speak very little English, others have learnt some English from parents and older siblings, or from kindergarten or child care attendance.

This year the classes with the highest numbers of EAL learners are the Years Prep/Foundation, 1, 2 and 5. The recent arrivals are in Years 2, 4 and 6.

The Year 6 teacher is particularly concerned about the 3 recent arrivals in Year 6, who will be attending secondary school next year, and who she feels will need additional help to make adequate progress.

### **Staffing profile**

The school's EAL allocation is for approximately 1.4 EFT teachers. One full-time and one part-time EAL specialist teachers are employed, making a total of 1.6 EFT, with additional funding being allocated from literacy funding. The EAL teachers have TESOL (Teaching English to Speakers of other Languages) qualifications.

Four of the classroom teachers have completed the *Teaching EAL Students in Mainstream Classrooms (TESMC): language and learning across the curriculum* professional development course. The school also employs part-time MEAs (around 0.7 EFT in total), who speak Arabic, Lebanese, Vietnamese and Chinese (Mandarin).

### **The EAL Program**

In the first weeks of the school term the EAL teachers' priorities are to:

- get to know the incoming Prep/Foundation students and their parents/caregivers (this is facilitated by access to Early Years Transition Statements and data collected on enrolment)
- help the Prep/Foundation teachers to assess the EAL learners' strengths and needs
- work with the Prep/Foundation teachers in implementing the transition program (e.g. ensuring all students and parents are familiar with the school routines and practices)
- assist the most recently arrived students at other year levels to settle into their new routines
- assist all teachers to build up their learner profiles and class profiles
- prioritise student needs and draw up a timetable for the EAL program
- timetable collaborative planning sessions with all teachers.

The timetable for the rest of the term is weighted towards the Prep/Foundation class because of the high numbers of students with a background in languages other than English, and the number of students who need support in English language learning.

As these students make the transition into school life, their needs will be identified, mainstream programs will be developed to meet these needs, and the emphasis on the Prep/Foundation class will become less. However, this school has identified high EAL support through team teaching as a priority in the early years, as it believes that early literacy development is crucial to success at these early stages, and that providing strong support in the early years reduces the support that may be required in the following years.

Also of high priority will be assistance for the most recently arrived students to settle into new classes and routines. The timetable at this stage also includes team teaching in their classrooms. EAL input into all classes is provided through collaborative planning sessions.

### **Ongoing identification of priorities**

At the end of the first term the situation is re-evaluated and new priorities set for Term 2. The EAL learners in the Prep/Foundation class have settled into school life and are progressing well. They no longer need the same amount of intensive teaching so extra time may be given to the students in other year levels. Needs are reassessed again at the end of the second term. In line with priorities listed in the school implementation plan, extra support is now offered to programs where EAL learners need assistance to achieve the mainstream goals. This influences the timetabling in third term.

The EAL teacher also helps classroom teachers to introduce or implement a new program or organisational approach that is particularly supportive of EAL learners. Further assessment of the program is undertaken at the end of each term.

The time allocated for the different aspects of the EAL program for the year looks like this:

**Term 1: weekly timetabled responsibilities**

- Collaborative planning – 7 hours (1 hour per year level)
- Finding and adapting resources for classroom programs to assist classroom teachers – 4 hours
- Team teaching Prep/Foundation – 10 hours
- Team teaching, parallel teaching in Years 1 to 5 – 2 hours each = 10 hours
- Similar needs group for Year 6 students – 5 hours
- Preparation for team teaching – 4 hours
- Supervision of MEAs – 2 hours

**Additional responsibilities:**

- Assist with the compilation of school and class profiles
- Get to know the parents of new EAL learners
- Develop timetable for MEAs
- Buy new resources
- Investigate school EAL PL needs and opportunities

**Term 2: weekly timetabled responsibilities**

- Collaborative planning – 7 hours (1 hour per year level)
- Team teaching Prep/Foundation – 10 hours
- Team teaching/parallel teaching
- Years 2, 3, 4, 5 – 8 hours
- Team teaching/parallel teaching, Years 1 and 6 – 10 hours
- Resources development and support – 5 hours
- Preparation for team teaching – 3 hours
- Supervision of MEAs – 2 hours

**Additional responsibilities:**

- Organise interpreters for parent–teacher interviews
- Organise EAL PL session at curriculum day
- Introduce new teachers to the *EAL Companion to the AusVELS*
- Review the MEAs' timetable
- Assist teachers to report on the progress of EAL learners to parents, using the *EAL Developmental Continuum P-10*
- Assist in writing reports for EAL learners, as appropriate

**Term 3: weekly timetabled responsibilities**

- Collaborative planning – 7 hours (1 hour per year level)
- Team teaching Prep/Foundation – 5 hours
- Team teaching/parallel teaching, Years 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 = 12 hours
- Similar-needs group, recent arrivals in Year 5 – 10 hours (see Note 1)
- Team teaching/parallel teaching, Year 6 – 5 hours
- Introducing rotating activities – 4 hours (see Note 2)
- Resources development and support – 5 hours
- Preparation for team teaching – 3 hours
- Supervision of MEAs – 2 hours

**Additional responsibilities:**

- Review the MEAs' timetable

**Term 4: weekly timetabled responsibilities**

- Collaborative planning – 7 hours (1 hour per year level)
- Team teaching Prep/Foundation – 5 hours
- Team teaching, parallel teaching, Years 1, 2, 6 – 6 hours
- Years 3, 4 – rotating activities program – 4 hours (see Note 3)
- Similar-needs group, recent arrivals in Year 5 – 10 hours
- Resources development and support – 5 hours
- Preparation for team teaching – 5 hours
- Supervision of MEAs – 2 hours

**Additional responsibilities:**

- Evaluation of the EAL program: goals met, on-going needs, new needs identified, future directions/priorities
- Review the MEAs' timetable
- Assist teachers to report on the progress of EAL learners to parents, using the *EAL Developmental Continuum P-10*
- Organise interpreters for parent-teacher meetings

**Note 1**

Discussion about ongoing monitoring of students' English language needs may take place formally or informally at weekly planning sessions. This provides valuable information when the EAL timetable is reviewed for the following term. In this case, the Year 5 teacher expressed concern about the progress of several of her recently arrived students with reading factual materials. It was decided to provide extra modelling of how a report is structured and practice using a structural overview.

**Note 2**

Rotating activities are a set of activities related to the topic the students are investigating, such as a science based problem-solving activity, a humanities activity around an issue, a reading activity based around literature, and an art activity. The students are divided into groups and each day they complete one of the activities. This approach provides contexts in which:

- students can participate in small groups in hands-on activities
- teachers can monitor the language development of a group of students or a particular student
- students may share and compare their findings with the rest of the class.

**Note 3**

A Year 3 teacher expressed interest in her students also participating in this program. As the Year 3 and 4 teachers plan together this also has benefits for the teachers in regard to their workload. All three teachers (including the EAL teacher) take responsibility for preparing the activities for the rotating activities and these materials are shared by the two classes.

## Case study 2: Fernhill Primary School

The following case study shows how an EAL program was organised in a school with a small number of EAL learners.

### **School profile**

Fernhill Primary School has an enrolment of 345 students.

Specialist ICT, art and physical education programs are offered.

15% of the students attract EAL funding (52 students).

The school is funded for approximately 0.5 EFT EAL teacher and a 0.2 MEA.

The school's SFO weighting is 1.

### **EAL learner profile**

The learning needs of the EAL learners vary greatly.

One student is newly arrived, and is in Year 5 – this student has had little schooling in his country of origin, but was unable to attend a new arrivals program.

Seven students have been learning English for less than two years.

Nine students are in Prep/Foundation.

The students come from a range of language backgrounds, including Serbian, Croatian, Polish and Vietnamese, and the majority of them have been learning English for several years.

The EAL learners are scattered in each year level and in each class – not all of the students were deemed to be in need of EAL support beyond that offered by the classroom teacher.

Those students who are in need of EAL support are being assessed against the EAL standards in the *EAL Developmental Continuum P-10*.

Students who have reached the 'at standard' level of their respective A and B Stages in all three modes of Speaking and listening, Reading and viewing and Writing are being assessed against the English standards for assessment and reporting purposes.

### **Staffing profile**

The teachers at the school vary in their understanding of EAL needs, but several have taught previously in schools with high EAL populations. The Assistant Principal has EAL qualifications and feels that the EAL program needs to be reviewed.

The school uses its EAL funding to employ an EAL teacher who is qualified in TESOL. The teacher is at the school for two full days and one extra morning a week. Two MEAs work at the school for half a day each.

The school has an EAL committee which consists of the Assistant Principal, the EAL teacher, the early years leader, the curriculum leader and a teacher representative. Many of the EAL learners who have been assessed against the English standards are about one full level or more below where their year levels would indicate they should be, particularly in reading and writing. The teachers are concerned about this and want to know how they can assist their EAL learners to develop their literacy skills. They want to become more familiar with the EAL standards and to continue the process of using them to assess their EAL learners, where appropriate.

### The EAL program

At the start of the school year a review of the EAL program commenced. The previous EAL teacher had left, and the EAL program, which had operated wholly as a similar-needs/withdrawal program for the last two years was felt to be in need of examination, to ensure that it was meeting the needs of the students and providing appropriate support for teachers. The School Strategic Plan and the Annual Implementation Plan indicate that improving the learning of the EAL learners is an important goal of the school program.

The new EAL teacher started her job with several priorities. For the first six weeks the school funded her for an additional day each week so she could review and set priorities for the program. During this time the EAL teacher was not expected to work to a timetable, except for spending 45 minutes a day with the newly arrived student, who was unable to attend an intensive English language program, due to its location.

The teacher set her priorities as follows:

- get to know the school and in particular the EAL learners
- assist teachers to complete sociolinguistic profiling of the school population, focusing on students from a language background other than English, and helping teachers to add this information to their learner profiles
- talk to staff about concerns they may have about the progress of their EAL learners
- assist teachers to place EAL learners on the *EAL Developmental Continuum P-10*
- work with the EAL committee to discuss possible scenarios for an EAL program, and from this discussion, develop an EAL program that meets the needs of the school.

The EAL committee felt that it was important to establish some priorities and principles for the program. It felt that the newly arrived EAL learner in Year 5, particularly because of his lack of prior schooling, should be given individual teaching for two hours each week for the first two terms, in two, one-hour blocks.

When prioritising the rest of the EAL program the committee was faced with several constraints that needed to be taken into consideration:

- the time available to the EAL teacher is limited
- the needs of the students are varied
- EAL learners are to be found in every class in the school.

It was felt that the EAL teacher's role needed to change from one where most of her time was spent with students in similar-needs classes, which had been the previous model. It was considered that this kind of approach did not link strongly enough with the classroom program, and did not support teachers to cater more appropriately for their EAL learners in their own classes. This was felt to be due mainly to the fact that the EAL teacher's planning time with the classroom teachers had been very limited.

Each team of teachers meets once a week to plan their units of work together. It was decided that the EAL teacher would join these meetings and use this time to assist teachers to plan their units with a strong focus on teaching the literacy demands of the topics and tasks they were planning.

The EAL teacher and the early years leader both attend the Prep/Foundation and Year 1 meeting. Apart from planning, the focus in this group is also on sharing guided reading strategies that are particularly successful with the EAL learners, and using the *EAL Companion to the AusVELS* to guide planning of the literacy needs of the EAL learners.



At the end of the first four weeks of the first term the EAL teacher, in consultation with the EAL committee, developed a timetable for the rest of Term 1 and for Term 2. The last two weeks of the second term were set aside to assist classroom teachers in assessing and reporting the progress of their EAL learners.

The program was evaluated by the EAL committee at the end of Term 2. It was felt that the program had assisted teachers to cater for their EAL learners and should continue in much the same way until the end of the year, and then be reviewed for the following year. The EAL teacher wrote a short report for the EAL committee at the end of the year, with recommendations for the following year.

During the year the EAL teacher attend EAL professional learning She was also funded with extra time to report back to staff meetings about these sessions.

The following timetable operated throughout the year:

### **Term 1**

First 4 weeks – 3.5 days a week:

- Sociolinguistic profiling
- Getting to know the EAL learners in the school, and making sure that classroom teachers are aware of their language skills and needs
- Helping teachers to assess their EAL learners
- Working with the newly arrived Year 5 student – 45 minutes per day
- Prioritising and organising the program for the rest of Term 1 and Term 2

Final 7 weeks – 2.5 days a week:

- Collaborative planning – 8 hours (1 hour per year level, 2 hours with Prep/Foundation)
- Prep/Foundation team teaching – 2 hours
- Working with the newly arrived Year 5 student – 2 hours
- Program planning and finding EAL-appropriate resources for classroom teachers – 3 hours

### **Term 2**

First 8 weeks – 2.5 days a week:

- Collaborative planning – 7 hours
- Working with the newly arrived Year 5 student – 2 hours
- Program planning and finding EAL-appropriate resources for classroom teachers for specific topics – 2 hours
- Prep/Foundation team teaching – 2 hours

Final 2 weeks – 2.5 days a week:

- Working with the newly arrived Year 5 student – 2 hours
- Prep/Foundation team teaching – 2 hours
- Assisting classroom teachers to assess the EAL learners' progress in English, and helping them to write reports. Organising interpreters for the parent–teacher interviews – 8 hours
- Program planning and finding EAL-appropriate resources for classroom teachers – 2 hours

### **Term 3**

Weekly timetable – 2.5 days a week:

- Collaborative planning – 7 hours

- Working with the newly arrived Year 5 student – 3 hours
- Program planning and finding EAL-appropriate resources for classroom teachers – 2 hours
- Prep/Foundation team teaching – 2 hours

#### **Term 4**

First 7 weeks – 2.5 days a week:

- Working with the newly arrived Year 5 student – 1 hour
- Collaborative planning – 7 hours
- Program planning and finding EAL-appropriate resources for classroom teachers – 2 hours
- Prep/Foundation team teaching – 2 hours

Final 3 weeks – 2.5 days a week:

- Working with the newly arrived Year 5 student – 1 hour
- Prep/Foundation team teaching – 1 hour
- Assisting classroom teachers to assess their EAL learners progress in English, organising interpreters for the parent–teacher interviews – 7 hours
- Reviewing EAL program and writing report for the EAL committee, planning for the next year – 6 hours

## Secondary school approach

In secondary schools, the development of the EAL program is influenced by the percentage of students at the different stages of EAL development, and the time allocation of the EAL teacher/s as well as year level of students, subject choices and timetable constraints.

The case study below outlines the approaches taken by one school in developing and implementing an EAL program.

### Case study 3: Highmont High School

#### School profile

Highmont High School has an enrolment of 1250 students.

About 25% of the students use languages other than English at home, including Cambodian, Arabic, Tagalog, Sudanese, Vietnamese and Mandarin.

7 per cent of the students (about 125 students) attract EAL funding.

85 students are deemed to be in need of a specialist EAL support program, and the rest are catered for through targeted EAL strategies in all their classes.

The EAL learners are in the following year levels:

| Year level | Number of students |
|------------|--------------------|
| Year 7     | 11                 |
| Year 8     | 13                 |
| Year 9     | 14                 |
| Year 10    | 14                 |
| Year 11    | 16                 |
| Year 12    | 17                 |

40 students have been learning English for less than 2 years, and 45 have been learning English for between 2 and 5 years.

The school's SFO weighting is 1.

#### EAL learner profile

The EAL learners have diverse needs.

Ten students are recently arrived into the school from a language centre and have been learning English for less than 12 months. These students are in Years 9 and 10. The school usually has an intake of recently arrived students who have spent between one and three terms at the local language centre. The students usually arrive at the beginning of each term.

The other EAL learners have been learning English for longer than this and generally use English confidently for social purposes, but they need support when accessing and producing texts required for academic purposes.

Of particular concern is the Year 10 group of EAL learners, as these students will be making pathway choices about VCE, VET and VCAL or other pathway options at the end of the year.

### **Staffing profile**

The school's EAL allocation is for approximately 3.7 EFT teachers. Four EAL qualified teachers are employed, in a mixture of full and part time capacities. One of these teachers coordinates the EAL program.

Five other teachers from different subject study areas across the school have completed the *Teaching EAL Students in Mainstream Classrooms (TESMC): language and learning across the curriculum* professional development course.

The school also employs three part-time MEAs, who speak Arabic, Vietnamese and Dinka.

### **Timetabling of EAL support**

The school offers parallel EAL classes at the same time as the English classes.

The EAL/English class is taught by an EAL teacher at each year level. English and EAL are timetabled for 5 periods a week.

A team teaching program is in place, with an EAL teacher in classrooms to support the students. In Maths and Science at each Year level, the EAL learners are grouped in one class so the support available to them is maximised. The EAL teachers also plan with the classroom teachers in these subject areas, ensuring that supportive teaching strategies and activities are used. They assist teachers to select appropriate texts for their students, and help them plan and teach the kinds of classroom activities that will assist the EAL learners to access them. They discuss with teachers the kinds of assessment activities that are most appropriate for their EAL learners. They also assist teachers when making judgements of students' performance using the *EAL Developmental Continuum*.

In the first weeks of the school term the EAL teachers' priorities are to:

- get to know the students and meet their parents/caregivers at enrolment, parent-teacher meetings and information evenings
- support the recently arrived EAL learners with an orientation/transition into the school (ensuring all students and parents are familiar with the school routines and practices)
- work with pastoral care leaders/teachers and student buddy mentors to support the students enrolling from the intensive English language program
- assist the most recently arrived students at other year levels to settle into their new routines
- set up homework support programs
- support other teachers to assess the EAL learners' strengths and needs
- assist all teachers to build up their EAL learner profiles and class profiles
- prioritise student needs and draw up a timetable for the EAL program
- timetable collaborative planning sessions with all teachers of EAL learners
- decide on the composition of the specialist EAL classes.

The EAL coordinator and teachers also:

- assist with the compilation of school and class sociolinguistic profiles
- develop the timetable for the MEAs
- buy appropriate resources and assist classroom teachers with purchasing material appropriate to their EAL learners' needs
- investigate school EAL PL needs and organise PL opportunities
- organise interpreters for parent-teacher interviews
- assist teachers to report on the progress of EAL learners to parents, using the EAL standards.

**Ongoing identification of priorities**

The needs of individual students are reassessed during the year. If recent arrivals come into the school from the language centre, these students will need priority support in their learning in the classrooms, as they settle into their new school.