

EAL ASSESSMENT FRAMEWORK FOR SCHOOLS: INTRODUCTION

Introduction

The EAL Assessment Framework for Schools – what is it?

The EAL Assessment Framework for Schools was commissioned by The Bell Foundation to provide schools with a straightforward, easy-to-use assessment tool for assessing learners with English as an Additional Language. At its core are EAL assessment descriptors (one set for primary and one set for secondary) that teachers can use for both summative and formative assessment. The descriptors are designed specifically to support the teaching and learning of EAL pupils and to enable teachers to generate targets to guide progress. The framework is underpinned by robust academic research and expertise and has been prepared with busy teachers in mind. (See also Arnot, et al., 2013, Evans, et al. 2016.)

Why EAL assessment?

EAL learners are doing two things at the same time. They are learning the English language at the same time as learning the curriculum through English.

Assessing EAL is not the same as assessing Literacy

Literacy assessment focuses on specific age-expected outcomes of the literacy curriculum (such as writing stories or newspaper reports). EAL assessment focuses on the development of English in Listening, Speaking, Reading and Viewing and Writing for all purposes within the school context.

EAL assessment helps both teachers and pupils

If teachers understand the English language needs of their pupils, they can help pupils to access the language of the curriculum and develop their English at the same time.

Pupils need to know particular uses of language to be able to succeed in school subjects

For example, if pupils don't know how to use "if [this] ..., then [that] ..." or the modals *would, should, could, might, may*, they will struggle with expressing themselves in History or Science. Different areas of the curriculum make use of English in different ways.

EAL assessment spotlights the learner's needs in a particular area of language

An EAL learner may appear to be 'fluent' because they can converse easily with their peers and teachers but this 'fluency' can be deceptive. The proficiency profile of an EAL learner can vary across the four strands of language use in different curriculum areas. For instance, a pupil may be fluent in everyday spoken English, but may find giving an oral report on a science experiment challenging. Some may find writing more demanding than listening and reading, and so on.

EAL assessment helps teachers teach all EAL learners

EAL assessment is not just for the *new to English* learners, but is important for all EAL/bilingual learners who still need to develop their academic English to succeed at age-related expectations.

EAL assessment is fair and inclusive

Appropriate assessment recognises a learner's potential and affects their life chances. Inappropriate assessment can lead to pupils being given unhelpful advice and being placed on the wrong pathway for their future learning.