

# Language Assessment

## EAL, SEND or Both? Individual Learner Language Assessment

**Pupil Language Assessment to identify language needs and consider learning and development differences.**

Careful assessment of learners with EAL, who may have special educational needs and/or disabilities is critical to identify language needs and learning and development differences\*. The assessment is a holistic approach which gathers information about the learner's journey, previous experiences in education, communication and interaction in school and at home, cognition and learning and social, emotional and mental health.

*\*Recognising the difference between language needs and learning needs is complex, especially those newly arrived. Learners with EAL are no more likely to have special educational needs/disabilities (SEND) than any other pupil. However, in every group of EAL learners, there will be some who experience additional barriers to their learning. This includes refugee & asylum seekers and Children Looked After who may have experienced significant trauma.*

**What it is:** An assessment to provide a baseline in English language proficiency across four skill areas: speaking, listening, reading and writing, and to support identification of learning and developmental differences. The Learner Baseline language assessment is conducted with parents/carers, an interpreter and the school's SENCO to build a profile on; background, previous schooling, linguistic abilities in first language, learning differences that impact engagement and progress, cognitive levels for help with setting/grouping, baseline levels to set language targets. EAL consultant will carry out the assessment, write a report, recommend strategies and create bespoke resources. The report will indicate whether it appears that there may be an underlying SEND although the EAL consultants are not qualified to formally identify SEND.

**Who is it for:** Learners with EAL where there may be challenges distinguishing between language and learning/developmental differences.

*(Newly Arrived applies to students who have recently joined the school or education system, often after migrating from another country. **EAL** is a learner recorded as having English as an additional language if she/he is exposed to a language at home that is known or believed to be other than English. **SEND** (Special Educational Needs and Disabilities) refers to learning differences or disabilities that make it harder for students to learn compared to most children of the same age. These needs can affect: Academic learning, Social and emotional development, Physical abilities, Communication skills, Sensory processing)*

### What it involves

#### Stage 1:

The EAL/ New Arrivals team member to liaise with the class teacher and SENCO to arrange an assessment date. Preparation documents are shared with the class teacher and SENCO including the 'All About Me' resource and the voice-enabled, dual language social story. Also shared is information regarding the learner's needs to ensure appropriate adaptations are put in place during the assessment. The class teacher and SENCO complete the Language Request Form and share relevant documents such as an Extended Support Plan, One Page Profile, Sheffield Support Grid and any other information related to learning/ development differences.

#### Stage 2:

The EAL/ New Arrivals team member leads the assessment in school, and the interpreter attends online. Family/carers are invited at the start of the assessment to gather background information, educational history, medical history and any information regarding learning or development differences. The assessment involves several activities to assess the learner's speaking, listening, reading and writing.

#### Stage 3:

The EAL/ New Arrivals team member attends a feedback session with the class teacher and SENCO to share the written report, recommended strategies and bespoke resources. The report may be used to support/ inform next steps for SEND referrals and provision.



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