

OAKTREE PRIMARY SCHOOL

An Athena Education School

LANGUAGE POLICY

English as an Additional Language (EAL/ESL) & Arabic as a Second Language (ASL)

Policy Title	Language Policy (EAL/ESL and Arabic as a Second Language)
Institution	Oaktree Primary School
Operator	Athena Education
Applies To	All teaching staff, language and inclusion leaders, and pupils
Version	1.0
Academic Year	2026/27
Status	Approved
Approved By	Director of Schools / Principal / SGAB
Date of Approval	25 June 2026
Last Reviewed	20 August 2026
Next Review Date	20 August 2027
Policy Owner	Principal / EAL Lead & Head of MoE Subjects
School Leader Signature	

Contents

1. Policy Statement	3
2. Purpose and Aims	3
3. Scope.....	3
4. Definitions and Key Terms	3
5. Principles.....	4
6. Roles and Responsibilities.....	4
7. English as an Additional Language (EAL/ESL).....	4
8. Arabic as a Second Language (ASL / Arabic B)	5
9. Assessment of Language Proficiency	5
10. Language Across the Curriculum	5
11. Home Languages and Multilingualism	5
12. EAL and Special Educational Needs	5
13. Parental Engagement and Communication	5
14. Monitoring, Evaluation and Review	6
15. Related Policies and Documents.....	6
Appendix A: Bell Foundation EAL Proficiency Bands & Support.....	7
Appendix B: Individual Language Support Plan	8

1. Policy Statement

Oaktree Primary School, as part of Athena Education, is a richly multilingual and multicultural community. We believe that every pupil, whatever their language background, is entitled to access the full curriculum, to make strong progress, and to feel valued for the languages and cultures they bring. We see bilingualism and multilingualism as an asset and an advantage.

This policy sets out how the School supports pupils who are learning English as an additional language (EAL/ESL) and pupils learning Arabic as a second language (ASL, also known as Arabic B). It reflects the requirements of the Knowledge and Human Development Authority (KHDA) and the UAE Ministry of Education (MoE), and the standards of Athena Education.

2. Purpose and Aims

Through this policy, the School aims to:

- Ensure all pupils can access the full curriculum, regardless of their starting point in English or Arabic;
- Identify pupils' language needs early and provide effective, well-targeted support;
- Help EAL/ESL learners develop confident, competent English for social and academic purposes;
- Deliver high-quality Arabic-as-a-second-language provision in line with MoE requirements;
- Value and celebrate pupils' home languages and cultures (additive bilingualism);
- Hold high expectations for all language learners and track their progress closely;
- Make language development a shared responsibility across the whole School.

3. Scope

This policy applies to the support of pupils learning English as an additional language and pupils learning Arabic as a second language, across the Early Years and the primary phase. It applies to all teaching staff and to language and inclusion leaders, and should be read alongside the School's Curriculum, Inclusion (SEND) and Teaching, Learning and Assessment policies.

4. Definitions and Key Terms

This policy uses the following terms:

Term	Meaning
EAL / ESL	English as an Additional Language / English as a Second Language — pupils whose first language is not English and who are learning English alongside their home language(s).
ASL / Arabic B	Arabic as a Second Language — Arabic taught to non-native speakers as an additional language, in line with the MoE framework.
Arabic A	Arabic taught to first-language (native) Arabic speakers.
Home / first language	The language(s) a pupil acquired first or uses at home.

Term	Meaning
Additive bilingualism	Developing additional languages while maintaining and valuing the home language.

5. Principles

The School's approach to language is guided by the following principles:

- Entitlement — every pupil has the right to access the full curriculum, whatever their language background;
- High expectations — language learners are capable of excellent progress and achievement;
- Additive — home languages are valued and maintained while English and Arabic develop;
- Shared responsibility — every teacher is a teacher of language;
- Inclusive — a welcoming, culturally responsive environment for all;
- Early and targeted — needs are identified early and support is well matched;
- EAL is not a special educational need — language learning is not, in itself, a learning difficulty.

6. Roles and Responsibilities

Role	Responsibility
Principal	Holds overall accountability for the quality and impact of language provision.
Vice Principal (Curriculum)	Ensures language development is embedded across the curriculum.
EAL Lead / Coordinator	Leads EAL/ESL provision; oversees identification, assessment, support and tracking.
Head of MoE Subjects (HoMoE)	Leads Arabic provision, including Arabic as a second language (Arabic B), in line with MoE standards.
Head of Inclusion	Works with the EAL Lead to distinguish language needs from SEND; oversees TAs and ILSAs.
Teachers	Plan for the language demands of learning and support EAL and Arabic learners in every lesson.
TAs & ILSAs	Support language access in class; ILSAs provide 1:1 support for Tier 3 students of determination.

7. English as an Additional Language (EAL/ESL)

On entry, the School identifies each pupil's language background and assesses their proficiency in English. EAL/ESL pupils are taught in mainstream classes, where language is best acquired in a rich, meaningful context, with support carefully matched to their stage of proficiency.

Support includes scaffolding, visual aids, modelling and sentence stems, pre-teaching of key vocabulary, talk partners and structured opportunities for speaking, differentiated tasks, and — for those at the earliest

stages — targeted small-group or individual support. New arrivals are welcomed through a thoughtful induction and buddying. Provision is reviewed regularly and adjusted as pupils' English develops.

8. Arabic as a Second Language (ASL / Arabic B)

As required by the UAE MoE and the KHDA, all non-native Arabic speakers learn Arabic as a second language (Arabic B), following the MoE framework and standards for Arabic as an additional language. Provision is engaging, communicative and progressive, building pupils' confidence and competence in Modern Standard Arabic and fostering positive attitudes towards Arabic and Emirati culture.

The required weekly Arabic lessons are delivered, Arabic is encouraged from the Early Years, and teaching is led by the Head of MoE Subjects with specialist Arabic teachers. Differentiation and support ensure that pupils with different starting points all make progress.

9. Assessment of Language Proficiency

Pupils' proficiency in English is assessed using the Bell Foundation's EAL Assessment Framework for Schools, which assesses the four strands of language — Listening, Speaking, Reading and Viewing, and Writing — across five proficiency bands, from Band A (New to English) to Band E (Fluent) (see Appendix A). New arrivals are assessed to establish a baseline within their first weeks in school, and proficiency is reviewed regularly (for example each term) to track progress and set targets. Progress in Arabic as a second language is assessed against MoE standards. This information is used to plan and adjust support, and the progress of EAL and Arabic learners is monitored closely to ensure it is strong, with appropriate intervention where needed.

10. Language Across the Curriculum

Language development is the responsibility of every teacher. Teachers plan for the language demands of their lessons and use strategies — such as visuals, scaffolds, sentence stems, modelling and the explicit teaching of vocabulary — to make content accessible to language learners. Reading, oracy and vocabulary development are prioritised across all subjects, so that language is a bridge to learning rather than a barrier.

11. Home Languages and Multilingualism

The School values pupils' home languages as a valuable asset and an important part of their identity. We encourage families to maintain and develop the home language, recognise that a strong first language supports the learning of additional languages, and celebrate the linguistic and cultural diversity of our community throughout school life.

12. EAL and Special Educational Needs

The School is careful to distinguish between a pupil's need to acquire a new language and a special educational need. Being an EAL learner is not, in itself, a learning difficulty. The EAL Lead and the Head of Inclusion work together to assess needs accurately, so that EAL learners are neither wrongly identified as having SEND nor have genuine additional needs overlooked. Where a pupil has both language and learning needs, support is coordinated and appropriate.

13. Parental Engagement and Communication

The School works in partnership with families, communicating in clear and accessible ways and, where possible, providing translation or interpretation so that all parents can engage with their child's learning. We help families understand the language support their child receives, value the knowledge and insight parents offer, and encourage them to support language development at home, including in the home language.

14. Monitoring, Evaluation and Review

The EAL Lead and the Head of MoE Subjects monitor the quality of provision and the progress of language learners, and report to school leadership. The School evaluates the impact of its language support on pupils' access, progress and wellbeing. This policy is reviewed at least annually, or sooner in response to changes in MoE or KHDA requirements, the standards of Athena Education, or learning from practice.

15. Related Policies and Documents

This policy should be read in conjunction with the following School policies and documents:

- Curriculum Design, Adaptation and Modification Policy
- Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) / Inclusion Policy
- Teaching, Learning and Assessment Policy
- Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Policy
- Arabic and MoE mandatory subjects policies
- Admissions Policy

Appendix A: Bell Foundation EAL Proficiency Bands & Support

This overview summarises the five proficiency bands of the Bell Foundation’s EAL Assessment Framework for Schools, which assesses the four strands of Listening, Speaking, Reading and Viewing, and Writing. The full framework provides detailed descriptors for each band (with separate primary and secondary scales); the strategies below are a planning guide. A pupil’s proficiency may vary across the strands.

Band	Description	Typical Support
A — New to English	New to English; little or no English; may observe quietly during an initial silent period.	Warm induction and a buddy; visual supports and gesture; key vocabulary; bilingual resources; time to listen.
B — Early Acquisition	Uses some everyday English; can follow with support; growing basic vocabulary.	Scaffolding, modelling and sentence stems; pre-teaching vocabulary; paired and group talk.
C — Developing Competence	Increasingly fluent; accesses the curriculum with support; gaps in academic language.	Targeted vocabulary, writing frames and continued scaffolding; extended opportunities to talk.
D — Competent	Works largely independently; may need support with complex or academic language.	Light-touch scaffolding; challenge; explicit teaching of academic vocabulary.
E — Fluent	Fluent across contexts, broadly comparable to a first-language peer.	Full access to the curriculum; monitoring to sustain strong progress.

Appendix B: Individual Language Support Plan

Use this plan to record and review tailored support for an individual EAL/ESL and/or Arabic-as-a-second-language learner.

1. Pupil name and year group:
2. Home / first language(s):
3. English proficiency band (Bell Foundation, A–E):
4. Arabic (A / B) level:
5. Strengths and interests:
6. Targets — English:
7. Targets — Arabic:
8. Support strategies (in class and targeted):
9. Review date and staff responsible: