



'OPENING DOORS OF
OPPORTUNITY TOGETHER'

NEWCOMER POLICY

NOVEMBER 2023



Newcomer Policy

Mission Statement

Meadow Bridge Primary School aims to foster a safe, happy and caring environment where each child's personal development is nurtured.

Every child's educational journey is enhanced and their lives enriched through stimulating learning experiences.

Equal emphasis will be placed on pastoral care and on ensuring each individual reaches his or her academic potential, equipping them for the future.

Rights Respecting Schools – UNICEF; The Convention on the Rights of the Child

Article 29 (Right to Education): Every child has the right to an education. Primary education must be free.

Article 29 (Goals of Education): Education must develop every child's personality, talents, and abilities to the full. It must encourage the child's respect for human rights, as well as respect for their parents, their own and other cultures, and the environment.

The aim of the policy is to highlight school's commitment to welcoming Newcomer pupils into the school community, so that they are assisted in their acquisition of the English language, in an inclusive manner, to enable them to access the curriculum and participate in every aspect of school life.

Rationale

Meadow Bridge Primary School is committed to providing equal access for all learners to a broad and balanced curriculum which is appropriate to the child's abilities, talents, and personal qualities.

Inclusion for all within the school community and access to appropriate support, both academic and pastoral, are key priorities in Meadow Bridge where the successful development of each of its pupils is valued.

Educational inclusion is an ongoing process that celebrates diversity which is valued as a rich resource that supports the learning of all. It involves the identification and minimising of barriers to learning, that may be experienced by some groups of children and aims to maximise resources to reduce these barriers.

This policy is intended to ensure that Newcomer children have access to appropriate support to enable them to access the curriculum and participate in the wider school community. The ethos of the school creates a welcoming and inclusive environment for pupils and parents from all ethnic or cultural backgrounds and all governors, staff, pupils, parents/carers, visitors, and others involved in any way with Meadow Bridge Primary School, are expected to comply with this policy statement.

We aim to ensure that all Newcomer children are assisted to:

- Use English confidently and competently.
- Use English as a means of learning across the curriculum.
- Have equal access to the NI revised curriculum.
- Develop their self-esteem and confidence through recognition and acceptance of their cultural identity.

Definition

For clarity, a 'Newcomer pupil' refers to a child or young person for whom English is not the primary language spoken at home and does not have satisfactory language skills to participate fully in the school curriculum.

Context

Children of all cultures, languages, and dialects are welcome at Meadow Bridge Primary School. Cultural diversity offers the opportunity for all pupils to benefit from sharing knowledge gained from a range of experiences and contexts.

Key Principles for Additional Language Acquisition

- An initial silent period is a natural stage when learning a language.
- Integrating newly arrived pupils into school life and classroom routines.
- Teachers have a crucial role in modelling the use of language.
- Developing a pupil's self-image through recognition of their distinctive cultural experiences, the ability to use two languages or more, of being bilingual, and through praise for their achievements.
- All pupils have access to the revised NI Curriculum.
- Organising classroom activities and experiences which foster communication.
- Motivation to communicate through the development of acceptance, security, and self-confidence.
- Helping pupils take ownership of their learning.
- A distinction is made between EAL and SEN. The focus and use of additional support time are best seen as an integral part of the curriculum and lesson planning.

"No pupil should be expected to cast off the language and culture of the home as he crosses the school threshold, nor live and act as though the school and home represent two totally different cultures which have to be kept firmly apart."

The Bullock Report 1976.

Roles and Responsibilities

A communication strategy should be implemented to ensure the successful dissemination of the roles and responsibilities within the school's policy for Newcomer children.

The Board of Governors should ensure that:

- the needs of all Newcomers are addressed;
- the policy for Newcomers is kept under review; and
- appropriate funds and resources are delegated to Newcomers.

The Principal should:

- keep the Board of Governors informed about Newcomer issues;
- work in close partnership with the SENCo;
- ensure that members of the SLT are actively involved in the management of Newcomers within the school; and
- meet with parents and complete the checklist for admissions and data capture forms.

The SENCO should:

- be responsible for maintaining the school Newcomer Register;
- complete mandatory Newcomer forms;
- maintain records for individual children, to be available for monitoring for funding by the EA;
- give guidance and support in target-setting and planning work;
- liaise with staff to identify SEN difficulties;
- support staff with resources;
- contribute to the in-service training of staff;
- liaise with Inclusion and Diversity Service (IDS); and
- be aware of current research.

All staff should:

- liaise with and advise colleagues;
- promote lessons that are well prepared – challenging, engaging, motivating, progressive, and accommodating the individual needs of learners;
- include opportunities to teach and model language skills;
- provide opportunities for relationship and self-esteem building activities;
- have a balance and range of teaching strategies and activities, for example whole group, small group, pairs, individual, or practical;
- ensure that learners have appropriate time to complete a task;
- use a balance of questioning techniques;
- use a range of teaching strategies and resources that promote different learning styles and multiple intelligences;
- employ self-monitoring and self-assessment techniques; and
- provide learners with positive and constructive feedback that promotes assessment for learning.

The class teacher should:

- gather important information about the pupil from initial parent meeting;
- ensure an interpreter is hired if required for parent meetings;
- monitor progress carefully and record information through observation and assessment forms;
- be knowledgeable about pupil's abilities and needs in English;
- not insist that Newcomer children take part in oral activities as part of the immersion period;
- provide opportunities for celebrating diversity such as 'European Day of Languages';
- develop a socially and intellectually inclusive classroom, valuing cultural differences;
- complete benchmarks from the Common European Framework of Reference (CFER) to record Newcomer pupils' progress. Use this alongside 'global descriptors of language proficiency' to assist with setting targets and planning for language learning;
- provide information to parents regarding school procedures and progress of children through a home-school journal;
- prepare a Buddy to welcome new arrivals;
- make parents aware of resources available to them.

Learning and Teaching

- All learners have the right to a broad and balanced curriculum. This involves all staff in using a range of teaching strategies and classroom management styles designed to take account of the differing abilities, interests, and experiences of learners.
- In order to facilitate this, work should be stimulating. It should be differentiated so that learners can experience success yet challenging enough to promote progression in learning.
- Work should allow learners to progress at their own rate yet encourage them to take responsibility for their own learning.
- Key language relating to curriculum topics should be pre-taught and sent home in home-school journals. This language should also be displayed in the classroom.
- The use of visual materials should be used where possible, to aid understanding particularly when giving instructions.
- Provide time for children to demonstrate their prior learning, including means other than writing.
- Lessons should be structured in a series of simple, clearly defined steps with clear learning intentions.
- The classroom environment should be inclusive, stimulating, and attractive, featuring as much learner work and vocabulary as possible.
- Provision of dual language books and bi-lingual dictionaries where available.

Continuing Professional Development

It is essential that all staff keep up-to-date with current developments in order to best provide for Newcomer children.

Monitoring and Evaluating the Policy

This policy will be reviewed in light of changes in legislation or practice, following consultation with all staff members, parents, and external agencies. Feedback will also be sought on an annual basis.

Resources

- Every School a Good School 'Newcomer Guidance for Schools' DE.
- Every School a Good School 'Supporting Newcomer Pupils' DE.
- Toolkit for Diversity for Nursery and Primary.
- EAL Language Builders – Books 1 and 2.
- Guidance pack for teachers.
- [Common European Framework of Reference \(CEFR\) | Education Authority Northern Ireland \(eani.org.uk\)](http://eani.org.uk)