

Re-accreditation of Gold Award

EAL Quality Mark



School Name: Goldington Green Academy	School Address: Goldington Road Bedford Bedfordshire MK41 0DP
EAL Leader: Mrs Tracy Wilson	
Headteacher: Mrs Caroline Skingsley	

Introduction

Having achieved a Gold EAL Quality Mark in 2016, the Leadership Team wished to seek an external review of how their provision had developed. The following criteria were examined:

- progress across the curriculum being made by children learning EAL;
- use of data to track and monitor progress and address attainment gaps;
- the procedures for welcoming new learners;
- staff knowledge about planning for language acquisition alongside learning; and
- linguistic and cultural diversity amongst adults in the school.

Findings

Assessment, data and progress

The school uses more than one assessment tool to track and cross-reference the progress children are making. This is done across the whole school, including for children who are progressing through the Early Learning Goals.

The Leadership Team emphasised that data generated did not lead to an automatic referral for an intervention. Quality dialogue always follows any data scrutiny and seeks to reinforce staff knowledge and expertise. Various suggestions can be made to address gaps, ranging from informal interventions to curriculum design.

The school uses PiXL as its main assessment tool. When the EAL filter is applied, some pupils show up as underperforming, due to their lack of proficiency in English. For this reason, teachers regularly plan for these pupils' next steps, and measure their achievement with reference to the NASSEA steps, an assessment tool designed to measure progress in language acquisition. Some early stage EAL learners have accounts on the Learning Village programme. This intervention tracks pupil progress against expected trajectories. The cross-referencing of these different assessment tools allows the school to be confident that pupils are closing any attainment gaps.

The Leadership Team has identified a change in its pupil profile since the last evaluation: an increasing number of children with both EAL and SEND needs. There are now EAL children with autism on roll as well as a child who is non-verbal. There are also a larger number of EAL learners on roll who are eligible for pupil premium. Changes to provision have been made to accommodate the more complex needs of these pupils.

Welcoming new pupils

The EAL leader, Mrs Tracy Wilson works closely with the School's Administrative Officer, Mrs Hotchkiss, to ensure the process runs smoothly and efficiently and that all staff are familiar with it. Mrs Hotchkiss and Mrs Wilson have collaborated to revise and redesign the admission forms as well as producing a package of information for parents. Class teachers, teaching assistants and midday meals supervisors are informed of the details of any imminent new arrival.

Children, including the class buddies, also get ready to meet a new friend. They use their 'buddy booklet' to check they are fulfilling their responsibilities.

Planning for language development

The Leadership team reports that oracy is always the starting point for learning. All staff, especially those new to the school or at the start of their careers receive regular CPD in Talk for Writing and Drama for Writing. Strategies and resources such as story sacks and word mats are used regularly in classrooms.

Teachers encourage children to share their ideas and introduce ambitious vocabulary to help them express themselves, recasting utterances when necessary.

There is an emphasis on reading for pleasure as well as for learning. This is reinforced through clubs, playtime activities and celebrations, for example, sewing Queen's Jubilee bookmarks. A range of books, including dual language texts are available in classrooms and the EAL space.

The Learning Village is now the main intervention used for pupils newest to English. Children enjoy its interactive format and system of rewards. Mrs Wilson has worked hard at providing high quality resources (reading materials and commercially produced games) to support the programme. Content covered in the programme mirrors the children's learning in the curriculum. Links between the programme and mainstream learning are physically reinforced by the full height Learning Village tree opposite the school's own EAL provision Cultural Heritage tree. Caroline Scott, the author and director of the Learning Village, dropped in to comment on how well the school uses her product to maximise the potential benefit to the children. She also praised the way Mrs Wilson models the use of the resource to schools throughout Bedford.

Linguistic diversity is welcomed as much amongst bilingual staff (who are not shy about helping pupils who share a language they speak) as by English-only speakers. Support for pupils also includes a teacher who can provide deaf-blind communication.

General Comments

Mrs Wilson is a Specialist Leader of Education (SLE) who is highly regarded by staff and pupils at Goldington Green and by the local authority. Vicky Hayward from Bedford School Improvement Team described how Mrs Wilson's expertise is used to deliver advice and CPD to up to 79 schools through centralised meetings and face-to-face visits. She highlighted Mrs Wilson's work in coaching other EAL leaders to apply for an EAL Quality Mark and acknowledged her role in the development of Council resources such as the EAL Welcome Pack. Ms Hayward praised Mrs Wilson's work, remarking that she brings the same energy and efficiency to that role as she does to her work in school.

Mrs Wilson's vision of what an inclusive school should look like is brought to life as a result of the trust and confidence placed in her by the school's Leadership Team and their willingness to get behind projects aimed at exemplifying the school ethos of inclusion and caring for others. The twinning with a school in Gyetiase, Ghana and the use of professional artists to create works that illustrate cross curricular themes are examples of this. This school celebrates youth, but also age, as with the Retired Caribbean Nurses pack. It moves forward boldly with its SOTO (School of Tomorrow) work.

Goldington Green has extended the reach of its EAL provision since the last evaluation. This work is embedded in the curriculum, has a clear remit across the local authority, and continues to work at an international level. It truly deserves its Gold Award.

Chiaka Amadi
17 March 2022