

## Stages of English Learning

The following scale describes aspects of bilingual children's development through English which teachers might find helpful. The scales emphasise the social aspects of learning as well as the linguistic.

### **Stage 1** - new to English

Uses non-verbal gestures to indicate meaning - particularly needs, likes and dislikes. Pupil is beginning to: respond to simple commands but more complex instructions are difficult to follow; produce utterances and participate in a basic one-to-one conversation; to name objects in the classroom and personal things; write some vocabulary items and simple sentences.

### **Stage 2** - becoming familiar with English

Pupil is beginning to listen with understanding to peer group talk. Pupil may still experience difficulties with some teacher instructions. Pupil is able to hold a one-to-one conversation but may still be unwilling to talk in front of the class. Pupil may not yet be an initiator in group work and may choose to take a fairly passive role.

Pupil extracts some meaning at text level and has an increased sight vocabulary. When reading aloud, intonation patterns sometimes suggest a lack of meaning in what is being read.

With guidance the pupil is able to write at paragraph level to convey meaning. However, writing will still include many inaccuracies e.g. tenses, articles, spelling, linking words. They need considerable support to operate successfully in written activities in the classroom as well as coping with the range of different types of text used across the curriculum.

### **Stage 3** - becoming confident as a user of English

Learners are often superficially indistinguishable from their peers in oral and aural skills. The difference is more apparent in written work. Pupil engages in group discussion, initiates ideas, and occasionally answers in class. Formal speech (i.e. as in a presentation or lengthy exposition) may be more limited.

Pupil reads narrative with some ease, but may find it difficult to read more abstract material: this involves the interpretation of more complex text where links between ideas are more deeply embedded and not explicitly expressed.

Pupil can handle a variety of written tasks reasonably well but with evidence of some errors e.g. tenses, spelling, occasional structural mistakes. Pupil may handle narrative and personal writing with greater ease although, in some cases, the style may be more colloquial and may also lack a proper sense of audience. Pupil may experience problems with writing accounts and argumentative/persuasive essays.

### **Stage 4** - a very fluent user of English in most social and learning contexts.

A very experienced user of English. May continue to need support in understanding subtle nuances of metaphor, and anglo-centric cultural content in poems and literature.