

Ethnic Minority and Traveller Achievement Service



Assessment of pupils with English as an additional language - advice and guidance in the investigation of possible Special Educational Needs

Early Years

Identifying and assessing SEN for young children whose first language is not English requires particular care. Early years practitioners should look carefully at all aspects of a child's learning and development to establish whether any delay is related to learning English as an additional language or if it arises from SEN or disability. Difficulties related solely to learning English as an additional language are not SEN.

Schools

Identifying and assessing SEN for children or young people whose first language is not English requires particular care. Schools should look carefully at all aspects of a child or young person's performance in different areas of learning and development or subjects to establish whether lack of progress is due to limitations in their command of English or if it arises from SEN or a disability. Difficulties related solely to limitations in English as an additional language are not SEN.

Special educational needs and disability code of practice: 0 to 25 years

Statutory guidance for organisations which work with and support children and young people who have special educational needs or disabilities **January 2015**

NB. In the first instance, any EAL/BME pupil causing concern should be referred to your EMA service for further discussion, advice and guidance. Please do not put SEN procedures into action until you have consulted your local EMA service for advice. See contact details at end of document.

P levels should not be used for pupils learning EAL unless they have SEN. For the purposes of reporting SATs results DfE guidance states:

Pupils working towards level 1 of the national curriculum who do not have a special educational need should be reported as 'W' (Working below the level). This includes pupils who are working towards level 1 solely because they have English as an additional language. You should use the code 'NOTSEN' to explain why a pupil working towards level 1 doesn't have P scales reported.

DfE **Statutory guidance, Assessment and Reporting Arrangements**, Changes for 2014 to 2015 academic year Published 5 September 2014

Points to consider

When seeking to identify whether an EAL pupil may also have special educational needs, schools must take the following points into consideration before beginning SEN support for the pupil. Careful tracking and monitoring of all pupils will ensure early identification of slow progress.

- Lack of competence in English must not be equated with learning difficulties
- A full understanding of the languages the pupil speaks and the current use and proficiency in them is essential
- Schools should look carefully at all aspects of a pupil's performance across the curriculum to establish whether perceived problems are due to limitations in their command of English
- Parental engagement is critical in identifying pupil need - parents must be consulted and kept informed of any school concerns
- Use of trained interpreters is essential in clarifying language needs or special educational needs
- Robust induction procedures should ensure that all relevant educational information about a new to English pupil is shared with school thus avoiding any initial misunderstandings about pupil ability.
- Schools should also be aware that if pupils with EAL make slow progress, this may not just be due to their unfamiliarity with English- they may have learning difficulties
- As with any BME pupil causing concern, schools should contact their local EMA service for further advice in relation to EAL pupils' progress before deciding on a particular course of action.

Triggers for concern

The list below is not comprehensive but is indicative of a need to look into pupil progress in more detail.

- Language acquisition progress below expected norm
- Unusually slow work rate compared with peers
- Little response to teacher or peer intervention
- Specific weakness in English language development e.g. poor verbal comprehension, limited vocabulary and use of expression
- Poor listening and attention skills

- Specific weakness in English literacy skills, e.g. difficulties in reading, comprehension or limited unaided writing
- Gap between cognitive ability tests (CATs) and reading age at KS3/4
- Very low EYFS scores at end of YR
- Poor ability in first language
- Inability to acquire basic number concepts
- Parent expressing concern over pupil's progress in school
- Pupil has difficulty in subjects which are less language dependent
- Pupil shows signs of distress, difficulty with social skills, is withdrawn or other indicators of emotional or behavioural problems

Possible reasons for these concerns

Before deciding whether the above triggers for concern indicate a pupil with SEN a range of possible reasons for these concerns should also be considered and addressed. These may include:

- There has been insufficient time or opportunity for the establishment of proficiency in English (for advice on supporting the acquisition of English contact your local EMA service or see [New Arrivals](#) section of the EMTAS website www.Emtas4Success.org)
- Teaching and learning have not been differentiated appropriately for a developing bilingual pupil
- The culture and ethos of the school, or the curriculum, are not inclusive
- The pupil has developed good conversational English, but has not been supported to become fully proficient in the formal academic language necessary for learning
- The pupil is experiencing the emotional effects of racism or other stressful life events, particularly in the case of newly arrived or refugee pupils (your local EMA service will be able to help identify pupils experiencing stressful life experiences or racism, see the contact details at the end of this document or on the EMTAS website www.Emtas4Success.org . For information about Asylum Seekers and Refugees see **page 7** of this document.
- The pupil has re-joined his parent/s who have been working in Britain while the pupil was cared for a year or more by a relative in the country of origin
- There is a specific language disorder
- The pupil has been identified previously with Special Educational Needs

You may find the Interactive Factors Framework by Frederickson and Cameron (1999) useful when considering all the factors impacting on a pupil that can contribute to poor progress in school. See Appendix 1 for the framework and links demonstrating how it informs identification of factors impacting on pupil progress.

First language assessment

Accurate first language assessments are useful to give an indication of a pupil's general language development. Age appropriate competence in first language will usually indicate that the pupil has English language acquisition needs rather than SEN. If, after appropriate pupil tracking and assessment against EYFS or curriculum levels, it is decided that a first language assessment would provide useful information then the following prompts should be taken into account. With some languages it is important to identify the same dialect of the first language when considering interpreting needs.

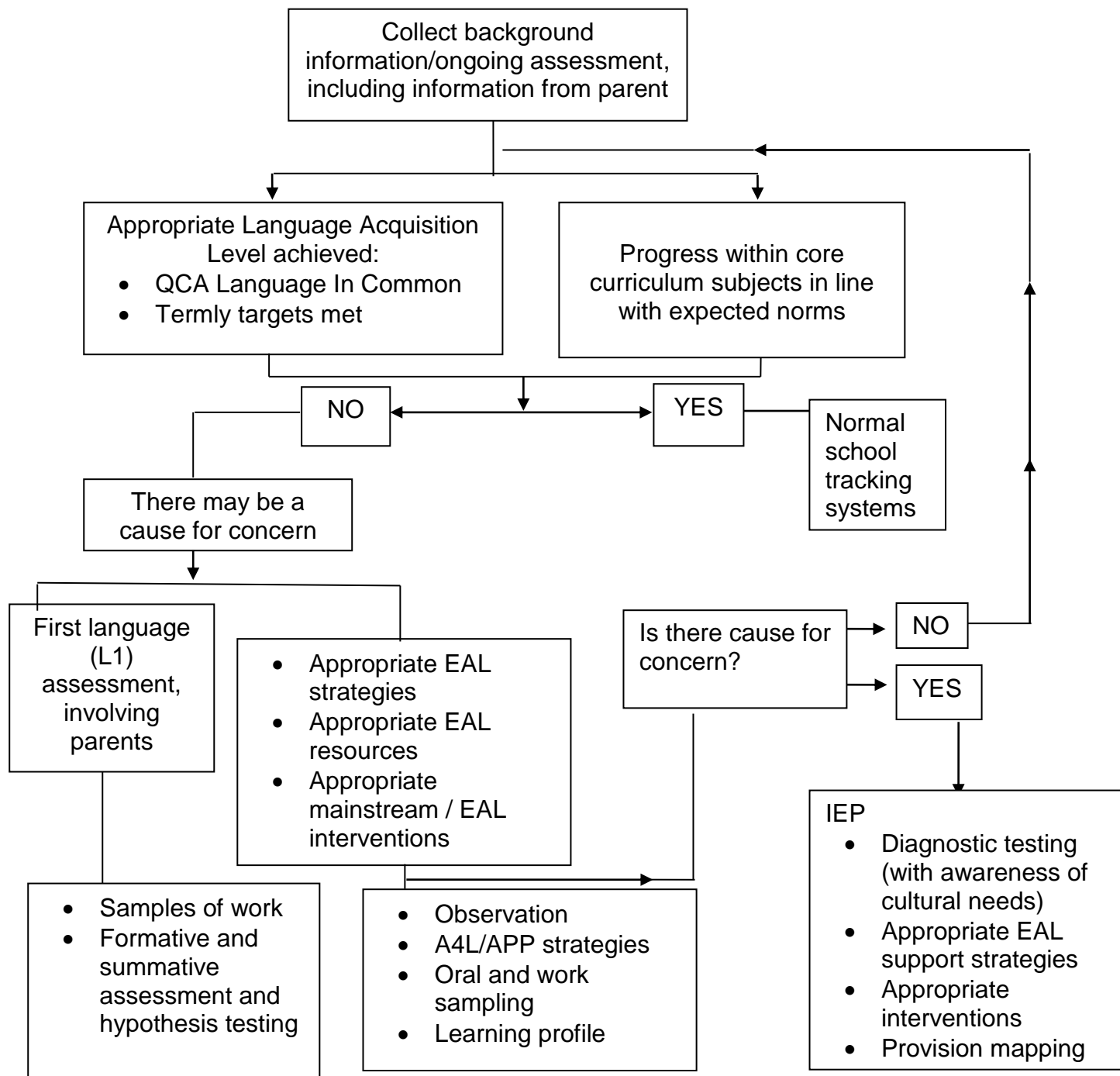
- Schools will have to consider arrangements for trained interpreters to conduct any assessments with school/EMA staff
- Parents must have given permission for a first language assessment and if possible be involved in the process
- If possible, interpreters should be previously known to the pupil.
- The pupil should feel comfortable where the assessment takes place – sometimes it may be more appropriate to carry it out at home, especially for a young pupil
- First language assessments should focus on age appropriate language which should be known i.e. the social language used in the home and language taught in school. Major gaps in areas in which the pupil has had ongoing opportunities to learn may indicate learning difficulties.
- There may not be a clear correspondence between first and second language; for example, if a child is more competent in first language this may highlight an EAL learning need rather than SEN. This should be considered in discussion with the interpreter.
- The pupil may have limited competence in first language because one or both of the parents are second or third generation UK born and may provide a limited first language model themselves.

Please contact your EMA service for further advice and support in carrying out first language assessments.

Flow chart to determine language or learning need.

If a pupil with EAL is making less than expected progress it may be useful to follow the flow chart below to identify which course of action to take.

Please contact your EMA service for support at any point in this process (see link at end of document for contact details).



See also www.emtas4success.org > **New to English** > Advice & Guidance

- Advice and guidance on pupils new to English
- Action Planning for Early Stage Bilingual learners
- EAL Pupil assessment pack

Whole school planning > Advice to schools > Policy for the Induction and Assessment of Newly Arrived Pupils

Further advice and guidance

EAL and SEN

Naldic: EAL and Special Educational Needs: An issue of concern for teachers of bilingual pupils

<http://www.naldic.org.uk/eal-teaching-and-learning/eal-resources/eal-sen>

Has links to:

- EAL SEN and Inclusion EAL and SEN professional development resources for teacher educators
- Language Needs or Special Needs Does it matter? A practical article from Tony Cline NALDIC (2009)
- EAL and SEN training toolkit EAL training toolkit for teachers in the SEN and/or disabilities series TDA 2009
- English Language Learners with Special Needs: Effective Instructional Strategies Alba Ortiz, University of Texas at Austin, 2001
- Guidance on the Assessment of EAL Pupils who may have Special Educational Needs Milton Keynes EMASS (2004) useful guidance for teachers

The **Portsmouth EMAS website** has a list of filter questions to help identify if pupils learning EAL may also have SEN, you can also find the same filter questions sheet on the British Council website:

<http://emas.lea.portsmouth.sch.uk/home/new-arrivals-specific-needs/sen-eal>

<https://eal.britishcouncil.org/sites/default/files/forum/Filter%20questions%20EAL%20SEN%20Portsmouth%20EMAS.pdf>

The SEN Code of Practice refers extensively to partnership with parents.

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/398815/SEN_Code_of_Practice_January_2015.pdf

EAL, Asylum Seekers and Refugees with possible SEN

Aiming High: Guidance on Supporting the Education of Asylum Seeking and Refugee Children

Advice from the DfES and old document but contains advice still relevant today.

<http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20130401151715/http://www.education.gov.uk/publications/eOrderingDownload/DfES-0287-2004.PDF>

Paragraph 8.5 children with interrupted education; Para 8.7 children whose families have suffered persecution; Para 8.8 children and families who have experienced trauma, and bereavement; 8.9 onwards advises on ways of supporting these pupils

Refugee and asylum seeker children in UK schools

Advice from the National Association for Language Development in the Curriculum

NALDIC <http://www.naldic.org.uk/eal-teaching-and-learning/outline-guidance/ealrefugee>

Supporting refugee children in 21st century Britain – a compendium of essential information, Jill Rutter, Trentham Books 2003

Local EMA services contact details can be found on the homepage of the EMTAS website www.emtas4success.org

or click here: [Contact Your Local EMA services](#)

Glossary of terms and acronyms

BME – Black and Minority Ethnic, people resident in the UK other than White British people

EAL – English as an additional language – the choice of this acronym demonstrates a recognition of the importance of maintaining proficiency in first languages – English is being added, other languages continue to develop

EMA - Ethnic Minority Achievement

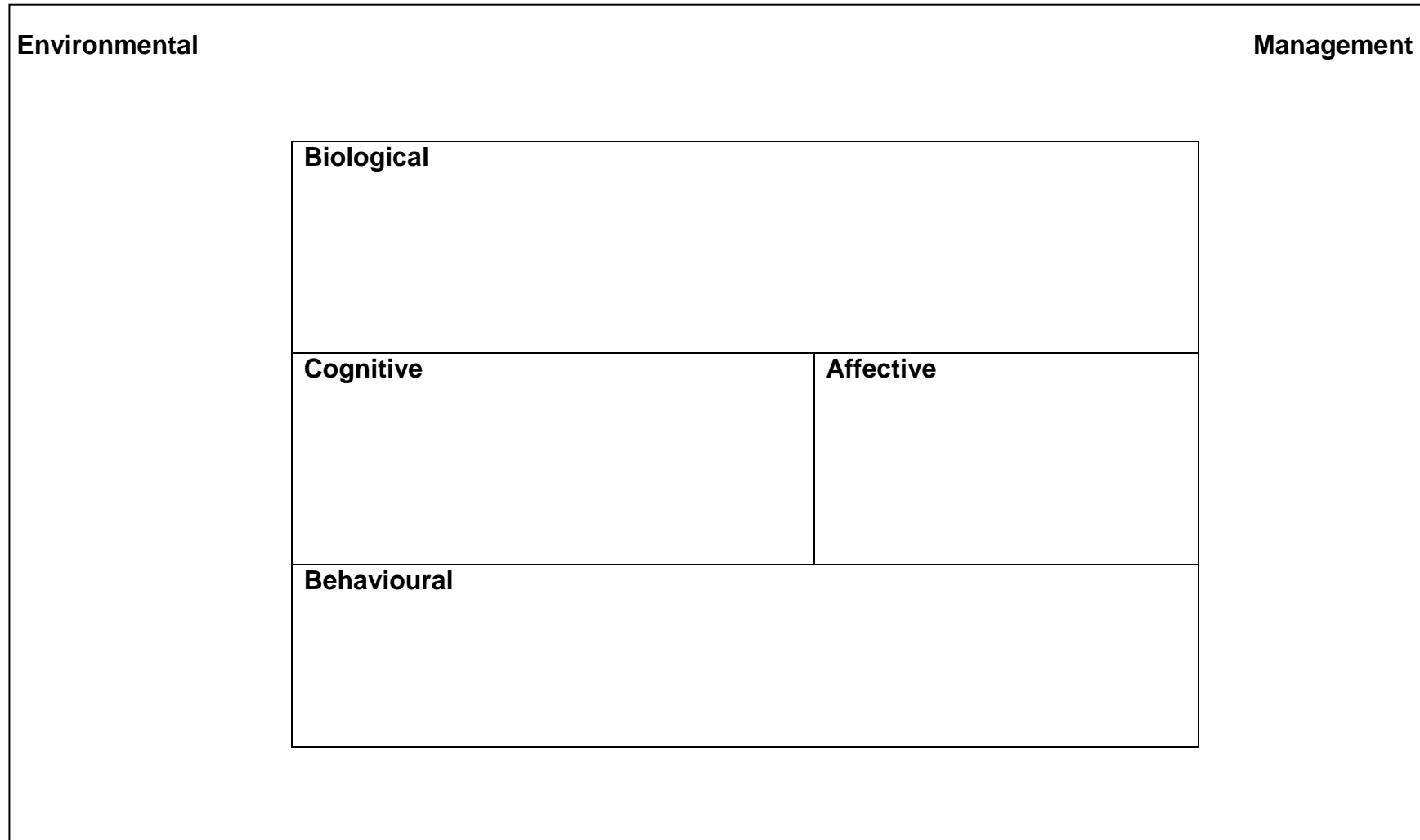
EMAS - Ethnic Minority Achievement Service – LA team to support the attainment of Ethnic Minority pupils, including those with English as an additional language

Frist Language – sometimes referred to as home language or mother tongue – the language or languages the child has learnt or has heard in regular use from birth

EMTAS - Ethnic Minority and Traveller Achievement Service – some EMA services also provide support for Gypsy, Roma and Traveller pupils and families so include a T in the acronym.

Appendix 1

Interactive Factors Framework Frederickson and Cameron 1999



For example of how framework can be used see: www.ncl.ac.uk/linguistics/assets/documents/TonyCline.ppt especially slides 4-8