

# EAL ASSESSMENT FRAMEWORK FOR SCHOOLS: USER GUIDE

# How to use the EAL Assessment Framework for Schools

## User guide

This user guide is for teachers, teaching assistants (TAs) and other practitioners who are using the EAL Assessment Framework for Schools to assess their pupils.

### How are the assessment descriptors organised?

The assessment descriptors form two sets of rating scales – one for **Primary** and one for **Secondary**.

Each set of scales covers the four strands of language knowledge and use:

- Listening
- Speaking
- Reading and Viewing
- Writing.

English language Proficiency in each strand is represented by five Proficiency bands and each band has a descriptive label :

- A**-New to English/Beginning
- B**-Early acquisition/Emerging
- C**-Developing competence/Expanding
- D**-Competent/Diversifying
- E**-Fluent.

Each band has 10 assessment descriptors. Pupils are not expected to achieve all the descriptors within a band (some may not be applicable to certain ages, for example) and you may well find that pupils attain the descriptors in a different order to those listed; this is not unusual and is not a cause for concern. However, it is important to be aware that the descriptors are sequenced to reflect internal progression within each band of descriptors, e.g. descriptors 1- 3 are ‘early development’ and descriptors 8 -10 are ‘getting closer to the next band’. Although the descriptors are not expected to be achieved in strict order by all pupils, this way of ordering the descriptors within each band enables teachers to set targets from the descriptors and to track progression.

### **How do I use the Proficiency bands and assessment descriptors to assess an EAL learner?**

Start the assessment by choosing the most appropriate band/s that a pupil is likely to be in for a particular strand. Apart from Band A New to English/Beginning, pupils are likely to have a ‘spiky’ profile – they may cross into different bands depending on their development within each strand. For example, a pupil may be comfortably in C-Developing competence/Expanding for Speaking but only be achieving the ‘early development’ descriptors in B-Early acquisition/Emerging for Writing. To decide on a ‘best fit’, look at the band above and below the one you think the pupil might be in, to ascertain which band best fits the pupil. The concept of ‘best fit’ means that the pupil’s performance might not exactly match each of the 10 descriptors in a band, but it does match a good number of them, and their performance matches more in this band than the band above or the band below.

Remember, English language usage and development takes place in different contexts. It will help the teacher, teaching assistant or whoever is assessing the pupil, to think of the following competences when highlighting descriptors:

1. Acquiring academic content
2. Demonstrating learning
3. Following instructions and understanding teacher feedback
4. Using (age-) appropriate language and register in a classroom context
5. Functioning in social language situations in and outside the classroom

### **How do I assign a best fit proficiency band if a pupil can do some things in one proficiency band and some things in another?**

Choose a ‘best fit’ as mentioned in the section above.

Points to consider:

Pupils do not need to ‘tick-off’ every descriptor in each band.

If the pupil has a ‘spiky’ profile, the most appropriate ‘best fit’ is to make a judgement on what is the average across the four strands (Listening, Speaking, Reading and Viewing, and Writing). Avoid choosing the lowest proficiency band as a ‘best fit’. For example if a pupil is Band A in Writing but varies between A and C in Listening, Speaking and Reading and Viewing, Band A would almost certainly not reflect the pupil’s overall Proficiency in being able to use English. You should read all the descriptors for bands A, B and C to decide which band is the ‘best fit’.

**If a descriptor is assessing above an expected outcome for the pupil's year group, what do I do?**

Many of the descriptors have to be understood in relation to the year or Key Stage of the individual pupil – assessors should use their judgement and focus on descriptors that are relevant to the expected outcomes of the pupil's year group.

**Are the assessment descriptors for summative or formative assessment?**

The assessment descriptors and the Proficiency bands have been designed to be used for both formative and summative purposes.

For summative assessment, pupils' EAL Proficiency at the end of a term, year or Key Stage can be assessed on the basis of tasks and activities that tap into the knowledge and skills represented by the descriptors set out in the rating scales.

For formative assessment, the assessment descriptors and the Proficiency bands can be used as a road map for progress. As teachers, TAs and other staff work with EAL pupils in everyday teaching and learning, they can use the assessment descriptors to check pupil performance and to plan ahead to promote learning.

**Can I use the Proficiency bands and descriptors to identify progress and set targets?**

Yes. The framework is designed so that it is easy to create targets. Teachers know that pupils do not necessarily 'jump' from one assessment descriptor to the next in the order they appear in the framework: English acquisition (or any kind of learning) does not work like that. However, the EAL Assessment Framework for Schools has been designed to show likely progression. The descriptors that appear first within any band indicate 'early development' within that band and the final descriptors in that band represent 'getting closer to the next band'. This enables teachers to chart progress and to set targets for progression into the next band.

Points to consider:

Set targets appropriate to the EAL learner's needs – they may not need a target in every strand (Listening, Speaking, Reading, Writing).

- It may sound obvious, but remember that in EAL, listening implies comprehension. Listening targets can focus both the learner and the teacher on the need for the learner to understand the language of the curriculum if they are to progress at age-expected levels.
- Targets can be taken directly from the descriptors themselves.
- If pupils are achieving the final 3 or 4 'getting closer to the next band' descriptors, they are probably achieving some of the 'early development' descriptors in the next band.

**Apart from using the descriptors is there anything else I should think about when assessing an EAL learner?**

Yes. The more you know about the pupil the better. The following considerations will affect a pupil's assessment profile.

- What was the pupil's previous educational experience? (if known)
- Is their first language age-appropriate and how were they doing academically and socially in their first language?
- Is there anything in their lives that could affect their learning (such as trauma, sudden change, or challenging home circumstances)?

**Does the EAL Assessment Framework for Schools fit with other school assessments?**

It does – in that it will support an EAL learner to aim for age-expected outcomes, but in terms of direct alignment, however, it does not completely, because the acquisition of English as an Additional Language cannot be mapped directly on to other curriculum assessments.

The relationship between the EAL Proficiency bands should be seen in terms of complementary alignment. Whilst there is no need for exact correspondence (i.e. no need for Science to have a five-level scale and EAL a five-level scale, and both Science and EAL are assessed at the same level) as learners progress with EAL, they will be increasingly able to access the curriculum and their English usage will gradually become more year group-expected in the different areas of the curriculum.

The year group-appropriate outcomes of National Curriculum assessments will develop at different rates in different contexts and different subjects. Bearing in mind the five competences of English usage and development, as outlined above (see section above called 'How do I use the Proficiency bands and assessment descriptors to assess an EAL learner?'), an EAL pupil is likely, for instance, to reach year group-appropriate competence in 'social language situations' sooner than in 'acquiring academic content'. However, it is important to be aware that an EAL pupil who already has good knowledge of a subject in their first language from previous schooling is likely to acquire *age-appropriate* academic content more quickly and 'demonstrate *age-appropriate* learning' than s/he will be in another subject which, for this pupil, comes with unfamiliar content and language demands.

## Assessment in action – what does it look like?

We have drawn up four example Pupil Assessment Profiles. You are not obliged to use this format for profiling your pupils but we have included a blank Pupil Assessment Profile form to use if you wish. Teachers are unlikely to have time to actually record this type of observational evidence – however it illustrates a helpful way of thinking when carrying out day-to-day formative assessments of EAL learners.

The four learners represent pupils with EAL in primary and secondary schools and between them they span the range of developing English proficiency from Band A (New to English/Beginning) to Band D (Competent/Diversifying).

When pupils learn a language as a curriculum subject (like French or Spanish), the convention is to examine and assess progress in each of the four strands of Listening, Speaking, Reading and Viewing and Writing. With EAL it is different. EAL learners are not being taught English as a separate subject. They are mostly ‘acquiring’ English across the curriculum and, of course, they are doing two things at once: they are learning the English language at the same time as learning the curriculum through English. They are also acquiring social language as they go along. When using the EAL Assessment Framework for Schools, it will help to think of Listening, Speaking, Reading and Viewing and Writing as being interdependent. It will also help to think of how your EAL learners perform in different language contexts.

In the Pupil Assessment Profile examples, evidence of the learners’ ability in English has been organised under five headings. These denote the key competences of English usage and development that a learner with EAL needs to function in school, in and outside the classroom, as listed above under the section called ‘How do I use the Proficiency bands and assessment descriptors to assess an EAL learner?’

As typical of most learners with EAL, the four learners have a ‘spiky profile’; each of them shows evidence that spans two or more bands of English Proficiency, although overall there is a definite ‘best fit’ into one particular band.

Crucially, the framework descriptors can be used to set targets for a pupil and this has been done for each of the learners on our Pupil Assessment Profiles.

## Pupil Assessment Profile examples

### Pupil Assessment Profile example A

Marek - Year 10 – Secondary

Contextual Background	Proficiency
Learner: from Poland, first language Polish, in the UK for 6 weeks, joined school 4 weeks ago. School: large mixed comprehensive in Shire county, EAL population 12% with increasing numbers of students arriving with very little English, several Polish children also in the school. (We have provided the section about the school to give you some background to the setting of each profile. The blank form for your own school does not include this section.)	Evidenced by descriptors in Listening, Speaking, Reading, and Writing. Band
Assessment in Action: some example performance indicators	
1. Acquiring academic content	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Knows commonly used ICT vocabulary such as <i>save</i>, <i>print</i>, <i>document</i> and <i>scroll down</i>. His teacher writes down new ICT vocab for him in a book and he writes the Polish translation.</li> <li>In PSHE he did not understand the word <i>illegal</i>, but engaged more easily with the group card sorting task once it was explained.</li> <li>In mathematics, is building a small 'sight vocabulary' of mathematic words, which are often used in the topic being studied.</li> <li>In I:1 work he often comments about topic vocabulary that is similar in Polish and has stopped reading WV aloud as V.</li> </ul>	A
2. Demonstrating learning	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Could point to three correct pictures when the teacher asked him to show her some examples of fossil fuels.</li> <li>In gap-fill tasks, he usually chooses correctly from two options if the sentence and the two choices are read aloud for him.</li> <li>In History, he placed five simple sentences in the right order to summarise The Versailles Treaty.</li> </ul>	A
3. Following instructions and understanding teacher feedback	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>In registration, when his form tutor said he wanted to check planners for stickers, he opened his planner at the sticker page.</li> <li>In Art, he added more shading to his drawing in the places his teacher suggested (using gestures as she spoke).</li> </ul>	A
4. Using (age-) appropriate language and register in a classroom context	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Has learned to use or omit please/thank you in situations and that this differs a lot from his first language.</li> <li>Uses Sir and Miss when addressing teachers and now addresses them as 'you', rather than in the 3<sup>rd</sup> person.</li> </ul>	A
5. Functioning in social language situations in and outside the classroom	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>When his friend said, 'I'm getting chips, a burger and pizza', Marek laughed and replied, 'Oh, I think you next very fat'.</li> <li>Marek regularly chats to his form tutor at the end of the day, initiating conversation and giving some more extended responses.</li> </ul>	B
Marek has made a lot of progress within Band A in just 4 weeks.	Overall Proficiency (best fit)
<b>Suggested 'next-step' targets for Marek:</b>	
Navigate curriculum material using headings, contents list, page numbers, visuals and graphics Understand and respond to longer questions and discussions Is beginning to successfully take part in group work and class discussion	<b>A</b>

## Pupil Assessment Profile example B

Stefan – Year 2 - Primary

Contextual Background	
Learner: First language: Romanian. New arrival to UK. Started school summer term Year 1. Had only just begun school in Romania before coming to UK. School: Two-form entry inner-city primary school, EAL population 56% including two other Romanian children. (We have provided the section about the school to give you some background to the setting of each profile. The blank form for your own school does not include this section.)	
Assessment in action: some example performance indicators	Proficiency Evidenced by descriptors in Listening, Speaking, Reading, and Writing. Band
1. Acquiring academic content <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Starting to transfer his knowledge from phonics lesson – e.g. could read 'pig' and 'blow' in three little pigs word bank.</li><li>• Said to TA 'straw soft, no strong' showing he understood from the context why the pigs' house had fallen down.</li><li>• Understood all the words on the word mat when TA asked him to point to the corresponding pictures.</li><li>• Can label pictures well now if he has a bank of words to choose from, doesn't attempt words independently.</li></ul>	A B C A
2. Demonstrating learning <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Eager to tell teacher and TA any fact he has learnt and was able to tell the whole class the basic sequence of events in Fire of London recently.</li><li>• Now participates keenly in unsupported carpet partner/group talk – particularly with good role model.</li></ul>	B B
3. Following instructions and understanding teacher feedback <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Understands almost all procedure instructions.</li><li>• Understands most differentiated task instructions provided teacher/TA speaks clearly.</li></ul>	B C
4. Using (age-) appropriate language and register in a classroom context <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Talking is becoming really confident, uses correct person now (at start of term said 'you' when he meant 'I') and has a good go at verbs – often with errors (uses past but says 'comed' and 'goed').</li></ul>	B
5. Functioning in social language situations in and outside the classroom <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Playground staff say he joins in a lot of the games and can stand up for himself.</li><li>• Finds some of the more complicated games difficult but tries hard to join in.</li></ul>	C B
Stefan's understanding and Speaking is securely within Band B and he is showing some elements of Band C. He is still operating in Band A for Reading and Writing. Being encouraged (through modelling and recasting) to use correct verbal forms will help his Reading as well as his Speaking to progress. He needs to be encouraged to have a go at writing independently.	Overall Proficiency (best fit)
<b>Suggested 'next-step' targets for Stefan:</b>  Can use awareness of grapheme-phoneme correspondence to try to decode unfamiliar words in phrases/sentences and try to make sense of them Can contribute to a shared story in the class and produce letters and strings of letters associated with pictures Begins to notice and can sometimes self-correct irregularities in own speech	<b>B</b>

## Pupil Assessment Profile example C

## Leila – Year 8 – Secondary

## Contextual Background

Learner: First language: Arabic. Refugee (with related additional pastoral needs). Joined school two terms ago after arriving in UK. Previous education included English lessons. Parents say Leila was doing well at school in all subjects.

School: Rapidly-improving Academy on the outskirts of a large city, EAL population 64% with EAL learners at all stages. (We have provided the section about the school to give you some background to the setting of each profile. The blank form for your own school does not include this section.)

## Assessment in action: some example performance indicators

Proficiency  
Evidenced by descriptors in  
Listening, Speaking, Reading,  
and Writing.  
Band

## 1. Acquiring academic content

- Leila often shows by her reaction or behaviour that she has picked up on e.g. sarcasm or emphasis of a particular point. D
- Leila listens actively to teacher inputs, assemblies etc. and no longer switches off because she cannot follow what is being heard. C
- In Geography, she successfully selected key information she heard in a video clip about flooding to complete a blank grid. D
- Leila is quite good at deconstructing longer words encountered in texts (e.g. *unthinkable*) to work out their meaning. D

## 2. Demonstrating learning

- Every Friday in Science, Leila updates the TA who supports her once a week, explaining recent lesson content and sharing any difficulties. C
- When Leila did not know the word '*imply*', she expressed this as '*when you say something without exactly say it with your words*'. C
- Leila's writing shows her understanding, but she sticks mainly to simpler sentence structures and still makes regular errors. C

## 3. Following instructions and understanding teacher feedback

- This morning Leila did not understand immediately when her Art teacher told her to '*get cracking*'. C
- Leila understood the key content of an '*assignment sheet*' her ICT teacher gave the class at the start of an extended task. C

## 4. Using (age-) appropriate language and register in a classroom context

- Yesterday in PE, Leila said '*I don't care*' instead of '*I don't mind*' when working with a partner. This kind of unintentional impoliteness is quite common with Leila. B
- Leila over-uses '*and*' and '*then*' in her writing, or misuses words like '*however*' or '*therefore*', as a KS1 or KS2 learner might. C

## 5. Functioning in social language situations in and outside the classroom

- Within her small group of friends or to trusted adults, Leila chats about a wide range of topics, although she still makes regular errors. C
- Leila joins in group work mostly on a passive level, although she understands the group task and the dialogue taking place around her. B
- She has a growing repertoire of phrases to express emotions e.g. pleasure, sympathy, surprise, shock and uses these appropriately. C

Although Leila is meeting some D descriptors, she is mostly operating within Band C. She particularly needs to work on the C band descriptor SeS-C6 (see target below) but she is ready to be encouraged to meet more D descriptors.

Overall Proficiency (best fit)

**Suggested 'next-step' targets for Leila:**

Can express belief, opinion, agreement and disagreement politely

Use both formal and informal English in appropriate contexts

Can search for and locate information from a range of sources, including the internet and social media

C

## Pupil Assessment Profile example D

## Nazan – Year 5 – Primary

Contextual Background		Proficiency Evidenced by descriptors in Listening, Speaking, Reading, and Writing. Band
Learner: First language: Turkish. Born in UK. Spoke only Turkish at home until age of 4 when started school in Reception. School: Two-form entry London primary school, EAL population 70% including several other Turkish-speaking pupils. (We have provided the section about the school to give you some background to the setting of each profile. The blank form for your own school does not include this section.)		
Assessment in action: some example performance indicators		D
1. Acquiring academic content	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Recently made good use of real leaflets for persuasive leaflet on a theme park – tried using same structures in own writing, including some correct use of modals but also some insecure modals and prepositions ('You <u>can</u> [should] go <u>in</u> [on] the Thunder-ride').</li> <li>Got age-expected in spelling and grammar test recently – recognised present perfect (I have been) but not applying (e.g. in Ancient Greece diary 'I went to Athens many times' when she meant 'I have been') – but task well understood and most basic grammar and sentence structure in place.</li> </ul>	
2. Demonstrating learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Has started to participate more in class and usually answers questions showing understanding.</li> <li>Showed good understanding of group work and presentation on habitats after the school's 'Planet Earth' day, but lacked higher order vocabulary (e.g. hunger).</li> </ul>	
3. Following instructions and understanding teacher feedback	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Doesn't need support in following instructions and understands clearly delivered teacher feedback.</li> </ul>	
4. Using (age-) appropriate language and register in a classroom context	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Pronunciation is similar to most pupils in the class and language is close to age-appropriate in oral presentations and feedback – non-standard English grammar affects the more formal registers.</li> </ul>	
5. Functioning in social language situations in and outside the classroom	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Apart from some occasional un-English phrasing (<i>I opened the TV</i>) Nazan's social language is age-appropriate.</li> </ul>	
Nazan is securely within Band D across Listening, Speaking, Reading and Writing and has some elements of Band E, but lack of higher order vocabulary and grammatical gaps prevent her from performing at age-expected levels across Band E. Support in enriching her vocabulary and using more complex grammar would make a big difference.		Overall Proficiency (best fit)
<b>Suggested 'next-step' targets for Nazan:</b>  Has access to a wide vocabulary including abstract nouns and growing bank of subject-specific words related to curriculum tasks Can use a variety of tenses (including present and past perfect)		D

## Blank Pupil Assessment Profile

### Pupil EAL Assessment Profile

Pupil name:

Year group:

Contextual Background of Pupil:

First Language:

[Previous educational experience? Pastoral needs? First language proficiency? Other?]

Assessment in action: example performance indicators

Proficiency

Evidenced by descriptors in Listening, Speaking, Reading, and Writing.  
Band

1.Acquiring academic content

2. Demonstrating learning

3.Following instructions and understanding teacher feedback

4.Using (age-) appropriate language and register in a classroom context

5.Functioning in social language situations in and outside the classroom

Suggested 'next-step' targets [2-4 descriptors from higher up in band or next band]

Overall Proficiency  
(best fit)