

St Paul's High School, Bessbrook

Newcomer Policy

Author(s):	D Murray and N O'Rourke
Version:	1
Date:	January 2025
Ratified by Board of Governors	March 2025
For review	March 2027

Contents

1. Mission Statement	2
2. Statement of Aims	2
3. School Context	3
4. Key Principles for Additional Language Acquisition	3
5. Teaching and Learning	4
5.1 Planning and Differentiation	4
5.2 Literacy and Numeracy	5
5.3 Strategies to Ensure Curriculum Access	5
6. Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation	6
7. Special Educational Needs and Gifted and Talented Pupils	7
8. Assessment and Record Keeping	7
9. Resources	7
10. Parents/Carers and the Wider Community	8
11. Staff Development	8
12. Review and Evaluation of Policy	8

1. Mission Statement

- 1.1 We at St Paul's High School are committed to providing a loving and caring atmosphere which embodies our Catholic ethos in which the children can grow and develop to their full potential in all aspects of their lives.

2. Statement of Aims

- 2.1 St Paul's High School fully supports the vision of the Department of Education '*To ensure that every learner fulfils his or her potential at each stage of development.*'
- 2.2 We are fully committed to enabling each child to maximise their best potential.
- 2.3 We believe that the educational experience of pupils in Northern Ireland has been enhanced by growing cultural and linguistic diversity.
- 2.4 We, because of this, have developed a multicultural atmosphere of warmth, care, understanding and respect, in which all children can thrive at St Paul's.
- 2.5 We strongly believe that pupils' achievement is linked to a welcoming environment in which they feel valued and confident.
- 2.6 We have a strong Catholic Ethos within our school which promotes an inclusive atmosphere. The school will identify individual pupil's needs, recognise the skills they bring to school and ensure equality of access to the curriculum.
- 2.7 We aim to ensure that all Newcomer pupils are enabled to:
- Use both their home language and English in school, with increasing confidence and competency using their second language.
 - Access the curriculum and the wider environment through the English language.

- Build on and make use of their knowledge of other languages and cultures.
- Encourage parental involvement.

3. School Context

- 3.1 St Paul's High School's current enrolment is 1762 pupils. Of these pupils, 20 are classed as newcomer pupils and have a home language in addition to English.
- 3.2 St Paul's High School works closely with is currently working with the Intercultural Education Service (IES), a regional service for Northern Ireland which is part of the Education Authority (EA).
- 3.3 The Newcomer section of the service provides advice and support for staff in schools who are working with Newcomer pupils.
- 3.4 They define a Newcomer pupil as *"a pupil whose home language is not English or Irish and who may require support in school for this reason."*
- 3.5 The IES Coordinator visits the school and liaises with the school's Newcomer Co-ordinator and other staff members.

4. Key Principles for Additional Language Acquisition

- 4.1 The school has adopted the following key principles to inform teaching and learning for pupils with additional language acquisition needs.
- Language develops best when used in purposeful contexts across the curriculum.
 - Effective use of language is crucial to the teaching and learning of every subject.
 - The language demands of learning tasks need to be identified and planned for, with attention both to initial access and to extension.

- Access to learning requires attention to words and meanings embodied in each curriculum area. Meanings and understandings cannot always be assumed but need to be explored.
- Teachers have a crucial role in modelling uses of language.
- The focus and use of additional support is to meet the curricular and linguistic needs of the pupil.
- All pupils have entitlement to the Northern Ireland Curriculum.
- A distinction is made between Newcomer Pupils and Special Educational Needs.
- Language is central to our identity. Therefore, teachers need to be aware of the importance of pupils' home languages and to build on their existing knowledge and skills.
- All languages, dialects, accents, and cultures are equally valued.

5. Teaching and Learning

5.1 Planning and Differentiation

5.1.1 The teacher will plan work pitched at an appropriate level for the Newcomer pupil, allowing them adequate time to be immersed in the English language.

5.1.2 Plans will identify the demands of the Northern Ireland Curriculum and provide differentiated opportunities matched to individual pupils' needs.

5.1.3 Key language features, which are necessary for effective participation, are identified. These might be key words, certain patterns of grammar, uses of language or forms of text.

5.2 Literacy and Numeracy

5.2.1 Classroom activities are carefully structured and focused to take account of the range of purposes as contained in the Northern Ireland Curriculum.

5.2.2 Classroom activities have clear learning objectives and appropriate support, and resources are deployed to ensure that pupils are able to participate in lessons. Seating arrangements and group work should ensure that Newcomer Pupils have access to strong English language peer models.

5.3 Provision for Learning and Strategies to Ensure Curriculum Access

5.3.1 The school will plan and implement a provision for learning which includes, where appropriate, extraction from normal timetabled classes, to allow pupils to receive one-to-one assistance from trained support staff.

5.3.2 The one-to-one provision will be monitored closely and will only endure as long as there exists an unmet need which requires support.

5.3.1 All teaching staff will use support strategies to ensure curriculum access. The strategies include:

- Collaborative group work
- Enhanced opportunities for speaking and listening
- Effective role models of speaking, reading, and writing
- Additional verbal support-repetition, alternative phrasing, peer support
- Additional visual support, e.g., posters, objects, non-verbal clues, pictures, demonstration, use of gesture, etc.
- Bilingual resources, e.g., dictionaries, on-line support, bilingual pupils, texts, key word lists.

- Writing frames, directed activities related to texts
- Opportunities for role play
- Pupils receive regular feedback from staff
- Opportunities are taken to focus on the cultural knowledge explicit or implicit in texts
- Discussion is provided before and during reading and writing activities
- Where possible, learning progression moves from concrete to abstract
- Further support for pupils' English language development is provided outside the formal curriculum, e.g., in assemblies, school clubs, etc.

6. Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation

6.1 Information is gathered about:

- The pupils' linguistic background and competence in other languages
- The pupils' previous educational and schooling experience
- The pupils' family and biographical background

6.2 Staff regularly observe, assess, and record information about pupils' developing use of language using the [Common European Framework of Reference](#) (CEFR). Whilst account is taken of English language development for Newcomer Pupils, the school aims to set appropriate and challenging targets for individual pupils. These targets are reviewed on a regular basis.

7. Special Educational Needs and Gifted and Talented Pupils

- 7.1 St Paul's High School recognises that Newcomer Pupils do not have SEN (Special Educational Needs) needs because of a language barrier.
- 7.2 However, should SEN needs be identified during assessment; Newcomer pupils will have equal access to school SEN provision.
- 7.3 Similarly, St Paul's High School recognises that there may be Newcomer pupils who are gifted or talented even though they may not be fully fluent in English and provision will be made for them.

8. Assessment and Record Keeping

- 8.1 Staff have regular liaison to discuss pupil progress, needs and targets.
- 8.2 The school will ensure that all Newcomer Pupils have access to statutory assessments.
- 8.3 The school analyses the achievement of Newcomer Pupils and regularly evaluates the effectiveness of additional support provided in terms of pupil progress.

9. Resources

- 9.1 Resources on which reading and writing activities may be based are monitored for grammatical, lexical, and cultural accessibility.
- 9.2 Displays and resources reflect linguistic and cultural diversity.
- 9.3 A range of resources are used to support pupils' linguistic development, e.g. The Toolkit for Diversity in the Post-Primary School, games, visual materials, differentiated worksheets, key word lists, bilingual dictionaries, computer software, etc.
- 9.4 Assessment materials use images and texts which are appropriate for all pupils.

10. Parents/Carers and the Wider Community

- 10.1 We provide a welcoming admission process for the induction, assessment and support of new arrival pupils and their families/carers.
- 10.2 We aim to ensure that our written and spoken communication with families and with the community is effective using plain English, interpreters and where available, translated letters and documents.

11. Staff Development

- 11.1 The school will enable all staff to undertake professional development to ensure that provision for Newcomer pupils is appropriately delivered and co-ordinated.

12. Review and Evaluation of Policy

- 12.1 School data will include relevant information about Newcomer Pupils. This will include needs, level of English, support, achievement, and progress. This will enable the school to monitor targets.
- 12.2 The evaluation process will serve the basis for planning programmes of action and targeting time, support, and resources.
- 12.3 This policy will be reviewed at least bi-annually by the Newcomer Co-ordinator in consultation with the rest of the staff and Governors.