

Language, Belonging and Learning: How Talavera Junior School Supports EAL Pupils

By Holly Carter, EAL Lead at Talavera Junior School

At Talavera Junior School, we're proud to welcome children from many different countries, cultures and language backgrounds. With over half of our pupils having English as an additional language (EAL), we've developed an inclusive, supportive approach that celebrates diversity and ensures every child feels they belong.

In-Class Support That Builds Confidence

When a new EAL pupil joins us, we begin with a **"My Passport"** profile—gathering key information about their background, interests, experiences and home language. This helps us plan tailored support that reflects the whole child.

We keep pupils in class rather than withdrawing them, immersing them in everyday English and supporting them through visuals, repetition and collaborative activities. One of our most effective strategies is **talking triads**—small peer-led discussion groups that give children the chance to practise speaking and listening in a supported, low-pressure way.

We also value and encourage the use of first languages. Pupils are welcome to write in their home language, where appropriate, and we use **Microsoft Translator** to translate both their work and our instructions. This enables children to access learning, show what they know and stay connected to their identity.

Peer Support and Reading

Our **Talavera Ambassadors**, trained through the **Young Interpreter Scheme**, play a central role in welcoming new pupils. These ambassadors act as buddies, helping new arrivals settle in and building confidence through everyday interactions. They also run a **reading club for EAL pupils** which supports language development and fosters a love of reading—something we believe is key to academic success.

Connecting with Families and Celebrating Culture

We place great emphasis on building relationships with families. In the past, we've run **coffee mornings for refugee families** and we continue to offer friendly, accessible communication for all EAL parents. Our **school website translates into multiple languages** and, where needed, we send home **translated letters** to make sure families stay informed and involved.

We're proud to celebrate the heritage of our pupils through events like **Nepali Day, Fijian Day** and **Refugee Week**, giving families the chance to share their culture and creating a strong sense of community within the school.

Training Others and Celebrating Success

We recently regained our **EMTAS Gold Award** in recognition of our commitment to EAL support—a reflection of the hard work, reflection and teamwork that goes into our provision.

We also deliver **EAL training to SCITT students** from **Winchester University** which began last year and continues into this academic year. It's a privilege to share our practice with new teachers and help them build the skills and confidence to support EAL learners effectively in their own classrooms.

We've learned that EAL provision isn't about simplifying content—it's about **removing barriers** and enabling access. We don't see multilingualism as a challenge—it's a strength. Our EAL pupils enrich our school in countless ways and, with the right support, they thrive. By building language, confidence and connection together, we create a school where every child can flourish.