



English as an Additional Language



EAL Levels of Competence and the DfE Proficiency Scale.

The Solihull Levels of Competence (LoC) have been designed by teachers and EAL specialists to measure, record and monitor the progress of EAL learners in both primary and secondary schools. The LoC are intended to be used alongside other assessment systems in order to provide a context for those learners who have English as an additional language and to enable teachers to show progress in English language development. The assessment system designed by Solihull also enables staff to set targets and gives support with strategies and advice for teachers.

The School Census Guide, published by the DfE (April 2016) indicates that, among other changes, the DfE will now collect English language proficiency information on all EAL pupils, starting in October 2016, followed by an annual collection from spring 2017 for pupils in Reception and above. More details can be found at

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-census-2016-to-2017-guide-for-schools-and-las>

The DfE proposes to use the code set currently used in the Welsh system which consists of five stages from A (new to English) to E (fluent). **The purpose of this code set is not for assessment; it is to provide a snapshot of information about the number of pupils across the country who are learning English.** It may have implications for funding but as yet this is not clear.

It is highly recommended that teachers use the LoC for assessment purposes in order that they can plan the next steps for their learners. Using the LoC across all four areas of language teachers should be able to reach a “best fit” for each pupil; this information can then be used to match up to a DfE descriptor. Where there is a mismatch between the skills it would be prudent to use the writing step as a measure as this is most often the last skill to develop.

A summary sheet of the LoC and the DfE descriptors can be found overleaf; however, it is strongly recommended that the full Levels of Competence document is used to assess children with English as an additional language and that this information is then used for the purpose of the census.

EAL learner (DFE Proficiency)	EAL Stage	Listening and Understanding	Speaking	Reading	Writing
New to English (Code A) <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px; display: inline-block; text-align: center;">Within 2 years</div>	Step 1	Understands home language Watches and joins in routines/activities Follows instructions using key words/gestures	Silent period Speaks in home language Non-verbal gestures Echoes words/expressions Simple naming vocabulary	Minimal/no literacy in English Awareness of print and able to recognise some words e.g. own name Starts to recognise letters and symbols	Minimal/no literacy in English May be able to write in first language. Holds pen correctly – begins to form letters, then words. Writes some HFW words Can draw and label diagrams Begin to write simple sentences
	Step 2	Follows short sequences of instructions	Basic, formulaic spoken exchanges Unclear pronunciation	Early reading skills e.g. CVC words	
Early Acquisition (Code B)	Step 3	Can indicate when they need to hear something again Listens attentively during lessons	Simple questions e.g where? Over-generalisation of grammatical rules Simple positional language	Able to demonstrate and understand basic punctuation Can read simple sentences Refers to visual clues in texts	Handwriting legible and correctly orientated Writes familiar words with phonic knowledge.
	Step 4	Understand function of time connectives Understands some teacher questions with visual support	Re-tell a simple story Can give a sequence of instructions Past simple tense emerging	Re-tell main points from a text. Identifies dialogue in texts. Follows pronoun references in texts	Uses some basic punctuation Uses simple present tense and some simple past tense Range of vocabulary including some conjunctions.
Developing Competence (Code C)	Step 5	Follow set of oral instructions Differentiates past/future/present Begins to engage with how? and why? questions.	Speaks in simple every day exchanges Uses common colloquialisms Uses extended sentences Uses relative clauses	Describes setting of a story Can select relevant text to answer questions Responds to how/why questions related to a text	Plurals, prepositions, pronouns and articles used with increased accuracy. Varied verb formations used. Developing wider vocabulary.
	Step 6	Active listener asking for clarification Follows gist of teacher talk with limited visual support	Can contribute to whole class discussion Plurals, articles, pronouns and prepositions	Makes inferences/draws conclusions Identifies key features of different text types	Writes competently and at length Uses structures to express higher order thinking.
Competent (Code D) <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px; display: inline-block; text-align: center;">Within 5 -7 years</div>	Step 7	Shows understanding of the detail of curriculum topics with limited visuals Understands some idioms and phrasal verbs Beginning to understand inference Follows reasoning/discussion/argument	Uses the passive tense Communicates meaning – complex ideas/concepts Can express higher order thinking Moderates response according to listener.	Can give/ compare own opinion about a text Distinguishes between fact/opinion Demonstrates understanding of idioms. Demonstrates understanding of literary devices. Appropriate tone when reading aloud	Writes competently and at length for varied purposes. Uses expressions to signal opinion Advanced use of connectives. Range of tenses and use of active/passive voice. Logical sequence. Appropriate for purpose/audience.
Fluent (Code E)	Step 8	Understanding is commensurate with that of a native English speaker Pupils have the range of listening skills required to participate fully in the National Curriculum for English.	Variety of articles and prepositions used accurately Confident, fluent speech for multiple purposes/audiences. Complex sentences used. Accent does not interfere with understanding.	Reads, understands, selects, interprets and responds appropriately to a range of fiction and non-fiction, age-appropriate texts with no more errors or difficulties than a monolingual speaker of English of the same age.	Copes with writing demands for all areas of curriculum. Uses complex conditionals. Able to mimic and parody and to use irony/humour. Can make comparisons and write an argument.