

Language entry requirements for JESS

As a high-achieving British curriculum school, our constitution states that one of the aims of our school is:

'To provide high quality education in a challenging, learning environment to **English speaking children**'.

Consequently we ask all parents and particularly those of children where more than one language is spoken, to fully take on board the language entry requirements for JESS and their role in preparing their children.

What are the language entry requirements?

- Children have to be fluent in English at the age appropriate level to gain entry to JESS.
- **Children have to demonstrate they understand the English language and can respond with the minimum level of English we require to gain entry.**
- Many parents tell us that their children can understand everything but are not able to communicate this verbally yet. Even at 2 ½ years old we expect children to be able to **listen, process and retrieve the right words in English to form simple sentences/responses to** who, where, what, why style questions. For example; 'what is happening to the dog in this picture?' Fluency cannot be demonstrated simply by counting to 10, recognising and naming shapes and colours. The vast majority of children we meet are able to demonstrate the levels of English outlined.

How can parents prepare their children for successful entry into JESS?

You have applied for your child to be educated in an English speaking school and as such you need to equip them with the tools they will need to gain entry and maintain progress whilst they are with us. **We require a basic level of English on entry. We do not have English as an additional language (EAL) facilities / support.**

As such, we advise all parents to ensure that their child is immersed in as many opportunities to talk in English as soon as possible. Some ideas of how to do this are suggested below.

- **English** must be **spoken regularly** in the home environment with the child. Where families have a home language other than English, some parents set up language boundaries for their child such as one parent speaking in English, or certain activities in the home taking place in English.
- **Start early** with this process and don't leave it until just before they are about to start school. Sadly, where this happens, it is often very confusing and too late for some children.
- **Talk, talk and more talk!** Talk about everything and anything with your child and encourage dialogue in English.
- Ensure you are providing clear **expectations** that your child should use words to communicate with you and not rely on gestures or sounds. This is easier said than done in busy families but encouraging your child to use their words to make choices in everyday situations will naturally provide opportunities for them to increase their vocabulary and practise their language.
- Follow up on things that your child has expressed an **interest** in. Use this as a way in to conversation.
- Use **open ended questions** to develop your child's dialogue; who, when, where, why and what style questions.
- Regularly repeat your **child's responses** back to your child in the correct format with a positive affirmation... 'that's right Clare; it is a big car isn't it?' This is a very natural process and many mums and dads do this without realising.
- Organise **play dates** with other English speaking children– particularly if English is not your child's first language.
- Provide experience of an **English speaking early years setting** such as a toddler group, play group or English-speaking nursery. Even on a part-time basis, this can help enormously.
- **Read** plenty of stories to your child in English and **listen** to nursery rhymes on CDs.