

English as an Additional Language

Young children use their individual, innate language-learning strategies to acquire their home language and soon find they can also use these strategies to learn English. At Hope House School, young children have time to learn through play activities. They pick up language by taking part in an activity shared with an adult. They firstly make sense of the activity and then get meaning from the adult's shared language. Staff will ensure that they have time to process their thoughts before they are expected to speak, and will model the correct English for them whenever necessary.

Understanding is always greater than speaking and young children's ability to comprehend will not be underestimated, as they are used to understanding their home language from a variety of context clues. Though they may not understand everything they hear in English, children will understand a few important words and decipher the rest using different clues to interpret the meaning. Staff will always provide encouragement to enable them to transfer their understanding skills to interpret meaning in English.

Children who can already read in their home language are generally eager to find out how to read in English. They already know how to decode words in their home language to get meaning from text and will be helped to acquire strategies, including phonics, to help them to decode in English. Sharing picture books and learned rhymes with staff and parents is another strategy used by Hope House School. Reading what they know by heart is an important step in learning to read English as it gives children opportunities to work out how to decode simple words by themselves. Once children have built up a bank of words they can read, they feel confident and are then ready for a more structured approach to reading and writing.