

This guidance is intended to support senior leaders and EAL coordinators who wish to include the school environment as part a Whole-School Self-Evaluation of the EAL provision in their school.

What is it?

The Inclusive School Environment Checklist is a practical tool that helps schools review how inclusive, welcoming, supporting and multilingual their environment is. The pro forma offers a set of questions to guide the observer/s in this process, establishing strengths as well as potential areas for development. The pro forma can be used in both primary and secondary settings.

Why is it important?

Schools are becoming more diverse and multilingual. Starting in a new education system, particularly for families who are new to English can feel overwhelming. The physical school environment will help to shape a family's first impression, so seeing their language or culture reflected can help them feel included, valued, and safe. Ensuring that multilingual learners and their families are included and represented in all aspects of school life supports well-being, motivation, and mutual understanding, benefiting the learners, their families and the school community as a whole. The pro-forma includes not just the areas in the school buildings, but also the people that make up the school; the staff, the learners and their families.

How does it connect to the whole school self-evaluation?

The Inclusive School Environment Checklist can be used as part of the Whole-School Evaluation and will primarily inform the following dimensions:

- A. Inclusive vision, values, attitudes, and behaviours;
- B. Inclusive governance and leadership of EAL provision;
- C. Whole school language(s) policy;
- H. Involvement of multilingual pupils' parents and carers.

How does it work?

Before:

- Decide on who will carry out the school environment walk; more than one observer will provide a broader and more meaningful perspective.
- You may want to identify a specific focus for the school environment walk. For example, you may want to specifically observe if displays and school signage represent, value and celebrate the cultural and linguistic diversity of the school. Select only the relevant points on the proforma.
- Establish what areas in the school will be the most useful to visit. For example, if you are focusing on displays and signage, the school entrance and reception area, and corridors will be priorities.
- Plan the timing and route of the walk carefully to allow you to both see and hear as much evidence as possible. For example:
 - Avoid certain areas at busy times such as the corridors due to the movement of learners between classrooms (in secondary settings);

- Find out if there are any parent meetings scheduled or class assembly performances that families will be attending, and if appropriate, plan to include them on the walk.
- Select and become familiar with the relevant questions on the pro forma. Looking at all questions is likely to be too time-consuming.
- Refer to the school policy, or to senior leaders, for specific guidance and criteria for conducting a learning walk.
- It can be useful to take photographs during the walk to recognise good practice and also highlight opportunities for improvement. Make sure all policies around photography and consent are followed.

During:

- Visit a range of areas in the school to gather as much evidence as possible.
- If appropriate, plan to visit areas where you might encounter visiting families such as, the school reception area, to observe inclusive practices.
- Take the opportunity to speak with families during the walk, if appropriate, to establish their opinion of the school environment. For example, do they feel welcome? What aspects of the school environment contribute to them feeling welcome? Can they easily access all of the information they need? What else would they like to see/ not see (or hear/ not hear)?
- Notice if there is evidence of multilingual adults and parents involved in school activities such as, working in a school role or helping with reading. Evidence can include displays.
- Use a range of ways to record your observations, such as:
 - Making notes;
 - Taking photographs of good practice;
 - Recording evidence of multilingual conversations between multilingual learners;
 - Looking at the school website.

After:

- Meet with the other observers to reflect on your observations. Identify:
 - Patterns of practice for consistency or for gaps. For example, is there more multilingual signage or reading material in KS1 areas than KS2 or, in specific subject areas and departments e.g., English or MFL departments.
 - Models of good and established practice and strengths.
 - Where a 'quick win' can be established and implemented quickly and effectively.
- Arrange a time to discuss the findings with the relevant staff, e.g. SLT.
- Suggest examples of good practice seen in other schools. For example, translation options on other school websites.
- Identify and discuss two or three recommended actions to address in a realistic time scale for each area visited, as appropriate.
- Compile written feedback for SLT.