



Advice Sheet 2609

DFE FUNDING TO SUPPORT MULTILINGUAL PUPILS



Are you accessing accurate funding from the DfE to support your pupils with English as an Additional Language?

The DfE's **School Census** is coming up soon but the 'EAL' funding factor can appear hidden. It's crucial that data for the Language code [used for funding] item is populated accurately. To do so, the understanding of 'First Language' is essential. Many schools are **missing out on significant EAL funding** due to them because of **incomplete or incorrect data** reporting.

This **Better Bilingual Advice Sheet** provides information to help you.

- **What do I need to know?** Key information from relevant DfE documents about EAL funding through the 'Language Code'.
 - **What should I do?** Follow the 'FUND' recommendations at the end.
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What do I need to know?

Key information from: Schools Operational Guide: 2026–27

1. Introduction

This guide helps local authorities, and their schools forums plan their implementation of the local funding system for the 2025 to 2026 financial year.

2. Expiry or review date

This guidance is for the 2026 to 2027 funding year.

3. Who is this publication for?

The guidance is for:

- local authorities
- schools forums.



8. Delegated funding

8.1 Local authority funding formula factors for 2025 to 2026

There are 15 allowable funding factors in 2025 to 2026; most are compulsory for all local authorities:

Compulsory

- basic entitlement
- free school meals (FSM)
- free school meals Ever6 (FSM6)
- income deprivation affecting children index (IDACi)
- minimum level of per-pupil funding for primary and secondary schools
- low prior attainment (LPA)
- **English as an additional language (EAL)**
- pupil mobility
- sparsity
- lump sum
- London fringe – compulsory for the eligible authorities
- split sites

10. English as an additional language (EAL)

This is a **compulsory** factor.

The factor values must be at least 10% closer to NFF values than their baseline values, except where local formulae are already ‘mirroring’ the NFF values. There can be separate unit values for primary and secondary.



Pupils identified in the October census with a **first language other than English** attract funding for **3 years after they enter the statutory school system**.

Key information from: [Complete the School Census 2026](#)

Data items 2026 to 2027

Guidance about every piece of information you need to send us in autumn 2026, and spring and summer 2027.

All data items are present within management information systems (MIS), but they may be implemented and named in different ways. Therefore, we'd recommend you also consult your MIS guidance for further information.

Language code [used for funding]

We require data on **language for all pupils**. The school **must not** ascribe a specific language to the pupil. This information **must** come from the parent or guardian or the pupil.

You should **only use codes ENB** (not known but believed to be English) and **OTB** (not known but believed to be other than English) where **all** the following conditions apply:

- pupil's first language is **not** known with absolute certainty
- parents have **not** responded to enquiries
- school can judge with a high degree of confidence whether the pupil's language is English or not.



Where a parent, guardian or pupil **declines** to provide a first language, you should record it as 'REF' (refused).

Where a pupil's first language is other than English – that is, **where the pupil has been exposed to a language other than English *during early development*** and continues to be exposed to this language in *the home* or in *the community*– schools may record specific languages from the extended language codes or continue to use the codes used in their software.

[Find a language code.](#)

Key information from: [Schools Block Funding Formulae 2026–27](#)

1. Summary

This document provides a summary of the local funding formulae submitted by each local authority to the Department for Education (DfE) in January 2026. The local formulae specify how each local authority has allocated their dedicated schools grant (DSG) schools block funding for 2026 to 2027.

There is an accompanying dataset and details of this are provided in the '[Information about the data](#)' section. Small details of the individual funding formulas presented here may change as a result of late amendments.

We also published a summary of [schools block funding formulae for 2025 to 2026.](#)



9. English as an additional language (EAL)

EAL is the number of pupils with **English as an additional language** that entered the **compulsory school system** in the **last 3 years**.

For **primary EAL**, 146 local authorities are allocating an amount **within 2.5% of the value of £610** used in the NFF. For **secondary EAL** 144 are allocating an amount within **2.5% of the value of £1,630** used in the NFF. There are 143 local authorities within 2.5% of the values used in the NFF for both primary and secondary EAL, compared to 139 in 2025 to 2026.

Across all local authorities, **1.1% of funding** was allocated through this factor, the same proportion as in the NFF and the 2025 to 2026 local formulae.

What should I do? Follow Better Bilingual's 'FUND' recommendations...

Freshen up your questions for parents and carers. It's amazing what a difference an initial positive statement can make, e.g. *We greatly value multilingualism at our school. Can you tell me about **all** your languages?*

Understand the full linguistic profiles of your pupil, e.g. oracy/literacy skills? Find out about strengths and experiences so this information can be used to promote a positive sense of identity and to access academic benefits.

Negate misconceptions about bilingualism. Hold bespoke workshops for parents and staff to inform them of bilingual benefits. Share and embed positive messages about multilingualism at every opportunity.

Doublecheck the First Language data you have on your school system ahead of the next School Census. Ensure all staff involved in collecting and processing pupils' 'Language' data understand this dictates EAL funding.

Contact us for further support and information on EAL funding for schools:

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