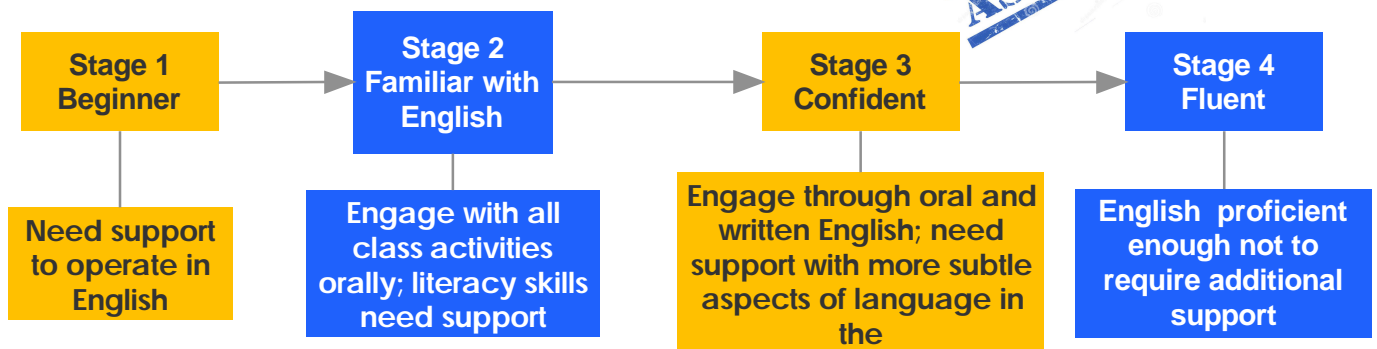


English as an additional language pupils: how long does it take to acquire English fluency

Demie, F. (2013) Language and Education

A UK Local Authority (LA) collected annual data to show the linguistic progress made by pupils learning English as an Additional Language (EAL). Using data for pupils in Years 6 -11, researchers tracked back year on year to determine how long it had taken each pupil to become fluent in English.

4 stage criteria used across the LA to assess pupil progress

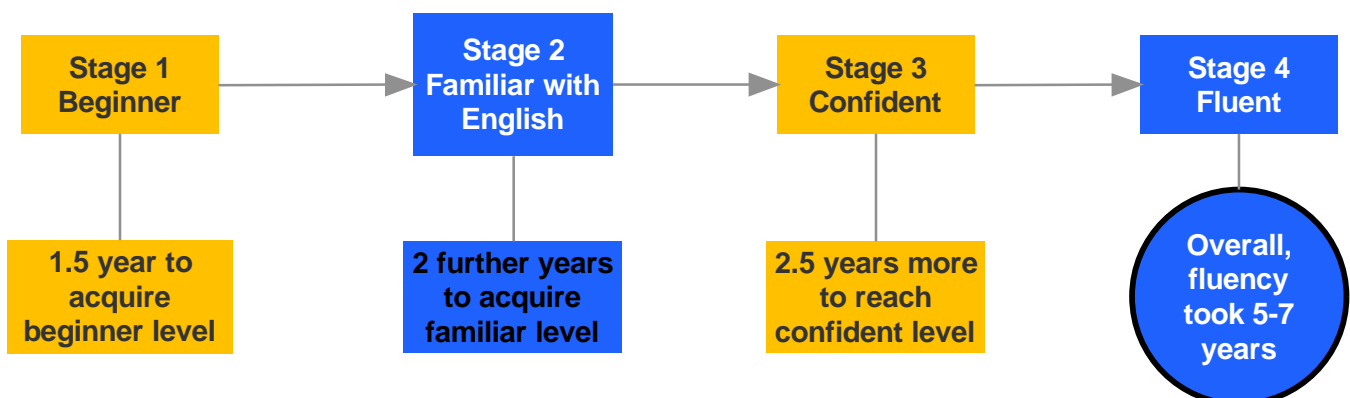


What the study found was that...



...despite the good progress of its EAL learners, pupils in the authority still took, on average, 6 years to become fluent and catch up with monolingual peers.

Time spent reaching the levels also varied:



The research strongly suggests:

Pupils in the LA from an African Commonwealth background (French, Yoruba, Somali, Akan, plus Polish) achieved fluency up to a year earlier than pupils from other countries (Turkish, Lingala, Spanish, Bengali, Portuguese).

Conclusion: Implications for Schools

School leaders need to take a long-term, strategic view of EAL and set long-term expectations around the learning and support for EAL pupils.