

# Achieving Together Through Language



We can make this information available in other formats and languages on request.  
Contact us at Children and Young People's Services, Early Years Quality and  
Inclusion Team, Wigan Council, 5 Worsley Terrace, Standishgate, Wigan, WN1 1XW  
Phone: 01942 828845 Fax: 01942 828841 Email: [earlyyears@wiganmbc.gov.uk](mailto:earlyyears@wiganmbc.gov.uk)

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[www.wigan.gov.uk](http://www.wigan.gov.uk)

Quality & Inclusion Team

**Supporting children in early years settings  
learning English as an Additional Language**

## References

- Avon and Somerset Constabulary (1998) Faces of Britain - A Cultural Guide. Burleigh Press.
- Blackledge, A (1994) Teaching Bilingual Children. Trentham Books.
- DCSF (2008) Early Years Foundation Stage Guidance. DCSF Publications.
- Johnson, A (2003) Cultural Diversity. Granada.
- Matterson, E (1969) This Little Puffin. Puffin Books.

## Further reading

Wignall, P. (2002) Multicultural Britain: Heinemann

Baker, C. (1995) A Parents' and Teachers' Guide to Bilingualism: Multilingual Matters

Baker, C. (2000) The Care and Education of Young Bilinguals: Multilingual Matters

Edwards, V. (1998) The Power of Babel: Trentham Books

Genessee, F. (1994) Educating Second Language Children: C.U.P.

Gregory, E. (1996) Making Sense of a New World: Paul Chapman Publishing

## Websites

<http://www.literacytrust.org.uk/Database/EALres.html>

<http://www.rdg.ac.uk/AcaDepts/eh/ReadLang/aimer.htm>

[www.practicalpreschool.com](http://www.practicalpreschool.com) (nursery rhymes and resources in other languages)

[www.standards.dcf.gov.uk](http://www.standards.dcf.gov.uk)

## Useful addresses

Dual language texts and support resources are published by: -

Hounslow Language Service Martindale Road Hounslow TW4 7HE Tel: 020 8583 4166	Milet Publishing North End Parade London W14 OSJ Tel: 020 7603 5477	The Willesden Bookshop Willessden Green Library Centre 95 High Road London NW10 4OU Tel: 020 8451 7000 <a href="http://www.willesdenbookshop.co.uk/">www.willesdenbookshop.co.uk/</a>
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Letterbox Library 71-73 Allen Road London N16 8RY Tel: 020 7503 4801 <a href="http://www.letterboxlibrary.com/acatlog/index.html">www.letterboxlibrary.com/acatlog/index.html</a>	Mantra Lingua 5 Alexandra Grove London N12 8NU Tel: 020 8445 5123 <a href="http://www.mantralingua.com_multilang.bks+materials">www.mantralingua.com_multilang.bks+materials</a>
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Multi-cultural resources and support materials can be obtained from:-

ASCO 19 Lockstock Way Leeds LS11 5TH Tel: 0113 277 5585	eduzone 29 Friern Barnet Road London N11 1NE Tel: 0845 644 5556	Learning Development Aids Duke Street Wisbech Cambridgeshire PE13 2AE Tel:01945 463441
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Baker Ross Ltd Unit 53, Millmead Ind. Estate, Mill Mead Road London N17 9QU Tel: 0870 770 7030	Galt Education & Pre-school, Johnsonbrook Road Hyde, Cheshire SK1 4QT Tel: 08451 203005	NES Arnold Excelsior Road Ashby de la Zouch Leicestershire LE65 1NG Tel: 0842 120 4525
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Cheshire Development Education Centre (CDEC) Campbell Community Hall Boughton Chester CH3 5BR Tel: 01244 347 880	Hope Education Hyde Buildings Ashton Road Hyde, Cheshire SK14 4SH Tel: 08451 202055	The Festival Shop Ltd. 56 Poplar Road Kings Heath Birmingham B14 7AG Tel: 0121 444 0444
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Supporting children with English as an Additional Language (EAL) in early years settings.

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## Story Books

Here are some suggestions for story books which have clear, simple, repetitious language, good illustrations and a particular vocabulary focus. There are plenty of other good books that you will find. Story-books are easier to understand and 'come to life' when they are used with puppets or props.

Title	Author	Publisher	Dual Language	Vocabulary Focus
Where's Spot	Eric Hill	Heinemann	Roy Yates	Position, furniture, animals
Brown Bear, Brown Bear	Bill Martin Jr	Puffin Books		Colours, animals
Elmer	David McKee	Andersen Press	Milet	Colours, weather, friends
Peace at Last	Jill Murphy	Macmillan	Ingham Yates	Rooms, furniture, garden
The Very Hungry Caterpillar	Eric Carle	Puffin Books	Mantra	Days, food, number
Rosie's Walk	Pat Hutchins	Bodley Head		Position
Noisy Farm	Rod Campbell	Campbell Books		Farm animals, baby animals
Dear Zoo	Rod Campbell	Puffin Books	Mantra	Zoo animals, description
Splash!	Flora McDonnell	Walker Books	Mantra	Animals
Walking through the Jungle	Debbie Harter	Barefoot Books	Mantra	Actions, animals
The Boo Hoo Baby	Cowell & Godden	Macmillan	Mantra	Actions, animals
Baby Goz - When I Grow Up	Steve Weatherill	Frances Lincoln		Animals, colours, position
Handa's Surprise	Eileen Browne	Walker Books	Mantra	Fruit, animals
Handa's Hen	Eileen Browne	Walker Books	Mantra	Counting
One Smiling Grandma	Ann Marie Linden	Mammoth		Counting
Head, shoulders, knees & toes	Annie Kubler	Child's Play	Mantra	Actions
Asian Nursery Rhymes	Robena Dutta	Mantra Lingua	Mantra	Actions
Who am I? Who am I?	Aurelie Lanchais Alain Crozon	Milet	Milet	Animals, actions, transport
Night and day	Herve Tullet	Milet		Opposites
Blue + Square Yellow + Round	Herve Tullet	Milet		Opposites
Pink Lemon	Herve Tullet	Milet		Colour-matching
A Whole World	Katy Couprie & Antonin Louchard	Milet		Nature
Frog	Max Velthuijs	Milet	Milet	Pse
Welcome to Lizard Lounge	Laura Hambleton	Milet		Pse
How Bees Be	Alison Boyle & Hambleton	Milet		Pse
I'm afraid too!	Laura Hambleton	Milet		Pse
Senses	Gwenyth Swain	Milet	Milet	4 titles - bilingual flap books about sight, sound, taste and touch
Small World	Gwenyth Swain	Milet	Milet	Kn & Understanding

## Ten Top Tips for supporting children with English as an Additional Language

1. Don't worry if the child does not talk for some months. Involve him/her in all activities, continue to talk and use smiles, gestures and eye contact. Give opportunities for speaking but no pressure.
2. Help the child to understand simple classroom phrases....., "Can I have..?", "Wash your hands", "Sit on the carpet", "Hang up your coat", "Put on an apron".
3. Involve the child in a variety of hands-on activities with other children so he/she can learn the new language in context.
4. Use visual aids to support stories, songs and talk, e.g. pictures, objects, photographs and puppets.
5. Use every activity as a basis for your communication with the child in meaningful contexts.
6. Talk through what you are doing so the child can hear plenty of structured language in context with visual support.
7. Keep language direct, simple and consistent. Try to avoid idioms and sayings, e.g. "It's raining cats and dogs!"
8. Make sure resources show positive images of the child's home culture, e.g. books, dolls, toys, games, role-play. Use dual language texts and signs.
9. Provide taped stories and songs in English, and in the home language, if possible.
10. Help all the children to learn a few simple words in the home languages represented in your setting, e.g. hello, thank you, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 (if possible, use the parents/carers help for this).

Practitioners must plan for the needs of children from black and other minority backgrounds, including those learning English an additional language.

Practice guidance for the Early Years Foundation Stage (P. 6)

## Introduction

The aim of "Achieving Together Through Language" is to develop the confidence of staff working in early years settings to support children and their families who speak English as an Additional Language. It sets out some of the basic information and strategies which will help children to achieve their full potential within an inclusive environment. It is a starting point... there is much more to find out.

Wigan Early Years Quality and Inclusion Team and Wigan English as an Additional Language Team would like to acknowledge Cheshire County Council's Surestart in allowing us to adapt their 'Understanding Each Other' booklet.







## Resources which will help children learning EAL

Everyday objects, lotto and other games

tapes of songs, rhymes and stories

Jigsaws of everyday objects

Photo cards and pictures

**All the activities in your setting**

Picture books of people, clothes, toys, food, home and colours

Persona dolls

First word vocabulary books

Stories with simple text, clear pictures and props

## Creating a welcoming learning environment

The Early Years Foundation Stage Guidance states that: You must promote positive attitudes to diversity and difference within all children. In doing this you will help them to learn to value different aspects of their own and other people's lives.

Practice Guidance for the Early Years Foundation Stage (P. 6)

### In your setting

Include displays, books, labels and notices in the children's home languages

Ensure displays reflect a multi-cultural world

Choose books that show positive images of all children

Provide a variety of multi-cultural toys, puzzles and games

Plan the role play area to reflect other cultures



## Respecting cultural differences

Everyday situations often raise issues of cultural difference. You need to be aware of this in order to understand and respect the values of all children and their families. In an inclusive setting, managers need to take responsibility for raising staff awareness of the cultural backgrounds represented within the setting and surrounding community. Below are listed some of the areas where issues may arise.

### Gathering Information

When a child starts at your setting you need to obtain certain personal information.

The information you will need to find out is:

#### The child's full name and what name he/she uses

In different cultures the family name may be given first.

- Lau Tsz Hong (Lau = family name, Tsz Hong = child's name)  
Children may have a religious title, but are called another personal name in the family.
- Haji Ahmet Gonen (Haji can be a religious title)  
Chinese families often give their children an English name, to be used outside the home.
- Shui-Ying may be called Sue at nursery and school.

Parent's names

These may be different from the child and each other because naming systems vary around the world.

- Kolsuma Begum – Mother's name, Begum is a female surname.
- Jahangir Khan – Father's name, Khan is a male surname, but may be used as the surname for the children.

### Languages spoken and understood by the child

### Names and ages of brothers and sisters

### Religion and religious festivals observed

### Dietary requirements

Certain cultures and religions forbid certain foods and some families observe dietary laws more than others.



**CULTURAL DIVERSITY – CUSTOM AND OBSERVANCE**

The information presented in this table is intended only as a "snapshot" of religious and cultural observance. It should be recognised that families will vary in how strictly they observe the customs of their culture and religion. Schools should always discuss family traditions as part of the enrolment process to avoid misunderstandings and ensure that pupils' religious and cultural heritage is respected.

It is understood that many people will wish to look into this more deeply and those who do can find further information in "Cultural Diversity", edited by Elaine Johnson, published by Granada, 2003 which is the source from which this table has been compiled.

FAITH	DRESS	DIET	RELIGIOUS OBSERVANCE
Buddhism	Shoes are not worn in a Buddhist place of worship and skimpy clothes are not acceptable. Heads are left uncovered by both men and women. Men should cover the torso and wear long trousers, women a top with sleeves and a skirt to the knee or trousers.	Vegetarianism is highly regarded but not compulsory.	Buddhists take no drink or drugs that may cloud the mind. They should be made aware of the effects of medicines likely to cause drowsiness. Holy days relate to the phases of the moon. Celebrations are often moved to the nearest Sunday in western societies. Each school of Buddhism has its own festival days.
Chinese - Confucianism - Daoism - Buddhism - Christianity	No special restrictions (but see Buddhists above)	Food is central to family life. Chinese dishes always have more than one ingredient to allow for contrast of colour and texture.	Festivals Spring (Chinese New Year) QingMing (clear light) Dragon Boat ZhongQiu(Mid-Autumn)

**Stages of learning**

Children learning English as an Additional Language may:

- be silent
- mix words from both languages (code switch)
- make many grammatical errors

These features are normal when acquiring a new language and do not necessarily indicate language delay. The table below outlines strategies you could use to help children at different stages of additional language development.

Stages of Learning for the EAL Child	What can we do to help?
<b>1. Chatters in Home Language</b> Child wants to communicate but is not yet fully aware that others do not understand or speak the same language	Keep talking and involving the child in activities with other children and adults. Talk one to one in context and use routine phrases, e.g. wash your hands.
<b>2. Silent Period</b> Child uses gestures, nods, smiles to communicate but is not confident that he/she knows enough English to speak	Keep talking and involving the child in activities with other children and adults. Teach words in context and reinforce phrases from routines. Accept any attempts to speak.
<b>3. Single Words / Routine Phrases</b> Child practices the vocabulary learnt through play as well as familiar routine phrases..... "tidy up time".	Use what the child says to extend and model language, e.g. "Car" "Yes you've got a blue car." <b>REMEMBER TO GIVE LOTS OF PRAISE</b>
<b>4. Making own phrases and sentences</b> Child uses learnt words to construct his/her own phrases, e.g. "Ali want do cars".	Accept all the child says and remodel phrases without criticism, "Yes Ali, you can play with the cars." <b>REMEMBER TO GIVE LOTS OF PRAISE</b>

The process of learning an additional language can take several years. For children entering a setting where a different language is spoken it can take three months for them to begin to understand. It may take two years before they can hold a conversation, and up to seven years to have full cognitive understanding of the new language.



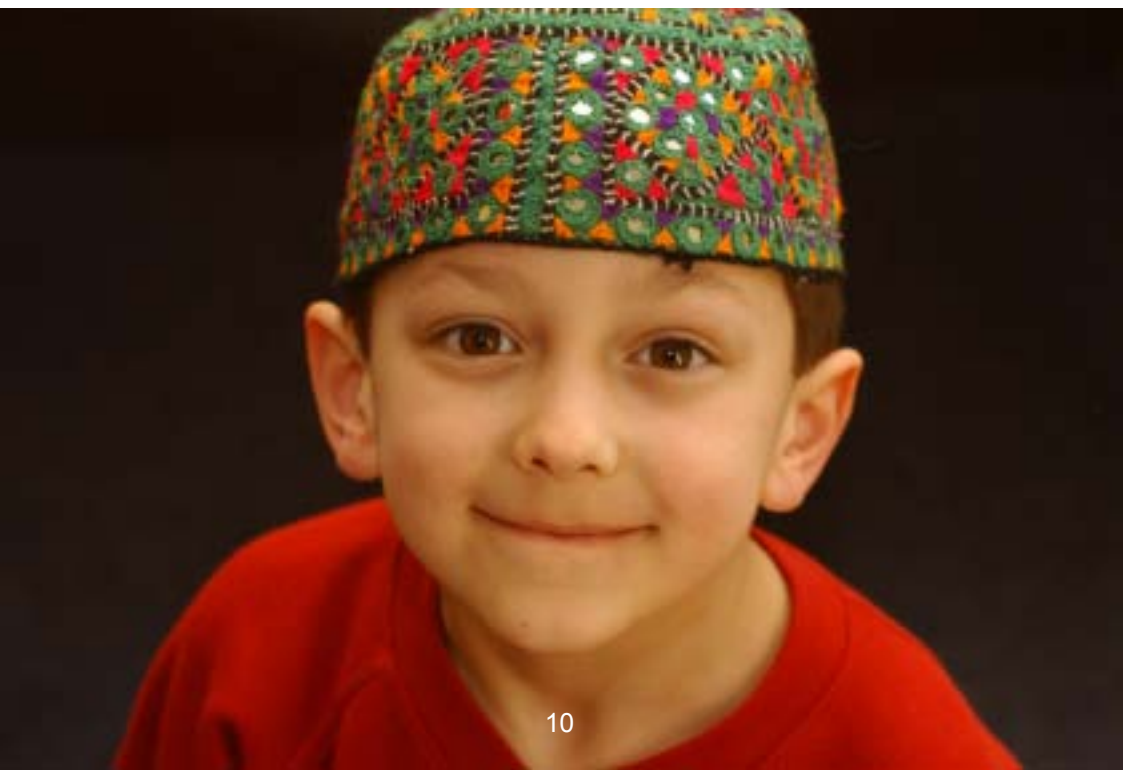
It is hard work operating in another language so you need to give children learning English as an Additional Language:

### TIME to:

- process what has been said
- think through what they want to say
- relax after they have worked so hard

### SUPPORT by:

- making sure your language is simple and clear
- waiting expectantly for answers
- allowing children to play without talking
- letting children use their home language
- keeping the noise level appropriate to allow language to be heard and understood



FAITH	DRESS	DIET	RELIGIOUS OBSERVANCE
Christianity	Until recently, people attending church would always wear 'Sunday best'. Women sometimes wear hats, men never wear hats in church	No food prohibitions although in some traditions Christians abstain from eating certain things at certain times. In Lent or on Fridays some Christians do not eat meat. Drinking alcohol is discouraged in some traditions	Festivals Christmas Easter Whitsun or Pentecost  A few Christian denominations have reservations about blood transfusions
Hinduism	Women generally dress modestly, would rather wear trousers or a long skirt	Generally avoid beef Many practice vegetarianism as a mark of respect for all life.	Eat with right hand, left hand is used for cleansing & considered impure Cover heads when offering prayers Festivals Holi – Spring Divali – late Oct/early Nov
Islam	Men should be covered from waist to ankle at all times.  Women must cover their hair and all their body from the neck to the ankles	Vegetarian, dairy, produce, seafood, game & poultry are acceptable Meat from mammals has to be halal Carnivorous animals & birds of prey; mammals & birds of reproductive age; pigs & pets are forbidden A muslim can happily eat at a Jewish table	Must be pure & clean at all times. Cannot perform daily prayers if not clean.  No celebratory festivals as such but days of thanks-giving prayers such as Eid (or Id)

FAITH	DRESS	DIET	RELIGIOUS OBSERVANCE
Judaism	Men and married women cover their heads during synagogue services, clothes should be 'decent'. During a service men wear a Tallit (prayer shawl)	Meat must be 'kosher' (slaughtered in an approved way) and may only come from animals which chew the cud and have split hooves. Eating farmyard fowl and fish which have both scales & fins is permitted.  Food containing meat and food containing milk may not be eaten together.	The Sabbath is observed from Friday night to Saturday night. Festivals Rosh Hashana (Jewish New Year) Yom Kippur (Day of Atonement) Pesach (Passover)
Sikhism	Both men and women dress modestly. Men wear the turban and sikhs who have been initiated will not cut their hair. Women always cover the whole of their bodies	Majority are vegetarian and eating beef is forbidden. Sikhs cannot eat halal meat (see Islam above)	Festivals Birthdays & martyrdom of Gurus Baisakhi (Birth of the Sikh Identity, first day of Sikh year & harvest) Diwali (Festival of light)

A wealth of further information on religions and religious observances can be found at:

<http://www.interfaithcalendar.org/>

## Strategies to develop communication

The following strategies are already widely used in early years settings. They help all children to improve their communication skills, and are particularly useful for children learning EAL.

- Self Talk** This is talking about what you are doing, modelling language in context.
- Parallel Talk** This is talking about what the child is doing. "You are painting a lovely picture. Is that your house?"
- Repetition** To learn and understand new vocabulary children need to hear it many times in context. We can provide opportunities for repeating language through tapes, stories, songs and rhymes. We can also repeat key words in sentences, e.g.  
**Adult** Everyone come and sit down on the carpet. (pause)  
Come and sit down. (pause)  
Sit down on the carpet.
- Modelling** This is teaching new structures or vocabulary in meaningful contexts, e.g.  
**Adult:** I like these teddies. Do you like the big teddy bear or the small teddy? I like the small teddy.  
**Child:** I like the big teddy.
- Extending** This is using what the child has said and expanding the language, e.g.  
**Child:** Like yellow.  
**Adult:** Yes, I like yellow too, it's a pretty colour.  
**Child:** I like yellow, pretty.

## Teaching through talking

Here is some of the vocabulary children will hear daily in your setting.

Type of vocabulary	Examples of language
Essential	Staff names, toilet, yes, no
Social	Please, thank you, sorry, hello, goodbye
Routines	Snack, tidy up time, home time, story time
Pre-school play activities	Construction, cars, dolls, bikes, playdough, water, sand, paint, paper, crayons, pencil, scissors, glue
Pre-school space	Carpet area, home corner, playground, window, door, bin, table, chair, outside, inside
Activity actions	Cut, stick, draw, paint, make, colour, roll, press, turn over
Instructions	Sit down, stand up, put on an apron, wash your hands, hang up your coat, put on your coat
Body	Head, face, eyes, ears, nose, mouth, teeth, hair, body, arms, legs, hands, feet, neck, shoulders, knees
Colours	Red, yellow, green, blue, black, white
People	Girl, boy, man, woman, children, teacher
Family	Mummy, daddy, brother, sister, baby
Clothes	Coat, shoes, socks, trousers, T-shirt, jumper, skirt
Home corner	Table, chair, cupboard, plate, spoon, telephone
Food	Apple, banana, carrot, tomato, bread
Actions	Walk, run, jump, hop, stamp, ride, wave, clap

Look at how many words children acquiring English as an Additional Language will learn, through talk, during an average session!

## Planning for talk

Children learning EAL will acquire some English whilst they are engaged in playing with others in the pre-school setting. Like all children they will benefit from additional, focused language activities. The target should only be a few words and possibly a phrase or a question. All vocabulary should be revisited frequently. Planning the language activities will raise the awareness of every adult working with children. This shouldn't need to be anything additional, your planning should already include high quality opportunities for language development.

## Achievements in other languages

If children's early language development is in a language other than English, it is important for practitioners to find out as much as possible about it. Language development in English and in the home language reinforce and support each other.

The Early Years Foundation Stage Guidance and Profile support practitioners in observing children's development using their home language. Other contributors to the assessment process, particularly parents, carers, previous practitioners and bilingual support assistants, will provide valuable information about children's progress.

### Information settings need to know:

Which language(s) does the child understand?

Which language(s) does the child speak?

Does s/he always use the same language with particular adults or children? (e.g. a child may speak the home language to parents or grandparents, but speak English to brothers & sisters)

What language experiences does the child have in the home language? (i.e. do they bake, art & craft, etc.)

Does s/he know rhymes, poems or stories?

Are there any plans for the child to learn to read and write in the home language?

## Valuing home languages

**Children in Britain speak more than two hundred languages. As many as five thousand children learn to speak a language other than English at home before they encounter English at school. (Blackledge A: Teaching Bilingual Children p43)**

An additional language is an advantage. English should not replace the home language, it should develop alongside it.

### There are many reasons to maintain the home language

#### Family

Young children learn to communicate best within their close circle of family and friends. Their home language is important for bonding, trust, affection, security and authority.

#### Culture

Language is important for social and personal development. It is rooted in cultural identity and contributes to the development of personal values and a positive view of one's place in society.

#### Education

Children will be surrounded by English in their early years setting, but they will continue to think in their home language at this stage. This means it is important to keep their home language active for developing their knowledge, skills and understanding.

#### Learning English

Children's home language supports their learning of English as an Additional Language. It teaches them how language works. Bilingual learners transfer skills from one language to another.

### Value the home language

Young children learning one language at home and another in their early years setting need to use their home language as much as possible. Parents should be encouraged to speak their home language. This builds a firm foundation for the second language. Without this foundation, both first and second language can be delayed or disrupted.

## Remember to check the pronunciation of a child's name and encourage all staff to practice it.

### Talking with Parents

Take time to talk with the parent/carer. Most people understand some English but are not tuned in to different accents and expressions. Try to keep your language clear and direct. Talk with the parent/carer about what you do and involve them in the activities. In your setting children should be encouraged to be independent. However, in some cultures early independence is not valued and a 'good parent' should be seen to do many everyday tasks for the child. Listen carefully to any comments; you may be surprised by something you have not considered. It's important to be aware of and discuss with parents any area where culture or religious observance may impact on curricular activities, e.g. mixed sex changing for P.E.

### Daily Routines

Simple routines and activities can raise issues of cultural difference. For instance, pigs are considered unclean and forbidden by the Qur'an. This will mean that stories about pigs will not have a 'cute' image for Muslim children, who may not even want to look at the illustrations. In some cultures avoiding eye contact can mean respect and certain hand gestures can be offensive.

### Writing Policies

Included in your policies should be clear statements which add value and respect children and parents/carers who use English as an additional language. Children's prejudices come from adults and we have a key role in creating a tolerant and inclusive society, valuing all cultures and celebrating diversity. All staff should be active in promoting the correct ethos in your setting.

Further insight into the varying customs, cultures and religious backgrounds of different communities in Britain can be found in 'Faces of Britain – a cultural guide'. (See References)