English as an Additional Language (EAL) provision in schools – 10 case studies

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Introduction

The Training and Development Agency has commissioned the Institute of Education, working with the Learning and Skills Network, to advise them on the development of a national school workforce strategy for EAL. This strategy will set out a vision for the next five years in which every EAL learner is supported in achieving their full potential, and every member of the teaching workforce is appropriately equipped to enable them to contribute in making this vision a reality.

The strategy will be far-reaching, affecting all members of the teaching workforce across all key stages; those who have a classroom role (teaching and supporting learning), including EAL specialists and mainstream staff, as well as school leaders. It will have a significant impact on teacher training providers, quality assurance agencies and all those who support schools. Chief among these are Local Authorities, who already play a key role in EAL provision and will have an equally significant role to play in the implementation of the strategy.

TDA has identified that there is a need for policy and practice to change. The population of EAL learners in England has increased consistently in recent years and with it demand for different types of EAL provision linked to new patterns of immigration. According to NALDIC figures from the 2008 school census indicate that EAL pupil numbers rose by approximately 25% between 2004 and 2008 to stand at 824,380, while the number of specialist EAL/EMA teachers has increased by just 8% during the same period. These figures demonstrate the mismatch in the system between demand and the available specialist workforce. This discrepancy results in additional pressures for the teaching workforce at all levels and undermines the principles of inclusion and equality of opportunity for EAL learners.

In order to provide an evidence base for the development of this strategy extensive research was carried out by the project team in the period of November 2008 to April 2009. It had four strands and used a range of methods and approaches:

- **A research review** mapping the national and international relevant research since 2000;
- **Case studies** of EAL provision in schools collected in a variety of settings;
- **Interviews** with a group of experts in education and a written consultation with a group of EAL specialists;
- **A National Online Survey** of the workforce.

The research review is now available as a separate document at www.teachingEAL.org.uk.

Case studies

Ten case studies were carried out. The sites were selected to provide regional coverage as well as to ensure that it was possible to compare EAL provision across the phases of education, between rural and urban settings and to assess the impact of changes in patterns of immigration.

The case study researchers worked to a protocol designed by the project team. This stipulated the areas for observation and interviews while on site and structures both their reports to the project and the versions that are included here. The full protocol can be seen in Appendix 1.

All of the reports included here have been anonymised.

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Main themes

Lack of specialised staff

The case studies show a picture of a lack of specialised staff to work with children with EAL without much of a link between 'need' and 'provision'. In one medium-sized secondary school 95% of the school's students are from minority ethnic backgrounds and yet the school has no dedicated EAL staff from the teaching workforce. Mostly contact of children with EAL is with Teaching Assistants (TAs) some of whom are bilingual and work in support roles in lessons. The majority have little if any training.

Provision for advanced bilingual learners appears to be an area of weakness

For new arrivals there were lots of examples of processes and materials in place to deal with new arrivals. While these were inconsistent, largely focused on process and varied greatly across the schools there was a sense of schools addressing the issue. Some schools had developed specific induction packs for newly arrived pupils and at others those new to the school receive induction into the way the education system works. Some of the materials for these are translated and some interpreting was offered.

However once new arrivals are considered to be beyond the early stages of English fluency they often appear to no longer get support. One school runs a study skills option class led by the EAL HOD, which provides a mixture of coursework support and focused language learning but there was little evidence of explicit provision made for advanced stage EAL learners. This would appear to be because of a lack of specialist staff.

Interestingly one school which Ofsted identified as excellent does address advanced bilingual learners through a cross school understanding of the need to embed EAL practice in the mainstream. A revealing comment here is that teachers were encouraged to promote 'higher-order academic language in those with high levels of social English.' This is striking compared to other schools who ONLY consider social, i.e. spoken English, in assigning the Individual Education Plans (IEPs). Even for people to talk about 'higher order academic language' suggests some knowledge about language and learning.

Roles and responsibilities

The case studies show a range of job titles and a lack of consistency/clarity over the responsibilities of each. This is compounded by the management of EAL provision also being an ill-defined role that is often carried out, either formally or informally, by a TA. The title of EAL teacher was rarely heard even in schools with very high numbers of children with EAL.

EAL provision was also found within SEN, EMA, Learning support or Inclusion teams rather than EAL and was often managed by the head of that service within the school. Accordingly, the line management of the EAL coordinator or head of EAL was taken by a range of staff at different levels of the school management structure, from SENCOs to head teachers. This contributes to a lack of visibility and status of EAL within the school, and also causes problems for the smooth functioning of EAL provision to children.

> The EAL Coordinator has no structures or opportunities to work with those responsible for delivering EAL support and no formal communication with the SENCO who does supervise the work programmes of those delivering EAL support. This is a structural arrangement that blurs the distinction between EAL and SEN.

Commitment from Senior Management appears to make a great deal of difference here; without it specialist staff, particularly if they are teaching assistants have great difficulty influencing mainstream practice.

Crossover with SEN

The case study of one school also illustrates the fact that often the work of the EAL is understood to be part of the work of the SEN team and is often managed by the SENCO. There seems to be a lack of clarity of the distinctions between EAL and SEN with the consequence that there is often no clearly-identified criteria for identifying the language needs of pupils. In one school the provision for pupils with EAL was handled by the SENCO who had had SEN training but none in EAL.

The structural association with SEN was emphasised in a number of schools where students identified for support are given an Individual Education Plan, which is intended to build on the curriculum that a child with learning difficulties or disabilities is following and is designed to set out the strategies being used to meet each child's identified needs. In another school all newly arrived pupils who are not regarded as completely fluent in English are placed automatically on the SEN register.

It is important to note that this is partly structural with no evidence that staff were confusing EAL with learning needs. However, it is often SENCOs or those with SEN expertise who do the job of assessing pupils with the likelihood of misassessing EAL pupils.

Status

We found that those with responsibility for EAL in a school could be called head or coordinator of EAL or EMA. They may be a specialist teacher but are more likely to be a TA. In another school the EAL Coordinator was a TA who had had no formal training in EAL work and had no relevant qualifications. This is problematic in terms of a lack of specialist knowledge but also in the effect it has on the status of EAL within the school.

As with a number of other schools, EAL support work is entirely carried out by TAs. Using a Higher Level Teaching Assistant (HLTA) to coordinate this work is possibly unusual. Although it is a good professional development opportunity for TAs, it does restrict the role and responsibilities of the EAL Coordinator; it poses problems in terms of line management and in terms of equality of status in liaising with and training mainstream staff. This may lead to an outsourcing of EAL coordination; the SENCO manages the individual support programmes of targeted students and the English department carries out English fluency assessments and this work does not necessarily get channelled back directly to the EAL Coordinator. The structural arrangements may also make it less easy for all the other related initiatives – curriculum, parent links – to be seen and developed in a coherent fashion.

Withdrawal

These were varied as expected but did suggest that withdrawal of children with EAL was common despite moves to promote inclusion. In one school we noted that,

"…there is an awareness amongst the Coordinators that EAL pupils are best served in the mainstream classroom and in inclusive environments in order to give them good models of English. However the practice is to place them in groups together with pupils with a range of SENs where they work with TAs. Sometimes these groups work outside the mainstream classroom and pupils very new to EAL may work one-to-one with TAs on basic vocabulary outside the classroom. The reasons cited for this discrepancy are the practicalities of organising TA support and the lack of training in – and therefore understanding of – EAL strategies amongst mainstream staff."

Partnership

There was little mention of how EAL staff worked in partnership with mainstream staff. A notable exception at one school showed where

' The head of EMA is keen for partnership teaching to take place within subject departments and has identified limited collaborative projects such as an annual project on refugee and asylum seekers in Yr 10 PHSE. Also: 'Currently there is an EAL project in Science where the local Authority EMA team and EAL coordinator are focusing on the literacy needs of Advanced EAL learners within the Science curriculum.'

Elsewhere partnership is barely mentioned or may be interpreted merely as three teachers working with separate groups in the same classroom.

The teaching of English itself

It was striking that even in those schools which could be deemed as having 'good' EAL provision there was greater sensitivity to cultural diversity than to language diversity with little awareness of the language demands of the curriculum.

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… strategies were not considered or modified specifically to match with EAL pupil needs and there was a lack of understanding of the linguistic demands some activities entailed for some EAL pupils.

Use of first language

There was plenty of evidence of innovative work around the use of the first language.

… the school recognises the part the first language plays in EAL development and in learning and encourages pupils to use their first languages in exploring concepts. In the introductory pages on its website and in its prospectus signal this and include positive statements about the value and importance of pupils' bilingualism. TAs are encouraged to allow pupils to use their first languages for learning, rather than translating words.

In other schools we noted the use of a wide range of community languages in the vibrant and diverse displays around the school, topics within the school curriculum and the clubs and events on offer in the Learning Resources Centre.

Peer support in the first language was also seen. In one school pupils are encouraged and invited to use their first language as a way into mainstream activities. The school operates a 'buddy' system and where possible the buddy shares the first language of the new arrival. Older pupils are invited to produce some of their written work in their first language and where possible the school will find other speakers of pupils' first languages to do some work with them in the classroom.

However it is worth emphasising here that there is a major difference between using bilingual assistants just for translating and taking the extra step to emphasising the use of first languages as resources for learning; thus encouraging mainstream teachers to also draw on first languages. There was little evidence of this.

Community links

Links with the community appear to be seen as part of EAL, particularly for the bilingual TAs. One school held surgeries for parents who have little English to meet with one of the TAs to talk about their child's progress, in another the EMA dept attends the parent meetings for their focus pupils.

Another way in which schools attempt to involve the parents of EAL children is through sending school information to parents which may be translated. This may encourage them to visit and contact the school and to offer help in classroom and extra-curricular activities. Some of the schools also had regular ESOL classes for parents.

Support for schools

There was mixed evidence on the strengths of links between LA EAL teams and schools. In some cases this was seen as working well with LA advisors delivering EAL training and school staff attending LA EMA forums and network meetings. In other schools this was not the case and there had been very little contact.

There was also little evidence of communication and co-operation among clusters of schools although one Deputy Head was exploring the possibilities of developing regular and formal contacts with schools in the area that have similar ethnic profiles.

Need for locally relevant training

There was a consensus that teachers need more EAL-focused training and advice; at the moment they are not wholly confident about appropriate differentiation and do not see the link between their strategies and EAL achievement.   However, there was a mixed picture on EAL training taken up by the workforce and a distinct preference for training that was locally relevant. One school had sent members of staff on a range of courses run by the LEA but had not found any courses specific and relevant to local EAL needs so had started to investigate possibilities for school-based training sessions. Indeed, there were a number of examples of this type of training. One head teacher explained that it was her policy to send one key member of staff on any relevant course and then to get them to adapt the content of the course to meet the needs, priorities and profile of the school and then to deliver more relevant training days for staff or department meetings. In another school the Lead Teacher for EMA was working with class teachers on how to identify the needs of EAL pupils and work with their TAs on supporting these.

One teacher suggested that those who came through the old BEd route had had a more considered and reflective training with space for EAL issues to be explored. She felt that teachers with a subject degree and a one year PGCE have had no time for reflection with too much emphasis on doing it 'by the book' and no space for any input on EAL.

Materials

Across all of the case studies little is said about what actual materials or strategies are used for EAL pupils. Any sense of an EAL Pedagogy is strikingly absent. Where there are comments on materials we have such as the worrying appearance of an adult EFL coursebook, Headway, which is inappropriate for any level of EAL learner in that context. There is also reference in three of the schools of phonics materials – in one school 'Jolly Phonics' is 'seen as particularly valuable for EAL learners.   In a secondary school the EMA teacher,

> '…devises and uses literacy–focused resources of his own based on material he has seen in use in primary schools, such as the Ruth Miskin (2009) phonics-based materials.'

Where there are comments on materials we have mention of worrying examples such as reference to the EFL textbook Headway, which was never intended for this audience. It appears that the less confident and effective schools may pick up on material brought in from elsewhere, which is often highly unsuitable, rather than devising a curriculum strategy to meet the needs of EAL pupils.

School 1

Age range: 3–11
Number of pupils on roll: 397

Introduction

The school is a three storied Victorian building situated in a fairly bleak area on the edges of a large city. It is overlooked by a series of tower blocks and bordered on one side by an industrial estate and on the other by undeveloped open country. The main entrance is from a busy road across an empty concrete expanse which is at present occupied by builders' equipment. The school seems to be in need of a great deal of repair. The back of the school is very different with a collection of a number of different areas of garden and play facilities. These are quieter and not overlooked; they have a fairly unkempt and disorganised feel to them but the children clearly like them and their possibilities for exploration. Inside there seem to be endless corridors, hidden spaces and a great number of rooms, not all of them utilised. The classrooms are of a good size and bright. There is a good deal of evidence of learning from the displays on the walls in the rooms and corridors. Most pupils seem to be happy and engaged. The reception area has a friendly feel to it and the Head Teacher is very much a presence in this area and around the school. The geography of the school, layout of staffroom areas and the timetabling arrangements seem to make staff interactions quite difficult. The TAs are very visible in the school, obviously highly regarded by staff and pupils; clearly an affable and mutually supportive group and seem to have more opportunities for interaction than mainstream staff. It is clearly an ethnically and linguistically diverse school with pupils using their first languages confidently in social interactions, and the school takes trouble to reflect this as a positive feature.

It is obvious that EAL work is regarded by the Head Teacher and the Lead Teacher for EMA as integral to the work of the school. They see it as part of the responsibility of the whole workforce and policies and initiatives are being mounted to reinforce and develop this approach. The school decided to use its EMA grant to augment the TA workforce rather than employ EAL staff. This is backed up by a commitment to ensuring that TAs are trained and equipped to take on this enhanced role.

Structures and policies

The school has an induction policy for new arrivals; induction sessions are provided for parents new to the UK education system. The school promotes a number of formal initiatives and encourages informal interactions to ensure that parents can support their children. New arrivals are placed in appropriate classes on arrival. Induction packs are provided for staff working with these pupils in their classrooms and baseline assessments are carried out after three weeks which determine any specific intervention that may be needed.

The progress of all EAL pupils is monitored using the same systems as for all children. Causes for concern about progress are picked up by TAs or class teachers and may be communicated back to the Lead Teacher for EMA.

Following comments in an Ofsted report, the school has developed more specific monitoring of advanced bilingual learners, who were reported to be making good but not fast enough progress. The achievement data is analysed to identify underachieving groups and the progress of individual pupils in those groups monitored by the class teacher and the Lead Teacher for EMA.

Personnel

EAL work is managed by the Lead Teacher for EMA who also has a class teaching role but with 1.5 days per week allocated to EAL work. She has an RSA Diploma in Teaching EAL but 'a bit rusty' now and would welcome a refresher course in current EAL practice. Her role is mainly seen as managing training for TAs and mainstream staff although she also oversees a number of initiatives involving community and family links. There are no other dedicated EAL Teachers.

The school's leadership team sees TAs in the forefront of providing in-class EAL support and has provided two separate two and a half day courses recently for TAs with an external trainer. Three of the school's TAs are designated 'Community TAs'. Their role is to support children from the main language groups spoken in the school and to establish community and family links. At present the school has two Turkish and one Bengali Community TAs. There is also a vacancy for a Somali TA.

Most of the pupils at the school have EAL yet there are no EAL support teachers. Each class has a TA and one-to-one support for pupils is delivered by the TAs, although there is no explicitly stated rationale for the choices made about whom to support. TAs have had training in EAL work, which included sessions on identifying barriers to progress in learning and on supporting English language development and the school hopes it will be using this training to inform their work in classes. The Community TAs work directly with pupils who are Turkish and Bengali/Sylhetti speakers and the Lead Teacher for EMA is working with these TAs to establish a clear rationale for the selection of pupils for support based on learning through their first language rather than a more ad hoc basis. The Lead Teacher for EMA is working with class teachers on how they identify the needs of EAL pupils and work with their TAs on supporting these. The school is concerned about the achievement of more advanced EAL learners – this was mentioned in the school's last Ofsted report – and they have made this a focus of EAL work. The Lead Teacher for EMA has analysed the data on achievement to identify groups of pupils underachieving against LEA patterns and has identified Kurdish and White British boys underachieving in writing and Somali and Black Caribbean pupils in general achievement as priorities for initiatives. Each class now has a target group for progress and the Lead Teacher for EMA tracks the progress of these groups.

Training

The LEA had until recently a well-coordinated and innovative team of EAL advisory teachers who offered central training and specific school-focused support to the teaching workforce. The Lead Teacher for EMA clearly benefited from this support and their work was generally well regarded in the school. The team has now been reduced in numbers, moved from its resource base and its members integrated into the LEA strategy teams with, the school feels, a loss of focus on specific EAL initiatives. The central EAL team had for some years been offering longer courses in EAL and EMA for mainstream teachers, which were accredited through the local University, but is no longer able to do so. The LEA offers a number of one-day courses at its PDC, a few of which are EAL-focused.

The LEA does have a particular interest in the professional development of TAs, largely through the efforts of one of its School Improvement Officers and is continuing to develop a range of short and accredited courses for this part of the workforce. It runs a central course – five half-day sessions – in EMA and has run a series of school-based courses of four or five half-day sessions in EAL and in Maths and EAL, both of which were taken up by the school. The central and school-based courses are run by external consultants. The school-based courses are dependant on the availability of LEA funding, which has now been greatly diminished. The LEA also offers a series of induction courses for new TAs, which include two sessions with a specific EAL focus.

The school is keen to develop the role of its TAs in EAL support and makes as much training as possible available to its TAs. However many of these courses have been funded by the LEA; it would be difficult for the school to take up these opportunities should they have to be funded from the school budget.

The Lead Teacher for EMA is concerned about the lack of knowledge and understanding about EAL from NQTs. From talking to them about their training needs, she is clear it is because of very little, if any, specific input on EAL and EMA in initial teacher training courses.

One of the school's class teachers recently gained a Postgraduate Certificate in Teaching EAL and is currently taking further modules for a Bilingual Learners in Urban Educational Settings MA. This has been wholeheartedly supported and funded by the school. The Head Teacher is clearly looking for ways of allowing this teacher to develop some training and coaching for her mainstream colleagues.

Lines of communication

The Lead Teacher for EMA does not offer in-class support. Her channels of communication with mainstream staff come from the promoting of her specific responsibilities – the induction of new arrivals and the baseline assessment of these pupils, the identifying of training needs and the delivery of training sessions and the identification of class target groups. She is currently developing a more organised and formal system of coaching for class teachers in working with EAL pupils. She is very clear about the need to have conversations about the needs

of the pupils and how to meet these needs as a means of making EAL more explicit and to establish a dialogue about EAL in the mainstream.
The Lead Teacher for EMA attends meetings of the Inclusion Team and has regular timetabled communication with the Head of Inclusion. She is also invited to attend or have an input into Senior Management Team meetings.

The Lead Teacher for EMA also has regular meetings in school time with the Community TAs where the focus is on community and family initiatives. There are no opportunities to meet formally with the rest of the TA workforce.

Through its training sessions for TAs the school has promoted the idea that TAs are expected to take more responsibility for identifying the learning needs of pupils with EAL and discussing these with their class teachers through their own channels of communication and working arrangements. However, the Lead Teacher for EMA feels that mainstream staff are not recognising fully the roles and responsibilities of TAs in this area of work.

Mainstream staff are all aware of the work of the Lead Teacher for EMA and will consult her about specific pupils although they still have an expectation that the school should be offering in-class support mainly to pupils at the early EAL stages and see this as the priority rather than wider inclusion strategy work.

TAs are expected to identify EAL pupils causing concern and to find ways of discussing this with class teachers. The Lead Teacher for EMA is using data analysis to identify underachieving groups of pupils; the discussions she has with class teachers to identify target groups is expected to be supplemented by information from TA observations. The school has a low starting point for its EAL pupils in terms of achievement. They tend to make good progress despite this, although the data analysis shows a tailing off in progress in the final years of KS2. The last OFSTED report commented that although progress was good, the school did not make enough use of data on underachievement, and the current initiatives to use the data to identifying underachieving groups and then to target pupils from these groups for specific intervention, programmes, community work and monitoring is the school's response to these comments.

Teaching materials

The school has developed induction packs for newly arrived pupils and there are curriculum materials for use with pupils in the very early stages of EAL. Some curriculum materials have been translated into the 3 main languages of the school – Turkish, Bengali and Somali – and are used by the Community TAs with some pupils.

However, generally the school's policy is that most EAL pupils should be able to handle the materials and resources used in classrooms without needing adapted versions. There is an emphasis on the multicultural and global dimensions of topics to draw pupils in. Class teachers are clearly aware of the importance of using pupils' own experiences and understandings as a way in to topics.

The school has carried out an audit of the learning environment and is providing more visual support for learning and multilingual signs and labels. Packs have

been produced for teachers new to the school which include extracts from DCSF training materials together with checklists and audit materials relevant to the school.

Strategies

The school promotes the development of an inclusive learning environment with all pupils having the same access to teacher input, learning resources and teaching materials and expected to work towards the same result. Differentiation is by grouping and by level of support. EAL learners may be grouped together according to first language or to their stage of English but not with slow learners. Lesson structures and intentions are expected to be communicated clearly and explicitly to all pupils.

A particular concern is writing – for specific ethnic groups but across the school generally, and work is expected to promote, encourage and support extended writing. The school recognises the part that first language plays in EAL development and in learning and encourages pupils to use their first languages in exploring concepts. Community TAs are encouraged to allow pupils to use their first languages for learning, rather than translating words from English.

TAs are encouraged to observe how pupils approach learning tasks. Intervention programmes such as Springboard are used with pupils who seem to need a higher level of individual support.

Community

The Community TAs are encouraged to use their languages to talk to parents on an informal basis about how they can support their children's learning at home. All parents new to the school receive induction into the way the education system works. Some of the materials are translated and some interpreting offered.

There are surgeries for parents who have little English to meet with one of the Community TAs to talk about their child's progress. The school holds coffee mornings which it sees as a means of parents sharing information and understandings of what happens in the classrooms. Parents have indicated that they find the office staff friendly and approachable.

The school is trying to encourage more parents to visit classrooms and participate in activities. At present this is being promoted on a casual and informal basis. There is an issue with CRB checks but once this is resolved the school will look at ways of developing this. The school has links with community groups – the Somali Women's Group, the church, ESOL parents' classes – which it realises it could develop further.

Conclusion

The school believes that all staff should have a deep knowledge and understanding of how to support pupils with EAL in the mainstream classroom, to

be able to identify their learning needs and to know how to meet these needs, even if they are not able to do this on their own. They also believe that EAL should be part and parcel of everything, not a 'bolt-on'.

The school has always had reasonably good achievement, despite it being in an area of considerable deprivation but the work on EAL has always been constrained by finances and there has been a lack of any long-term initiatives and therefore EAL work appears somewhat ad hoc. For example, there is funding to employ Community TAs who speak specific languages but without a clear idea of how to use these staff members effectively this is not necessarily the best use of the funds. The lack of training for mainstream staff from the LEA and from EAL experts still makes class teachers unsure about strategies for EAL achievement. The lack of any real EAL input on initial teacher training courses reinforces this insecurity and lack of confidence. TAs at least have had some training on EAL and are aware of what a good learning environment for these pupils should look like but need to be able to work together with their class teachers to implement this. While class teachers do not share this understanding and find it hard to embed EAL practice into their approaches – and perhaps have a different understanding of the role of the TA – this is not going to be easy.

The school is interested in developing a 'coaching' role for EAL staff, but without the funding to employ any more EAL staff, again this is difficult.

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School 2

Age range: 11–18
Number of pupils on roll: 1600+

Introduction

The school is a highly successful, large multi-cultural comprehensive school on the outskirts of a large city. It has Specialist Arts status in Media Arts and is also a wing school for pupils with a range of social and communication difficulties, including autistic spectrum needs, so has a high number of pupils with Statements of SEN. Most pupils are of Asian heritage (62%), mostly Indian and Pakistani with increasing numbers of Bangladeshi. Of the 10% Black pupils approximately half are of African origin and half Black Caribbean with 5% Mixed background. The number of White British pupils is falling (14%) with small numbers of other pupils from diverse backgrounds e.g. Chinese, Turkish, Greek etc. Most ethnic minority pupils are identified as having EAL, nearly 70% of the total roll and 55 first languages are identified other than English with the most common first languages being Punjabi, Urdu, Gujarati, Bengali and Tamil. Care and support for new arrivals is good with pupils being given individual and small group support in and out of class.

It was considered by OFSTED (2006) to be "a very good school with outstanding features and a harmonious and inclusive community where students of diverse faiths and cultures learn well together." Pupils achieve high standards.

The school has worked hard to include all pupils and their different backgrounds; pupils commented that they found it very welcoming when they were new. This is shown through the vibrant and diverse displays around the school, topics within the school curriculum and the clubs and events on offer in the Learning Resources Centre (Library).

Structures and policies

All new admissions are dealt with initially by a specific member of the school admin team who deals with the paperwork and arranging visits to the school. The Head of Year interviews the family and informs the Head of EMA about the pupil or will invite the Head of EMA to be involved in the interview where appropriate, particularly if the pupil is a new arrival or at an earlier point in learning English. Interpreters are brought in if necessary.

Background information is collected on the pupil and staff are informed through brief details in the staff bulletin. The EMA department assesses the English level of the pupil. The Head of Year places the pupil in the form and at KS4 the option subjects.

The EMA department provides support for new arrivals through individual or small group withdrawal sessions and within subject classrooms. It does not meet the needs of more advanced learners.

The needs of advanced bilingual learners are met within the mainstream curriculum by subject teachers. The level to which their needs are considered and catered for depends upon the understanding of individual teachers. Some are aware of a need and are unsure how to address this and others lack any real awareness. Only a few staff have a good level of understanding.

Currently there is an understood procedure in place that varies according to pupil needs and also depending on which year head is involved. As the school receives a relatively small number of new arrivals each year, it works reasonably well. However as this situation is increasing annually, the school intends to formalise its practice in an admission and induction policy.

There are several issues arising from current practice. One is that in Year 7 core subjects, groupings are based on pupils' literacy levels with most groups mixed ability but all pupils with a low level of English are placed into one set, comprising EAL new arrivals and some SEN pupils. However the EAL pupils may be able to operate at a more advanced level in Science and Maths than in English and also most progress well in their acquisition of English. However these groupings remain the same until the end of Year 9, by which time the variation in levels of learning of the EAL pupils to the SEN pupils is very marked. This practice also sets limits on learning, preventing the EAL pupil from entering higher tier papers at KS3 SATs and the course level at KS4.

The other issue is the placement of older EAL new arrivals joining the school into more practical option subjects. These courses are not always the ones the pupils are interested in, or which fit with their own personal aims of future education and careers. They also carry heavy coursework demands requiring higher literacy skills to achieve good grades.

Staff commented that they are not always aware of the new pupils before they meet them in class and feel they have insufficient information about them to help in planning for their needs. They would welcome more in-class support for the newly arrived pupils from TAs and also from the Head of EMA in working with them in planning to meet their needs.

The school does monitor pupil achievement and identifies underachieving pupils. There is also a mentoring system in the school with school staff mentoring identified pupils. At senior leadership level underachievement is looked at by ethnicity but not by level of EAL. At departmental level, several heads of department do look at their underachieving pupils and also consider issues of ethnicity and EAL but this is not done uniformly. Any concerns about a pupil will be fed back to the Head of Year and sometimes to the Head of EMA.

There is an EMA policy setting out the work of the EMA department. It has a clear focus on meeting the needs of EAL pupils who are new or at an early stage of learning English.

Personnel

There is an EMA department consisting of a full-time teacher who is the head of department and also 4 Bilingual Teaching Assistants (BTAs), two full-time and two part-time, equivalent to three full-time. The Head of EMA completed a one year specialist qualification in EMA. Two of the BTAs have completed a one year course in supporting EAL pupils and one has gone on to achieve HLTA status. The other two BTAs are undertaking the current Redbridge Certificate course for TAs.

The Head of EMA is managed by the Assistant Head Teacher who is Head of Inclusion. The Head of EMA manages the team of BTAs and determines the work of 3 of the BTAs. One BTA, who is a Higher Level Teaching Assistant and so is the most experienced and longest serving, is working linked mainly to core subject departments (English, MFL, Maths & Science), providing support for the EAL pupils within the curriculum, support re: community language exams, along with providing lesson cover. She manages her own timetable in conjunction with the subject Heads of Deptartments. The other BTAs also provide some support in subject classrooms focussing on EAL pupils who are new arrivals or developing a level of fluency in English. They also work with these pupils in small groups or as individuals in a withdrawal situation depending on needs, providing literacy support such as reading with a pupil focussing on decoding and text comprehension. This level of support is maintained for up to several years upon entry.

The Head of EMA is keen for partnership teaching to take place within subject departments and has identified limited collaborative projects that have taken place such as an annual project on refugee and asylum seekers in Yr 10 PHSE. Currently there is an EAL project in Science involving the Local Authority EMA Team EAL Coordinator focussing on the literacy needs of Advanced EAL learners within the Science curriculum. The Head of the EMA department has had some involvement in this work and is expected to follow this project up. She is not engaged in any current partnership teaching occurring and has met resistance by subject departments to this. However when interviewing Heads of subject departments, they welcomed support and involvement by EMA in developing classroom practice.

Training

There are good links between the LA central EMA team and the Head of EMA at the school and developing links with the Head of Inclusion. The Head of EMA attends LA EMA forums and network meetings for secondary EMA staff and relevant training provided by the central EMA team. Likewise the BTAs have or are attending long courses provided by the central EMA team. The course is designed to provide secure knowledge and practice in supporting the needs of EAL pupils within the curriculum.

Other staff from the school have had no training from the central EMA team apart from some limited contact around EAL assessment with the Head of English and more recently the Advanced EAL learners project with the Science department. As part of a one day INSET on Inclusion at the school, a one hour EMA workshop

was provided by the LA EMA team EAL Coordinator on general supportive strategies to meet the needs of EAL pupils. This was attended by some staff.

All induction for teachers new to the school including NQTs and Beginner teachers, is provided by the school. The Head of EMA provides a short session on the NQT induction programme. Although she has raised CPD needs re EAL for staff, they have not been seen as high priority. There is a discussion currently on possible introductory training for the number of TAs in the Inclusion team on the needs of EAL pupils and how best to support them.

Lines of communication

Communication between the EMA department and other school staff is variable. The EMA bilingual TAs work partly in mainstream classes and so form good relationships with staff and their support for pupils is welcomed. The Head of EMA is not directly supporting teachers in class so her communication with teachers is often by email or memo along with meeting colleagues at set times and informally. There is a level of separateness of EMA from the mainstream that must inhibit communication and joint working to some extent. In a recent review of EMA, the need for greater integration in supporting pupils in mainstream classes was identified and this would further improve communication.

Heads of Year do liaise with the Head of EMA over newly arrived EAL pupils or EAL pupils with particular needs. However not all concerns about EAL pupils will be fed back to the Head of EMA by the Heads of Years unless the pupil is one that is heavily focussed on by the EMA department. Staff do approach the Head of EMA or the EMA TAs over specific pupils where there are issues. All staff talked to stated that they knew that they could turn to the EMA department if an issue over an EAL pupil arose. Subject staff were more likely to go to their Head of Department initially and form tutors to the Head of Year.

Although there is a level of useful communication, it could be developed further to make the exchange of information on pupils more effective and hence the support for these pupils.

As commented above the school does identify underachieving pupils at senior leadership level and mentoring of pupils takes place. However there is not a joined-up approach linking Heads of Departments, Heads of Year and the Head of EMA in looking at the pupils identified to see who are the ethnic minority and EAL pupils and how they can work together to raise the pupils' achievements.

Teaching materials

The EMA department holds resource material that can be used as part of EAL withdrawal groups or individual pupil support e.g. induction materials, some curriculum related such as worksheets on *To Kill A Mocking Bird* and textbooks focusing on language acquisition activities. How these are used and the quality of the materials is not clear. There seems to be no organised scheme of work for KS3 withdrawal support and what is used is dependant on what the BTA providing the support chooses to do.

The Head of EMA runs Supporting Studies option groups for Years 10 and 11, Key Skills groups for Years 12/13 and a Year 13 group for IELTS – English language qualifications. The schemes of work for these courses were unavailable during visit.

Strategies

Teaching and learning

Most Subject lessons seen had aspects of inclusion in the curriculum content such as links to pupils' ethnic heritages and experiences.

- Art – representing visually their identity
- Geography – Flooding in Bangladesh
- RE – discussing views on evil from different religious perspectives.

Other Heads of Departments also named instances of inclusive curricular activities. However, there was less opportunity to draw on linguistic backgrounds apart from in MFLs where there was a focus on community languages.

A number of lessons addressed a level of differentiation of materials or activities. General supportive strategies to access the curriculum were observed in lessons such as use of visual material or practical demonstration to support understanding and learning. There was an emphasis on keywords, usually subject specific vocabulary although in History lessons other more general words that EAL pupils may not recognise or understand were also explained.

However these strategies were not considered or modified specifically to match with EAL pupil needs and there was lack of understanding of the linguistic demands some activities entailed for some EAL pupils. For example the map labelling activity in which pupils matched detailed labels outlining flooding issues to a map of Bangladesh was not done collaboratively with partners reading and discussing together and pupils developing fluency were not helped to understand the complex ideas encapsulated in the labels. There was not any specific planning to address specific language development in lessons. For instance a history lesson writing about the 1914 Christmas truce in the First World War from perspectives of both sides provided an opportunity to look at comparative language and giving opinions but this was not exploited.

The needs of EAL pupils in developing fluency in English especially literacy skills, were often overlooked as teachers lacked awareness of needs or expected that supportive strategies would be sufficient. Only in an English lesson was there a collaborative focussed group discussion of aspects of a book chapter just read by the class as a precursor to a structured writing task. The English teacher also checked understanding and engagement of EAL pupils during group work. The needs of Advanced learners are not generally considered and teachers showed a lack of awareness of this issue during interviews, although were very interested in it when discussion ensued. Only the Science department actively engaged in a project to address this issue and other departments were keen to be involved.

Pastoral support

There is a focus on admission and induction of mid-phase new arrivals. There are general procedures in place for this through completing admission forms, interviews with parents and the pupil, collecting relevant information on EAL pupils with Head of EMA involved where relevant, allocation to class and dissemination of information on a new pupil to teaching staff. The procedures are not written into a policy but are relatively consistent across year groups and working well.

However, issues arise in Year 7 where EAL pupils with lower levels of English are placed in the bottom English groups along with SEN pupils so that they can receive targeted support. They remain in these groups for other lessons such as Science and Maths, regardless of their ability in these subjects, they develop their skills and fluency in English and so by Year 9 are often way ahead of other pupils even reaching Level 6 English. Subject Heads of Department are very concerned about this and recognise the limitations on future learning it causes. Likewise selecting subject options at KS4 is also difficult as Heads of Department of more practical subjects raised. Subject areas are often selected because they are assumed to be more practical in nature allowing new pupils with less developed English to cope better. However some courses have huge linguistic demands e.g. 100% coursework, technical language and in some subjects, the difficulties the pupils have in expressing their ideas and information only show up during tests. Another issue is the level of interest the EAL pupil has in the subjects chosen for them.

Underachieving pupils

The school does use its assessment data to track pupil progress at an individual level but does identify some pupils as underachieving. This is not looked at in terms of differing groups of EAL pupils such as new arrivals, advanced learners or by ethnic group to pick up any trends. Individuals identified are supported by mentoring from teaching staff. The EMA department does look at the focus pupils they work with – those new arrivals or developing fluency but not more advanced learners.

Community

The school holds the usual range of parents meetings to review pupil's progress and achievements and sends home reports. It provides information for parents about the school and events as part of its website along with letters and bulletins home. The school welcomes parents and their involvement in their child's learning. Interpreters are arranged for meetings where necessary. The EMA department attends the parent meetings for their focus pupils.
The Inclusion Centre has good links with a variety of agencies to support pupils. However there are no apparent links with any community schools as there are none in the local vicinity. The Head of EMA has no direct link governor on the Governing Body.

Vision

The school provides a good quality of education for its pupils and is committed to continuing to improve its practice and help the pupils maximise their potential. The school has recognised however that its intake of pupils is changing, with more now joining who are new to English or with less developed English and coming from more varied ethnic and social backgrounds. Accordingly, it needs to look at and develop its mainstream provision to meet the needs of these EAL pupils and also meet the needs of the more advanced EAL learners. It also needs to review its current additional EMA provision to ensure that it is as effective as possible. Hence the school requested and organised a 5 day review of EMA, conducted by two coordinators of the LA central EMA team. Based on the outcomes from this review, the school will look to develop its current practices and provision for all ethnic minority pupils.

There has been lack of awareness of EAL pupil needs in the past as most EAL pupils are advanced learners with a good command of English. Given good teaching, these pupils have been successful overall but may not have achieved the highest grades in their exams.

Possible barriers to achieving this vision is the importance that staff will place on mainstreaming EMA practice into their teaching and the time available for CPD on EAL.

School 3

Age range: 3–11
Number of pupils on roll: 638

Introduction

This Primary School is an oversubscribed, three-form entry, community school. The school population is 'almost entirely from one ethnic group whose origins lie in Pakistan and who are Muslim and 98% of the pupils have English as an additional language' (OfSTED, 2006). The school is situated in an area of significant social and economic disadvantage and there has been a high turnover of staff in recent years. It is 'driven by a committed and passionate senior leadership team' (OfSTED, 2006). Teaching and learning were recognised in the most recent inspection as strengths, as were the priority given to the development of speaking and listening and the good range of enrichment activities provided. Mainly because of the nature of the school population, standards in national tests – although usually close to meeting LA targets – are well below national average. They have steadily improved over recent years and valued-added levels have been consistent at about 99%.

Structures and policies

The school does not recognise EAL as an issue relevant only to a particular group of pupils, but as 'all-consuming', a whole-school set of issues, much more than a matter of meeting the needs of 'new arrivals', of whom there are a small number in the school. The Assistant Head for Literacy and Language across the curriculum sees EAL issues as part of her management role. There is no specific EAL policy and the EMA budget is devolved into whole-school use; according to the Head Teacher, 'the edges are blurred'. The funding is seen as contributing to developing language learning across the whole school and enriching the curriculum generally, specifically in providing extra TA support to work alongside teachers.

In the whole-school approach to teaching English/Literacy, there is a strong focus on developing the 'narrow band of competence' in reading and writing that is seen as required for children to achieve L4 in KS2 SATs. A key aspect of this, from Foundation Stage (FS) to KS2, is 'keeping things straightforward'. In contrast with this, teachers aim to promote speaking and listening as a vehicle for children's learning and accessing the whole curriculum. The Head Teacher asserts that he feels happy to subscribe to this aspect of the 'Bradford vision', seeing it as a way for children to 'really' learn, rather than simply pass tests.

The management structure of the school is an unusual one: there is one Deputy Head and five Assistant Heads, one each for FS, KS1, KS2, Literacy and Inclusion. The last two are both recent appointments. The aim of this is to promote distributed leadership and provide professional support among the staff through a matrix of intersecting roles. The Head also believes that it encourages

a sense of shared responsibility for specific issues in school, with mangers feeling confident to take initiatives in dealing with matters that arise, rather than have the sense that a particular issue is 'nothing to do with them'.

Personnel

A peripatetic teacher from the EMA service in the LA spends 0.10 of her time in school linking with a 0.5 EMA-funded teacher who also works across the school. There are about 8–10 pupils defined as 'new arrivals' at any one time in the school. Mainly Arabic speakers, they are mostly the children of 'sojourner' families from Saudi Arabia involved in studying at the University. It is recognised that these pupils need some specific provision in induction and language support in their early days in school. LA-produced materials, such as the recently introduced induction pack, are not used, but the school has had some contact with the consultant responsible for new arrivals.

In the mainstream teaching across the school, up to thirty TAs, many of them with skills in Mirpuri Punjabi (the main home language of the children) are identified as bilingual support and work with class teachers to provide focused attention to speaking and listening as part of lessons. They use pupils' home languages when needed for interpretation and support. There is an issue with recruiting sufficient numbers of Bangla-speaking support staff as the numbers of Bangladeshi-heritage children in the school grow. Another issue is the lack of planning and discussion time for teachers and TAs because of the TAs' contractual arrangements, but the fact that teachers and TAs work together for long periods encourages positive relationships and good communication. In the Assistant Head for Literacy's opinion, there is much more flexibility than in other schools for staff to arrange to be out of class, which she sees as a positive aspect of the management strategy.

As described above, there is a strong distributed leadership ethos. Language issues are addressed in different ways by four of the five Assistant Heads, one of whom has a more focused brief for literacy and language learning across the curriculum. This recently appointed Assistant Head has also picked up responsibility for introducing MFL into the school. Another recent development is the promotion of the SENCO to become Assistant Head for Inclusion. This encompasses a wide range of roles, including SEN and addressing the needs of EAL learners causing concern. This teacher also has a 0.5 teaching timetable, and it is unclear as yet whether this is a manageable workload.

There is no one in the school with specific training or qualifications in EAL, and the Head Teacher does not see this as a priority in making new appointments. His main concern is to identify quality of teaching and an understanding of how children learn, seeing this as a more important priority than specific language qualifications. His aim is to appoint 'the very best teachers' to promote learning.

Training

While teachers are encouraged to participate in LA-provided training, this is not the main source of training provision, and there have been some

'disappointments' when specific courses have not come up to expectations. The Head Teacher's belief that school improvement should be 'bottom-up', not a top down 'quick fix' has led to some resistance to joining LA 'EAL projects'. The Assistant Head for Literacy feels that the teachers 'won't do things unless they think it is a good idea', and the school was not one of the group of local primary schools in a recent project despite its very high numbers of bilingual learners. The Head is aware that his views can give rise to tensions between the school and the LA (and have done so), but believes that his approach suits better the model of distributed leadership which works best to move the school forward. He is not unwilling to engage in professional development indeed, he sees it as vital at both personal and institutional levels. He is aware of the crucial importance of meeting targets and of attainment for pupils in his school, which he sees as an equal opportunities issue, benefiting children and families in raising their self-esteem and combating the often stereotypical views of them held by the wider society.

The Head Teacher's approach to professional development is for the staff to identify their own needs and then he will seek out the expertise that can provide tailored training. This usually involves working with former and current LA staff on a consultancy basis. He promotes the idea of the school as a learning community, that all members of staff have distinctive knowledge and expertise that can be shared. For example, the literacy team has a range of expertise, such as Phonics, Better Reading and Assessment for Learning, which they have shared with the staff.

The FS Assistant Head describes the training model within school as a 'cascade' one. A weekly whole-school meeting is used as a training meeting, generating and focusing on topics identified as needs within the school. She has implemented cross-school training in Phonics and Assessment for Learning in response to identified needs.

Despite the Head's declared views on qualifications at the appointment stage, there is the sense that the school is a 'learning community' with teachers taking opportunities for professional development: the Assistant Head of Literacy is completing an MA in SEN and the Assistant Head FS has been involved in leading ITT sessions on PGCE courses in at least two local institutions.

Lines of communication

All pupils are regularly tracked, and are assessed four times a year with outcomes recorded and discussed at a progress meeting once a term. The aim is that pupils will progress at consistent rates, and interventions are immediately put in place when this is felt not to be happening. The main mechanism for deciding on how to support pupils causing concern is the half-termly Pupil Overview and Support Meeting (POSUM) which is attended by a range of staff including relevant class teachers, the KS Assistant Heads, the Assistant Head of Inclusion, the Deputy Head, and learning mentors. Class teachers bring individual cases to discuss and identify ways forward. Such cases may include children with specific EAL needs, but these are not common. The focus of the meeting is on agreeing responsibility for action, which could include particular interventions carried out by TAs, sometimes on a withdrawal basis and less often within the class.

Apart from the POSUM meeting, the Assistant Head for Literacy regards herself as the point of contact for teachers with concerns about the language needs of specific pupils, including those new to English. She believes that this role will grow as she gains experience in the school (this is her second term). She is trying to collect together a bank of materials so that she can become a 'resource' for teachers. She is pleased that the initiative for developing MFL is also coming within her ambit; she has no qualifications in this area, but did some training at her last school.

Issues of communication in FS are particularly crucial especially with TAs as they are employed only for school hours; the FS Assistant Head described having to seek out time to talk with TAs, but feels that the group is generally supportive and positive. She believes that her communication with the rest of the school is facilitated by her status on the SMT and the regular routine of leadership meetings. She has established a 'clear line of command' in FS so that all staff (a total of 14 FTE) know their roles and responsibilities.

The FS Manager maintains regular contact with the Sure Start Centre which is located next to the school. She is a member of the Advisory Committee and also meets the Manager and other staff at least once a term. She also monitors the frequent use made of the facilities at the Centre by children in FS with SEN and their parents.

There is communication and co-operation among the cluster of schools in the area, including both primary and secondary schools. The Head Teacher talked about a change in culture from competition to cooperation among schools in the area. However, the FS Manager did not seem to give a high priority to this, though she ensured that any network early years meetings were attended by a school representative.

Teaching materials

There are no specific EAL-related materials used or promoted across the whole school. The Assistant Head for Literacy had seen what she considers would be useful resources for new arrivals on a visit to another school – she was unsure whether these were EB or commercially-produced, or part of the NAEP materials.

The FS Assistant Head is a very committed exponent and nationally accredited trainer of synthetic phonics using the Jolly Phonics materials (Jolly Learning, 2009). She sees the approach taken by this scheme as better than the PNS-produced Letters and Sounds, and particularly valuable for EAL learners. Since her appointment to the school 5 years ago, she has introduced the scheme (and the accompanying Jolly Grammar) across the whole school, and believes that this has been advantageous in raising standards. The materials are used extensively for interventions and 'low ability' learners in KS2.

Strategies

As mentioned above, the school seems to have two main, somewhat incongruous, strands in their strategies for teaching and learning. Firstly there is a

strong focus on the 'very narrow band of competence' in reading and writing skills required to achieve Level 4 at KS2 SATs, and secondly there is an awareness of the need to promote talk in all its dimensions as widely as possible as a means of enriching children's learning experiences. Attaining the SATs targets is seen as a whole-school responsibility. Most children are expected to reach Level 2c by the end of KS1. Having a firm grip on Phonics (using Jolly Phonics) and the mechanics of writing are seen as a means to this end. 'Paired Talk' and 'Talking Partners' are used extensively across the school from FS, where they begin with extensive training and practice in taking turns in conversations.

As is common in most primary schools, the mornings are mostly taken up with Literacy and Numeracy, and afternoons with learning in foundation areas. Bright and colourful displays all over the school attest to the range of activities available to the children and to the wide range of visiting artists, drama specialists, musicians and so on. It is recognised that the small number of children – 10–12 at any one time – undertaking intervention activities (usually with the guidance of TAs) are missing out on some of this enrichment activity, but this is seen as inevitable.

The group of children interviewed were clearly aware of the school priorities in reading and writing. They talked about writing as a somewhat mechanical process, seeing it as to do with learning decontextualised sets of text features and terminology, rather than as a means of communicating ideas and expressing personal meanings. None of the group of five seemed to have any strong personal interest in reading for pleasure, though they did say that they read at home and visited the local library. Alongside these somewhat unenthusiastic responses, they described with animation various projects in which they had been involved in school, all of which entailed working in groups. Despite the opinions about writing reported above, one Year 6 boy described at length a group writing project he had taken part in, showing clearly that he was proud of the outcomes. The children expressed a strong preference for working in groups rather than separately, and had clearly internalised the value of the learning strategies promoted by the paired talk approach used across the school, saying that they liked using it in their writing tasks, as it helped them extend their thinking about what they had to write about and monitor accuracy.

Community

The school premises are used for Saturday classes in Modern Standard Arabic, which has come about because of interest from the community. In return, the school is negotiating to begin teaching MSA as their chosen MFL, despite concern from some staff that this will 'ghettoise' the children. This initiative is being managed by the Assistant Head for Literacy. The group of children interviewed were clearly very interested in and knowledgeable about their heritage and community languages and quizzed each other about their different experiences. One Year 5 girl attended the Arabic Saturday classes and explained them enthusiastically to the others. In their view, their home languages did not have any role in their learning in school.

Parents are seen to be committed to supporting their own children and are very willing to attend consultations, but they are less likely to take an interest in

learning about curriculum initiatives or taking on more active roles in supporting their children at home. Consultations are organised in different ways across the school; in the FS stage for example, they are done on an ongoing basis with a small number of parents being seen every week. The Assistant Head of FS is involved in parental development courses run by a local college which involves course members undertaking placements in Nursery or Reception classes, but she was not aware of similar initiatives developed as part of the LA's EMA-funded raising achievement initiatives.

There is no governor with specific responsibility for EAL learners, and no sense of a strong governor involvement in the issues.

Conclusion

The most recent OfSTED report comments that 'The Head Teacher and leadership team have a clear, shared vision of the future development of the school,' seen as the need to constantly work to raise pupils' achievements, but articulated by different interviewees in different ways. The FS Assistant Head's vision of developing 'happy children who can't help talking' entailed the development of outside learning areas as a key way of widening children's experiences. The Assistant Head for Literacy talked about 'sharing good practice' and promoting literacy learning across the curriculum. All interviewees showed a strong awareness that raising achievement for EAL learners is inextricably bound with social and cultural issues, and that important strands in developing good provision for EAL including promoting positive attitudes to learning, widening horizons and enriching the curriculum. The ethos is warm, positive and very supportive of the children and their families. Communication among staff is clearly excellent. Children are encouraged constantly to do their best.

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School 4

Age range: 3–11
Number of pupils on roll: 216

Introduction

School four is a small urban Junior school in a residential area of anonymous and nondescript but quietly respectable housing. It has been oversubscribed since a recent OFSTED report described it as "outstanding". It is bounded by larger roads lined with small shops catering for specific ethnic communities – Polish, West African, Indian, Chinese and, most markedly, Pakistani whose claim to be the predominant established community is signalled by the mosque close by the school. The school lies on the geographical edge of the community it draws its pupils from, a cramped and fairly densely populated urban area, and looking out over towards the more spacious suburbs and the lush home counties countryside. It seems to be trying to funnel its pupils out of the social deprivation of one area into the privileged environment of the other. And now reinvented as a successful school – despite, as is whispered by those who should know better, its large minority ethnic population – it may well start to do just that.

It also has a high level of mobility; most of its casual intake being from elsewhere in the UK rather than from outside. Otherwise most pupils come from the nearby infant school. Around 75% of the school population is from minority ethnic backgrounds with EAL. Most of these pupils – around 60% of the school – are of Pakistani heritage, Mirpuri speakers from the Kashmir region and many of them born in the UK. There are increasing numbers of eastern European pupils, mainly Polish, and some pupils from African countries.

The school's previous reinvention was in the early 1990s when the Edwardian building was given a complete architectural makeover and turned into an identikit New Labour functional and all-purpose edifice. Its gabled roof, its large windows and particularly its bright green exposed metal beams and girders give it an identical look to the Asda supermarket just down the road. At first it looks like it might be – literally and symbolically – all front. All the exterior space is around the entrance of the building, tucked away at the back the playground seems too small and hemmed in.

Inside the school however everything is bright and cheerful and spacious. It looks tidy and well cared for and the artwork and other displays on the walls are imaginative and energetic. The displays also reflect the language backgrounds and cultural heritages of the pupils. The pupils are very much multi-ethnic, the teachers are very white. In the classrooms some of the interactions between pupils were in languages other than English, sanctioned and smiled upon, but not engaged with, by their teachers. Teachers and TAs were more like sensible mums, responding to questions with "that's right dear" and doing a lot of metaphorical head patting. Everyone was speaking nicely to one another, remembering to take their turn and getting on with their work in a purposeful manner. No-one seemed baffled or confused or unsure as to what they were

supposed to be doing and there was a confidence about evaluating and criticising work. There was a general awareness amongst pupils, reinforced at regular intervals by their teachers, that they were part of a successful school.

Structures and policies

The school is clearly proud of its multi-ethnic profile; the introductory pages on its website and in its prospectus signal this and include positive statements about the value and importance of pupils' bilingualism. The Equalities Policy is focused around the bilingual heritage of pupils and its role in learning but also has a positive stance on challenging racism. It also has a strongly stated commitment to inclusion; recent structural works have made the building accessible to pupils with mobility difficulties and the school has an above-average number of pupils with a range of SENs.

Most of the new arrivals come from the infant school and the school incorporates the information about language experience, learning and achievement into the initial assessments of pupils.

Pupils who arrive at other times are placed straight into mainstream classes. The school is two-form entry and there is a TA for each year group and one for each class in Year 3. It is the TA's responsibility to ensure that any newly arrived pupil is welcomed and integrated into the class. A resource pack is provided for work with beginner bilinguals containing some key phrases, dual language texts and basic English materials but the emphasis on supporting pupils to engage with mainstream activities. Pupils are encouraged and invited to use their first language as a way into mainstream activities. The school operates a 'buddy' system and where possible the buddy shares the first language of the new arrival.

The EAL work in the school is overseen by the Deputy Head Teacher. She has a very clear understanding of the importance of specific strategies, interventions and initiatives for advanced bilingual learners and her communications to staff make specific mention of the language and learning needs of this group of pupils. Staff meetings have included input on strategies for developing higher-order academic language in those EAL pupils with a high level of social English. The recent Ofsted report made the link between work with advanced EAL learners and achievement and the school has developed this into a rationale and the beginnings of a policy on this group of pupils. The Deputy Head has started to analyse the end of Key Stage 2 achievement data to identify intervention strategies for this group.

Personnel

The school has an Inclusion Team with an Inclusion Coordinator. Within the team there are three coordinators for different aspects of inclusion – EAL, SEN and Gifted and Talented (Advanced Skills).

The two latter coordinators are qualified teachers, the EAL Coordinator is a TA. She has had no formal training in EAL work and has no relevant qualifications.

She is currently working towards HLTA status. Her main responsibility is to offer advice and support on EAL work to her TA colleagues through a mentoring programme. The intended focus of her work is to develop ways of supporting EAL pupils through the various curriculum areas. Other curriculum coordinators at the school are expected to include a clear and specific EAL input into their development roles; their opportunities for liaison with the EAL Coordinator are largely limited to formal staff training sessions and their channels of communication are unofficial. The work of the Inclusion Team and of EAL specifically is overseen by the Deputy Head, a Mirpuri speaker herself with a keen interest in EAL work.

The school employs no dedicated EAL teachers. TAs are expected to offer direct support to early stage EAL learners and new arrivals. There is a full-time Bilingual Teaching Assistant, not a Mirpuri speaker, who provides support to early stage EAL learners throughout the school. Early stage EAL learners are targeted for individual support; more advanced EAL learners receive support through general classroom strategies rather than on a one-to-one basis.

The school emphasises the responsibility of all its teaching staff to enhance the learning of pupils with EAL and lesson plans, assessment frameworks and monitoring documents include a specific EAL dimension.

Training

The school has very little contact with its central EAL/EMA advisory service (MECSS). This is clearly a source of great regret for the school leadership. The authority's EAL support service had been well-used and highly-regarded when it was located in its own centre with training areas, advisory staff and a resource base. (In fact it was the base from which NALDIC – the National Association for Language Development in the Curriculum was launched). In recent years however, the centre was closed down, the staff moved into the central school improvement service and their specific role changed into a more generic one and the whole service generally, as the Deputy Head put it, "run down". The school knows that there is some support for and advice on EAL provided by the LEA but understands that it is linked to the distribution of the EMA grant, which in turn is linked to priorities not filled by the school. The school has sent members of staff on a range of courses run by the LEA but has not found any courses specific and relevant to local EAL needs so has started to investigate possibilities for school-based training sessions.

The now-defunct central EMA service facilitated networks for EAL/EMA practitioners to meet regularly to share resources and good practice. The Deputy Head sees this approach as potentially beneficial and worth pursuing and is exploring the possibilities of developing regular and formal contacts with schools in the area that have similar ethnic profiles.

The school's Key Stage 2 assessment results have improved over the years and pupils with EAL are achieving good grades. The Ofsted report made the link between the quality of teaching and EAL achievement. However the Deputy Head feels that staff would still benefit from some substantial (i.e. not delivered through a one-day LEA course or a DCSF training package) input on

differentiation for EAL within an inclusive classroom and especially on how to develop more formal academic writing. She also feels that class teachers would benefit from some detailed input on "cultural understanding". At present most class teachers and class-based TAs are White British; the staff who share the languages and cultural backgrounds of most of the pupils tend to be general supervisory staff.

Lines of communication

The TAs, who carry out most of the EAL support work, have the lines of communication with mainstream teachers common to many primary schools – mostly informal and ad hoc or conducted through documentation. Most class teachers do not have a full-time TA and TAs are generally shared between classes.

TAs have timetabled opportunities to meet as a group. Sessions are run by the EAL Coordinator who will offer advice on strategies for individual pupils and more general ones.
The Deputy Head, who has a personal interest in and an understanding of EAL, has regular meetings with curriculum and support coordinators. The school has a commitment to an EAL focus across the curriculum. The Art Coordinator has worked recently with class teachers on more imaginative and professional curriculum projects and display methods. Part of this initiative included a multicultural approach to art and the impact of certain cultural backgrounds on children's understanding of, attitude to and approach to making art.

Class teachers are expected to be more explicit about EAL needs in their planning and other documentation although there are no formal or obvious channels of communication between teaching staff and EAL or senior staff to consolidate this.

Teaching materials

The school has a range of dual language texts for use in classrooms throughout the school and uses some commercially produced catch-up programmes such as 'Springboard' for pupils whose lack of English fluency is a barrier to engaging with classroom activities.

Strategies

The school places equalities and inclusion at the heart of its teaching and learning strategy. A number of pupils come from socially and financially disadvantaged families; the school recognises the barriers this places in front of learning and has a policy of ensuring that equality of access to learning in classrooms as a way of removing some of these barriers. Class teachers are encouraged to draw upon pupils' experiences, skills and prior knowledge in their teaching and to have and reflect high expectations of pupils. The leadership encourages and promotes as much topic-based, cross-curricular work as is feasible in order to draw upon pupils' experiences more effectively.

The use of pupils' first language is promoted as a key strategy across the school. Pupils are encouraged to pair up with other speakers of their first language in activities and to discuss ideas, information and concepts in the first language. Class teachers have had input on the value of the first language as a means of thinking, processing, conceptualising and ordering information.

The school has significant numbers of pupils from a fairly well established community, Mirpuri speaking Pakistanis. Mirpuri is a spoken language and so most of these pupils are not literate in their first language, although some are attending weekend Urdu classes and all will have some understanding of Arabic from attending the mosque. Resources and materials written in this language are not therefore seen as effective as those in some of the other first languages used in the school. The school has a particular focus on further raising the achievement of more advanced EAL pupils through literacy. Class teachers are receiving advice and suggestions on how to transfer social English into academic language and in written work. Key approaches to this are the unpacking of the questions and instructions that may get in the way of pupils' abilities to express and demonstrate conceptual understanding and of moving pupils from active and concrete learning experiences to more abstract ideas and concepts.

Community

The school has always felt it had close links and good relations with its core constituency from the Pakistani community, even though its teaching staff are not on the whole drawn from this community. The Deputy Head, however, is from this community and her presence in the leadership team clearly inspires trust and confidence amongst parents. Two or three generations of families from this established, settled and close-knit community have attended the school and many of the pupils have siblings and relatives at the school. The school drew from this ethnic group by virtue of its geographical location even when it did not have a high academic profile. An excellent Ofsted report and impressive Key Stage 2 assessment results have vindicated both the teaching and the drive for success within the families and have confirmed this trust and confidence, although have attracted interest from families wider afield with the possible consequence of shifting the ethnic balance.

Despite the positive regard of the parents, the school is experiencing some difficulties in developing deeper links with families. Information to parents is translated where appropriate and a Home/School Agreement is signed by teacher, parent and pupil. Information sent to parents encourages them to visit and contact the school and to offer help in classroom and extra-curricular activities. The feeling is that despite all this, parents are still "fearful" of stepping into the school and the school is exploring ways of getting parents onto the premises more. Another factor is the unavailability of parents during the day; many run small businesses or shops or work in the service industries and work long or irregular hours. Many of the fathers are minicab drivers. The school has regular ESOL classes for parents. These are held on school premises, albeit in a temporary structure outside the main building and conducted by ESOL teachers from the LEA's Adult Education service. The intention is that this will enable parents to engage more in their children's school work. The school is trying to

measure the impact of these classes on the attainment of the pupils whose parents attend and recognises that it needs to develop a conversation about supporting learning at home from this project.

The Governing Body, including its Chair, is mainly drawn from the community and is generally supportive of the school. The Head Teacher would like members to become a more visible and regular presence in the school and to take on an active "critical friend" role rather than a symbolic one. The parent governors are drawn from the Pakistani community, although staff members are not at present.

Because a number of pupils are from families where parents work long hours, the school runs an after-school club, held at the nearby Technical College. Children are taken there after school and also attend at weekends and in school holidays. The club is staffed by staff from the college and provides a range of artistic and musical activities.

Vision

The school has had extremely good and very much improved results in the last couple of years and is now perceived to be a highly successful one. The teaching is obviously of a high quality and overcoming barriers caused by lack of English, fluency, high mobility and social deprivation. Classrooms are obviously ones conducive to learning for pupils with EAL. The school still needs to identify more precisely what these features are and to develop them. There is very little EAL support so staff are expected to ensure that EAL pupils are engaged fully in learning themselves. And staff have had virtually no training in EAL from the LEA or elsewhere. A positive ethos, atmosphere of respect and challenging expectations are not enough in themselves to sustain progress and to continue raising achievement. The school needs to work on clearly identifiable EAL strategies for teachers and TAs to promote.

The current school improvement plan, post OFSTED and in the light of recent exam success, sets out some of these areas around which EAL strategies should be located – reading skills, higher level thinking, academic writing, learning partnerships with parents.

EAL has a very high profile – it is firmly embedded in teachers' planning and reports and is at the forefront of discussions with the leadership team. However teachers still need more EAL-focused training and advice; at the moment they are not wholly confident about appropriate differentiation and do not see the link between their strategies and EAL achievement. With so many EAL pupils, teachers tend to forget about their EAL-ness and only notice those who are new to the school and do not have a great deal of English.

Some of the teachers are fairly experienced; they have worked in the school, or similar ones, for some time and have built up an understanding of how to support children with EAL even if they have had no real training and cannot articulate it. They therefore have a confidence in their EAL work. More and more teachers however come to the school with no training, no awareness and no understanding of EAL – and consequently no confidence in doing it. Teachers who came through the old BEd route had had a more considered and reflective

training with space for EAL issues to be explored. Teachers with a subject degree and a one-year PGCE seem to have had no time for reflection, too much emphasis on doing it 'by the book' and no space for any input on EAL. The policy seems to be: throw them in and expect them to pick up on all the gaps in their training. The other thing missing from NQT's experience is any input on what race equality is actually all about and how to promote it in a school. This school puts equality at the heart of raising minority ethnic achievement. Racism needs to be addressed in any school – all white, all black and any combination between – and until teachers are aware of its potential impact on learning, they will not be able to raise EAL children's achievement significantly.

Conclusion

The school has obviously embedded EAL practice in the mainstream – certainly in theory and at a leadership level and in some instances at classroom level. Documents open with a clear and strong commitment to equalities and EAL initiatives and practices are seen very firmly within this context. The rhetoric of EAL from the leadership goes way beyond the bland and obligatory statements found in some schools. And what is promoted and encouraged as good EAL practice is based on current thinking and research rather than government policies. It engages with the experiences that pupils bring to their learning, the support for the kind of English that will allow pupils to extract deeper understandings from materials, pupils' own conceptions of themselves as learners and their approaches to learning, pupils' bilingualism and its role in learning and making learning and the evaluation of it more explicit. The challenge the leadership faces is how to develop this fully into what is going on in classrooms.

School 5

Age range: 3–11
Number of pupils on roll: 650

Introduction

This primary school in a suburb of a large city is in an attractive building. It is a new school, moving into these premises only 6 years ago. The Reception area is open plan and very welcoming. Christmas was already in evidence in the foyer during the visit, although it was still early November. There is not an obviously strong multicultural ethos evident in the school, with a lack of signs in languages other than English. While a number of the staff are Black and Asian, reception staff are all white it appears as, I note, are the Senior Management team. Two Sikh girls arrive with their father, saying by way of explanation for a missing third child that 'Amandeep is at a festival' but this isn't specified.
The facilities are very impressive, with a swimming pool, a well equipped library and computer suite and attractive classrooms

Structures and policies

There is a full and readily accessible EMA policy document posted on the School Website. This sets out the roles of EMA personnel in the school and the rationale for support for EAL pupils. It also notes that letters will be sent where appropriate to the parents of EAL children, in the home language.

There is an induction programme for new arrivals for which the EMA coordinator is responsible. There is no specific policy for advanced bilingual learners – who constitute a majority of the school. In the Nursery, the vast majority of children come to the school with no English. All are visited in their homes. In the Nursery there is a helper who is completing a Level 3 NVQ Pre-school Diploma in Child Care who supports the children, along with a volunteer helper and Nursery staff. There do not seem to be specially trained EAL personnel in the Nursery even though all the children have English as an additional language, I am told.   At the time of the visit there was, in addition to the regular Nursery staff, a male student teacher on teaching practice from the IOE.

Personnel

EAL work is managed by the EMA coordinator, who however works only two days a week. There are, in addition two Bilingual Classroom Assistants, one specifically to offer support for Polish children. She is a new appointment.

The EMA coordinator has no specialist qualifications in EAL but has QTS. One of the Bilingual Classroom Assistants has done quite a lot of EAL training on a one-off basis and appears very knowledgeable about issues related to

EAL. I did not meet the second Bilingual Classroom
Assistant (specifically appointed to work with Polish children).
There appears to be little or no partnership teaching. I observed the EMA
coordinator take a class but this seemed to be more of a replacement class for a
regular teacher and there was no particular emphasis on the EAL children (there
were two very new arrivals in the group) on this occasion.

Training

EAL training is provided by the Local Authority. There are strong links between
the School and the authority although the EAL Advisory Teacher from the LA,
who was present in the school on the day of the visit, tells me that the EMA
coordinator of the school has not taken part in very much of the training offered.
One of the two bilingual teaching assistants Mrs S. has done a number of training
courses, some offered by the IOE, and talks knowledgeably and with enthusiasm
about the training she has received. Links between EAL staff and the EMA team
in the LA are strong. The LA EAL Advisory Teacher Ms T. was greeted warmly
by a number of staff when she entered the school on the afternoon of my visit.

The EMA coordinator provides training in staff meetings but does not have a
strong knowledge base in EAL.   Typically, the EMA coordinator takes a plan
from the class teacher and does some pre and post teaching based on this,
when, as the main classroom teacher says,'this person doesn't get it'.   Overall
the role of the EMA coordinator is reactive rather than proactive.   In other words
the EMA coordinator does not appear to initiate support for EAL pupils but rather
responds to concerns of the classroom teachers, so that support is on an ad hoc
basis.

Lines of communication

The EMA coordinator works only two days a week which means that her role is
not central to the school. However she conducts whole class work on occasion
and seems to have a good working relationship with other mainstream teachers.
The overall person in charge and the line manager for the EMA Coordinator is
one of the two Assistant Heads who is responsible overall for Inclusion which
covers SEN and EAL. The Assistant Head has no knowledge base in EAL.
Conversations with mainstream teachers during the visit indicated an awareness
of the support systems available and the needs for new arrivals to have particular
language learning opportunities (through the chance to talk for instance). The
EMA coordinator keeps in close touch with mainstream teachers, regarding
individual pupils.

One group of teachers contacted during the day were three ITTs, who are on
placement from IOE at this school.   They were anxious to talk about the needs of
the children with regard to EAL. They had received half a day's training as part of
their Primary PGCE at the IOE and felt this was inadequate. They had gained
basic knowledge about key issues from the training, in particular in relation to the
work of Cummins and BICS and CALP. Particular issues raised by them,
relevant to training needs, were:

- How to modify and 'pitch' language to make themselves accessible to those new to English
- The role of Grammar in their teaching
- What kind of literacy teaching was appropriate.

It should be noted that all three felt their experience was positive in this school in general and that lines of communication between them and mainstream teachers were good.

Teaching materials

There was a good collection of Dual Language books in the library, attractively presented and centrally placed next to the computer suite on the first floor. The librarian said that the books were popular.

Work with phonics was very evident around the school in particular Read.Write Inc. Phonic ability tended to be seen as synonomous with progress as in statements such as: 'M. (a Polish girl) is 'a bright child – she can sound out words.'   This was said by the EMA coordinator who showed me round the school. The emphasis on phonics support is echoed in the material on the Website which notes that, when additional literacy support is required use is made of ALS (a phonics based programme) or 'the Five Minute Box' (in order to aid the development of phonic knowledge). Other kinds of language support work which might be relevant to the needs of EAL children is not mentioned.

Strategies

A noticeable strategy to support teaching and learning was evident in the Nursery School.   Here a signing system of communication, devised originally for children with communication difficulties was in use: Makaton. It is a form of communication which uses signs and gestures and is based on British Sign Language. I noted during my observation in the Nursery that this tended to replace verbal communication and not to accompany it.

The school is proactive in making contact with the EMA team. The EAL Advisory Teacher from the LA calls this a 'school which keeps in touch'. There was originally a form sent out by the LA with options of what is available – the schools used to tick what they wanted. Then the EMA LA service decided to target specific schools which the data suggested would benefit from support. Now the EAL Advisory Teacher approaches the schools directly and the school is seen to respond positively to such approaches. The hope is that this is seen not as a threat but as a support. The EAL Advisory Teacher emphasises the strong links between her and the EMA coordinator who she says is always 'in touch'. It appears that this is not necessarily the case with other schools in the Borough. It should be noted however that the dependence on the support from the Borough may replace a strong expertise and knowledge base on the part of the EMA Coordinator.

Community

The longer established bilingual assistant takes on a strong role in liaising with parents. She meets parents in the morning and evening at the start and end of the school day. The Advisory Teacher from the LA who joins us in the afternoon says that this is a role which she takes on voluntarily.

The role of governors is linked very much to targets in that they do not make generalised visits to look at the school, sit in on classes an so on. It seems that all visits are planned around 'targets', according to the Head. I was not able to determine whether minority ethnic or bilingual parents are well represented on the Governing Body.

Vision

I was not able to ascertain this during the visit.   In general the school feels quite confident in what it is achieving. The major concern expressed related to specified under achieving groups and there is a specific project on raising the achievement of Black boys which the School is committed to.

Summarising comments

The Head Teacher and mainstream staff give a strong impression of being part of a successful and popular school. This is a view which is shared by the three ITTs who I interviewed during the day. They are enjoying their experience and are made to feel welcome.

The Head Teacher is clearly well liked and respected by the staff . She had openly expressed an interest in cooperating with research in the field of EAL children apart from involvement with the TDA project.

The overall thrust regarding the achievement of EAL and minority ethnic children appears to be efficient but very outcome oriented. The Head sees her role as ensuring that targets are met in terms of specified minority groups matching achievement goals at Borough and National level.

School 6

Age range: 5–11
Number of pupils on roll: 382

Introduction

This primary school is on the edge of a small town in a semi rural area. The town seems at first glance to be a prosperous middle class place with several antique shops and cosy tea rooms but just off the high street lie areas of fairly shabby low rise council housing. The school serves the town and surrounding farmlands and the children are drawn from the families of commuters, service industry workers and agricultural workers. The relatively high price of private housing and the relative scarcity of social housing keep the population fairly stable. The school has always had a predominantly White British intake. It is proud of its acceptance and integration of children from other cultures and has an ethos of 'treating them all the same' rather than emphasising diversity.

The school is housed in a Victorian building which has recently been extended and modified to retain the overall architectural themes but to break up enclosed spaces and introduce more light. The teaching areas are all open plan and parallel year groups are connected with each and with the spaces beyond by a flexible system of sliding doors and curtains which allows areas to be opened up or partitioned off according to need. The teaching areas radiate out from a central hub which gives the school an intimate feel. It is a two form entry school with an intake that is possibly too large for the building but the management of space does not give it the impression of being crowded. There are extensive and well laid out outside areas and a huge field leading on to common land and downland beyond.

The school seems well resourced in terms of books and technology. The work being done in classrooms was purposeful and engaging the children, although not from the evidence of a short visit, particularly imaginative, although the teaching areas and corridors have very extensive and eye-catching displays of children's work. None of the work or resources on display seemed particularly multicultural in content or nature.

Children seemed calm and content. Social interactions and behaviour seemed respectful and thoughtful. The few EAL children in the school were working purposefully. Learning Support Assistants (LSA) were present in many of the classrooms and it was hard to see at first glance who was the LSA and who was the teacher.

Structures and policies

Most pupils come from the nearby nursery school; the school has very few new arrivals at other points in their schooling.

The catchment area gives the school a wide socio-economic mix, although its intake is predominantly White British. At present there are 5 pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds out of a school roll of around 400. Of these pupils, 4 were born in the UK, came through the nursery and are considered to be fluent in English. One – a Turkish speaker – arrived during Key Stage 1 and is considered to be in the early stages of English development. The EAL intake has remained at a fairly consistent and low level over the years, although there have been periods of larger and temporary intakes of pupils from the families of eastern European agricultural workers.

The school has a commitment to inclusion in its practices and its stated ethos. There is very little withdrawal of individual children from classes. Adaptations have been made to the building to allow pupils with a range of health, mobility and behavioural difficulties to work in the classrooms and the school took a number of pupils from the LEA's unit for children on the autism spectrum. Around 20% of the pupils are on the SEN register and the school has a commitment to as early as possible identification of SEN.

Each class has its own LSA who works on a one-to-one basis with children on the SEN register.

Newly arrived pupils with EAL who are not regarded as completely fluent in English are placed automatically on the SEN register. There is no standard or formal assessment of English fluency for pupils arriving from the nursery; the decision is made by reference to the nursery records and by parents' indication of first language. Pupils who arrive later in KS1 or 2 are given some informal assessments of their oral communication skills and literacy ability in their first language. This is to determine the existence of additional needs; they are still placed on the SEN register.

Any new arrival who is considered to have potential difficulties in settling in or managing aspects of school life – and this includes pupils who are not fluent in English and pupils who have recently arrived in the UK as well as pupils with a range of behavioural and emotional difficulties and health problems – receive a personalised induction programme from the SENCO. Pupils in the class in which they will be placed are given information about the pupil's needs beforehand and appropriate responses and interactions are discussed.

All newly arrived EAL pupils receive an SEN Individual Education Plan (IEP) which sets out needs and targets. They receive support from the class LSA; the SENCO will sometimes reallocate LSAs to ensure that an EAL pupil is supported by an LSA who has some experience in EAL work.

Targets on the IEP are related to general English language development, and not EAL-specific. The LSA monitors the progress of pupils with EAL and progress is reviewed by the LSA, class teacher and SENCO at half-termly review meetings. LSAs have close working relationships with class teachers and are expected to report back any observations about progress – although these discussions tend to take place informally.

Personnel

The school receives no EMA funding and has no dedicated EAL staff. Provision for pupils with EAL is handled by the SENCO. She has had accredited training in SEN but no EAL training. Most staff at the school, including the SENCO, are from the area and their teaching experience has been in this school or similar ones with very few EAL pupils.

All pupils with EAL receive additional support from the class LSA. There is rarely more than one pupil with EAL in any class. This support continues until the class teacher and SENCO judge that the pupil has a sufficient level of English to engage fully with learning activities – although there are no standardised assessments of English fluency.

Regular reviews of the progress of pupils with EAL are made by the LSA, class teacher and SENCO. Although the school analyses data to show achievement against local and national data, there is no analysis of EAL achievement data. Numbers of EAL pupils are far too low to undertake any such analysis.

Training

The school receives and commissions training on strategies and other curriculum initiatives from the EAL and other providers but none of this is specific to EAL. The school has not sought any training on EAL because there is no perceived need for this because of the very low numbers of pupils with EAL.

The LEA has an EAL Outreach Team; they work with schools in urban areas with significant numbers of pupils with EAL. The school only has occasional contact with the team to obtain first language resources. They are not aware of any training and advice offered by the team.

Lines of communication

The school has no designated EAL staff. Overall responsibility for EAL lies with the SENCO. She liaises with LSAs in classes where EAL pupils are placed and with LSAs and class teachers on half-termly IEP review meetings for pupils with EAL. All EAL pupils have an IEP until they are considered to no longer require support.

Informal channels of communication are strong and LSAs tend to make themselves available outside contracted hours to liaise with colleagues. The geography of the school makes informal contact easy.

Other than through IEPs, there are no additional procedures or systems in place to monitor the progress of pupils with EAL.

Teaching materials

They use some basic vocabulary recognition materials – not designed specifically for EAL – which LSAs use with EAL beginners in one-to-one sessions outside the classroom.
There are no adapted curriculum materials aimed at EAL pupils and it is not common practice to produce these. Some simplified curriculum materials are available for pupils with SEN and these may also be used for pupils with EAL.

The school will obtain fiction and non-fiction books in languages other than English whenever they have a new EAL arrival. These resources are borrowed from the EAL Outreach Team or from the LEA resource centre in Reading. The low numbers of EAL pupils and the difficulty in predicting the languages of future new arrivals do not make it worthwhile to have any permanent collections of resources in languages other than English.

Strategies

Generally the school favours inclusive education. Some early stage EAL learners may have some one-to-one sessions with the LSA outside the classroom. LSAs are encouraged to relate any teaching outside the classroom to mainstream curriculum activities and to do some pre-teaching of key vocabulary and content to enable pupils to access as much of lessons as possible. For older pupils withdrawal will take place during lessons such as history in order to concentrate on basic literacy and numeracy.

The school prides itself on its social inclusion and care is taken to ensure pupils with EAL feel respected and part of the school. Explicit mention is made within the class of their cultural heritage or first language. Social interactions are encouraged.

The school recognises the value and importance of drawing upon the cultural heritage and language experience of pupils with EAL as a way into learning. Older pupils are invited to produce some of their written work in their first language and where possible the school will find other speakers of pupils' first languages to do some work with them in the classroom – although these will be very informal and on an ad hoc basis.

The school has a Welfare Officer and a Family Support Officer who will provide pastoral support and discuss pupils' learning with their families. It operates an extended day including a Breakfast Club and recognises that pupils new to the UK will particularly benefit from these arrangements.

The SENCO is an advocate of global perspectives in the curriculum and promotes this through formal and informal contacts with colleagues. The school has links with schools in West Africa and supported an initiative, 'Send My Friend to School', to sponsor the education of children in that part of the world. French is taught throughout the school and the SENCO, who has a personal interest in West African cultures, also teaches lessons in Mandinka, using this as an opportunity for some metalinguistic talk about differences between languages.

Mutual respect is seen by the school as the underpinning of successful learning and there is an implicit recognition of equalities issues.   School staff are aware of the danger of equalities being sidelined in a school which is almost exclusively White British and the SENCO tries to ensure that this is kept at the forefront.

Community

The school sends information to parents through the weekly 'Newsflash' and the half-termly Newsletter. There are regular formal opportunities for parents and families to visit the school to find out about current plans and initiatives – Consultation Evenings, Open Evenings, PTA meetings. There is Family Learning Week each term when parents are invited to join their children in classrooms. Parents are involved in running some after-school clubs.

The school has an open door policy. Parents are invited to talk to teaching staff at the beginning and end of the school day and are assured of always being able to see a senior member of staff at any point during the day. The Head Teacher is a visible presence, often in classes, and always available to parents.

The school has an open plan layout to ensure that parents and other visitors have an impression of what is happening in all the teaching areas. The SENCO ensures that parents of EAL pupils are aware of the open door nature of the school.

The Governing Body is largely made up of members of the local community, many of whom have lived and worked in the area for some time. There is no EAL representative.

Parents of EAL pupils are consulted and informed regularly about their child's progress and negotiated targets for achievement through the standard IEP consultation process – and all EAL pupils have an IEP.

Vision

The school is providing a good learning environment and one in which all pupils are encouraged to reach their potential. It has a positive inclusive ethos and sound support and monitoring systems. The values of the school ensure that pupils with EAL feel safe, secure, valued and respected and the structure supports their integration and achievement. There doesn't seem to be any need for anything else to be put in place for EAL at the moment.

Classrooms are good inclusive environments where pupils with EAL get all the individual attention and support they need to access learning and their achievement is good.

At the moment it is straightforward and easy to incorporate EAL pupils using the school's regular support systems because of the low EAL intake. If this were to change, additional support and possibly changes in systems would be necessary. However, a large increase in the EAL is not expected in the foreseeable future.

All the current workforce have an understanding of and a commitment to the general inclusion strategies and practices that underpin access to learning for EAL pupils but are not familiar with the processes by which EAL pupils acquire and develop English. At the moment training in this area seems to be unnecessary – it is thought that staff would forget anything they learned if they were not applying it for long periods of time – but it would be useful to have access to it should the need arise.

It would be useful to have more contact with the central EAL team just to 'put the school on the map' and to keep up to date with what they might be able to offer. The school would need to take the initiative as the team's priorities lie with more multilingual schools. Perhaps a floating support teacher whose advice and support could be brought in when needed would be useful.

Conclusion

The school takes its notions and practices of inclusion, learning support and access from the SEN tradition. Pupils with EAL are assessed, receive support and intervention and are monitored through the existing structures designed for SEN. There is some confusion over the terms around inclusion; EAL pupils are classified as SEN because they are EAL and the approaches to EAL support are broadly similar to that of SEN. Conversations with practitioners did reveal however that this may be purely a structural similarity and it was clear that key members of staff certainly were not confusing EAL with learning difficulties. But in the absence of specific EAL training, the semantic confusion may well give rise to a conceptual confusion.

The school does have a noticeably strong commitment to SEN inclusion, actively inviting children with some challenging difficulties through its doors and has a very obvious concern for the well-being of its pupils. This concern for well-being is implicitly extended to a concern for their access to and achievement in learning. It makes no explicit provision for EAL in general because it feels confident that the needs of any pupils with EAL can be catered for within the normal practices of the school. Overt racism towards pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds is not seen as an issue and not regarded as likely within the school's ethos of inclusion and mutual respect. Children from minority ethnic backgrounds are still unusual in the school and in the area in which children spend their lives but are not regarded negatively. The SENCO at least does recognise that there is a difference between equality in a stable school with very few minority ethnic children and in the world beyond and sees education about promoting positive images of all cultures, not just those of the children in the school – equality in an abstract and universally applicable context, rather simply within the context of the immediate environment – and to that end is promoting global perspectives.

There are some innovative approaches to multicultural education but these arise from the particular experiences or passions of individual members of staff – the SENCO's interest in the Mandinka language for example – and the school leadership is sufficiently open and relaxed about accommodating these.

School 7

Age range: 11–16
Number of pupils on roll: 600

Introduction

The school is located in the Alum Rock area in the eastern suburbs of
Birmingham. The area is one of late Victorian/ early Edwardian modest-sized
terraced housing constructed in a fairly uniform grid pattern. There are no large
estates or tower blocks; there is a park near the school but no smaller pockets of
green space. The impression is overwhelmingly of red brick. Along the main
thoroughfares are small independent businesses – fabric and jewellery
wholesalers, mini-markets, poundstores, religious tract retailers, minicab offices,
halal takeaways – all very busy and lively. Mirpuri is spoken on the streets, signs
are in Urdu. People on the streets are greeting one another but not lingering to
chat. There is a purposeful air about the place. Many of the shops are selling
things to other shop owners – everyone seems to be buying or selling large
plastic storage boxes. There is a sense of a community where everyone is in a
symbiotic relationship to one another – of individuals connecting to form a larger
organism. Houses are a little shabby on the outside with small, unused gardens.
Nothing draws attention to itself – even the mosque is understated. The area
feels safe enough but this masks its notoriety as having the largest number of
street crimes in the Birmingham area. No drive-by shootings or knife murders yet
as in other parts of the city. No drunken brawls or open drug dealing but gang
culture, it appears, is gradually taking hold on the youth of Alum Rock.

The school is situated unobtrusively and almost apologetically up a side street,
tucked between the redbrick terraces. It's just a few steps from the street to the
main entrance and the building on first sight does not seem large enough to
house a secondary school. It extends back away from the road of course but has
very little space around it. The entrance hall is bright and welcoming, the artwork
and signs signalling the heritage of its students. Further into the school, it
becomes less attractive. The building is a 1960s/70s block with long, narrow
corridors and uniformly square shaped classrooms. The corridors are too narrow
to display anything attractively and this gives the building a very functional and
institutional appearance. The layout of the classrooms makes them difficult to do
anything interesting with; they all seem slightly too small. The Maths rooms
however were festooned with comments from students about their learning and
their aspirations and targets and other rooms had evidence that staff had
attempted to inspire learning. The ICT rooms had students going about their
work in a very purposeful and self-motivated way.

Many of the staff are Mirpuri speakers and talk between staff and students and
amongst students was switching quite naturally back forth between English and
Mirpuri. There were some parents on the premises having serious conversations
with their sons in the corridors. There had been a couple of instances of the
overspill from gang fighting into the school and parents were working with the
leadership team to prevent it from getting out of hand.

The school has an unusually small population for city secondary school, with around 600 on roll. It is clearly very much a physical part of its residential, commercial and religious community. There is an air of getting on with things without making a fuss about it which mirrors the community around it. There is also a slight defensiveness on the part of the leadership and some of the staff – a sense of having been unjustly maligned by Ofsted and by the world outside – a sense that outsiders who did not know the community could easily make negative assumptions about the school – and a tension between the instinct to keep their head down and not attract attention and the desire to celebrate the improvement the school has made and its very real successes.

Structures and policies

Ninety-five per cent of the school's students are from minority ethnic backgrounds. The majority are Pakistani of these, most are Urdu/Mirpuri speakers from the Kashmir region. The other main languages are Somali and Bengali. Most of the students have come from one of the feeder primary school, although there is a steady flow of students new to the UK arriving into all year groups, mainly Somalis.

The Learning Support Department liaises with the feeder primaries and arranges induction classes at the primary school for Year 6 students and summer schools and English booster classes during the summer prior to starting secondary school. Key Stage 2 assessment data is collected from the primary schools, although the opinion is quite clearly that the primary school records are "useless" for initial assessment purposes.

New arrivals from primary school are assessed at the start of Year 7 by the Learning Support Department. The department uses the EAL stages compiled by NASSEA to determine English language fluency and also uses CATs to determine cognitive ability. The department analyses these assessments and uses them to draw up a list of students who are priorities for EAL support.

Those students identified for support are given an IEP. Until recently the IEP was for core subjects only; from Autumn 2008 students receive one for every subject. The intention is that the IEP is reviewed termly by subject teachers and amended accordingly. There is no system, or enough time, for the Learning Support Department to liaise with subject teachers on this review and the department accepts that training at least is needed to support subject teachers in this process.

The English Department has responsibility for making further and regular assessments of the stages of English fluency of students with EAL and for passing this data on to the Learning Support Department. An assessment at Stage 5 indicates no further EAL support is needed.

The school has carried out research into the home language background of its Pakistani students. The students arriving from primary schools do not necessarily have a high level fluency in English, even those who are 2nd or 3rd generation immigrants and have been born in the UK; they are living in households and within communities where Mirpuri is used all the time and have had very little

exposure to English outside the primary classroom. Mirpuri is a spoken language only. Urdu may also be used in households but students will generally have very little literacy in this language. The language they may have some level of literacy in besides English will be Arabic, acquired through the mosque – although one of the Pakistani teachers at the school described this typically as a "surface literacy". The Somalis who form the majority of the casual entrants come mainly via other European countries in whose language they may have a level of literacy.

The Learning Support Department uses the initial assessments to make decisions about placement of newly arrived EAL beginners. The department runs withdrawal classes for beginners who will be withdrawn from those lessons considered to have greater language demands. In mainstream classes, new arrivals tend to be placed in lower ability sets.

Personnel

The school has no dedicated EAL staff from the teaching workforce. EMA work is dealt with by the Learning Support Department who are managed by the SENCO. The department has coordinators for the various areas of inclusion, including a full-time EAL Coordinator. The work of gathering and analysing assessment information, the placing of students into mainstream classes, deciding on priorities for support and monitoring progress is dealt with at the Learning Support Department level.

The school has 16 TAs who work exclusively with students who have been given IEPs. All students with EAL below NASSEA EAL Stage 5 are given IEPs. One of the TAs teaches Urdu classes as part of the mainstream curriculum and leading to a GCSE exam.

The role of the EAL Coordinator is to liaise with the TAs on individual support for students with EAL and with mainstream staff over review of IEPs. The present EAL Coordinator does not have QTS; he is a TA who has achieved HLTA status. The Learning Support Department also includes a TEFL Teacher who teaches EFL classes for older newly arrived students.

The other departments in the school which have an explicit EAL focus are English, RE and ICT. Members of the English Department are expected to gear their teaching to the language needs and patterns of English development of students with EAL. They conduct regular assessments of students' levels of English fluency using EAL stages. RE and ICT are regarded as core subjects along with English, Maths and Science, and ones from which students should not be withdrawn. RE teaching is expected to allow and encourage students, the majority of whom are Muslim, to explore their cultural – and by extension their language – identity. ICT classes have a strong emphasis on developing the business skills and models that are relevant to the community of small-scale entrepreneurs that the students live in and focus on the specific English literacy skills needed for business enterprises.

Training

The LEA offers a range of one-day courses at its central Advisory and PDC base just outside the city centre. Information about these courses is circulated to all the workforce and staff are encouraged to apply to attend any course they feel may enhance their practice.

The Head Teacher however has reservations about the usefulness of external training delivered through one-day courses outside the school. Her policy is to send one key member of staff on any relevant course and then to get them to adapt the content of the course to meet the needs, priorities and profile of the school and then to deliver more relevant training sessions to the workforce at training days or staff or department meetings. She feels that LEA courses are too generic and need differentiation for the school and some input into how to take the school further on in its development.

Her policy is to offer training on the premises wherever possible, although she is very careful about the use of external consultants and providers. She is aware and mindful of the stereotyped impressions of the school held by outsiders, based on its intake and on the surrounding area, and her experience is that external trainers will offer either a generic package or a specific one based on misconceptions of the school. The school received bad press some years ago following on Ofsted report which found serious weaknesses although several of the identified concerns have now been redressed and the 2008 GCSE results were above national average

The school has had support from some of the LEA's advisers and has a close and positive working relationship with the EMA Adviser who some years ago taught in the school. The Head Teacher has a sense of which advisers are "credible and pragmatic" and will seek their advice and support.

The school is currently developing an initiative to do away with the model of the staff training day at the start of term and to replace it with 'horizontal training' weeks, in which the school would close early each day over the week for staff training. One of the keys to effective CPD is considered to provide platforms for departments to share ideas and examples of good practice.

Lines of communication

EAL support is delivered by TAs. TAs work in mainstream classes with students targeted for EAL support, all of whom will have an IEP for each subject they are taking. The IEP contains targets and achievement is monitored against these targets. It is expected that the monitoring and reviewing of these targets will be discussed between TAs and subject teachers, although there are no formal opportunities for this to happen and the extent to which there is any liaison varies from class to class. Subject Teachers have copies of IEPs and are expected to incorporate elements of them into their planning and differentiation. It is accepted that the more successful liaisons take place in departments where IEPs for targeted EAL students are an established practice; they are less successful in departments where EAL IEPs were only established in 2008. Some departments, Mathematics in particular, have developed collaborative working

practices between TAs and subject teachers and the liaison that takes place over EAL support arises naturally from curriculum planning and encompasses teaching and learning strategies as well as the progress of targeted individuals. The Head Teacher sees this department as providing a model to share with other colleagues.

The Learning Support Department has a weekly meeting which the TAs attend; the meeting provides an opportunity to discuss general strategies, policies, initiatives and structures. The SENCO and the EAL Coordinator meet TAs each term to review IEPs and amend the list of targeted students accordingly.

Teaching materials

The school uses an EFL package entitled 'Headway' in its English classes for older new arrivals. The rationale for its use is to provide consistency where there is a fairly high degree of mobility amongst older students between other schools and colleges which use the same package. An adapted version of these materials is used in some of the withdrawal classes further down the school and in English booster classes organised in school holidays.

Students in mainstream classes have the same materials; differentiation is through approach rather than teaching materials. The school does not use any first language materials as most of the students have a higher degree of literacy in English than in any other language.

Strategies

The school has high expectations of its students. The Ofsted report of 2001 which highlighted the low achievement of students in GCSEs spurred the school to raising achievement – an approach the Head Teacher terms "tough love". "Challenging but supportive" is the phrase echoed by many of her staff. She is seeking to develop a curriculum that reflects the strengths of the students yet still "plays the game" in terms of examination success and sees the establishment of an aspirational ethos as underpinning achievement.

Students are given an individual forecast grade set against LEA figures and then set a target above this grade. There is a system of termly rewards and certificates which are awarded for meeting learning targets and for positive attitudes towards learning. Students are supported for early entry into GCSEs where appropriate.

The school plays up its uniqueness in terms of being a relatively small and very local school and that many of the staff have worked there for a long time and that parents will send all their children to the school and will have been pupils there themselves. It sees this strong local identification and loyalty as providing the pastoral foundations on which to build a learning community. The ICT department promotes a curriculum and activities which reflect the business activities of the locality and the development of English as well as the maintenance and development of the languages used within these businesses are promoted as an integral part of this curriculum area.

Three languages are offered from the beginning of Key Stage 3 – French, Arabic and Urdu. None of these languages are seen – as in some schools – as an easy way of accumulating GCSE passes; French is the mother tongue of only the occasional student, Arabic is used only for religious purposes and Urdu may be understood by most students but not written or read. The teaching of these languages is seen as a means of developing general linguistic understanding, of enhancing employment and business prospects and of engaging with cultural identity.

The school provides a number of enrichment activities – sports, drama, musical instruments, choir, scouts and an 'enterprise village'.

With an almost exclusively Muslim intake, the school recognises the importance of girls-only provision and facilities – particularly in sports activities.

TAs and mainstream staff are described as using "mixed strategies" for EAL support, although the degree to which these strategies were shared, developed, adopted consistently, underpinned by a clear rationale and made explicit vary from department to department. There is a stated ethos of inclusion throughout the school with the emphasis being on mainstream support. In many classes however, students are organised into ability sets. The Maths department seems to be leading the way in terms of inclusive practice and in developing classrooms which make the processes of learning explicit – 'learning walls' for example – and which are designed to give students more responsibility for and control over their own learning.

Community

The school regards itself and seems to be seen as a 'local school'. All of its pupils live less than 400 km from the building. Some of its ICT curriculum initiatives and extra-curricular activities have been developed in consultation with the local business community and to fit its needs and potential.

Many of the staff live in the immediate area and share the ethnic and language backgrounds of their students and families. They attend the same mosque as the students and have forged strong links with the families through religious activities and practices. Parents feel very confident about contacting and approaching the school with concerns and questions about their children's learning. As many of them live and work in the vicinity, access to the school is relatively casual and straightforward. There is constant dialogue between the parents of some boys who are involved in gang membership and the school and parents will visit the school during the school day to deal with behavioural matters. Many of the teachers speak Mirpuri and there are also Somali and Bengali speakers on the staff. It is relatively straightforward then to find a member of staff to speak to and interpret for parents. School staff have carried out an explicit research project into the home languages of students from the school and this investigation has strengthened home-school links as well as provided useful information for curriculum planning and developing other initiatives. Much of the home-school work is around pastoral issues; the school is aware of the importance of more explicit discussion on supporting learning.

The school has a Parent Partnership Worker who organises classes in English for Mirpuri and Somali speakers.

Most members of the governing body are drawn from the local community and therefore from the same ethnic, religious and language backgrounds as the students and are fairly visible around the school. The Chair of Governors is the Education Spokesperson for the Muslim Society of Great Britain.

Vision

The school's strength is that it is a small, compact community school with a high degree of parental trust. Over half of the 2008 new intake had siblings in the school. The school needs to maintain and extend that. The Ofsted report and the adverse press it attracted seriously damaged the reputation of the school and made it difficult for pupils and staff to have positive images of their efforts. Despite – or perhaps as a result of that setback – the school has re-evaluated its approach to learning and has raised achievement significantly. The teachers have a real passion for their work, high expectations of the pupils and deliver high quality teaching. The school now has a positive image in the community and a waiting list for places.

However it still has a negative image outside the community and needs to establish itself as a real centre of excellence in learning to counter that image.

Most pupils have EAL so EAL is firmly part and parcel of mainstream practice. Staff – TAs supporting EAL pupils and subject teachers – still need a lot more EAL-focused training however, in determining the language needs of pupils, in differentiation, in assessing progress, in basic strategies for inclusion. The problem is that the sort of training needed to address the needs of this particular school is not readily available. We are trying to address this in-house but we need someone to offer training on the premises, liaising closely with staff here from someone who knows the school or is at least prepared to listen and approach the school with no preconceptions.

Conclusion

EAL practice in the school was not explicitly mentioned or featured because the school population is almost exclusively EAL. There was some exciting and innovative teaching taking place but this was not seen as EAL-specific but as something which engaged all the students. EAL work in terms of inclusive practice is therefore very much embedded into the school. Most of the students, whatever their home language or however long they had been in the UK, share a similar language profile in that they have very little exposure to English outside school but tend to have a far greater level of literacy in a language that is not their mother tongue – English, Arabic, other European languages – than in their mother tongue itself. This feature is known by the school leadership but EAL work is not explicitly taking this on and providing support around it.

The criteria for targeted support is the level of fluency in spoken English and this support is operating independently of classroom teaching strategies. The

distinction between the targeted EAL students and all the other students (who also have EAL but are not targeted for support) is in danger of being conceptualised around SEN. EAL work is located within the SEN department, managed by the SENCO and promoted through IEPs.

As with a number of other schools, EAL support work is entirely carried out by TAs. Using an HLTA to coordinate this work is possibly unusual. Although it is a good professional development opportunity for TAs, it does restrict the role and responsibilities of the EAL Coordinator; it poses problems in terms of line management and in terms of equality of status in liaising with and training mainstream staff. In this instance it leads to an outsourcing of EAL coordination; the SENCO manages the individual support programmes of targeted students and the English department carries out English fluency assessments and this work does not necessarily get channelled back directly to the EAL Coordinator. The structural arrangements also make it less easy for all the other related initiatives – curriculum, parent links – to be seen and developed in a coherent fashion.

The explicit embedding of an EAL focus within certain other curriculum areas – RE, ICT, MFL and, increasingly, Maths – is a potentially exciting one.

School 8

Age range: 3–11
Number of pupils on roll: 361

Introduction

This primary school sits at the edge of rolling meadows in the East of England and looks out across the vast expanse of fenland stretching away to marshes and the North Sea. Its buildings do not reflect the extremes of wealth contained in this small place. It has, according to a recent survey, one of the highest concentrations of millionaires in the country; it also has pockets of extreme deprivation, poverty and social problems.

The village spreads itself out in a linear fashion with no real centre and dotted with low rise, small scale industrial workshops and lorry parks. Its geography encourages the visitor to carry on through it rather than stay and explore. The school lies off the High Street, approached via an imposing driveway which opens out onto a campus with the primary school on one side and facing it across a green, the secondary school. The secondary school is a converted 18th century mansion; the primary school is a single storey 1970s building in light brick and wood.

The school has carried out extensive refurbishments recently. The main entrance has been fitted with two massive solid doors, shrubs have been planted and fences erected. Inside the building, the original large open teaching areas have been partitioned off into enclosed spaces. The light and airy vaulted ceilings and the large dormer windows are being covered over. The effect of the refurbishment has also been to make the school more inaccessible and impenetrable. There is no welcome sign, no buzzer on the main door and other doors; windows and access points are screened from the path. Visitors have to walk around the outside of the building knocking on windows at random to attract someone's attention.

It is into this environment that children new to the UK arrive from time to time. Their parents work in the polytunnels on the surrounding farmland or for one of the many transport haulage firms. Mostly from Catholic or non-Christian families, they are accepted rather than integrated into this school community based around the Anglican Church. Their families become part of separate and smaller communities within the village. The three places to eat in the High Street reflect the area's older established and its newer ethnic communities – an Italian restaurant, a Polish grocery and café and a Portuguese coffee shop.

Structures and policies

The school receives some children from the area's more established minority ethnic communities who were born in the UK and have attended the local nursery school. These children are listed on the school register with a home language as English but mother tongue as other than English. They are listed on the EAL register but are not deemed to need EAL support. The school also receives children new to the UK who may arrive at any point in their school life. These children receive EAL support.

The school has recently amended its standard admission form to include an EAL addendum, on which languages other than English spoken or used are listed together with some indication of proficiency.

Parents of these new arrivals receive a welcome pack, some of which is translated into Portuguese or Polish, the two main languages of the school. The pack contains information about the British educational system as well about the school.

The EAL coordinator tries to ensure that there is a gap of a few days between parents of new arrivals enrolling their children and the children's starting school. This is to ensure that class teachers – a number of whom have had little experience with EAL – have as much time to prepare for their arrival as possible. The children in the class are also prepared for the new arrival and are encouraged to befriend her/him. The EAL Coordinator will discuss the new arrival with the class teacher and share the information known about the child and discuss teaching strategies. All class teachers have recently received a pack of information about EAL which includes a copy of the admissions form, guidance on welcome and inclusion strategies obtained from other LEAs, the school EAL policy, the EAL Stages of English document produced by NASSEA and the DCSF guidance on new EAL arrivals.

New arrivals are assigned a school 'buddy'. Where possible this is an older child who shares the pupil's first language. These buddies are on occasions called upon to come into the new arrival's class to interpret or translate.

Once assigned to a class, the provision for support and the monitoring of progress is in the hands of the SENCO and her team. Support is carried out by TAs who will generally work with the EAL new arrivals in their support groups, which also include children with SEN.

The school has just worked with the LEA's Race, Equality and Diversity Team (CREDS) on an assessment of stages of English fluency framework. The stage descriptors are linked with planning and teaching strategies – although class teachers and TAs are not altogether confident in using this. Once a new arrival is considered to be beyond the early stages of English fluency s/he no longer gets any support from the TA. There is no consideration given to or explicit provision made for advanced stage EAL learners; the view is that the children have a "strong work ethic" which will motivate them to do well.

The school has a policy on Equality and Community Cohesion, a paragraph of which emphasises the importance of recognising linguistic diversity. The newly-

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written EAL policy offers advice on integrating new arrivals into classrooms. The school has a stated commitment to inclusion and does have a good track record in welcoming children with a range of SENs. It is a Church of England school with an explicit commitment to the spiritual values of the church. Most of its EAL pupils are in fact from Roman Catholic countries and backgrounds. The school recently admitted a pupil from a Muslim family whose parents, in the absence of a Muslim school, wanted a school with a strong faith. The pupil has since left the school as the religious ethos was apparently "too much for her to cope with".

Personnel

The school has an EAL Coordinator. The current postholder is also a class teacher and has one day per week allocated for her EAL duties. She adopts a "flexible approach" to her time and does not necessarily spend the entire day on her duties but may accumulate the hours to use the time more appropriately.

The EAL Coordinator defines her role as providing general advice and information to class teachers. The responsibility for assigning support and monitoring progress rests with the SENCO. The school has a Learning Mentor who works with individual children. She will work with any EAL pupil who may have additional learning needs.

The school has a number of TAs. Some Key Stage 1 classes have their own TA; further up the school 1 TA is shared between 2 year group classes. The TAs mainly work with the same group of pupils and these groups include the pupils with EAL. TAs are managed by the SENCO.

Lines of communication and opportunities for the SENCO and the TAs to meet are purely informal, as is the communication between the EAL Coordinator and the SENCO.

The EAL Coordinator has no EAL qualifications and has received no training in EAL other than a one-day course delivered by the LEA on the recent DCSF document on newly-arrived pupils with EAL. Her interests and experience lie elsewhere; she was, she admits, reluctant to take on the role.

The school uses parents to provide some ad hoc support to pupils whose first language they share. One Portuguese speaking mother works regularly with the Portuguese children but is not paid for this work.

There is no clear rationale for EAL support other than it is given at first to all newly arrived pupils new to the UK and then withdrawn when the SENCO decides it is no longer needed.

Training

The LEA has a central service which offers occasional one day courses on aspects of EAL at the PDC. The school had no information to hand about details of any current courses, although the EAL Coordinator recently attended a course on new arrivals.

The school's perception of the central service is that its priority is to support those schools in the towns and cities where there are larger numbers of pupils with EAL and there does not seem to be any regular contact initiated by the central service with the school. The exception was when the EAL Coordinator recently attended a course run by the central team and following conversations with members of the team, arranged for the team to carry out assessments of the English language fluency of the school's pupils. Members of the team spent the day in school making formal assessments of pupils and provided the school with an assessment framework – albeit produced by another LEA. The rationale was to make teaching staff more aware of the needs of EAL learners.

The EAL Coordinator has requested to run staff meetings on strategies to support EAL learners but has been told that the main priorities lie elsewhere.

Lines of communication

The EAL Coordinator has no formal lines of communication with mainstream staff or any real opportunities to discuss individual pupils or general strategies with them. She has prepared an information pack on EAL, a copy of which has been given to all mainstream staff but was given no platform to introduce this.

Class Teachers will tend to consult the SENCO about individual EAL pupils, who has more time and an opportunity to be a presence around the school and whose clearly-stated responsibility it is for organising support for individual EAL pupils. The EAL Coordinator is aware that class teachers tend to "panic" about new arrivals, find it a "struggle" to include them in mainstream activities and "worry about doing the right thing for them".

The perception and anecdotal evidence is that EAL pupils tend to achieve well once they have a reasonable level of English. There is no statistical analysis of the achievement of an admittedly small number of EAL pupils. Hence there are no procedures for a clear identification of under-achievement in EAL pupils.

Teaching materials

The school has some basic vocabulary books for TAs to use with new arrivals. There is a small collection of Polish dual language fiction books. Class teachers are supplied with lists of basic words and phrases in languages spoken by the pupils for them to use in talking to them.

Strategies

There is an awareness amongst the Coordinators that EAL pupils are best served in the mainstream classroom and in inclusive environments in order to give them good models of English. However the practice is to place them in groups together with pupils with a range of SENs where they work with TAs. Sometimes these groups work outside the mainstream classroom and pupils very new to EAL may work one-to-one with TAs on basic vocabulary outside the classroom. The reasons cited for this discrepancy are the practicalities of organising TA support

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and the lack of training in – and therefore understanding of – EAL strategies amongst mainstream staff.

EAL support is seen purely in terms of increasing proficiency in English to enable them to make some sense of mainstream activities. Supporting the specific learning needs of pupils with EAL through scaffolding, developing academic language and so on is not on the agenda. The view is that once beginner bilinguals have good enough English – a term which is not clearly defined – this, together with the bilingual learner's innate high motivation, will carry them through.

School policy documents refer to the use of pupils' home languages to facilitate learning, although class teachers have had no discussion or direction on how to support this or how it impacts on their practice.

Apart from some dual language fiction books, classroom resources and materials did not reflect the languages and heritages of the EAL pupils. In a number of classrooms pupils were working together in groups in a purposeful and engaged way – collaborative learning is encouraged by the school leadership and promoted in policy documents – although many of these groups were organised in ability sets – with the EAL pupils in the lower ability groups.

Community

The school is a Church of England school and as such has strong links with the local church. Many, though not all, of the families attend the church and are involved in other community activities promoted by the church. The school has a stated Christian ethos and the trappings of the Anglican faith are visible around the school. Most of the school's EAL pupils are from non-Anglican families and do not have the same connections within the local community as the indigenous population. School activities for parents and families are organised around the church community and although other faiths are welcome, there is an understandable caution from some EAL in attending.

The school recognises the importance of finding out about children's backgrounds and heritages but perceives a difficulty in getting this information from parents, partly because of lack of fluency in English and partly because of reluctance on their part. It does provide translated letters and other information for parents of EAL children.

The school uses its parents a good deal to help with school-based initiatives and encourages parents and other members of the community to provide translations and interpreting for other parents and first language support for pupils. Although a good deal of effort is going into informing parents, there is no indication of any initiatives to develop partnerships with parents in supporting their children's learning.

The school's two main EAL groups, the Polish and the Portuguese, have their own community networks, organisations and commercial enterprises within the village and in the surrounding areas.   The school expects that the parents from these groups who do voluntary work within the school will also act as conduits for

information between these communities and the school, although none of this is promoted on any formal basis.

Parents of EAL children are invited through the documents they receive to contact the school's SENCO if they need to discuss any aspect of their child's progress. At the moment because of refurbishments, it is extremely difficult for any visitor to gain access to the school other than at the start and end of the school day.

The Governing Body is largely drawn from representatives from the church. It has no minority ethnic representation. One member of the Body has responsibility for Race Equality, although members of staff were not sure of who this was or how to contact her/him.

Vision

The school has a solid community founded on Christian values of tolerance and respect and as such is a welcoming and supportive environment for pupils with EAL. However EAL work needs to be more positively developed; the school has a growing number of pupils with EAL and this is a trend that is likely to continue.

A continuing number of the EAL children are new to the UK. They come from established communities so they have local networks and some resources in school to support them. The school leadership assumes that teachers will know what to do with these pupils but class teachers are continually alarmed by their arrival and worried about how to teach them. The level of TA support is not sufficient to deal with this. Teachers therefore need a considerable amount of training in the kind of strategies, resources and approaches they need to support pupils with EAL in their classes. This is not a priority that is recognised by the school leadership and so no training is made available.

The LEA's EAL support service seems remote and inaccessible. Their recent work in the school was intended to involve class teachers in assessing the learning needs of their EAL pupils but the team ended up by taking the children out of classrooms to conduct formal assessments of their English language fluency and none of this was shared with class teachers.

The school assumes that because there are relatively few numbers of EAL pupils on roll, they are not a priority and will be easy to integrate. The particular issues around isolated EAL learners in mainly English speaking schools are not addressed because they are not recognised. The provision of training is based on the availability of additional funding and as long as funding is based on large numbers of EAL pupils, this school is going to find it difficult to access the training it needs.

This school has a relatively small number of EAL pupils and therefore does not get any EAL teachers. The onus is more strongly on class teachers to support these pupils. They need training to do this – and specific training in new arrivals and isolated learners. The LEA's training linked to the DCFS strategy documents was far too brief and was not available to the entire workforce.

Conclusion

Classroom activities were no more or less usual than classroom activities anywhere; there were instances of good inclusive practice and individual support for learning with differentiation by approach – but nothing specifically EAL-focused.

The EAL Coordinator has a thorough and detailed approach to her work. The documentation she has and has supplied to class teachers is far more extensive than often seen in a school with such a low number of EAL pupils.

There is a quite glaring lack of any priority given to EAL from the leadership. The school has a number of policy documents, action plans and other statements about EAL, equalities and inclusion but these have all been cut and pasted from other sources and contain very little that is original and specific or relevant to the school. The policies do not seem to have evolved from consultation with the staff or shared in a meaningful way with them so the classroom practice does not match the stated intent.

The organisation of EAL support is awkward. There is a division of responsibilities for EAL between the EAL Coordinator and the SENCO with no educational rationale for this division. The EAL Coordinator has no structures or opportunities to work with those responsible to delivering EAL support and no formal communication with the SENCO who supervises the work programmes of those delivering EAL support. This is a structural arrangement that blurs the distinction between EAL and SEN. The EAL Coordinator does not have a clear job description and has not been given any direction as to how to pursue her duties.

School 9

Age range: 11–19
Number of pupils on roll: 706

Introduction

This is a voluntary aided, comprehensive and mixed school in inner London. It is in a deprived area and 40 percent of it students are on free school meals. Over 70% of the school population has EAL with 90 registered as early stage (Stage 1 and 2), and around 250 students Stage 3. This term there were 21 new arrivals. In the 6th form 85 percent of students are EAL. In terms of languages spoken: 28 percent of the EAL students has Arabic as their home language, 13 percent Bengali, 6 percent Kurdish and the rest are a variety of small groups. In total there are around 50 languages represented and around 80 countries of origin.

EAL students in this school slightly outperform non-EAL students, in the period 2005–2008. 60 percent of EAL students achieve 5 A–C, while this is the case for 59 percent of non-EAL students. EAL students are very successful in Art, Drama and Music. They are also achieving well in Biology, Chemistry and Physics.

Structures and policies

The EAL Head of Department (HOD) is informed in advance about any new arrival joining the school. This term 21 students joined the school as new arrivals after the official start of the term. The TA responsible for new arrivals organises an EAL assessment. In the past this TA also ran induction classes for all new arrivals focusing on language learning, but that is no longer the case as the EAL department doesn't have a classroom anymore and also because the TAs are no longer doing any teaching.

EAL learners are placed in appropriate Year groups, preferably in a class where there are speakers of the same home language. Every new arrival has between one to four lessons of in-class support and is invited to the EAL homework support in the library during lunch time. These in-class support lessons are also used for regular monitoring, recorded in personal profiles available for all students who are EAL stage 1–3. Whole school monitoring is also conducted twice a year; the first time is in September when the whole school writing assessment is conducted, co-ordinated and marked by the EAL department. This is an important opportunity to keep track of more advanced bilingual learners who do not receive any support, mainly because of lack of staff. The second monitoring exercise is conducted in December in preparation for EAL returns. EAL returns are an LA requirement; these include full names of students on the EAL register, their EAL stage, home language/s, date of arrival in the UK, country of origin and refugee status, if known.

There is very little in place for advanced bilingual learners due to the small size of the EAL department. In year 10 they can join a Study Skills option class led by

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the EAL HOD, which provides a mixture of coursework support and focused language learning.

Personnel

The EAL department is led by an experienced EAL teacher, who is also a qualified science teacher. She gained her EAL expertise while working for several years for the LA's peripatetic team. Her view is that the role of the EAL teacher is to analyse the language demands of the curriculum and support access to it; develop differentiated activities; activate prior knowledge; suggest strategies focused on language development and model good practice.

The department consists of two full-time teachers and two full-time TAs. They are all bilingual and have the experience of being educated in other countries. The department has been shrinking since the lead EAL teacher was appointed in 2004. At that time she had 3.6 teachers and 1.6 TAs. However, as staff left to do other jobs, they were not replaced.

The EAL HOD is a Science teacher and has many years experience of working with EAL children. Her role is to organise the deployment of her staff, communicate to the SMT and other management structures in the school, develop and review programmes of support for EAL learners, oversee whole school assessments, EAL returns, development of EAL resources, development and implementation of specific projects and initiatives. She has been in post since 2004. This year she was offered a secondment to the LA as an adviser; the post of secondary EMAG adviser at the LA having been unfilled since the January 2007. She has accepted the secondment for a day a week but says she is committed to working in schools and would not consider the advisory post on a full-time basis.

One of the EAL teachers was trained in EFL in Poland and has an MA in Cognitive Linguistics also from Poland. She has been in the country for three years, all of which she has spent working at the school, first as a TA and now as a teacher. She gained QTS last year. Her main responsibilities are in-class support mainly in English and DT, co-teaching with an English teacher and mainstream English teaching to a Year 11 class. Co-teaching in this case means that the English teacher splits the class in three groups. She works with EAL students, while a SEN specialist works with SEN students and the mainstream teacher works with the rest of the class.

One of the TAs has a degree in Psychology, three years experience of EAL work and two years experience of SEN work. Originally from Bosnia, she arrived as an unaccompanied minor during the war in Bosnia. She would like to become a qualified teacher and has made several attempts to join different schemes, but all her attempts have failed so far. She has now decided to leave work next year in order to do a PGCE in Health and Social care. This is presented to her as the only option linked to her degree in Psychology. She is committed to EAL work and would like to specialise in EAL but does not see a route of gaining QTS through EAL courses on offer. In the interview she said: 'I know what it means to be a teenager and a new arrival. I would like to continue working with EAL students because I have a special understanding with them.' Her main

responsibilities are in-class support in Maths, Science, Drama, Art, Geography and History. She is also responsible for a Year 7 reading group which includes a mixture of Year 7 students, EAL and non-EAL.

Another TA is responsible for new arrivals, refugee students' support and data input. She has worked as a bilingual assistant since 2002. Originally from Brazil, she likes the job she does and she is not interested in becoming a qualified teacher. Currently she is working on organising an interpreting project with bilingual 6th formers from St. Augustine's who will be interpreting for the primary school next door. This project is also supported by the LA refugee support adviser and they work in partnership on it. She used to teach new arrivals during their induction period and regrets that TAs cannot teach anymore.

The rationale for support is to provide induction for new arrivals, deploy staff in a range of subjects across different year groups and provide flexible optional support that EAL students can choose to attend. For example in Year 10 EAL students can choose instead of one of their GCSE options to attend a Study Skills option which is led by DR, EAL HOD. A variety of EAL students, ranging from being in the country for 1 month and being in the country 8 years, attend this class where they are given individual support with their coursework for any of their GCSE subjects or anything else they may want support with. This class was observed and students interviewed for the purposes of this case study. Four interviewed students (there are 8 in the group) stated that this is a very useful class and is tailored to their needs.

There is also regular EAL teaching often led by students' demands to clarify a particular aspect of language use or to expand their vocabulary in a particular area. The class is conducted in the library, mainly because the EAL Department do not have any teaching space, but also because this provides easy access to PCs, internet and reference books that students use in their individual work.

All mainstream teachers work with EAL students in their classes, with or without support. EAL students also attend homework clubs facilitated by mainstream teachers. EAL children with SEN needs are also taught by SEN staff. One important aspect of provision is offered by the co-ordinator of the Learning Support Unit (LSU) which is available to a mixture of students targeted for support for a range of reasons. Some of these students are EAL. The co-ordinator is a very experienced community worker who has transformed the image of the LSU and has students regularly asking to attend sessions and trips which he organises. One example is working with the artists at a local gallery developing creative writing based on images, works of art, colours and photos taken by students themselves.

There is evidence of joint work within the EAL department, very little joint planning with mainstream teachers and joint work on specific projects with LA advisers. Co-teaching which one of the EAL teachers does with the mainstream English teacher is something I have not come across before. As described before, the class is split in three groups which are respectively taught by the EAL, SEN and a mainstream English teacher. They all work in the Drama studio so there is a bit more space than in a standard classroom.

Training

EAL provides in-house training for NQTs and all new staff. There is also one twilight session organised at the LA level for NQTs. The LA has delivered TDA TAs training programmes too. The two TAs described here came to the school via working for the Bilingual services offered by the LA, mainly used for interpreting in schools and then also for specific projects such as supporting new to schooling EAL pupils. (New to schooling pupils arrive from countries in long term conflicts where there has not been compulsory schooling for a number of years, such as Somalia. These children can be entering a secondary school in England without any prior experience of schooling.) All the bilingual TAs in this position were given training by the LA team, provided with teaching resources and trained in first language assessment.

There used to be strong and regular contacts with the LA EMA team, but this was disrupted by the departure of the secondary EMA adviser in January 2007. Since September 2008 connections have improved thanks to the EAL HOD being seconded for a day a week to the LA EMA team.

The EAL HOD was provided individual training on data analysis and the new OfSTED framework (SEF). Her next training is on leadership. Recently she attended a course on SEN because she was covering for the school's SENCO while on maternity leave.

The EAL staff face many obstacles to attending any training as funding is needed and time taken off work. Apart from attending network meetings organised by the LA, EAL staff have attended very little training in the last two years. The TA who was looking to gain QTS was enrolled on the GTP route but she was taken off it just as it was about to start due to lack of funding. The TA in charge of new arrivals and refugee support has attended training with the Refugee Council.

All interviewed staff stated that they are very keen to attend training that would be tailored to their needs. Their main concern is to be familiar with models and strategies of good practice. The teacher who arrived from Poland three years ago stated that she would like to learn more about the English education system in general.

Lines of communication

The EAL department is well established and the EAL HOD sits on two school committees: School Strategy Group and Subject Leaders Group, therefore all staff are clear in terms of where the EAL expertise are in school. The EAL department has put together an EAL Handbook which includes a range of documents to do with EAL students, roles and responsibilities of EAL staff, ways of working, principles of good EAL practice and samples of teaching materials. This Handbook is available to all members of staff in the EAL office.

A lot of communication between EAL and mainstream staff is conducted on email and during breaks in the staff room. EAL staff are well accepted by the mainstream staff and recognised as enthusiastic and committed.

The EAL HOD regularly analyses school data in order to identify successes and weaknesses of EAL students. She works in partnership with the Data Manager. The outcomes of data analysis are regularly presented to the SMT. The needs of the pupils who are underachieving are discussed on an individual basis by Directors of Learning and form tutors with the EAL HOD's involvement.

Teaching materials

The EAL department has inherited Induction materials used by the LA Induction Team, after the centrally held funding was devolved to schools. The materials are curriculum linked and the department now has materials covering the following subject areas: English, Maths, Science, DT and IT. The EAL Department has also developed a scheme of work: access to English which is used with the 6th Form EAL students.

Support materials on meeting the needs of new arrivals have been made available to subject teachers.

The EAL HOD is currently working on an Activity Book for early stage EAL learners. This book would be for students to take home and do it in their own time. It would include: use of charts, measurements, crosswords, maths vocabulary and geometrical shapes.
The department is also well equipped with bilingual and picture dictionaries. One of the TAs is also working on collecting relevant resources available on different websites.

Strategies

EAL staff are mainly deployed to provide in-class support. Even though the department would like to continue providing some small group focused EAL teaching this is not possible due to the fact that there is no EAL classroom or appropriate teaching space.

In terms of pastoral support EAL students will be receiving support as any other students. The EAL HOD stated that this is an inclusive school and therefore there is no need for extra pastoral care, apart from refugee students who will be supported by the designated TA.

The EAL Review conducted on the 2nd December 2008 confirms these views:

"The school provides a welcoming and inclusive environment for its very diverse population. Pupils from all backgrounds generally make good progress and EAL learners are supported well through a range of whole school and targeted initiatives."

The school encourages and supports students to take examinations in their first languages. One of advanced bilingual learners has gained a GCSE in French and Dutch and is preparing for a Dutch A level.

In terms of most effective strategies the EAL HOD stated that it is not one strategy that can make a difference, but a lot of different aspects of support which all have their place.

Least effective has been influencing whole-school practice.

Community

The school has a very active Parents and Staff Association which meets once a month. When the school joined Black Pupils Achievement Programme in 2006 this association was used to inform and involve relevant parents. The school developed partnership with the organisation 100 Black Men who provided mentoring for students from a variety of backgrounds, including EAL students and they also provided sessions for parents on parenting skills.

All parents are invited to school once a year to discuss their children's learning with their teachers. The rate of attendance is 90 percent. Otherwise EAL parents can access school staff via the tutor or EAL staff. Many staff in school are bilingual and on occasions when the school is open to parents and the community they will wear badges showing what languages they speak, in order to help with interpreting and to communicate valuing linguistic diversity.

In the library there are flags of all home countries as given by students and welcome signs in all respective languages. The flags and signs have been made and displayed by the EAL department and students. Their plan is to produce the same for all countries around the world.

The interaction amongst students was judged as outstanding in the latest OfSTED report (2006). The same report also recognised as a strength that although this is a Church of England school all cultures and faiths are represented, which was judged as outstanding by S48 inspection. There are parents of EAL children represented on the Governing Body.

Vision

The slogan of the EAL department is: Out of many languages one school. The languages spoken by EAL students are displayed on the EAL office door. The EAL HOD is eager to say that everybody in the department is also bilingual. There is further evidence in displays and given interviews that all EAL staff consider skills in other languages relevant to EAL work in terms of understanding second language development and also using their first languages to support students.

The EAL HOD stated that she feels very enthusiastic after the EAL review they just had, in which the good work and the expertise within the department has been recognised. Her wish is for St. A. to become a beacon of good EAL practice in Westminster and to see her department progress from good to outstanding.

The principles underpinning the work of the department are communicated as valuing other languages and cultures and using previous knowledge and

experiences to develop new learning. The department has an Action Plan accessible to everybody in the Departmental Handbook.

The barriers to further developments as perceived by the department are: lack of teaching space, lack of EAL staffing and lack of effective training.

The aims of the school, as stated in the documentation and on the website, are: 'to develop students cultural, social, spiritual, physical and academic potential, to be welcoming and open with an outward looking culture seeking to engage with the community.'

Conclusion

All staff in the EAL department were individually interviewed and all of them listed the same barriers to improvement: lack of teaching space, lack of training and lack of partnership work with mainstream teachers. This indicates a good departmental communication and shared views. I left the school feeling very sad that a committed group of EAL practitioners were left longing for what would be a considered basic conditions for any teacher – an appropriate teaching space. This is yet another sign of inequality in status and expectations. Would a Science or a Geography teacher ever be asked to work without a classroom?

School 10

Age range: 11–18
Number of pupils on roll: 1506

Introduction

This is a comprehensive, 11-18 foundation trust specialising in sports, science and applied learning with over 1500 students on roll, including 240 in the sixth form. It is about 3.5 miles from a northern city, in a semi-rural location. The socio-economic context and population of the school reflects broadly the national picture, and the proportion of minority ethnic pupils is slightly larger than for the national population, about 25% of students in the school are from ethnic minorities which rises to 40% in the sixth form. The higher proportion of minority ethnic pupils in the sixth form is attributed to the fact that many such pupils stay on post-16 and also that the school attracts minority ethnic pupils into the sixth form from a wide catchment area across the city. As is common in most multilingual schools in this area, pupils are mostly members of settled second- or third-generation immigrant communities originally from Pakistan, India and Bangladesh, though with a more diverse mix of language and cultural backgrounds than in the inner city schools.

The OfSTED report concludes that pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds and learning EAL achieve well, along with their 'white' peers. It also asserts that, 'Care, guidance and support for learners are outstanding. Students are valued, trusted and respected. They feel safe and secure in school.' Grades are consistently 1 or 2, with 3s recorded only for standards for the 16–19 age range.

Structures and policies

Although the numbers of 'new arrivals' in the area generally have risen over recent years, there have been very few coming to this school. Currently there is just one such pupil, who has been placed in the EMA teacher's own tutor group. The main issue concerning 'EAL learners' is identified by all the informants as meeting the needs of 'advanced bilingual learners' and is clearly seen as a whole-school concern. There is the strong perception that language issues affect achievement across the whole curriculum. Because of the small numbers of new arrivals compared to other schools (one nearby secondary school had admitted about 30 such pupils into Year 7) the Deputy Head describes the 'EAL needs' in the school as 'profound, but not urgent', recognising that schools admitting large numbers of new arrivals have more immediate and short-term pressures than Thornton. There is the perception, perhaps, that LA finds it difficult to satisfy the different priorities faced by schools across the district, leading the Deputy Head to assert that the school has 'greater needs, but lower funding' than some other secondary schools in the area.

Personnel

Reduction in funding nationally for EMA over recent years is identified as a problem. The school at one time could resource 3.5 EMA teachers: currently, the funding available covers part of the costs of the one identified 'EMA teacher', who has worked in the school for 15 years. He is trained as a Science/Technology teacher, and spends 0.75 of his time on EMA work and the rest teaching Maths to Year 7. He speaks highly of the collaborative ethos among staff and of how other teachers are keen to 'get involved', having built up positive professional relationships over the years. This is seen as a significant factor in raising standards in the school. The literacy coordinator makes the general point (implying that this is not the case here) that, if EAL issues are not identified as significant in raising achievement by the Senior Management in a school, then it is not likely that they will get the priority they deserve.

The recently-appointed ICT teacher, who is of Pakistani-heritage, describes ways he works in partnership with the EMA teacher to promote a positive ethos in the school where pupils' home languages and cultures are recognised and valued (see Section 8 below). He has also begun, under the EMA teacher's guidance, to mentor and support individual pupils in their classes when issues of behaviour and learning are identified as impairing achievement. They plan to develop this work, and to monitor its effects on the pupils' achievements over the long term.

There are about 30 TAs in the school, some of whom are bilingual and work in support roles in lessons, such as with the EMA teacher in Maths. The majority of the TAs are deployed in SEN roles, in which there is perceived to be some overlap with EAL. There are five 'Asian' teachers in the school, including the ICT teacher, mentioned above. They work with the EMA teacher to varying degrees, the ICT teacher and a Maths teacher more than others.

At several points in the conversation, the informants compare their own situation with other secondary schools in the local area where there are much higher proportions of minority ethnic pupils, perceiving those schools as having had the opportunities – with greater funding – to develop provision for EAL learners to a much higher level and more strategically than they have been able to, for example one school has 'a whole department for EAL' and another has been able to resource an AST with a specialism in EAL.

Training

The EMA teacher, who has recently returned to school from long-term sick leave, reports that he has not had any specific training to develop his expertise in working with pupils learning EAL over the 15 years he has worked in the school, but he has learned 'on the job'. The fact that he is very experienced and works with other teachers in the school is regarded as providing training for other staff. He commented on how there does not seem to be any clearly identified training nationally for EAL, starting from ITT, as there is, for example, for SEN. However, the ICT teacher speaks highly of his own, recent, ITT for its coverage of EAL and cultural issues related to pupils' learning, though this seems to be the influence of one particular university tutor. Both the EMA teacher and the literacy coordinator identify a 'training gap' for mainstream teachers around EAL and language issues

generally, pointing out how some of the EAL-related teaching and learning resources which have been developed for use in secondary schools, such as the diagnostic writing tool (see Section 6 below), are very 'sophisticated' and so are difficult to use without the requisite background knowledge and understanding.

The school's involvement in the national MEAPs project over the past 3 years, where their focus has been on 'Reading for understanding', is clearly regarded as having brought benefits in CPD for several staff, as well as contributing to raising pupils' achievements. There is concern about sustaining this improvement now that the project is coming to an end. All of the informants (apart from the Deputy Head) have taken part in training sessions related to the project. The ICT teacher spoke at length of what he feels he has gained from attending training sessions, though he feels that teachers he met from other schools in the project had taken a much more interesting and 'hands-on' approach to developing learning strategies with their pupils, which had perhaps been of greater benefit to their pupils than the more traditional approaches taken by the school.

The training provided by MEAPs is seen as 'strategic' rather than as promoting 'principled knowledge', as the literacy coordinator comments:

> 'What you get is pre-determined by the project and the form that it is likely to take means that you're going to be … in a traditional cycle of action planning with an expert which is activity-based but not about developing professional knowledge … pointing to a deeper framework underpinning the activities.'

The literacy coordinator sees clear links between 'EAL' and 'Literacy' in terms of teachers' professional knowledge, saying they have 'the same problems', with the implication that all teachers need some understanding of language in classrooms and across the curriculum. Reflecting on the success of the work done in school by an AST with a specialism in EAL, he articulates the need nationally for M-Level CPD in EAL issues in order to 'professionalise EAL', developing both career progression and 'deep, principled knowledge' about language and learning among practitioners and giving status to the area, in the same way as SEN has been given status by the range of MA courses that are now widely available. He has found details of the PG courses in Bilingualism in Education at the University of Birmingham, and has to locate, without success, similar courses in his region which might assist in developing professional knowledge and status in EAL and language in education generally, but has not found any. He believes that project-related training does not really promote such professional development, but rather promotes 'surface' knowledge about strategies to deal with specific issues in the classroom.

Lines of communication

All the informants feel that communication in the school is 'excellent' and it certainly seems as if they all work closely together, and have a shared understanding of their goals and aims for working with advanced bilingual learners. For example, there was extensive discussion of one particular A-level pupil who was clearly well known to both the EMA teacher and the literacy coordinator, who had worked together to help her when it was felt that she had reached a 'glass ceiling' in her writing development which was holding her back from achieving a high grade at A-level English.

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The EMA teacher uses data sent from feeder primary schools to identify individual pupils who may be in need of support, and he then plans his timetable, and those of relevant TAs, to provide support in classes with mainstream teachers.

Teaching materials

Extensive use is made of the national diagnostic writing tool materials for KS3, (devised as a result of Lynne Cameron's work in EAL writing).

There is the perception of the need for resources to meet a 'complex and inter-connected range of needs' among the pupils in the school, often for the same children as they progress through the school. The EMA teacher also spoke of the need for good quality dual-language resources, particularly online or digitally based. He devises and uses literacy-focused resources of his own based on material he has seen in use in primary schools.

Strategies

The EMA teacher works for some of his time in the sixth form, developing reading and writing strategies, particularly with pupils who gained Cs in English at GCSE. But his main focus is Year 7, where he sometimes team teaches with the subject teachers and sometimes takes small groups out of class for intervention work. He also prepares resources for subject teachers to help develop a stronger focus on the language of the subject.

It is felt that the input provided in partnership teaching and structured intervention in English, Maths and Science through the MEAPs project by an AST with a specialism in EAL was very cost-effective and had a direct positive impact on the numbers of pupils gaining Level 5 at KS3 in 2006, particularly in Maths and Science. Several pupils had improved their performance by two levels. The literacy coordinator believed that they were 'lucky' to have had this input, which was managed by EB, rather than by themselves. He made the point that the strategy had benefited the 'white working-class pupils', as well as the bilingual ones. But the fragility of the improvement was noted by both the EMA teacher and the literacy coordinator; it had not been sustained after the AST had left. The perception was that the strategy developed by the AST was 'not owned by the institution and not even necessarily by the authority'. The literacy coordinator's perception was that 'we lost favour with EB because we generated success' and the support was discontinued. The AST was redeployed into another school that was going into special measures.

The ICT teacher described how, in his subject, it is more possible than in others to 'change the context' in order to make the content more relevant and meaningful to the pupils; he described a project he had done about researching writers where the transferable skills could be related to topics which appealed much more strongly to pupils from different language and cultural backgrounds than the ones recommended in the scheme. That he allowed the pupils to research writers who had more immediate relevance to them led to a 'mind-

blowing' change in the pupils' attitudes and motivation to carry out the tasks. He also noted that they began to involve their families in the work much more enthusiastically than they would otherwise have done.

Community

OfSTED awarded a grade 1 for care, guidance and support, asserting that, 'the vast majority of parents are extremely supportive of the school'. It was also noted that the school had very good links with local businesses and educational institutions, which contributed to enriching the curriculum, and that they had been successful in gaining funding for curriculum-related projects in school. However, the literacy coordinator felt that such initiatives were not regarded by the LA as having a very strong impact on pupils' achievements, and also that this was a 'soft measure' of improvement, often complex to implement and difficult to quantify. He gave the example of a small music project, funded partly by a local enterprise and partly by Action for Boys' Achievement (Excellence in Cities), which ended in 2006. One of his aims in developing the project was to create 'peer leaders' who other pupils would look up to. He believed that the project had had a very positive impact on a small number of 14–15 year old boys who did not normally access extra-curricular activities and, by implication, on the self-esteem and confidence of other minority ethnic boys in their classes.

The ICT teacher described a similar project, focusing on boxing, which had had a very positive effect on the behaviour of some boys. The literacy coordinator's opinion was that such initiatives were beneficial, but were not seen as a 'city-wide' priority by the LA, and indeed were possibly seen as counter-productive in that the effort invested in sustaining them was not rewarded by the consequent improvements in pupils' achievements, as reflected in grades A–C at GCSE.

The ICT teacher spoke strongly of the value of curricular and extra-curricular work that promotes positive attitudes towards different languages and cultures and makes minority ethnic pupils feel recognised and valued in school. He believes, along with the other informants, that such work contributes to raising achievement. He has not detected any serious problem with racism among the pupils in the school and feels that 'Asian' pupils at the school have a wider social and cultural experience than pupils in schools in other parts of the local area, which may contribute to the harmonious cross-cultural ethos among pupils. When he began work at the school, he was very conscious of the caring atmosphere and the support provided for the pupils, but at the same time felt that there was not as strong a recognition of the pupils' cultural backgrounds, and consequent high expectations, as there was in other similar schools he knew. More senior teachers have encouraged him to develop his ideas and take on relevant initiatives. For example, the literacy coordinator invited him to take part in the music project (see previous paragraph). Also, after it was pointed out to him by the EMA teacher that there was no provision in school for pupils fasting during Ramadan (or apparent awareness that they were doing so) he is planning a whole-school 'Eid project' for the coming academic year, involving parents and community members, which he hopes will promote a positive whole-school attitude to and celebration of other cultures and religions. He has received support and encouragement from many other staff for this project. He is not

aware of similar initiatives being undertaken by the Achievement Forum, part of EB's EMA provision.

Vision

Teachers clearly see that language, and EAL when relevant, is central to raising pupils' achievements and are very committed to working collaboratively to promote success in any ways possible. They are beginning to be aware of the complexity of the issues, seek opportunities to develop their own professional knowledge and would welcome more CPD. There seems to be a sense of frustration in that the school is clearly very successful in promoting a positive ethos and attitudes among the pupils (as noted by OfSTED), but this does not seem to have had such a high impact on test scores as was hoped. Perhaps teachers need to challenge their pupils more, and seek to promote independent learning in order to encourage pupils to achieve their full potential. There is the sense that, within the local area, the school has its own distinctive problems as it has neither a large number of new arrivals nor as high a proportion of second- and third-generation minority ethnic pupils as other schools, the two key groups of learners which they see as EB's main priorities.

Conclusion

This seems to be a school that, in terms of provision for EAL learners, is growing in awareness of the need to recognise the issues as 'whole-school' and across the curriculum. It was interesting that the informants identified by the Deputy Head as relevant to the case study included subject teachers as well as the designated EMA teacher in the school. It was very apparent that the teachers shared an excellent professional relationship, which benefited their teaching and understanding of their pupils' needs. The following are issues which arise from considering the views of the four informants:

- The provision for EAL seems to depend more on shared perceptions developed over years within longstanding professional relationships, rather than a clearly articulated policy. While this approach has its strengths, it is also very dependent on individuals;
- There seems to be some lack of clarity of the distinctions between EAL and SEN, and clearly-identified criteria for identifying the language needs of pupils;
- Involvement in the MEAP project had clearly developed understanding in the school about the needs of advanced bilingual learners – the fact that a range of teachers had been involved was clearly beneficial, and there is a need for CPD to sustain this progress;
- There is already an awareness among the informants of the importance of language across the curriculum – this could be developed, to the benefit of pupils and standards in the school, through CPD of the kind mentioned by the literacy coordinator.

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Appendix 1: Case study protocol

School name:

Address:

Telephone:

Website:
Main contact:

Email: Telephone:
Date of visit:
Researcher:

Documents examined:
- School website

- Latest OFSTED inspection report.

- Families of schools (http://fos.dcsf.gov.uk/default.html)

- Copy of departmental self-evaluation form (SEF)

- Department action plan

Structures and policies

What kind of structures and policies are in place related to the provision of new arrivals, the

placement and monitoring of EAL learners and provision for advanced bilingual learners?

Personnel

Who manages EAL work and what is the role of the EAL team?

How many EMTAG funded staff (include FTE) are there?

What are their specialist qualifications and roles?

What is the rationale for additional support for particular pupils?

Who else is involved in the teaching and support of EAL children?

What kind of partnership teaching, if any, is in place, between the EMA coordinator, bilingual teaching assistants and mainstream staff?

Training

What EAL training is available either in-house or by the Local Authority or by other agencies/institutions?

Are there strong links between the Local Authority and the School regarding training for staff employed via EMA?

How aware is the workforce of the range of training available?

What is the take-up and impact of any available training?

What links exist between EAL staff and any EMA central LEA team?

Lines of communication

What kind of relationships are in place between designated EMA support staff and mainstream staff? This could be both formal lines of communication and more general ways of working together?

Do all teachers know who to turn to when faced with an EAL learner who is raising concern?

What procedures are in place to identify under achieving EAL pupils?

Teaching materials

Does the school use any specific materials for EAL support?

Are these curriculum linked?

Are there specific induction materials for new arrivals?

Strategies

What particular strategies does the school favour for EAL pupils in terms of:

- teaching and learning?
- pastoral support?
- raising achievement?

What have they found the most/least effective?

What are the ways in which the school facilitates access to the whole curriculum for EAL

learners?

- Are there specific strategies in place to ensure that EAL learners can access the whole curriculum?
- Can you give examples of particularly successful strategies?
- What issues have arisen in facilitating access to the whole curriculum?

Community

What steps does the school take to involve parents and families in their children's learning?

What kinds of links are maintained with agencies in the community to promote pupils' learning, e.g. community schools?

Is there ready access of parents of EAL children to school personnel?

What is the role and constitution of the Governing Body (is there a named member of the Governing Body with responsibility for EAL?)

Vision

What is your vision for promoting learning and enhancing achievement for EAL learners in school?

What are the barriers to achieving that vision?

Summarising comments

During the visit were there any striking or unusual aspects of EAL practice in the school? Comment on these as fully as possible

What are your overall impressions of the school? Give a descriptive account of the school in approximately two hundred words.