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Bilingualism

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- [Overview](#)
- [Study](#)
- [Case studies](#)
- [Further reading](#)
- [Appraisal](#)

Bilingualism is an important yet under-researched field of study. Ofsted (2005) defined advanced bilingual learners as: 'pupils who have had all or most of their school education in the UK and whose oral proficiency in English is usually indistinguishable from that of pupils with English as a first language but whose writing may still show distinctive features related to their language background'.

A pilot project set up in January 2004, aimed to increase 'the confidence and expertise of mainstream primary teachers in meeting the needs of advanced bilingual learners and also raising the attainment of bilingual learners'. As the pilot developed it grew to include less advanced bilingual learners too. The pilot aimed to improve attainment of all these learners in literacy and numeracy, and to promote effective pedagogy and practice for pupils with English as an additional language. The pilot was set up by the Primary National Strategy (PNS) in partnership with the Ethnic Minority Achievement (EMA) Unit within the DfES in seven local authorities (LAs).

For this TLA research summary, we selected and summarised a study that reported on:

- how pupils and teachers benefited from the pilot
- the role of LA consultants in participating schools
- teaching and learning approaches
- how teachers and pupils were supported during the pilot
- the school factors that supported the programme, and
- interventions and practice that were influential in achieving the aims of the project.

The study is:

White, Kerensa, Karen Lewis and Felicity Fletcher-Campbell. *Raising the Achievement of Bilingual Learners in Primary Schools: Evaluation of the Pilot/Programme*. London: DfES (Research Report RR758), 2006.

Although the study refers to 'bilingual' and 'non-bilingual' as well as learners with English as a second language, in this summary we have opted for the terms EAL and non-EAL learners for simplicity.

Because this programme involved individuals and organisations at different levels - LA, school, teachers - there is considerable detail about organisational and management issues connected with the programme. Nonetheless, the importance of the learning environment and whole school support is clear and we have highlighted how closely the two are interconnected in this summary. The summary is illustrated with examples from the study and is complemented by a number of case studies which provide extra detail about schools' practice in relation to EAL teaching and learning and about the key role of EAL specialist teachers.

Overview

The RfT summary looked at the study *Raising the Achievement of Bilingual Learners in Primary Schools: Evaluation of the Pilot/Programme*

Why is the issue important?
In many local authorities and schools there are significant numbers of children from ethnic minority backgrounds for whom English is an additional language (EAL). There is plenty of evidence that lack of fluency with English is a barrier to learning for many of these children.

What did the study find out?
The study found that the programme helped pupils with EAL:

- to be more confident and to have higher expectations of themselves
- to ask more questions and 'expect to understand'
- to be more prepared to use their home language in school; and
- to be more 'on task' and focused.

How was this achieved?
In this RfT, we look at the importance of creating effective action plans that included accessible targets, making appropriate resources available, effective targeting and monitoring, appropriate and effective organizational and managerial structures for developing and supporting teaching and learning in the schools. Teaching approaches that made language development a priority were also critical to the success of the programme.

How was the research designed to be trustworthy?
Local authority personnel and practitioners were consulted in 21 schools within seven local authorities through interviews and visits. There were follow-up visits to 13 of the schools and visits to a further four schools.

What are the implications?
The research showed the importance of:

- teachers encouraging children to develop their language skills in their home and engaging parents to help them develop the skills, such as reading in their home language
- teachers deploying strategies that provided effective support for speaking and listening among EAL learners such as guided reading, reading buddies, speaking frames, for example; and
- schools offering CPD for mainstream teachers in relation to the learning of EAL pupils, informed and provided by EAL specialists.

What do the case studies illustrate?
The case studies show, for example, how:

- teachers and EAL specialists collaborated to plan and deliver effective teaching to EAL learners

- parents and other adult volunteers were helped to become more confident and proficient in reading with learners, including those with EAL; and

- how a school organised an effective, whole-school approach to the teaching and learning of EAL pupils.

Study

How did the pupils benefit?

Assessment data showed:

- significant improvements in English for all

- English as an additional language (EAL) pupils in the pilot programme schools compared with EAL pupils in non-programme schools

- no difference in science and maths achievement - researchers concluded this may be because the effort was on English teaching and approaches were less embedded in science and maths, and

- no difference in the rate of improvement between EAL and non-EAL pupils in programme schools - researchers suggest this means the programme benefited all pupils

Teachers in the participating schools reported that the pilot activities encouraged EAL pupils in a number of ways, including:

- having higher expectations of themselves

- being more confident

- asking more questions

- 'expecting to understand'

- being more prepared to use their home language in school, and

- being more 'on task' and focused.

Teacher interviewees explained that the benefits of using talk partners were:

- encouraging children to talk in a more constructive way and to keep 'on task'

- more articulate responses, often from pupils who were reluctant to contribute, and

- children who were more confident talking one-to-one with another child in their first language than to the whole class.

How did teachers benefit?

The research suggested that the confidence of teachers and teaching assistants was enhanced by their work with the pilot, particularly when they worked collaboratively with consultants from the LA (see next section). Specifically they reported gains in:

- insight into the general difficulties encountered by key stage 1 and 2 pupils with EAL and the reasons why these difficulties inhibited the pupils' attainment in national tests

- insight into the specific difficulties encountered by individual groups of pupils within the EAL cohort (e.g. such as different sets of tenses or anomalies in vocabulary)

- awareness of links between EAL teaching and learning and other current initiatives such as Assessment for Learning

- understanding of how the pilot strategies could be integrated into regular classroom routines and approaches for all learners

- extension of the individual teachers' repertoire of strategies, techniques and presentations for use in the classroom

- opportunities to observe new models and get constructive feedback from the consultants (see next section)

- support from senior leaders, and

- collaboration with other teachers.

In some cases the teachers learned new strategies from the consultants; in others the consultants helped teachers adapt existing strategies; and on some occasions consultants helped teachers re-engage with strategies that had fallen into disuse.

Who were the pilot consultants and what was their role?

LAs appointed consultants to work with schools on pilot activities. Whilst the numbers of consultants, who served groups of schools, differed from LA to LA, each school was allocated approximately ten days of consultancy time. Schools usually had an input into how the consultants were deployed. It was important that the consultants had the relevant pedagogical knowledge and expertise and the skills to work with school senior leadership and with teacher practitioners in the classroom.

In most schools, the consultant worked with the leadership team, class teachers and TAs in a number of ways, including:

- an initial diagnostic visit
- co-teaching strategically targeted year groups
- co-teaching with individual class teachers on priorities identified by the school
- working with class teachers on integrating EAL strategies into existing units of work, and
- observing and monitoring classroom practice after strategies had been introduced.

One example of a consultant supporting teachers involved the strategy of guided reading. The consultant worked with year 3 teachers. After selecting and grouping the target pupils, the consultant modelled a guided reading session, and team taught with the teachers. In another school, the consultant held one-to-one sessions with the teacher on speaking frames. In this strategy children orally "fill in" a speaking frame; this encourages them to learn to listen to others, imitate, and invent and adapt language patterns. One class teacher explained that these sessions made her feel confident that she was using the speaking frames correctly in her classroom.

[Case study 1](#)describes how teachers in a London borough undertook professional development activities aimed at supporting EAL learners.

How did schools identify and plan to address their pupils' needs?

A diagnostic visit by the consultant helped schools to write a termly Raising Achievement Plan (RAP) which identified the targets and included an action plan to meet them. In most schools, the RAPs were written by the headteacher, together with members of the leadership team and the pilot consultant. RAPs had a common format which included detailed objectives in four areas: leadership and management, teaching and learning, conditions for learning and partnerships beyond the classroom. In one school at least, the RAP was incorporated into the school's development plan; over time more schools took this approach as it made the programme more sustainable.

The diagnostic visit and the RAP set the context for the work of teachers.

Some teachers felt their first RAPs had been over-ambitious and they had not been able to meet all the success criteria. Several teachers commented that the second and third RAPs had more focus on embedding and monitoring targets they set in the first RAP. Others believed their first RAPs were too vague; and that in later RAPs success criteria, and means to achieve them, were sharpened up.

The majority of schools saw the benefits of writing termly RAPs, including

- focusing teachers' minds through short term plans
- enabling teachers to take ownership of their actions
- clearly setting out who was accountable for the actions

- establishing success criteria, and
- creating a time frame.

What teaching and learning approaches helped?
Teachers recognised the need to prioritise speaking and listening. One headteacher commented: 'Raising standards is not about putting up signs in different languages - that doesn't make any difference...What makes a difference is good quality teaching and learning and really focusing on the speaking and listening input.'

Strategies teachers used across a range of contexts and which seemed to be helpful in enhancing pupils' understanding and developing their language use are described below.

Curricular/layered targets to plan for language development and curriculum access
Whole-school targets (one each for reading, writing and mathematics) were identified from an audit of attainment against the progression strands in the 2006 Primary Framework and the schools' original target statements for reading and writing. The curricular targets were translated into year group targets for each half-term or more frequently, and were based on age-related expectations. School staff used them to guide teaching and learning and prepare the ground for future assessment. One numeracy coordinator believed the Numeracy Strategy 'darted around too much' and children were being taught too many different things in any given period. Layered targets enabled him to return to focus on one aspect for a number of lessons.

Planned opportunities for speaking and listening
Schools made use of planned speaking and listening activities aiming to increase speaking and reduce time spent only listening. As one headteacher explained, 'teachers used to talk at children and explain words; now they realise children need to talk...'. Speaking and listening activities were mainly whole class, although small groups were sometimes used. A range of strategies for structuring dialogue were used, for example, in one school, speaking and listening activities were planned using roles in dialogue. Children were each designated a role - chair, reporter, scribe and observer - and were asked to debate a particular issue. One class teacher felt this had worked well as it focused pupils' attention on their role. Teachers also found speaking frames and guided talk helpful; they became more aware of modelling and scaffolding language for EAL learners, recognising the importance of speaking in structured sentences and rephrasing sentences to aid comprehension. Teachers also used 'talk buddies' where pupils were given planned opportunities to talk with one another in English or their first language. Talk partners were used in English and mathematics when pupils were asked questions, and at the beginning and end of lessons.

Teachers who wish to look more closely at the role of dialogue in the classroom may be interested to read our earlier RfT on the work of Wegerif and his colleagues, *Raising achievement through group work:*

The use of first language
First language was used by children to learn - rather than limiting it to its use by adults for explanations. By the end of the pilot year, approximately two thirds of schools were attempting to promote the use of first language as a tool for learning more in the classroom. However, some monolingual teachers did not feel confident using pupils' first languages and preferred it when bilingual TAs were present in the classroom to give them support.

In one school, teachers set up an Urdu class for pupils in which lessons were delivered by an Urdu speaking TA to high achieving bilingual learners. This was one of the most successful aspects of the pilot for this school.

[Case study 2](#)describes additional strategies for supporting EAL students; it shows how an EAL specialist and science teacher worked together to design and implement a more appropriate teaching and learning programme for EAL learners.

How were teachers supported?

Support was based around the work of the pilot consultants, appointed by the LAs, and trained and supported by them and by PNS regional directors. The two groups worked together to provide participating schools with a programme of eight whole-staff professional development sessions which could be used flexibly to meet the specific needs of schools. Once a consultant was employed, his/her contribution to particular schools was negotiated between themselves and senior leaders in schools. In the majority of schools, an EAL coordinator was appointed to manage the pilot. This was often a more senior member of staff but a few were class teachers. In many schools, the EAL coordinator had a key role in driving the pilot and acting as the mediator between the consultant and other staff.

School based development was built around a number of strands:

- leadership and management
- teaching and learning: including language development, curriculum access and assessment for learning
- conditions for learning, and
- partnerships beyond the classroom.

Within schools, the professional development programme was most positively viewed by staff when it:

- was negotiated from the outset by the senior leadership team and the consultant
- was jointly delivered by (internal) school staff and the (external) consultant
- was explicitly linked to the current needs of the school
- offered new ideas and approaches and/or supported staff in using strategies they were already familiar with
- was accessible to all staff, including teaching assistants, and
- was supported by effective use of consultant time to ensure that professional development was enacted in practice.

How were pupils supported?
Two main ways of supporting children were through TAs and partnerships with parents/carers and the community.

Deployment of TAs
Staff commented that the pilot had enabled schools to recognise the potential of working with their TAs in the classroom and to build up TAs' skills in appropriate areas. There was evidence that TAs who were trained in the pilot were being deployed differently. Significantly, in many cases TAs were working with teachers in the classroom with a target group of pupils, on particular tasks. By working with EAL learners in the classroom rather than withdrawing them, classrooms became more inclusive. Some of the specific tasks TAs carried out included:

- supporting guided reading
- speaking in first languages (guided talk), in all areas of the curriculum, and
- analysing the language used in National Curriculum test papers to identify areas which caused EAL learners particular difficulties.

In one school, the headteacher redeployed bilingual TAs across the whole school, rather than focusing their work in key stage 1, in order to spread their expertise more widely.

Development of partnerships beyond the classroom
Two practical activities planned to develop partnerships beyond the classroom were to:

- give staff the skills needed to liaise with members of the community, and
- involve minority ethnic parents more widely in school life.

Parent Family Learning Groups were established. These aimed to increase the involvement of parents in their children's education by providing information about the pilot and teaching strategies being used and

providing practical examples of how they could help their children's learning. For example, teachers helped parents to recognise English coins which in turn enabled them to help their children to count and handle money. Other examples of activities designed to help parents included:

- encouraging parents to hear pupils read and inviting them in to read stories to the children in English and their first languages at the end of the day
- presenting numeracy and literacy workshops for pupils and parents
- discussions about the importance of attendance for their child's education, and
- designing a new and easier induction process for newly arrived pupils and their parents. The new procedure was developed in one school and shared with other schools in a cluster.

One school sent a curriculum newsletter on speaking and listening to parents which described the different strategies, such as group work, guided talk and speaking frames, in user-friendly language. It also outlined possible ideas about when parents could use first languages at home - e.g. when they are getting ready in the morning, coming home from school and discussing homework.

Case study 3illustrates an approach to training parents and other adults in supporting children's literacy which is particularly relevant to parents of children with EAL.

How did LAs help schools and teachers implement the pilot?

The pilot was led, and pilot consultants managed, by managers of the Primary National Strategy (PNS) and the Ethnic Minority Achievement Service (EMA). In this way the pilot became embedded in the Primary National Strategy which made it possible for participants to gain access to professional development based on local specialist expertise. In some authorities, the collaboration between the two LA teams - PNS and EMA - was innovative as respective managers/teams had not previously worked together.

A key initial task LA personnel shared with schools was the diagnostic visit. LA officers and the school leadership team analysed the school's existing provision for EAL learners using performance and self-evaluation data. The LA consultants provided feedback on lesson observations and audits of the learning environment and the school's planning.

LA management was most effective in the following areas:

- choosing pilot schools based on a sound knowledge of school's provision for EAL pupils and the capacity of the school to make good use of the pilot resources
- showing participating schools it was itself clear both about the aims of the pilot and its application to the schools (including the target group of pupils)
- including senior leadership within the authority in support of pilot activities and in engaging in collaboration aimed at promoting a coherent LA approach across a range of other specialist work
- identifying and creating access to resources
- developing appropriate means of monitoring and evaluating the pilot in order to support and disseminate its processes and outcomes, and
- identifying networks and providing opportunities for sharing good practice.

Schools which used the tools, such as speaking frames, but did not share funded external advice/consultation were less successful in improving outcomes for EAL pupils - suggesting the importance of external specialist input.

This finding chimes with the findings of a review of effective CPD carried out in 2005-7 by Cordingley, P. et al. (2007) which highlighted the crucial role of specialists in effective CPD. (See Further Reading).

What part did the schools play in implementing the pilot?

A leadership team within each school was responsible for implementing the pilot. In most cases this was made up of headteacher/deputy head, literacy and numeracy coordinators and the EMA coordinator in the

school. To identify the specific needs of the school and the part the consultant could play, senior leaders and relevant middle managers, the consultant and relevant local authority advisers carried out structured audits, leading to a RAP (see next section). The pilot built upon other work schools were doing to create an inclusive curriculum.

Schools which participated in the pilot used a number of activities to enhance the learning of their EAL and non-EAL pupils, including:

- dual language displays (e.g. displaying key vocabulary; signs and instructions; languages spoken)
- visual resources (e.g. whiteboards, 3D objects)
- photography (in one school, photography had been used to build a storyboard to bring the story to life for pupils)
- better opportunities for representing minority ethnic cultures and allowing the curriculum to be more culturally inclusive (e.g. celebrating a language of the month; promoting Black History Month), and
- collaboration between a consultant and the race equality coordinator to review the school's existing policy on race equality.

In a number of schools changes in staff deployment were made as a result of the pilot. This illustrates the importance of the involvement of senior leaders who could respond to emerging outcomes from the pilot and take strategic decisions based on the evidence.

Case study 4 describes a whole-school approach to supporting EAL learners that helped to raise achievement for all learners.

Schools and teachers also recognised the importance of sharing good practice from their pilot activities and welcomed the opportunity for further work with other schools through:

- networks of pilot schools, and
- dissemination of good practice.

Networking amongst pilot schools had occurred in approximately half of the case study LAs during the pilot year. In one LA, the consultant set up termly meetings for EAL coordinators and other teachers in the borough. Staff found them useful as a way of sharing innovative practice and resources. In other LAs, the consultant brought together teachers from pilot schools on single occasions. For example, a consultant had taught all the literacy coordinators in one LA about specific teaching strategies for EAL learners. In another example the consultant arranged for the EAL coordinator and assessment coordinator in one school to visit colleagues in another school to see how curricular/layered targets were being used.

How were the data collected?
Personnel and practitioners were consulted in 21 schools within seven LAs through interviews and visits. Seven local authorities were selected to participate in the evaluation which took part in three phases between May 2004 and April 2007. Key staff consulted in each LA included the Primary Strategy Manager, the manager of the EMA service and the pilot consultant. There were also visits to 19 schools across the seven authorities to interview a range of staff (total of 116 interviews). There were follow-up visits to 13 of the schools and visits to a further four schools recommended by the LAs for having made interesting developments in their initial year of the pilot and more telephone interviews with school staff. Three interviews were conducted with the regional director(s) during this period. This report primarily focuses on the findings from the case study school visits.

Data were analysed in relation to:

- monitoring the inclusion of EAL strategies in planning
- observing the use of teaching and learning strategies in lessons
- undertaking baseline assessments on the attainment of EAL learners

- assessing language development
- target setting, and
- monitoring and tracking the progress of EAL learners.

Schools evaluated their progress through:

- evaluation of RAPs, and
- end of year assessments.

Pupil performance data was analysed for the years 2004, 2005 and 2006.

What are the implications of the research?

Teachers wishing to develop their own EAL practice might like to consider the following implications of the findings of this research:

- The study emphasised the importance of learning in pupils' home language. Could you encourage your children's parents in order to help them develop reading skills in their home language. Could you link up with institutions such as community centres or mosque to discuss how learning in school can be linked most effectively to first language learning?
- The study highlighted the value of interactions between pupils and parents. Could you give parents and carers more guidance on activities that they could do at home to support their children's learning such as reading books, listening to them read, experimenting with money?
- The study referred to a number of strategies that were effective in supporting speaking and listening among EAL learners such as guided reading, reading buddies, speaking frames, for example. Do you have any experience of these strategies? Would you find it helpful to work with - and possibly observe - your colleagues to refine your, and their, practice in these areas?

School leaders may wish to consider the following implications for whole-school EAL development:

- The research suggested that speaking and listening skills are important. Do you have a whole school strategy for developing your pupils' speaking and listening skills across different curriculum areas? Could the opportunities provided to the pupils at school be complemented by work with their families? Are there any existing home-school or home-community links you could build on?
- The pilot programme was very structured and involved collaboration at a number of levels: between local authority leaders and school leaders, consultants and school leaders, consultants and school staff as well as between consultants and staff involved in other strategies like EMA support. Is it possible for you to access on-going support from your LA that would enable you to develop a programme for EAL learners in your school similar to that described in the study?

Gaps in the research

Gaps that are uncovered in a field of research also have a useful role in making sure that future research builds cumulatively on what is known. But research also needs to inform practice, so practitioners' interpretation of the gaps and follow-up questions are crucial. In relation to research on the learning of EAL students greater information would be helpful in a number of areas including:

- more detail about classroom teaching and learning, process perhaps through an observational study
- the role of interaction with other pupils and adults, and
- the impact of cultural differences on learning.

Do you think that research exploring these questions would help you inform your practice? Which issues are of most interest to you?

What is your experience?

Do you have any evidence about what enhances the learning of children with EAL? Do you have action research or enquiry based development programmes running that explore, for example, the impact of particular teaching and learning strategies on children with EAL? We would be interested to hear about

examples of effective strategies in or out of school that have helped bilingual learners, which we could perhaps feature in our case study section.

Your feedback
Have you found this study to be useful? Have you used any aspect of this research in your own classroom teaching practice? We would like to hear your feedback on this study, which we can share and use to inform our work.

- email: research@gtce.org.uk

Back to top

Case studies

We have chosen four case studies to illustrate different aspects of the programme featured in our RfT summary.

Case study 1 describes the professional development needed if teachers are going to make a difference to the achievement of English as an additional language (EAL) pupils.

The second case study describes the way in which a science teacher and a EMA specialist support teacher worked together to improve outcomes for learners with EAL in science.

The third case study illustrates how parents and other adult volunteers can be helped to become more confident and proficient in reading with learners, including those with EAL.

The final case study provides an example of a school that developed effective whole-school practice in the teaching and learning of EAL pupils.

Specialist teachers' support for mainstream teachers' CPD

This case study shows how involving EAL teachers in literacy training brings benefits for teachers and pupils. Whilst it is actually drawn from key stage 3 (Years 7 and 8) we believe it has the potential to inform literacy teaching in the primary school too. The case study is based on the experiences of a local literacy consultant and an EAL adviser and of teachers and pupils at Swanlea School in Tower Hamlets. They believe much of the pedagogy that underlies the literacy strategy is good practice for the inclusion of EAL students. Promotion of oral language, interactive teaching, group work, teacher modelling - all key elements of the literacy strategy - are also key features of the learning of children whom have EAL.

Professional development for teachers of EAL pupils
This collaborative effort enabled EAL teachers to play a key part in training teachers in literacy learning. Deryn and Ranjna believe LAs should be encouraged to see the link between the two areas and to ensure that EAL colleagues are involved in delivering and embedding the teaching and learning approaches at school and classroom level. They suggest that at LA level it means using the EAL adviser to co-deliver cross-curricular materials and English training as well. At local training days, they suggest that both the head of EAL in each school and the head of special educational needs (SEN) should attend.

The role of the school and department
They believe that a whole-school response is critical. At school level, leaders need to be aware of the key role that EAL and SEN colleagues can play in transforming teaching and learning and to identify clear roles for them. At department level this means involving EAL staff in training, focusing on the literacy of each subject area. This should help departments identify strengths and weaknesses in their teaching of the language that supports learning within their area. Deryn and Ranja encouraged collaborative learning, where each partner values the contribution that can be made by others. This approach also encouraged collaboration between the

departments by identifying common aspects of focused language development. Again, EAL and SEN teachers were in a position to play a central role in the process.

Collaborative working to meet pupils' needs
Deryn and Ranjna believed targeted EAL support was essential if pupils were to gain access to information, improve their understanding, and make progress. They believed a key starting point was an initial analysis of what pupils can and can't do at word, sentence and text level including identifying points of difficulty where pupils reach a 'plateau'. They believed this was helpful for all pupils not just those with EAL. They also identified a number of key areas such as collaborative planning with a focused EAL input, and team teaching - particularly in relation to word and sentence level work. EAL teachers' specialist language knowledge of sentence level grammatical structures was potentially especially useful here in modelling language features or approaches to help pupils be clear about what they are trying to write. Such a clear focus on language objectives would enable EAL teachers to break down learning tasks to the level appropriate for pupils. EAL teachers were also an excellent source of expertise in setting up investigative group work and pair and group talk.

Literacy teaching and learning at Swanlea School
Swanlea School provided an example of how professional development and teaching literacy worked in practice. The heads of English, EAL and SEN at the school attended a three-day English training programme together. The EAL specialist attended literacy across the curriculum training accompanied by an English department colleague. They subsequently jointly planned and led a training day on this back at school.

At the beginning of the school year school leaders implemented support from SEN and EAL departments for English in Year 7, which was taught in mixed ability groups. The main features of the strategy included:

- block-timetabling all English lessons
- giving the teachers a protected period together once a week for shared planning, and
- providing each teaching pair (EAL specialist plus English teacher) with an additional period so they could produce differentiated materials for group work and 'starters' - word and sentence level short activities.

EAL specialists presented the starter activities, and in practice often co-taught with mainstream colleagues. Starters were followed by an introduction to the key objectives of the lesson, followed by individual and group activity which gave pupils the opportunity to work on specific learning areas. The EAL and the English teacher supported pupils during these activities. Plenaries were led by the EAL or English teacher and provided pupils with the opportunity to reflect on the lesson objectives and their learning.

What impact did the strategy have?
The teachers believed that the extra support offered to Year 7 pupils was paying off. This was supported by a visiting regional director who was so impressed by their classroom practice that lessons were filmed for a National Literacy Strategy video included in the material sent to all secondary schools in England to support the key stage 3 literacy strategy. An OFSTED report commented: '(The) school is on track to significantly increase the percentage of pupils gaining expected and higher levels at key stage 3 in English, mathematics and science.' Available CVA results show a significant improvement, overtaking those at LA and national level.

Reference
Deryn Hall and Ranjna Dudhia, London Borough of Tower Hamlets
The information on which the case study summary is based is accessible on the Literacy Today website:

National Literacy Trust: Bilingual benefits

Improving outcomes in science for learners with English as an additional language (EAL)

Whist this case study mainly focuses on Year 7 pupils we believe it has a number of key messages for teachers in the primary phase too. De Ferrers Specialist Technology College is an LEA Comprehensive School with 1800 pupils and over 100 members of staff situated on the outskirts of Burton on Trent. The project was undertaken in conjunction with the science faculty. It involved an EMA specialist and a science teacher. Two classes of Year 7 students were involved in the project. Students in Years 7-10 were interviewed. The teacher-researchers also used videoed and taped recordings of minority ethnic pupils to gain a picture of difficulties they felt they encountered and how they might be addressed. In total, over 100 students took part in the study. Ethnic minority pupils form approximately 10% of the college's population.

The two teachers involved in the collaboration had two main aims:

- to see how the science curriculum at KS3 could be made more accessible for EAL learners of Pakistani origin; and
- to develop an effective teaching partnership between specialist subject staff and ethnic minority achievement grant funded (EMA) support staff.

What problem did the study aim to address?

This research was prompted by an analysis of the school's national test results, which showed that pupils of Pakistani origin were falling behind the main school population in terms of achieving Level 5 in mathematics and science. The gap between the majority school population and Pakistani girls was even greater than that for boys. The teachers wished to find out why these students could achieve Level 5 in English, but not in science.

How did teachers decide which strategies would be helpful?

In the first term of the project the teachers conducted interviews with pupils and used the findings to help them plan the project activities for the second term. They developed a variety of strategies, including:

- games and activities using key words from learning content
- worksheets to aid writing connected with experiments-such as planning and drawing conclusions from results
- writing frames to 'scaffold' students' report writing
- worksheets using DARTs (Directed Activities Related to Text) activities, and
- a science dictionary for Year 7 pupils.

Games and activities using key words were based on approaches such as card games matching words and meaning, and putting key words in sentences. These were designed for pairs or small groups of pupils. Teachers also created word searching activities for example, a 'four in a row' game (using true or false questions to complete the game).

Prepared worksheets aided pupils in writing up experiments; these involved cloze activities - which are based on word prediction, sequencing and use of tables. Writing frames helped to structure pupils' report writing, offering them sentence stems, connectives, and specific vocabulary they could follow.

A science dictionary was also published containing key words for each topic with simple definitions.

What were the outcomes of the project?

Discussions with students, classroom observations and analysis of teaching and learning strategies gave an insight into how the science curriculum could be made more accessible for EAL learners.

Many pupils identified new vocabulary as an issue. They felt new words were 'coming at us too quickly' for them to learn their meanings. When asked why they didn't ask the teacher, one pupil replied, 'I didn't want the teacher to think I didn't understand because they might think I'm in the wrong set, but I don't understand because I'm learning in another language'.

The pupil interviewees all agreed dictionaries containing specific scientific definitions of words would be helpful. One highlighted the inadequacies of standard dictionaries, 'When I look in a dictionary for a word I

see lots of explanations but I don't know which is the science one'.

All interviewees felt that they enjoyed practical lessons the most and learnt the most during them. They identified writing in science as difficult because they are uncertain about which voice to use, passive or active. They also had trouble deciding what had to be included in their writing. One student commented that 'I wrote down method, result and conclusion for lots of experiments and never understood and still don't know what to write in each heading'.

Some pupils commented that they had to copy from the board whilst the teacher was explaining the work. They found this particularly frustrating, as they could not concentrate on the explanation as they were fully occupied with accuracy.

Few pupils felt that Urdu translations would be useful. However, they all felt the benefits of having other EAL students in their group as they could talk things through in their first language (Punjabi-a spoken language).

What did the project achieve?
The strategies used were evaluated through student comment, end of module tests and classroom observations. The researchers found:

- specific teaching on keywords helped pupils improve their oral contributions and they were more likely to use the correct vocabulary
- pupils found the dictionaries most useful: their written work improved in terms of structure and use of specific science vocabulary and the end of topic tests showed an improvement for the majority of the group; and
- pupils felt they were taking a more active part in their report writing, not merely copying from the board.

Reference
Julie O'Connor, National Teacher Research Panel summary: *Improving outcomes for learners with English as an additional language (EAL) in science*

National Teacher research panel publications website

The Better Reading Partnership, Partners in the FAST LANE

We chose this case study because it illustrates the FAST LANE (Families And Schools Together Literacy And Numeracy for Everyone) approach. This is used to train reading volunteers and parents reading to their children using the principles of the Bradford Better Reading Partnership. As the author of the original case study commented: 'Many parents comment "I just don't know how" when asked to support their children with reading.' This is particularly likely to be the case with parents of children with EAL. The FAST LANE programme enabled parents to access three different types of training, accredited at varying levels, to help them support their children's reading more effectively:

- Reading at Home: Informal parents' workshop (one hour)
- Reading Friends training (three two-hour sessions)
- Better Reading Partnership (two days plus one half-day follow up)

Parents' workshops covered the importance of parents talking about pictures in books their children are reading. Not only does this help the child but parents who are not confident themselves when reading can use them to support their child's reading. Referring to pictures provided parents with a way of introducing names of characters, linking new words to the illustrations, and relating the story to the child's own experiences.

Workshops emphasised the importance of praise and the avoidance of the word 'No'. Children responded more positively to: 'Have a closer look at that' or 'What went wrong there?' Pupils with EAL particularly benefited from additional questioning in a friendly, conversational tone, to probe their understanding: 'Why do you think he did that?' or 'What do you think would happen if...?'

Parents learned to encourage their child to use pictures to read on and make guesses about the meaning of difficult words. Once they saw the results, parents realised they can really make a difference to their own and other children's reading skills: 'My little boy is really keen to read now when he comes home'. Or as a class teacher commented: 'It really makes a difference ... makes the children feel much more confident'.

Reading Friends sessions involved adults meeting their pupil once or twice a week for half an hour, under the supervision of a trained support worker. The reading partner notes down when the child then uses the three reading strategies: grapho-phonic (visual), syntactic (structure) and semantic (meaning). Weaknesses in the pupil's understanding are addressed through prompts such as: 'Does that look right?', and 'Does that make sense?' Adults give pupils specific praise for what they achieve.

The Reading Friends encouraged the children to look for meaning from the whole text and the supporting illustrations, rather than the individual letters of words. Initially the adults were retired people from the local community who were eager to support children in school. The scheme now has parents helping out, including some who were already in school as lunch-time supervisors. Following the success of the first Reading Friends group, set up in February 1997, there were now 25 groups in school throughout Kirklees. Five schools had two groups operating successfully.

Better Reading Partnership training was for parents who have successfully taken part in a Reading Friends project or have been supporting pupils regularly. They were recommended for further training by the participating schools. The training was accredited through the Open College Network at levels one and two, leading to a Better Reading Partnership qualification at level three. Adults with Better Reading Partnership training were expected to maintain weekly progress records and analyse the child's strengths and weaknesses in more detail than the Reading Friends did.

What impact did the programme have on pupils and adults?
Typically over the ten weeks of the programme pupils showed a three to 18 month increase in reading age, as well as more positive attitudes to reading. Parents liked being able to support their own children at home as well as the pupils they work with in school, gained in confidence and appreciated being able to acquire accreditation. Involving volunteers other than parents brought other benefits such as helping to strengthen the school's links with the community.

Reference
Anne Dunford, FAST LANE coordinator for the Reading Partnership, Kirklees

National Literacy Trust: Partners in the fast lane

Good Practice Case Study: Tredworth Junior School

This case study shows how a junior school developed policy and practice to ensure equality of access to the curriculum for all pupils, including those for whom English is an additional language (EAL). The school adopted a whole-school approach that included direct language support from a specialist teacher. The whole-school approach was based on creating a learning environment that encompasses a varied range of teaching and learning strategies, multicultural and multilingual resources and displays, and whole school celebrations that embraced a wide range of world cultural events.

Aim
Specifically the school aimed to provide effective learning opportunities for all pupils, by setting suitable learning challenges, responding to diverse learning needs, and overcoming potential barriers to learning.

Factors underpinning work with bilingual and multilingual pupils
The school recognised a number of background factors as being key to progress for EAL pupils, including:

- recognition of the importance of home language

- treating racism and bullying seriously
- strong home/school and wider community links
- learning environment that is sympathetic to a variety of cultures
- resources, which include bilingual materials; and
- curriculum, which portrays positive images and role models.

The role of the EAL specialist teacher

The school received language support (currently 0.5) from an EAL teacher from the Ethnic Minorities Achievement Service (EMAS). The EAL teacher liaised with the school multicultural education co-ordinator. The involvement of the EMAS teacher in school planning occurred at all levels, as appropriate to meet the needs of EAL pupils.

The role of the EAL specialist teacher included:

- initial assessment of language stage of EAL pupils
- monitoring of EAL pupils' progress
- in consultation with class teachers, collaborative planning and target setting for EAL pupils including both curriculum and EAL specific objectives; and
- direct support of pupils' language development both in class and withdrawal (1:1 or small group) as appropriate, for language development and enrichment.

A key role of the EAL specialist teacher was to provide class teachers with advice in a number of areas including: differentiation of work for EAL pupils, curriculum materials, classroom strategies to support EAL learners in the classroom and implementing inclusion statements for EAL pupils, refugee and asylum seeker pupils, ethnic minority pupils and EAL pupils with SEN.

Curriculum planning

The school recognised that the needs of EAL pupils in accessing the curriculum had to be carefully planned. Specifically teachers aimed to ensure that:

- the language and learning needs of pupils were clearly identified and provided for
- the language and learning demands of the curriculum were analysed and appropriate support provided
- visual support was provided for key concepts
- planning included opportunities for first language activities in the classroom; and
- the support requirements of pupils were identified.

Classroom practice

This was based on a number of elements, including:

- teachers having high expectations of all pupils regardless of ethnicity, gender, or social background
- activities being matched to pupils' needs and abilities with a clear sense of progression.
- developing oracy and literacy through: awareness and utilisation of the children's first language expertise; provision of scaffolding/writing frames; and using story props.

Developing pupils' language skills

The school planned to raise pupils' language skills through a number of activities including:

- collaborative activities that involve talk
- opportunities for giving feedback to others; and
- opportunities for structured group work that encourages participation, and models the skills pupils need to develop.

Creating a learning environment

Teachers planned to use displays in the classroom and around the school to reflect linguistic and cultural diversity. Dual language textbooks would be available and in use where appropriate. To help pupils access their learning, teachers used a number of visual approaches based on:

- videos

- maps
- posters
- pictures
- objects; and
- ICT.

EAL pupils and special educational needs
The school was keen to ensure that pupils whose first language was not English were not automatically understood to have special educational needs, whilst accepting that EAL pupils could have SEN. The school recognised both the importance of, and the difficulties involved in, the early recognition of SEN in EAL pupils. Assessment of SEN in EAL pupils involved the EAL specialist teacher as well as the Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator. The EAL specialist teacher was responsible for ensuring that home language did not prevent the parents/guardians either from accessing information on their child's special educational needs, or from putting forward their point of view.

Liaison with parents
For parents of EAL learners this was taken into consideration by:

- providing a welcoming environment, actively seeking to put parents at their ease in what may be an unfamiliar setting
- monitoring letters and newsletters sent home, to check that language used is clear and straightforward
- reading through letters (where appropriate) with children before they are taken home
- provision of translations of school documents in community languages, where appropriate
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- informal contact with parents in the school playground to reinforce communication
- inviting parents into school to help with class activities, eg reading, cooking, class outings
- encouraging parental involvement with shared reading scheme and homework, which may be specifically language based; and
- encouraging parental involvement on governing body.

Assessment and target setting
Monitoring EAL learners' progress and development was shared between mainstream teachers and the EAL teacher. Individual pupil profiles were kept updated with relevant information and regular assessment tasks to monitor children's progress. This assessment also informed curriculum planning. Pupils were encouraged to take responsibility for their own learning by setting their own targets for achievement or assessing their own progress.
The school also carried out a structured programme of ethnic monitoring to observe the performance of different groups in relation to academic achievement, and uses the results to assess whether its provision is ensuring equal educational achievement by all groups.

What impact did the strategy have?
Data published by the DCSF showed steadily improving aggregate scores for English, mathematics and science. OFSTED particularly singled out reading levels, science achievement and family learning as worthy of mention.

Reference
Gloucestershire County Council: Tredworth Junior School
Back to top

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Further reading

The project
Raising the Achievement of Bilingual Learners in Primary Schools: Evaluation of the Pilot/Programme by Kerensa White, Karen Lewis and Felicity Fletcher-Campbell (2006) DfES London: Research Report RR758.

Resources

NALDIC publications - National Association for Language Development in the Curriculum

[NALDIC website](#)

Research Informed Practice digest: *Reasoning as a scientist: ways of helping children to use language to learn science*

[DCSF Research informed practice site: Science](#)

Research Informed Practice digest: *How classroom talk supports reading comprehension*

[DCSF Research informed practice site: Speaking and listening](#)

Research Informed Practice digest: *Learning support assistants and effective reading interventions for 'at-risk' children*

[DCSF Research informed practice site: Teaching assistants](#)

Writing Research and Enquiry Summaries
CUREE and NCSL

[NCSL: Networked Learning group publications](#)

[Back to top](#)

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Appraisal

Robustness
This study set out to evaluate a pilot project introduced by The Primary National Strategy (PNS) in partnership with the Ethnic Minority Achievement (EMA) Unit to raise the attainment of bilingual pupils. In 2005 the pilot, which took place in 21 local authorities (LAs), became the English as an additional language (EAL) Primary National Strategy programme. The researchers collected data over a three year period to evaluate the impact of the programme and provide recommendations for further development for primary EAL provision.

The evidence for the study is based on both qualitative and quantitative data consisting of:

- telephone interviews
- face-to-face interviews with school and LA staff
- analysis of pupil performance data.

The outcomes of the evaluation are set out in two reports. The first interim report was published in 2006 and

details the messages emerging from the interviews concerning impact on teacher confidence, the nature of the interventions, and the effectiveness of management arrangements. The second report, published in 2007, reviews the outcomes for pupils participating in the pilot in their Key Stage 2 (KS2) English, mathematics and science tests.

Relevance

The prevalence in England of families who do not have English as their first language means that increasingly teachers are looking for approaches which mean they can enhance the learning of all pupils. Much of the research on provision for bilingual pupils emanates from the USA, so it is particularly timely to have a window on how this group can be accommodated in the English context. The report not only provides detail on the types of intervention that teacher reports and pupils' English outcomes suggest work, but also looks at the wider picture of how other agencies, in particular LAs, can support schools with EAL pupils to improve their provision.

Applicability

The study identifies a link between the approaches taken during the pilot and improvements in teacher confidence and pupil performance in KS2 English tests. In particular it focuses on:

- teaching and learning approaches identified as particularly helpful, including planned opportunities for speaking and listening, and encouraging the use of first language for learning
- the role of local authority consultants in supporting teachers to develop their practice -consultants, for example, conducted diagnostic visits, modeled teaching and team taught with practitioners, helped teachers integrate strategies within existing units of work, and observed and fed back to teachers as they introduced new strategies
- other support provided by LAs, such as ensuring coherence with other initiatives and facilitating access to resources, and
- developing home school links by providing school staff with liaison skills and involving minority ethnic parents more widely in school life.

Writing

The language in the report is accessible and transparent. As always with DCSF commissioned research, the executive summaries provide a helpful overview of the main features and findings of the study, and signpost where more detail can be found. The description of the approach to the statistical analysis is detailed enough to provide a basic understanding without drifting into over-technical language. The authors have also formulated a series of questions for policy makers, LAs, and schools to prompt their thinking on taking provision for EAL forward.

Back to top