Foreword

Welcome to the autumn edition of the National Strategies Ethnic Minority Achievement (EMA) newsletter which contains examples of good practice across the range of EMA programmes.

This issue contains excellent examples of using talk to promote learning, strategies for the development of writing, personalisation of the curriculum to meet the needs of vulnerable Black and minority ethnic pupils, and examples of using some of the newly published National Strategies EMA guidance materials to support professional development.

It has been a real privilege to observe first hand some of the exciting and innovative practice in schools and local authorities across the country to raise achievement of Black and minority ethnic pupils, and I wish you continued success in the future. Keep up the good work!

Kate Daly
Programme Director for Inclusion (Ethnic Minority Achievement)
Ethnicity, Social Class, Gender and Achievement (ESCGA) autumn term priorities

- Use 2007 ethnicity data to support local authorities to review and set appropriate targets to narrow the attainment gap for underachieving pupils and groups.
- Disseminate successful strategies to raise attainment of Black and minority ethnic learners with a focus on local authority alignment and pedagogy (linked to the National Strategies priorities in English, mathematics and science).
- Work with local authorities to further develop the quality of EMA consultancy across all phases with a focus on school improvement linked to the National Strategies and EMA priorities (including alignment and pedagogy).
- Through the local authorities, challenge and raise expectations of progress for pupils from deprived households.

Primary English as an Additional Language

How Outejak Billee (Curiosity Cat) helps learning in our nursery

Chuckery Primary School, Walsall

Chuckery Primary School has a large group of Mirpuri-speaking Pakistani children in the nursery who started with little or no spoken English. Initial autumn term assessments indicated that children also spoke limited Mirpuri. Pupils tended to be reluctant to use either Mirpuri or English actively so the nursery staff were keen to build their confidence in speaking. Following a continuing professional development (CPD) session on the importance of first language for learning, the nursery staff decided to use circle time and planned interventions during structured play activities to develop bilingual approaches. They also included the use of Outejak Billee (Curiosity Cat) – a friendly, confident, bilingual puppet that the children would enjoy interacting with and respond to – in order to promote dialogue in Mirpuri and English.

The nursery is staffed by one teacher (who speaks only English), one nursery nurse (who speaks Mirpuri Punjabi and English) and one bilingual assistant (who speaks Mirpuri Punjabi and English). The bilingual adults and Outejak Billee develop the children’s ability to speak in sentences and use vocabulary appropriately in Mirpuri Punjabi by modelling asking questions as well as giving responses. Focused praise is used to encourage active listening and speaking in extended sentences. The monolingual adult works with a bilingual adult (and Outejak Billee) to model questions and responses in English, with the bilingual adult translating in this instance. Children are encouraged to choose which language they would like to respond in, and contributions are praised and responded to in both languages.

There is a topic for every day which is introduced by Outejak Billee. Great care is taken to establish children’s prior knowledge of the topic as discussion and questioning develops. A question for the day is generated by Outejak Billee, for example, ‘What colour are your eyes?’

The work for the day develops around this question – children looking at each other’s eyes and into mirrors and talking to partners and adults about the subject. At the end of the day the emphasis is on all
children being able to say a sentence about their eye colour in the language of their choice, just like Outejak Billee.

This work, which emphasises the ability to talk both in home language and English, is making a significant difference to the engagement of Pakistani children in the school. Where, in the past, children coming into nursery would not talk very much at all, they are now talking to each other, making eye contact with each other and asking each other questions. They are able to relate the words in their home language to English words. Consequently, their ability to speak in sentences, both in English and in their home language, is much better than that of previous nursery children in the school. Children have begun to value their bilingualism. One child, after hearing a story read aloud in English several times, said recently, ‘Now read it in our home language.’

Parents have been involved in this learning and support it at home, encouraging their children to speak in sentences and engaging in extended dialogue to develop their use of rich language. Parents have a clearer understanding of how extended talk and the continued use of Mirpuri in the home supports learning at school.

Using ‘small world’ equipment and role-play to support language development

Langley Green Primary School, West Sussex

Langley Green is a large primary school in West Sussex with a multicultural intake, in which 21 languages are spoken. 232 out of 288 pupils are learning English as an additional language (80.5%) with the majority from South Asian heritage who are born in England. Pupil mobility is high and the school admits many older new arrivals who are new to English. There were 23 new arrivals during 2007: seven from Eastern Europe, four from Mauritius and the Seychelles, four from Africa and four from other European countries. Only four new arrivals came from Asia.

The school provides a range of activities and real-life experiences – school trips, visiting theatre groups, themed days, and special events – to support children’s imagination and creativity and thus their language development, with a particular focus on writing.

In addition to this the school uses a wide range of ‘small world’ equipment to support and enhance learning within a two-year cycle of themes/topics.

Examples of ‘small world’ equipment include:

- castles, figures, siege towers and trebuchets to support a ‘knights and castles’ theme in Year 5 and 6;
- Roman arenas, emperors, soldiers, gladiators, animals and chariots to support ‘An Italian adventure’ in Year 3 and 4;
- pirate ships, smugglers’ forts and pirate figures to support a pirate theme in Year 3 and 4;
- a wide selection of animals to support various topics across the year groups, including rainforest animals, woodland creatures, polar wildlife, mythical creatures, African animals and safari sets;
- a selection of human and fairytale figures to support the retelling of stories;
- furnished doll’s houses which support various topics, including ‘Houses and Homes’ in Year 1 and 2.

The ‘small world’ equipment is very popular with all children. It brings the topics to life and provides a ‘way in’ for those who are new to English.

The equipment is used to:

- model language (key topic vocabulary as well as language structures) and introduce concepts;
- provide planned opportunities for collaborative talk where children use the language and develop understanding of the concepts.
Children do this through a range of activities:
- re-enacting historical scenarios;
- retelling stories orally using features of storybook language;
- creating new stories and telling them orally;
- creating photo-story books with text added;
- creating video stories;
- creating non-fiction texts;
- sorting topic-related items.

This strategy has been particularly supportive for new arrivals who are new to English.

‘The small world equipment engages pupils in the topic, especially new arrivals. It also helps children to connect different aspects of their learning.’

(Year 3/4 team leader)

‘Using small world equipment reinforces subject-specific vocabulary and gets the children using new words.’

(Year 3/4 teacher)

‘The children enjoy using the small world equipment so much that it breaks down barriers between them, for example boys and girls work happily together. It also provides a means for new arrivals to interact with other class members.’

(Year 3/4 teacher)

‘The small world figures give new arrivals “puppets” to speak through so that they can rehearse language without being “in the spotlight” themselves.’

(Reception Year teacher)

‘All of the children enjoy using the small world equipment and it is a great way to develop their spoken English. When you listen to them you often hear them reproducing the language of books we have read in class.’

(Year 1/2 team leader)
The unit on adjectives was used with another group in Year 3.

The materials were used by teachers as well as teaching assistants. They found that the aims and instructions were clear and the suggested teaching script supported consistency of delivery. Joint planning by teachers and teaching assistants, providing clarity in key messages and explicit links between whole-class and guided teaching, was a key factor in making a difference to children's writing. The appendices, which included exemplification of analysing writing for Assessment for Learning (AfL), guidance on setting learning objectives and feedback to pupils as well as a glossary of grammatical terms, enabled staff to make links to other National Strategies, materials being used by the school.

Learning for teaching staff

After using the materials, staff reported that they were more alert to children’s misconceptions. They also said that they felt more confident in giving feedback and guidance on how writing could be improved. One commented, ‘It makes you think.’ Where some staff had thought previously, ‘Why don’t they just get on and do it?’, they were now ‘a bit more patient’ with able EAL pupils because of their heightened awareness and understanding of their support needs. One teacher commented on how academic writing ‘can be an additional language for all pupils’.

Learning for pupils

- Pupil talk and writing reflected accuracy and effective use of the language features which had been taught. There was clear evidence of ‘presentational’ talk being used as a bridge to writing.
- Improved motivation and engagement were reported across all year groups.
- Children were ‘choosing to write’ whenever they had an opportunity.
- A Year 3 pupil who had been particularly hard to motivate enjoyed the activities on adjectives and became interested in writing. This is because the activities in the units use a range of interactive teaching and learning strategies, engage pupils in structured and focused talk and link the talk to literacy skills.

Specific tailoring in Year 1

Although the materials are not aimed at Year 1, the whole-staff CPD opportunities enabled the Year 1 team to adapt their use in conjunction with other resources such as ‘rainbow sentences’ to support teachers in ‘making more interesting sentences’ with their pupils. Based on the colour-coded activity for adverbials, they developed the following rainbow for their working wall:

The teachers’ version was a full colour rainbow which had been produced with the pupils and stuck up on the working wall.

The words and phrases that could be used for each question were also discussed, colour-coded to match the rainbow and built up on the wall in a word bank. The pupils were encouraged to add more. This resource was referred to across the curriculum, not just in literacy.

The colours were also matched to different groups in the class working at different levels and on different targets, the most able group thinking about ‘Why?’ However, all the pupils became keen to include different colours to make interesting rainbow sentences. This led to discussions about what would and wouldn’t work together. The response from the pupils has been so positive that there is now a dedicated ‘Rainbow Writing’ slot for half an hour every day.
The teachers have also begun to use the colour coding in their marking of pupils’ work and in their feedback to them about how to improve. The teachers want to develop the rainbow as a sticker which can be used on the pupils’ books. When discussed at the staff meeting, there was interest in adopting this approach throughout Key Stage 1.

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Secondary English as an Additional Language (EAL)

Personalisation in history: Linking skills to learning objectives and outcomes

Albany School, Enfield

At Albany School in Enfield, the lead history teachers on the Secondary EAL Programme have built on existing good AfL practice within the department to empower pupils to understand clearly the way in which learning key skills in history links to objectives and learning outcomes.

Objectives, outcomes and success criteria

AfL has long been a key focus for the history teachers at Albany School in Enfield, and over the past two years in the Secondary EAL programme they have focused on empowering the pupils by:

- using talk as a tool for thinking;
- using formal talk to scaffold the shift from discussion to writing;
- helping the pupils to take ownership of their learning using a precise focus on learning objectives and outcomes.

Below is an extract from a presentation given to a Year 9 class looking at reasons for the abolition of slavery.

Key skills

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Knowledge and understanding</th>
<th>Objectives</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>To analyse why the Slave Trade was abolished</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interpretation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>To evaluate the relative importance of different factors in leading to the abolition</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Enquiry</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>To select and evaluate sources to reach conclusions about why the Slave Trade was abolished</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Communication</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>To make appropriate use of historical terms, to use ‘the historian’s voice’ to argue persuasively</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note particularly the emphasis on the higher order skills of analysis and evaluation as well as the use of literacy objectives signposting the need to use appropriate historical terms and persuasive language.

Having outlined the learning objectives, it was then made clear that the outcome would be a piece of writing intended to persuade a museum curator that an empty cabinet should be filled with material related to the different factors responsible for the abolition of slavery.
The teacher then presented the learning outcomes.

**I will have...**
1. described a range of reasons for the abolition of the Slave Trade
2. recognised different interpretations
3. identified which sources are useful

**I'm working at level 5**

**I will have...**
1. made links between the reasons why the Slave Trade was abolished
2. analysed why different interpretations have been reached
3. used sources critically to reach and support a conclusion

**I'm working at level 6**

**I will have...**
1. analysed the relationship between different factors
2. shown independence in enquiry and reaching a conclusion
3. employed formal, persuasive historical language

**I'm working at level 7**

In order to scaffold the use of formal, persuasive language and analytical skills, the teacher used a continuum activity to help pupils take on different points of view and analyse the relationship between them. Key to this process was the teacher-modelling of the thinking and the language used to present a balanced argument.

Pupils then used the criteria to inform the planning of their writing and, later, to self-assess.

Previously, the department tended to use writing frames to scaffold the pupils’ writing; now they have developed an approach in which pupils engage in talk activities – modelled by the teachers – throughout a unit of work. Alongside a very precise focus on objectives and outcomes, this enables the pupils to develop their own ideas and reach the higher levels using, in the words of the teacher, ‘the language of success’.

Ask better questions, get better answers

**Hillingdon local authority**

As part of the Secondary EAL Programme, the Hillingdon Secondary EMA Coordinator and Teaching and Learning Consultant prepared a network meeting in which the lead teachers could discuss how to engage pupils in more purposeful talk through planned questioning.

*How can we personalise the curriculum if the pupils don’t talk in a purposeful way?*

This was the nature of the discussion at the lead practitioners’ network in Hillingdon, and the Secondary EMA Coordinator and the Teaching and Learning Consultant responded by preparing a session in which the practitioners were able to reflect on their practice as questioners and consider ways of developing their practice.
The aims of the session were:

- to be able to structure questions to stimulate thinking;
- to develop a range of strategies to enable pupils to improve their answers.

Initially, the teachers discussed the question: *Why ask questions?* This enabled them to consider the purposes behind questioning. It became clear that most teachers ask questions to check factual recall, for example:

\[ \frac{7}{9} \]

‘Which side of the triangle is the hypotenuse?’

‘What were the names of Romeo’s friends?’

The teachers agreed that these questions, while necessary, made few demands on the pupils’ thinking skills.

### Activity 1: ‘Fattened’ questions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Strategy</th>
<th>‘Fattened’ question</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Can ( \frac{7}{9} ) be simplified?</td>
<td>Give the answer and ask why it’s correct</td>
<td>Why can ( \frac{7}{9} ) not be simplified?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is this a regular verb?</td>
<td>Make it an open question</td>
<td>Why is this a regular verb?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is this a good prediction?</td>
<td>Focus on how to work the answer out</td>
<td>What makes a good prediction in geography?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What is the area of this rectangle?</td>
<td>Give the answer and ask what the question could be</td>
<td>The area of this rectangle is 12cm(^2). What are the possible lengths of the sides?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.3 × 0.06 =</td>
<td>Focus on common misunderstandings</td>
<td>Which is the correct answer: 25.8, 0.258 or 0.252?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is this a good sentence?</td>
<td>Compare/contrast</td>
<td>Why is sentence A better than sentence B?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The teachers considered the strategies for ‘fattening up’ questions and discussed how the new ‘fat’ questions placed more demands on, and were more interesting for, the pupils. Then they had a go at a few questions of their own, using the grid below:

### Activity 2: ‘Fattening up’ questions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Original question</th>
<th>‘Fattened’ question</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Which foods are good for us?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is this a complex sentence?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>((3x + 5)(2x – 3))</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What do we need to make a circuit work?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What was it like to live in Nazi Germany?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The teachers suggested questions like:
‘Why are green vegetables better for us than chips?’ (Compare/contrast)  
‘Explain why this is a complex sentence.’ (Open question)  
‘Ahmed thought the answer was 6x^2 - 15; why was he wrong?’ (Common misunderstandings)  
The teachers then analysed their questions in relation to the Bloom’s Taxonomy/Language Function grid (below) and noticed how they were now challenging pupils to use higher order thinking skills.

**Bloom’s Taxonomy**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cognitive objective</th>
<th>What pupils need to do</th>
<th>Prompts</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Knowledge</strong></td>
<td>Define</td>
<td>Describe what you see…</td>
<td>Pupils are more likely to recall information if it is linked to a specific task or to other relevant information</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Recall</td>
<td>What happened after…</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Describe</td>
<td>How many…</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Label</td>
<td>What is the best one…</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Identify</td>
<td>Who spoke to…</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Match</td>
<td>Find the meaning of…</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Comprehension</strong></td>
<td>Explain</td>
<td>How do you think…</td>
<td>Requires pupils to process knowledge they already have</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Translate</td>
<td>What might this mean?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Illustrate</td>
<td>Explain your model…</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Summarise</td>
<td>Can you give an example of…</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Extend</td>
<td>What are the key features of…</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Application</strong></td>
<td>Apply to new context</td>
<td>Where else might this be useful?</td>
<td>Pupils need to use their existing knowledge and understanding to solve a new problem or in a new context</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Demonstrate</td>
<td>How can you use a spreadsheet to…</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Predict</td>
<td>Could this have happened in…</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Employ</td>
<td>What does this suggest to you?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Solve</td>
<td>What do you think will happen and why?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Use</td>
<td>What facts would change if…</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Analysis</strong></td>
<td>Analyse</td>
<td>What is this really saying?</td>
<td>Pupils need to break down what they know and use the elements to solve a problem</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Infer</td>
<td>What does this symbolise?</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Relate</td>
<td>What are some of the problems of…</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Support</td>
<td>What is the evidence for…</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Break down</td>
<td>What is the function of…</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Differentiate</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Explore</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cognitive objective</td>
<td>What pupils need to do</td>
<td>Prompts</td>
<td>Pupils select and combine elements from their knowledge to respond to unfamiliar problems or situations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------------</td>
<td>------------------------</td>
<td>---------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Synthesis</td>
<td>Design</td>
<td>How else would you…</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Create</td>
<td>How do the writers differ in their response to…</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Compose</td>
<td>Can you design a … to…</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Reorganise</td>
<td>What is a possible solution to…</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Combine</td>
<td>State a rule for…</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evaluation</td>
<td>Assess</td>
<td>Is there a better solution to…</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Evaluate</td>
<td>What changes would you recommend and why?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Appraise</td>
<td>How can you defend…</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Defend</td>
<td>What inconsistencies are there in…</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Justify</td>
<td>How would you feel if…</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Which is more important/moral/logical…</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Having looked at how they could generate better questions, the teachers considered the conditions for learning which might empower pupils to give longer, more thoughtful contributions. They came up with the following strategies:

- Reflection time.
- Think, pair, share.
- No hands up.
- Phone a friend/Ask the audience.
- Six thinking hats.
- Individual whiteboards.
- Building on previous answers.

The session ended with the teachers planning to use three new strategies in their teaching with a view to feeding back at the following network meeting.

All the teachers agreed that the session had made them think very carefully about the kinds of questions they asked and the ways in which they supported pupils in responding.

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Minority Ethnic Achievement Programme: Raising the attainment of Pakistani, Bangladeshi, Somali and Turkish heritage pupils

What next? – a review of phase 2

Newham local authority

Five local schools (Forest Gate, Lister, Little Ilford, Plashet and Stratford) have experienced several successes as a result of their participation in the Minority Ethnic Achievement Programme (MEAP).

Over the last two years the schools have focused on a cohort of about 20 students of Bangladeshi, Pakistani and Somali heritage who were identified at the beginning of Year 8 as having the potential to attain level 5 in science at the end of Key Stage 3, if supported according to the practice and principles of the programme. Science was chosen as an area of focus as Key Stage 3 results in science in Newham were lower than those in mathematics and English.

The programme featured four strands, namely leadership and management, learning and teaching, tracking and monitoring, and parents and community. Schools reported on progress in all four areas on a termly basis.

Leadership and management proved to be more effective in phase 2, with strong evidence of highly effective joint working between EMA and science departments, overseen by schools’ strategy managers and mirrored by very effective collaborative working practices between EMA and Secondary National Strategy teams at local authority level.

Not surprisingly, learning and teaching proved to be the most effective area, with some outstanding partnership teaching being developed between science and EMA teachers in all schools. Examples include a lesson on the rock cycle involving drama techniques, and a lesson on renewable and non-renewable energy involving role-play. Many effective EMA strategies were incorporated into science lessons, resulting in improved literacy skills.

One school, Little Ilford, presented work they had done on extended writing in a unit of work on photosynthesis at a pan-London network meeting.

In their final reports, schools commented on better pace, better questioning, more differentiation, the development of thinking skills and collaborative learning. EMA teachers made gains in their knowledge of science and the Key Stage 3 syllabus, while science teachers felt they had developed more inclusive teaching strategies. One hour per week joint planning time had been crucial in developing effective partnership teaching.

Pupils commented positively on more interactive teaching methods and felt more confident as a result of academic mentoring sessions. Schools became much more familiar with data and the importance of tracking pupil progress. Pupils developed greater awareness of their National Curriculum levels and how to progress to the next (sub) level. Links were made with Key Stage 3 questions which were deconstructed to enable students to become more familiar with the demands of questions and therefore how to answer them more appropriately.
Schools strengthened links with parents of the targeted pupils, particularly by the involvement of bilingual support staff, seeking parents’ views and making contact for positive reasons. While progress has been made in this area, schools are aware that developing links with parents and community is an aspect of work which requires further development. Nevertheless one school, Forest Gate, was able to share good practice at a pan-London network meeting and a local EMA conference.

As well as reporting on the four strands mentioned above, schools also carried out questionnaires with parents, pupils and teachers involved in the programme. Results were very positive:

- Teachers felt more confident about addressing the needs of bilingual pupils and felt motivated by the progress pupils were making.
- Pupils commented positively on the benefit of having two teachers in the classroom, more interactive learning scenarios and being better informed about their progress.
- Parents felt welcome in school and more able to help their son/daughter at home.

Schools will be encouraged to continue to develop the successes gained from the programme, particularly through:

- using data to identify underperforming groups;
- developing partnership teaching to improve learning;
- tracking and monitoring the progress of targeted pupils;
- involving parents and community to support the progress of the targeted group.

Plashet School, Newham

At Plashet School the focus for teaching and learning in phase 2 of the Minority Ethnic Achievement Project has been raising students’ attainment through partnership teaching in science. In two Year 8 classes, a target group of 17 pupils of Bangladeshi, Pakistani and Somali heritage was identified, who were regarded by their teachers as being at risk of underachieving by being unlikely to attain level 5 in the end of Key Stage 3 science test. Two EAL teachers have worked in partnership with the teachers of these classes in all of their science classes throughout Years 8 and 9.

The continuity of support that was provided in this way emerged as one of the principle advantages of this phase of the project. In questionnaires, the targeted pupils commented on the increased level of support that they had received in class and through homework clubs that were offered at dinner-time and after school. The EAL and science teachers valued the opportunity to work in partnership over an extended period, especially where there was regular protected time for liaison in order to plan and evaluate lessons and to prepare resources.

Within science lessons, there was a specific focus on the language demands of the science curriculum, with particular attention to the language of test questions and close analysis both of model answers and of the pupils’ own written responses to questions. A workshop approach to such questions, involving shared writing tasks similar to those that the pupils were familiar with in English lessons, produced significant improvements for all pupils, but particularly for those EAL pupils having difficulty with independent extended writing.

Another focus of the partnership teaching was to promote pupil talk and to establish a close link between talk and writing. Pupils regularly collaborated on pair and group tasks, for example in preparing lesson starters for the revision of topics. Groups of pupils responded particularly well when they were given responsibility for presenting a starter activity to their class, making excellent use of ICT to prepare PowerPoint presentations and activities for interactive whiteboards. Pupils commented on the benefits of having to think through their understanding of the topic and of having to consider carefully the language they would need to use in order to express this understanding clearly for their peers. In addition
to these benefits, some of the targeted pupils who had lacked confidence as speakers were able to develop an impressive degree of assurance and fluency through regular practice in this kind of presentation. One group of pupils was able to demonstrate this high level of confidence by presenting a sample of their work to an audience of teachers and advisers at one of Newham’s curriculum transformation meetings.

The effectiveness of this partnership teaching will be evaluated principally through the attainment levels achieved by the targeted pupils in their end of key stage tests in science. There has, however, been a wider positive impact, for example, through the sharing of strategies and resources with other science teachers, and through the influence of the pupils’ improved confidence and fluency on their progress in other curriculum areas.

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Gypsy, Roma and Traveller Achievement Programme

A whole-school personalised approach for Gypsy Roma Traveller pupils

The Mount Primary School, Nottinghamshire

Getting to grips with what personalisation means for individual Gypsy, Roma and Traveller (GRT) children can be the key to success for these pupils. Where success is evident, it is often because personalisation is operating both at a whole-school and at an individual class and pupil level. When both operate in tandem, real personalisation can follow.

One school that demonstrates this is The Mount Primary in Nottinghamshire. The culture of the school, as articulated by the headteacher, teachers, parent governors and teaching assistants, is one that recognises and celebrates diversity and one that values inclusion while maintaining high expectations of all its pupils.

This ethos is a crucial prerequisite for what happens in every classroom. As the school’s Traveller parent governor says:

‘The Mount is very good at sharing how different children live, what different things they do and accepting each other. That’s the good thing about this school. It makes people feel comfortable and confident and there is a lot of trust.’

Of course, the main focus for the delivery of a personalised curriculum remains within the classroom. The Mount uses a variety of methods to achieve this. Initial assessment is important with a transient population. This initiates short, achievable, measurable early intervention catch-up literacy programmes to accelerate progress. However, all children benefit from individual curriculum mapping. The headteacher describes this:

‘We look at pupil progress on visual mappers. Through the visual mappers we look at current attainment and progress, and then identify individual children and groups of children who we consider to need individual help.’
This mapping methodology is then underpinned by class activities that reflect the interests and backgrounds of different children. For GRT children this includes a Year 2 curriculum that has lots of practical experiences, recognising that purely pencil and paper activities might put some pupils off their learning.

Parental liaison is vital too. Talking to parents about their work activities and the places they have visited means that family experiences can be reflected and utilised in the classroom, thereby valuing and stimulating individual GRT pupils. The curriculum utilises obvious opportunities to reflect GRT lifestyle, in homes for example, but goes beyond this to recognise and reflect the interest of the community, the family and hence the child.

A high level of trust exists between the school and the parents. Asked to advise other schools with GRT children on their roll, the headteacher emphasises the home–school bond but also that it is necessary:

‘to understand and appreciate why those levels of trust don’t come naturally because things have happened in the past, barriers are there that we have got to overcome. I think that it’s also important to have a real established sense of fairness for all and an appreciation that we care for all our children in school as individuals and look to develop them accordingly.’

Using individualised learning programmes

Colegrave Primary School, Newham

At Colegrave Primary School in Newham there are currently 438 pupils on roll. Eight pupils (2%) are Gypsy, Roma Travellers. All children who may be vulnerable to underachievement have individualised learning programmes. This includes the eight GRT pupils. These plans are informed by pupils’, parents’ and teachers’ views, build on existing pupil strengths and identify strategies and success criteria for raising the pupil’s overall achievement. At the beginning of the GRT Achievement Programme literacy targets were set for all GRT pupils using the pupil’s strengths as a vehicle to achieve this with clear success criteria identified.

Nancy is the younger of two children. She is five years old and is currently in Reception. Her ethnicity is ascribed as Gypsy/Roma. Nancy is living on the local authority Travellers site which has recently been resited and redeveloped during Olympic site developments in Stratford. Nancy’s mother always attends parents’ evenings and is very supportive of the school.

At the beginning of the Programme all class teachers of GRT pupils were given a small budget to implement a personalised learning programme for literacy. Role-play resources and story sacks were selected for Nancy. During Gypsy, Roma and Traveller History Month (GRTHM) the children from the site invited their class, or a group of their school friends and their teacher, to their caravan site. This fitted into Nancy’s personalised learning programme as she wanted to invite her friends to a tea party.
Nancy has progressed through five scale points. (In September 2007 her reading was 1SP; in July 2008 it was 6SP.) She has learned all letter sounds and can now segment and blend. Since the site visit during GRTHM her friends have visited the site independently. She has gained in confidence and independence and is able to attempt activities she would not have before, for example, reading more challenging books.

An important part of planning an individualised programme has been involving parents, particularly knowing how the children learn at home and using this in a school setting. Valuing the home-life of the pupils and sharing it with peers, for example by organising trips to the site during GRTHM, has boosted Nancy’s confidence. It has been important too to listen to the pupils themselves. All personalised learning programmes will be reviewed and new targets set for the coming year.

Other developments during the Programme’s implementation have included embedding GRT culture, alongside other diverse cultures, within the curriculum. A Gypsy storyteller raised awareness of GRT cultures and issues during a cultural celebration week earlier in the year. Several GRT pupils, previously not happy to acknowledge their own background and culture, have begun to talk more openly about their background and there is raised awareness of GRT cultures and issues amongst staff and pupils.

Keeping GRT pupils engaged at Key Stage 4

Sittingbourne Community College, Kent

The Sittingbourne Community College is a specialist creative and performing arts college with 1200 pupils on roll. At present there are 14 GRT pupils on roll. All of these pupils are from a UK or Irish Traveller background. With a Traveller site and many housed Travellers in the area, the college has a long history of working with Traveller pupils and their families. The headteacher has a good understanding of the issues which may prevent GRT pupils from achieving their potential in secondary school; the school has been particularly successful in engaging and retaining GRT pupils into Key Stage 4 by personalising their education with support from local further education providers. While some Key Stage 4 GRT pupils will be following academic programmes next year, others will follow accredited courses in hairdressing and other vocations. One GRT pupil in Year 12 is following a BTEC National Diploma in art. Next year in Year 13 she will have the opportunity to mentor younger GRT pupils and work as a classroom assistant.

As a priority of the GRT Achievement Programme, pupils’ achievement is tracked and recorded termly on a database. Specific attention is paid to the first level teaching and learning of GRT pupils through consultation with Advisory Services Kent (ASK). In line with recommendations for schools in The inclusion of GRT children and young people (Ref: 00063-2008) the school has appointed a school support officer (SSO) who is attached to the pastoral and literacy development teams with specific responsibility for Gypsy Traveller.
pupils. The SSO monitors attendance, behaviour and achievement, runs a ‘Culture Club’ for Gypsy Traveller pupils once a week and liaises with families where there may be a cultural issue, for example, travel out of the area to take part in a personalised learning course. The SSO for GRT pupils was recruited from the Traveller community and is a former pupil from the school. This appointment has added value to the actions and impact set out in the GRT Programme. Working with local community groups to engage parents, raising the confidence and self-esteem of the Gypsy Traveller pupils themselves and providing a positive educational role model from the community have been particularly successful developments.

Alongside academic activities, the ‘GRT Culture Club’ led by the SSO has:

- visited a Romany cultural museum, resulting in increased motivation to take part in a storytelling project;
- visited Kent County Constabulary to look at the various policing methods and the developments in community cohesion strategies;
- produced a DVD with a local housing association on settling in bricks and mortar.

The SSO has also worked closely with the literacy adviser from ASK on strategies to improve pupils’ literacy while working on these activities. These strategies include the use of Literacy Progress Units, relevant and engaging GRT cultural texts.

‘The pupils are very positive about the support they have received.’

‘Teachers here give you a lot of chances. If you get in trouble they’re fair. They give you another chance.’

‘The teachers treat you like adults not children.’

‘The teachers show us respect.’

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Black Children’s Achievement Programme

The Enfield Personalisation Programme

Enfield, situated in north London, is one of the largest London authorities. It is experiencing a changing population with a steadily growing number of children from ethnic minority backgrounds. Over the last twelve years the proportion of pupils from other than White British backgrounds has increased from 52.6% to 65.3%. The proportion of pupils with English as an additional language currently stands at 39.9%. The ethnic groups that have been growing fastest in Enfield are some of the lowest attaining – Somali, Turkish and Kurdish. Primary age attainment in Enfield is typically just below national averages. We aspire to do better.
When funding for personalisation appeared in the 2006/7 Primary Strategy Standards Fund we decided to set up a programme drawing on this funding entitled the Enfield Personalisation Programme (EPP). This was to be for schools where significant numbers of pupils were making limited or no progress and school leaders wanted fresh ideas about how to raise achievement. Fifteen primary schools joined the programme in the first year.

Each of the schools was provided with in-school consultancy typically involving an EMA/EAL consultant and in some cases with the additional support of an English and/or a mathematics consultant. There was also the expectation that headteachers and deputy headteachers would attend half-termly half-day network meetings and a one-day conference in the autumn term.

Schools were asked to use their tracking to identify a group of target pupils, at least ten, who were not making progress. Consultants then supported schools in researching these pupils, observing them in the classroom, talking to them, scrutinising their work and talking to their teachers, support staff and parents.

The findings from this enquiry phase were very striking. While not all the pupils fit this pattern most of them are pupils who:
- do listen even when they do not appear to;
- do not speak in sentences in lessons;
- skim the surface in their learning, doing easier, closed, one-step tasks and avoiding more complex, open, multi-step engagement where they can;
- regularly copy the work of other pupils in order to complete tasks sufficiently to satisfy the teacher.

They are pupils who have for various reasons fallen into the habit of surviving at school, getting by, rather than engaging seriously with learning. So how do we break this habit?

The most obvious starting point for us was the need to get these children engaging orally in the classroom. Every school in the programme wrote a Raising Achievement plan, selecting actions that they thought would be most effective. Parallel to this, the Enfield Primary Team developed a number of strands that we believed would be supportive. These include:
- emphasis in central training on the skills of interactive teaching, including teacher’s questioning technique (the emphasis on speaking and listening in the renewed Framework was very opportune);
- a school-based teaching assistant training programme focused on the skills of developing children’s oral participation in mathematics;
- involvement in the Bradford local authority ‘Talking Partners’ programme, a guided talk intervention programme;
- work on the concept of what it means to be a ‘target pupil’ in the classroom; which strategies are the most effective?

Now in the second year of the programme and with twenty schools involved, we can see successes, but also challenges. About one third of target pupils are now making good or better progress, another third are making steady progress, but one third are proving very resistant to help and continue to make limited progress. Some children have specific learning difficulties, emotional barriers to their learning or some other obstacle to overcome. The programme has helped schools to identify these children at an earlier stage than might otherwise have been the case. Many schools in the programme have come to believe that part of the problem is the curriculum and have begun to repackage their curriculum in ways that they believe will be more successful in engaging target pupils.
So what is different? The main change that has come about with the EPP is a change in the approach to school improvement. Schools in the programme use their underachieving pupils as the key driver for school improvement: What do we need to do differently to get these pupils learning? It is a problem solving approach to school improvement that is putting personalisation to the fore, and it has put EMA/EAL consultants at the heart of school improvement within the local authority.

The transition (transfer) project

St Catherine’s Catholic Primary School, Sheffield

Background – a shared understanding

The aim of the Black Children’s Achievement Programme (BCAP) work at St Catherine’s Catholic Primary School, as the headteacher stated at an initial meeting with the local authority teacher adviser, was to ‘support Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) pupils and their parents in the transition to Key Stage 3’.

Saint Catherine’s is a thriving and well-run inner-city school. In recent years, it has had increasing numbers of ethnic minority and EAL pupils on roll. Its last Ofsted report noted that the ‘children enjoyed school immensely’. The headteacher was keen for all of her pupils to continue to enjoy and achieve as they moved from Year 6 to their new secondary schools.

There were 13 pupils of differing abilities chosen by the school for this project. The common features were that the pupils were all in Year 6 and were of BME heritage.

The project’s success depended on a number of preparatory factors:

- a clear and shared focus between the school and the local authority;
- joint and agreed planning between the school and the local authority;
- parental cooperation and understanding;
- prior meetings with targeted pupils, their peers and class teacher;
- scrutiny of targeted pupils’ working habits.

These factors allowed bespoke sessions to be developed by the local authority teacher adviser to meet the needs of the pupils as individuals and as a group. It was important that the work planned was of a high quality, that it was varied, and that enjoyment and rigour were at the heart of the project. Everything had to be underpinned by the pupils’ emotional well-being.

Project launch – a shared responsibility

The launch took place, as did all the pupil sessions, at St Catherine’s, and involved a meeting of parents as well as interested parties from local secondary schools. The local authority teacher adviser led the meeting with help from the Year 6 class teacher.

- The launch provided an opportunity for parents to receive up-to-date information including local and national statistics on BME educational issues, and to share their views.
- The session gave practical advice on how parents could make their child’s transition a success.
The pupils did a separate workshop with their Year 6 class teacher during the presentation and then they shared a practical session with their parents.

Most parents attended having received a letter and seeing the local authority teacher adviser in the school prior to the meeting. Those parents who could not come sent their support for the initiative and wanted to be kept informed.

**Session work**

A series of one-hour timetabled weekly sessions at the school were planned, and they covered a number of themes.

**Session 1 – my primary school experiences:**
This was a chance for pupils to start from what they knew, and they considered what their preferred learning style was and what the factors were that helped and hindered their progress.

**Session 2 – moving to secondary school:**
The session gave information about secondary schools. The pupils also looked at how others might see them as individuals and as part of different groups.

**Session 3 – practical advice (role-play):**
Pupils acted out real-life situations and considered the possible consequences and outcomes for those involved. They considered what they should take to school and the messages and consequences that the objects might have, for example a pencil case, a penknife and an MP3 player.

**Session 4 – cooperative learning:** In groups, the pupils made badges of different countries of the world. At the end the headteacher gave out certificates to the pupils.

The teacher adviser led each of the sessions and the school provided support during each session, such as a teaching assistant and a well-resourced room.

Each session used various teaching styles. There were opportunities for the pupils to share their ideas and opinions with each other in a safe and supportive environment. The pupils recorded their work in folders. At the end of the project, each pupil kept his or her folder and was awarded with a certificate that was given out by the headteacher.

**Impact of the work**

The school reported a stronger sense of enthusiasm and motivation towards their studies from the targeted pupils. This was particularly noticed as the pupils prepared for their end of Year 6 Key Stage 2 tests. The pupils gave positive feedback to their school about the sessions.

There has also been contact from parents to the local authority BME teacher adviser as they seek to intervene more fully in decisions affecting the educational future of their children.

The headteacher is keen to see the work spread to other BME pupils in the school and be shared with other members of staff.
Getting started with Excellence and Enjoyment: Learning and teaching for Black children in the primary years

Some of the ways in which local authorities have used the handbooks, photo-pack, governor leaflet and route map so far include:

- launching the materials within one local authority to a number of school leaders and consultants;
- sharing the materials at a briefing for primary school deputy headteachers;
- using the photo-pack for primary NQT race equality training;
- education improvement advisers and teaching and learning consultants using the handbooks to plan for work with schools;
- introducing the materials to non-programme local authorities by introducing them to EAL consultants at EAL hub;
- including the materials in plans for parents’ meetings with two programme schools;
- using the governors’ leaflet in a local authority governor training session for 300 governors;
- introducing the materials to School Improvement Partners (SIPs) – a joint presentation with the Black Pupils’ Achievement Programme (BPAP).

Hertfordshire local authority

One consultant had a positive response from staff when she introduced the materials in a primary school with very few Black children. Unit 2A Learning and teaching: planning, assessment and the curriculum – Appendix 1 Developing inclusive learning and teaching across the curriculum: subject opportunities has been shared with school staff. The staff used it to plan literacy lessons and to inform planning for Year 6 mathematics, science, and design and technology lessons.

Oldham local authority

The materials were introduced at a primary conference for local authority officers (Primary Strategy consultants, EAL consultants and EYFS consultants) to explore opportunities for local authority officers to work in a more aligned and integrated way, in order to raise the achievement of all children. The conference focused on Unit 2B: Language and Learning to illustrate the need for all officers to take responsibility for reducing attainment gaps. Evaluations indicated that the conference was a very enlightening and successful activity, suggesting the need for further local authority officer professional development and aligned working.

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Black Pupils’ Achievement Programme

Working within a cross-curricular teaching and learning group

Silverdale School, Sheffield

As a result of whole-school training by the local authority consultant on developing an inclusive curriculum and BME achievement, a cross-curricular teaching and learning group was formed to focus on supporting BME students to access the Key Stage 3 curriculum with a particular focus on Years 8 and 9.

I joined the teaching and learning group because my English class had a wide range of abilities (National Curriculum levels 2–7), with about a fifth of pupils learning EAL. I wanted to ensure that all pupils could access the work we were doing, and to encourage higher level thinking skills and raise attainment. I also wanted pupils to feel good about themselves and what they had achieved in our lessons together. Finally, I noticed that several of my BME students had a far greater understanding of issues that we were studying than they were able to express in written English. Therefore, I was looking for techniques in materials planning which would help them to get their ideas into writing. I also wanted to ensure that pupils were engaged and that I was able to deliver an inclusive curriculum.

The Black Pupils’ Achievement Programme (BPAP) teaching and learning group met once every half term as part of a cross-departmental BME/EAL group. The half day networks took place off-site and included core and non-core subjects, EMA/EAL teachers, assistants and senior managers with a responsibility for teaching and learning and inclusion. We were given teaching strategies we could use with pupils, such as concept maps, mapping out a story and the use of images to aid thought. All strategies focused on developing an inclusive curriculum and supporting pupils’ learning. Every half term we developed strategies and prepared lessons around them. We taught the lessons with the targeted pupils, and then evaluated at the next meeting. I was a member of the group for a year.
The pupils responded very well to the prepared lessons, and I started to use some of the strategies with other classes. I observed that my targeted group of pupils was more motivated, and attempting more difficult work; at one point my pupils began independently to find quotes for an essay on a novel. This was a big step forward in skills and concentration levels. I feel that this happened because the techniques enabled the pupils to understand what we were doing from the beginning. Therefore, they had the confidence and the knowledge to continue.

The BPAP cross-curricular group will continue next year with a new group of staff. It will be structured so that it includes members from different departments to further develop good practice and hence build capacity across the school. The Key Stage 3 co-ordinator is rewriting English schemes of work for all of Key Stage 3, which will include strategies developed in the focus group.

The BPAP cross-curricular teaching group has provided very good professional development for our teachers. It has enabled staff to work collaboratively, share ideas and expertise within departments and ensure that there is a common approach across the school.

Poetry Slam

Bluecoat School, Nottingham

Poetry Slam was a day-long writing workshop run by Dreadlock Alien Productions. All of our Year 8 pupils were guided through a variety of poetic forms in an engaging, enthusiastic and creative way. They were introduced to slam poetry, a competitive format aimed at getting pupils to write and perform poems or raps. The themes of the poems centred on racism, tolerance and identity. The day was linked to the Year 8 ballad scheme of work in English.
The day was very well received. In pupil interviews following the day, the Poetry Slam had a near 100% positive response from the pupils. Typical comments included, ‘That was sick!’; ‘I never liked poems before this’ and ‘The best day we have had in English’. Staff who supported the workshop were really impressed with the level of engagement on the day – behaviour issues were minimal. Year 10 pupils who heard about the day begged to have a similar day for them, saying, ‘We heard this was amazing.’

Pupils were so engaged on the day that they are currently preparing entries for the UK National Poetry Slam competition. Dreadlock Alien has been rebooked for another Year 8 Curriculum Enrichment day. This day will be co-run between the English and Modern Foreign Languages (MFL) departments. We plan to expand the themes of the event to cover EAL issues, by making one of the poems translation poems.

We hope to make this:

- an annual event, building each year;
- an embedded part of how we teach and assess poetry in Year 8 in terms of English;
- a way to build greater links with the MFL faculty.

We see this project as a critical part of how we as a faculty can help address ethnic minority achievement in our subject area, because of the themes, engagement and learning styles it helps us to adopt.

We hope that Bluecoat will become a regular participant in the UK National Poetry Slam competition, with a long-term goal of sending a competitor to the World Competition within the next five years.

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