



Guidance

Pupil Support

Equal Opportunities

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Aiming High: Guidance on the assessment of pupils learning English as an additional language



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Note: The case studies in this document feature schools selected on the basis of high or strongly improving standards of achievement by pupils learning English as an additional language as well as the whole school.

Introduction

Background

All children and young people should be able to achieve their potential whatever their ethnic or cultural background and whichever school they attend. In England 686,200 (10.05%) of all pupils in primary, secondary and special maintained schools are recorded as having English as an additional language (EAL).¹ Throughout England, over 200 languages are used by pupils with varying degrees of competence.

In this document 'bilingual' is taken to mean all pupils who use or have access to more than one language at home or at school – pupils who are living and learning in more than one language. It does not necessarily imply full fluency in all languages.

The government strategy for raising the attainment of minority ethnic pupils – 'Aiming High' identified the need to establish a common national approach to the assessment of bilingual learners as a key factor in improving pupils' performance.

What is the purpose of this document?

This document provides further detail on approaches to the assessment of pupils learning EAL. It should be read alongside guidance on assessment for learning developed by the Primary National Strategy and the Key Stage 3 Strategy. It is intended to complement assessment for learning procedures already taking place in schools and classrooms.

In order to ensure that all bilingual learners receive the support they need to develop proficiency in English, teachers may need to develop more detailed profiles for some bilingual pupils as part of their assessment for learning procedures.

Who is this document for?

This document is designed to support school managers, mainstream and specialist teachers and teaching assistants to make appropriate provision for pupils learning EAL.

Schools should examine their assessment procedures in the light of information and guidance contained in this booklet and amend their practice accordingly.

Schools are not expected to provide additional records for pupils learning EAL that duplicate performance information held elsewhere in the school. It is particularly important that any records of progress kept by staff providing additional support are streamlined with core school assessment procedures.

¹ Pupil Characteristics and Class Sizes in Maintained Schools in England January 2004 (Provisional)

Learning English as an additional language

Bilingualism and multilingualism

The majority of the world's population speaks more than one language. For many people the ability to communicate in two or more languages for a range of purposes is an integral part of everyday life. Whilst some people who define themselves as bilingual may speak and understand two languages at a high level, their fluency in each may not be equivalent in speaking, listening, reading and writing or in the range of contexts in which they are used. Language learning is a continuum and proficiency varies significantly depending on the purposes for which the languages are used. For example, some people may use one language solely for day-to-day transactions and another for academic or literary purposes.

There are a number of social contexts in which children become bilingual. In some homes each parent will speak a different language and the child will grow up bilingually. In some homes a language other than English is spoken but acquisition of English is seen as important for economic and social reasons. Some children will have been encouraged to learn a language different from the one predominantly used in the home because it offers social or economic advantages such as Swedish in Finland, French in Canada or English in many parts of the world. Children whose families work abroad by choice are likely to maintain and develop their first language while acquiring fluency in an additional language.

Bilingualism where two or more languages are spoken fluently has been shown to provide a cognitive advantage. However, for this to occur, a positive attitude to all the languages spoken is necessary both at home and at school.

Schools should celebrate all the languages spoken in the school and create opportunities to use them within the curriculum.

UK born bilingual pupils

Many UK born pupils hear and learn to speak a language other than English at home and in their community during the first few years of their life. This language may continue to be used regularly throughout their lives. Although these pupils may have some familiarity with English from television or older siblings, their extensive exposure to English effectively begins when they enter the education system.

Most children beginning to acquire English at the age of three or four are adding to their growing knowledge of how language works. It can be surprising how quickly some children speaking little or no English develop the ability to communicate verbally with their peers in English. This learning takes place in an environment that is rich in visual clues to meaning such as pictures, objects and activities like playground games within which talk and interaction with English speakers is encouraged. Within two years at school most pupils have acquired a good level of conversational fluency in English.

New Arrivals

There is also a group of pupils who arrive in school at different ages and may be new to English. It is important to find out as much as possible about the new pupil in order for appropriate educational arrangements to be made. Some late-arriving pupils will be from families seeking asylum and may have had limited or interrupted education. Such pupils are faced with the task of acquiring English and learning

curriculum content at the same time and for older new arrivals, this may represent a considerable amount of catching up to be done in a short time.

Language support is best provided within the mainstream classroom wherever possible, as time out of subject lessons for additional language tuition may cause the learner to fall behind in the curriculum.

Teachers can employ strategies to make the learning environment as supportive as possible for language development. These will include strategies which enable pupils to use and build on existing knowledge and skills, providing opportunities for use of the first language, visual support (use of pictures, diagrams and objects), opportunities to learn from others and planned opportunities for speaking and listening.

New arrivals who have already developed literacy skills in their first language can, by transferring these skills, often close gaps with their English mother tongue peers and achieve age-related national curriculum levels relatively quickly. There are many cases where pupils arriving late into secondary school and new to English achieve good grades at GCSE.²

Developing English as an additional language

As the language demands of the curriculum increase in complexity, higher order skills expressed in the language of hypothesising, evaluating, inferring, predicting and classifying are fundamental to the development of thinking skills necessary for academic progress. These uses of language, together with an ability to express abstract ideas are a key aspect of written language. A wide body of research shows that some bilingual learners may require five years or longer to develop this kind of written expression.

Exposure to English alone without explicit teaching of the range of registers of spoken English and written academic language required will not usually be sufficient to ensure continued progress for bilingual learners beyond the initial stages.

Good oracy skills underpin literacy development and are important for all pupils throughout school, but are of particular importance for pupils learning English as an additional language for whom the school may provide the main point of contact with formal registers of English.

Three groups of pupils are at particular risk of underachievement:

- new arrivals with little or no previous educational experience
- those who are acquiring English with limited exposure to first language
- some more advanced bilingual learners (pupils with a number of years' exposure to English)³ whose specific needs have been overlooked.

It is as important to attend to the on-going need for language support for pupils who have developed basic conversational fluency as it is to use additional resources for the more obvious needs of pupils newly-arrived from overseas.

Effective assessment procedures as described in the following sections can help to clarify the nature and extent of the needs of these distinct groups of pupils.

2 The education of asylum-seeker pupils OFSTED (2003)

3 Writing in English as an additional language in secondary schools and colleges OFSTED (2003)

Different types and purposes of assessment

Assessment of learning and assessment for learning

Sound and consistent assessment practices should be based on a strong and purposeful range of teaching and learning strategies. Teachers are required to assess pupils' learning progress within the curriculum as part of the normal cycle of planning, teaching and assessing. There are two main purposes of assessment:

- assessment *of* learning (also known as summative assessment) summarises where learners are at a given point in time in terms of attainment and achievement
- assessment *for* learning (also known as formative assessment) informs the next steps to teaching and learning.

Summative assessment

Good summative assessment can also be used for formative purposes and can be used to:

- identify language needs and allocate support
- monitor and review progress and attainment of children from different ethnic and language backgrounds
- review impact of interventions and targeted support
- identify particular strengths and areas for development to inform teaching (for example by analysing children's responses to specific questions in national curriculum tests).

Summative assessment for bilingual pupils, as for all pupils, should be based on national curriculum measures and where applicable, the QCA EAL steps should be used as an extension of the national curriculum English scale. It is not recommended that additional locally developed scales of fluency are used for summative purposes and LEAs should not require schools to produce performance data using locally devised fluency scales.

Formative assessment

When procedures for effective assessment for learning are in place, teachers have a systematic way of building up a picture of each pupil, or groups of pupils, which contributes to an on-going dialogue about their learning needs. In the case of bilingual pupils, the systematic identification of language development needs is key to this, but not, of course, the sole consideration.

Continuous formative assessment:

- helps teachers adapt teaching and learning to meet individual pupil needs
- provides structured and useful feedback to promote individuals' learning
- develops the skill of peer- and self- assessment so that pupils can take charge of their own learning
- enables teachers and pupils to set numerical, curricular and language development targets for improving performance.

Assessment for learning for pupils learning English as an additional language can include:

- initial assessment or profile on entry to school

- collection and analysis of qualitative data such as question level analysis, work sampling, language sampling to inform curricular and language development targets
- day-to-day assessment such as the use of questioning to check understanding, observation, oral and written feedback, oral language sampling
- involvement of pupils in peer or self evaluation with reference to success criteria for learning
- involvement of parents and carers in building up a picture of what children can do and supporting learning
- use of first language by learners to show what they know and can do
- assessment of proficiency in first language for specific purposes such as confirmation of a diagnosis of the presence of a special educational need.

It is vital that there is a strong correlation between outcomes of assessment and teaching. This is dependent on good subject knowledge and therefore teachers of all bilingual pupils need to be aware of the language development, as well as the learning needs of pupils in the particular subject area when making a judgment about performance and achievement.

Initial Assessment (Early Profiling)

When pupils arrive in school, at any age, it will be necessary to find out as much as possible about the new pupil in order for appropriate educational arrangements to be made. For older learners, this initial assessment will provide important information for setting up an appropriate programme of support. It may be useful to allow a short settling-in period before assessing skills in English.

Where a pupil is new or relatively new to English, detailed background information as well as a snapshot of current performance is crucial for determining appropriate support.

It is important to ensure that materials used for initial assessment are as free as possible from cultural bias.

Purpose of Initial Assessment:

- To establish achievement levels on entry to school
- To provide a framework for assessing and recording pupils' progress in English, particularly during the first year of learning English
- To enable teachers to plan appropriate learning experiences for pupils
- To enable schools to set up an appropriate programme of support.

Sources of evidence

- Informal assessment procedures (reading a book together, asking for a piece of unaided writing, inviting talk about a picture or photograph)
- Pupils' self-evaluation
- Observation in classroom, playground and at home
- Previous school records
- Discussion with teachers and support staff
- Discussion with parents/carers (via an interpreter if necessary)

- Specific assessment procedures (short formal tests can be useful to provide indication of performance in certain areas but should be considered alongside other evidence).

It is not recommended that schools administer formal tests to pupils new to English immediately upon arrival in schools. It is usually better to allow a short settling-in period and to use other sources of evidence for the initial assessment.

CASE STUDY – SECONDARY 1.1% EAL

A rural Roman Catholic Upper school with a predominantly white intake. In general the school population is advantaged although there is a full range of ability. The school admits a small number of pupils new to English who are the children of migrant farm workers.

This school has no EMA coordinator and only a handful of EAL learners. The LEA EMA service is consulted when a new pupil arrives. The LEA advisory teacher conducts an initial assessment and an EAL Planning document is prepared for the pupil. This sets out a range of short-term and long-term objectives as well as an indication of the QCA EAL steps or national curriculum level achieved. These are reviewed periodically by the SENCO and the language support assistant and shared with tutors. Recently training was given to the whole staff on how to observe an EAL learner in the classroom, identify a learning priority, decide on strategies to increase the pupil's engagement with learning and then monitor the outcome. This process includes simple activities and clearly written profiles with helpful prompt questions. The training and the practice of observing new arrivals according to this framework has helped to raise staff awareness about the needs of bilingual pupils. This has given them confidence to introduce strategies that support the newly-arrived pupils' learning.

In some cases it will be possible to conduct an interview with the pupil and parents on admission to school in first language, administered by the school's own bilingual staff or an external interpreter. Some LEAs provide an advisory service which includes first language support. This will be very useful in providing information about family and medical history, previous educational experience and proficiency in the skills of speaking, listening, reading and writing in first language.

Detailed early profiling of the pupil's language skills and educational experiences will ensure effective planning for support and appropriate placement.

However the information is gathered, the initial assessment profile should only provide necessary background information together with levels of academic performance. The profile should be integral to pupils' school records and not duplicate information unnecessarily.

Generally, bilingual pupils should be placed in chronologically appropriate year groups. Initial placement in low ability sets is not helpful because pupils new to English will benefit more from access to strong models of English language and confident learners.

Involving pupils in self evaluation

All learners need to know where they are in their learning, where they are going and how to get there. For bilingual learners, an explicit identification of their own skills in English and in one or more other languages by the pupils themselves may help to strengthen the whole picture of achievement and provide a useful insight for the teacher and pupil of where to go next.

In a 'learning to learn' curriculum, assessment for learning involves children and teachers thinking about learning skills and dispositions, as well as curriculum matters. Children are encouraged to reflect on how

they learn and how they can improve as learners. This involves setting learning targets as well as curriculum targets. Such learning targets may be about skills, attitudes or behaviours.

CASE STUDY PRIMARY SCHOOL, 88% EAL

A large primary school in the West Midlands serving a very disadvantaged, inner city area.

The teachers set curricular targets for reading and writing based on work trawls and mark pupils' work against the targets. The targets are shared with pupils. Each half-term, pupils get feedback on aspects of writing targets met and areas where further improvement is required. The system is understood by all as aspects achieved are highlighted in gold and one aspect which needs development is highlighted in green. Children in Years 5 and 6 work in pairs to peer-evaluate progress against the curricular targets in writing for each half-term using the same system.

The school is also beginning to set language development targets which either support curricular targets or meet specific needs related to EAL development.

When involving bilingual learners in self-evaluation, it is important to ensure that pupils understand what is required of them and that the school is sensitive to individual and cultural attitudes towards describing personal and social achievement.

The following extract describes a mentoring session with a year 12 bilingual student of A level history, whose potential in the subject appeared to be hindered by lack of proficiency in English.

CASE STUDY – SIXTH FORM 50% EAL

A mixed comprehensive secondary with sixth form in Inner London. The school has high mobility and a large number of pupils are asylum-seekers or refugees.

The teacher asks the pupil about his reading and work habits and the techniques he uses for revising. They discuss preferred learning styles and which areas of study appear to be particularly challenging. The student is then asked to talk about what help he thinks he needs. He comes up with note-taking, revision guides and how to structure an essay. As an example of how to do this, they discuss an essay which has already been marked by the history teacher and consider the teacher's comments. They look in detail at the introduction and identify that some of the sentences are too long and some of the ideas are repeated. Some specific language features are discussed in detail, especially the use of the modal verbs 'could have' and 'would have'. The student and teacher together complete a simple form which lists challenges to overcome and specific targets. The agreed targets are; learn note-taking techniques; practise picking out key information from texts; improve planning and structuring of essays; and address key language features. They agree to meet once a week for a month to monitor progress on these targets.

Distinguishing between EAL and Special Educational Needs (SEN)

"A child must not be regarded as having a learning difficulty solely because the language or form of the language of the home is different from the language in which he or she will be taught." (1996 Education Act)

"The identification and assessment of the special education needs of children whose first language is not English requires particular care. It is necessary to consider the child within the context of their home, culture and community." (SEN Code of Practice 2001 5.15)

It is important that teachers feel confident in their ability to distinguish between English language development needs and issues of learning where there is cause for concern about a pupil's educational progress.

The dilemma facing professionals when assessing bilingual pupils with suspected learning difficulties is that it is very easy to make two errors which have wide-ranging implications for a child's progress. These errors are highlighted by Deryn Hall (2001)⁴

A **false positive** occurs when a learning difficulty is diagnosed when in fact none is present. The child is incorrectly labelled and may fail to achieve their potential because expectations have been lowered and inappropriate support may be provided.

A **false negative** occurs when a learning difficulty is not correctly identified. In this case the child's difficulties are incorrectly attributed to lack of proficiency in English and appropriate help and support is not provided. Lack of early intervention can have serious and long reaching consequences for the child.

Great care needs to be taken when interpreting data from assessments of young children with little prior exposure to English. Care also needs to be taken in interpreting the results of literacy based tests which have been standardised against a monolingual population.

There are a minority of bilingual pupils who, despite having the same curricular input as their peers, and in some cases additional targeted language support, do not make anticipated progress. The reasons for this may not be straightforward and it is important that thorough assessment is undertaken to identify the nature of the need.

CASE STUDY – PRIMARY 95% EAL

Situated in an urban area of considerable deprivation, the school receives virtually all its EAL learners from the well-established Bengali speaking community which it serves.

The EMA team includes two bilingual teaching assistants who come from the same community as the pupils. All the EMA team have received training on first language assessment provided by the LEA. The first language assessment includes observation over time as well as formal testing.

The school has taken the decision to carry out first language assessments only when concerns have been expressed about progress in regular classwork and further investigation is required. Assessors concentrate on speaking and listening as very few pupils are literate in their first language. Tests are usually recorded for later analysis. By noting features of immature language development in first language, staff can provide clues to difficulties in English language development. Similarly, very good first language ability is also noted and passed on to the assessment coordinator as an indicator of high learning potential. First language assessment forms a key component of the school's assessment procedures.

To support this thorough analysis of need, some LEAs have developed a checklist of "triggers" in order to assess the possible range of needs. As part of the school's on-going assessment processes, before a special education need can be identified, it will be important to investigate possible sensory problems, social, emotional or behavioural needs as well as apparent lack of progress in language development. It is also important to establish that the learning environment is supportive and enables access to the curriculum for the bilingual pupil.

4 Assessing the Needs of Bilingual Pupils Living in Two Languages Deryn Hall David Fulton 2001

CASE STUDY – ADAPTED FROM LEA GUIDANCE ON SEN AND EAL

Triggers for cause for concern

- Language acquisition progress below expected norm
- Unusually slow work rate compared with peers
- Little response to teacher or peer intervention
- Specific weakness in spoken English eg poor verbal comprehension, limited vocabulary
- Poor listening and attention skills
- Specific weakness in English literacy skills eg difficulties in reading comprehension, limited writing stamina
- Gap between cognitive ability tests and reading age
- Inability to acquire basic number concepts
- Parent expressing concern over progress
- Difficulty in subjects that are less language dependent
- Emotional and behavioural difficulties

During the process of investigation of possible special education needs, high expectations of pupils should be maintained and care taken not to wrongly or prematurely place pupils in lower ability sets or groupings. Pupils should be grouped according to their cognitive ability in the subject. For pupils new to English, non-verbal reasoning tests may be helpful to support assessment of potential rather than actual academic performance and any grouping arrangements should be kept under review.

Parents should be involved as soon as a pupil becomes cause for concern and this may need the help of an interpreter. Limited grasp of first language does not, in itself, confirm a learning difficulty. It may be as a result of limited use of first language by adults in the home.

When a pupil is identified as having a mixture of needs stemming from learning English as an additional language and having learning needs, a programme of support should be drawn up involving parents, pupils, the classteacher and the SEN and EAL specialist staff.

Where pupils are working towards level 1 of the national curriculum in English, mathematics and science there is the option of collecting P scales to further refine the measure. However, P scales should not be applied to recently-arrived pupils and/or those new to English unless it has been established that a special educational need (as set out in paragraphs 6.14-6.16 of the SEN Code of Practice) is likely to be the sole reason for performance below the expected level. This assessment should, where appropriate, be carried out in the pupil's first language. Pupils learning EAL and working towards level 1 should continue to be recorded as W for information submitted to the DfES. For further information see the Assessment and Reporting Arrangements booklet for the current year.

For school records, pupils new to English who are working towards or level 1 of the national curriculum in English may be assessed using the QCA EAL steps as published in 'A Language in Common' (QCA 2000)

Role of first language in assessment

First language can be used:

- to support an initial assessment of a pupil on entry to school
- to give indications of a pupil's general language development, particularly where there are concerns about progress
- to assess learning on an on-going basis as part of regular assessment procedures
- to enable access to formal tests and to allow pupils to demonstrate competence in subjects other than English.

Assessment of proficiency in first language can be very useful as part of initial assessment procedures when a pupil joins the school as a late arrival and previous educational experience is not known (see section on initial assessment).

CASE STUDY – SECONDARY 15% EAL

Situated in a socially and economically disadvantaged northern suburb, the school receives a high number of asylum-seeker and refugee pupils who form the greater proportion of the pupils learning English as an additional language.

Many of the new pupils arrive without records of previous educational experience. The EMA coordinator and SENCO work with senior staff and learning mentors to form a picture of academic ability and linguistic aptitude as soon as possible.

First language assessment, overseen by trained LEA staff and interpreters, forms part of the school's initial assessment procedures for all new arrivals from vulnerable groups who are learning EAL. Information on first language ability informs decisions on setting and streaming together with allocation of support. The initial assessment profile, including information about competence in first language, is distributed to all the pupils' teachers within two weeks of arrival. The incorporation of first language ability into core assessment procedures creates a positive ethos from an early stage. This is followed up by the encouragement of the use of first language as a tool for learning in lessons.

Assessment of first language may also give an indication of a pupil's general language development. In bilingual communities where schooling has been entirely in English, the first language is likely to have been used mainly in the home and the community. Pupils will probably be more proficient in English in the academic domain and unless they have been previously given the opportunity to use their first language for learning the curriculum, they will be unlikely to be able to talk about it in first language during assessments. First language assessment should focus on the language commonly used in the home setting, language previously encountered in school and language in familiar contexts. Gaps in areas of language which should be familiar to pupils in first language may indicate learning difficulties. The assessment of first language should be part of assessing the pupil's whole language repertoire.

CASE STUDY PRIMARY 38.1% EAL

Situated on the outskirts of a large town in the Southeast this 3-11 Primary school with an attached Nursery has approximately 390 pupils on roll with 22% eligible for free school meals and 22% having special educational needs.

There is a wide range of languages within the school with Urdu and Punjabi being the most frequently spoken followed by Bengali. This is reflected in the languages spoken by the bilingual assistant who is a full time member of the school staff.

The assessment process begins in the Nursery Class with a home visit for all new entrants. For families where English is an additional language an interpreter supports the parents and child. Information about the child's development in their home language and English within the context of the home environment is shared.

Observational assessment informs the next steps for all children's learning as they progress through the early Stepping Stones towards the Early Learning Goals. Development across all areas of the curriculum is supported in home language where possible and progress in both languages is recorded. Formative assessment based on the Stepping Stones in each of the six areas of learning determines the allocation of additional support, which may be in home language where available. This is an informal process firmly placed within the context of the rich play based Foundation Stage Curriculum.

Some LEAs may be able to provide a first language assessment service or schools may employ staff who are qualified to undertake such an assessment. It is important that assessors have received training in assessment and have a clear understanding of the nature of conceptual and linguistic development. Ideally, assessors should be known to the pupil and speak the same dialect of the home language.

First language may also be used to enable access to formal tests and allow pupils to demonstrate achievement in subjects other than English. For example, schools may provide written or oral translations of individual words or phrases in the science and mathematics national curriculum tests if this is usual practice for the pupils.

Care should be taken when translating tests or sections of tests in English. There may be inexact correspondence between the two languages and some languages do not have a written form. Some languages also have many dialects and it can be difficult to ensure that the correct version is being used. Concepts do not always overlap and utterances which are commonplace in one language may be unusual in another.

Whole school approach to assessment

The government consultation document 'Aiming High: Raising the Achievement of Minority Ethnic Pupils' (DfES 2003) states that "the particular needs of bilingual pupils are best met through a coordinated whole-school approach led by headteachers and senior managers."

When considering the summative and formative assessment of bilingual pupils in the school, it is important that a number of key staff and senior managers are involved. Where some bilingual learners are targeted for additional support, it is particularly important that quantitative and qualitative information on performance is shared by all relevant staff and fed into whole-school assessment systems.

For bilingual learners, tests standardised against a monolingual population are not always a reliable basis on which to base decisions on ability sets or bands. It is better to draw from a range of evidence which allows the pupil to demonstrate potential as well as current performance.

It is not recommended that specialist staff adopt separate scales or measures of performance for making a summative judgment about levels of English language fluency. Locally devised fluency scales create additional work and do not provide reliable or consistent information that can be used for tracking progress or setting targets.

National curriculum levels and the QCA EAL extended scale for English, sometimes called the 'EAL steps' provide a helpful point of reference for marking progress for pupils new to English, when considered in the context of all the available information about the bilingual learner. The EAL steps provide a best fit measure which leads into national curriculum English measures. It is not recommended that adapted versions of the EAL steps are produced for summative assessment purposes.

Using results from formal tests

All schools are data rich with the statutory collection of end of key stage national curriculum measures that can be analysed by ethnicity and EAL. In addition, many schools collect data on first language, date of entry to schooling in the UK and/or length of exposure to English. Many schools also incorporate a number of other standardised measures into school assessment procedures such as the optional national curriculum and other commercially produced tests. All of these may be analysed to pinpoint the varying needs of particular groups of pupils. In the case of bilingual pupils, tests that measure non-verbal reasoning or tests that provide separate scores for skills such as inference can be very revealing and show disparity in aspects of performance even when overall scores are comparable with the class average or above.

In assessing the performance of bilingual learners, it is important to draw on multiple sources of evidence. Schools should be sensitive to the possibility of cultural bias in the content of the test or in the way that the test is applied (for example, lengthy verbal instructions may leave some bilingual pupils unsure of what is required of them).

CASE STUDY – PRIMARY 58% EAL

A very large primary school in Greater London which serves an urban area of socio-economic deprivation. There is a high level of pupil mobility and one fifth of pupils are refugees or asylum-seekers.

The EMA team work closely with the senior management to interpret patterns and trends in attainment. They have also led staff meetings on assessment and race equality issues. A recent school initiative has been the analysis of results of a reading test according to whether English is the first or additional language. Scores for accuracy, comprehension and reading rate are established and have enabled senior managers to identify a significant comprehension gap for bilingual learners. Pupils may have good decoding skills but find particular aspects of comprehension difficult. This close analysis confirms for senior managers what teachers have identified in their day-to-day assessment and enables staff to adopt teaching strategies across the school to better meet the needs of their pupils.

CASE STUDY – SECONDARY 80% EAL

A girls' comprehensive situated in a small conurbation serving a diverse community.

In this school the EMA coordinator works closely with the assessment coordinator (a deputy headteacher) to track the progress of pupils individually and by ethnic group from key stage 2 to key stage 3 and then from key stage 3 to key stage 4. The results are shared with all staff and questions asked about why progress has not been sustained or why individuals perform very differently in different subjects. A wide range of data is used to identify individuals who are not attaining their potential. The uneven profiles of some EAL learners (where verbal scores are lower than non-verbal scores) are used to identify those needing additional support. This has led more recently to EAL staff working with pupils in higher sets.

Target-setting

Schools that are successful in raising attainment of bilingual pupils are notable for the quality of their monitoring procedures involving setting targets at whole school, year group, class and individual level and mapping progress carefully.⁵

Targets based on national curriculum measures should be informed by high expectations of progress and understanding of age-related expectations. It is important to note that most bilingual pupils make greater than average progress according to national curriculum measures as they move through the key stages.

Individual curricular and language development targets are informed and identified by analysis of children's work, teacher assessments, tests, oral language samples and discussions with children. Language development targets may support curricular targets or meet specific EAL development needs.

Curricular targets include targets which relate to specific elements of a subject for example, composing and editing on-screen as well as targets for aspects of learning that occur across the curriculum (supporting opinions with evidence). These may be targets shared by all pupils. Language development targets relate to specific aspects of language development for example, agreement of subject and verb and are more likely to be specific to individual or groups of bilingual learners.

When setting literacy targets for bilingual pupils, care must be taken to include text level targets such as those related to composition and effect as well as attention to weaknesses in word and sentence level aspects of language.

CASE STUDY – PRIMARY 7% EAL

A large, predominantly white primary school in a residential area of a market town.

The EMA coordinator has excellent tracking systems for EAL learners and all minority ethnic pupils in the school. Initial assessments are undertaken for newly-arrived pupils and classteachers furnished with helpful information. Analysis of all assessment data (NC levels, QCA optional tests) is carried out and targets set with the classteacher and reviewed termly. This information is integrated into the school Analysis of Assessment results and ultimately into the School Improvement Plan. Underachievement is picked up rapidly and steps taken to provide additional support. This careful analysis has, for example, identified some underachievement in maths for minority ethnic pupils. Now numerical and curricular targets are set in mathematics as well as English.

CASE STUDY – SECONDARY 10% EAL

A large comprehensive school in the Midlands situated on the fringe of a large conurbation. It is in a relatively prosperous area.

Assessment for year 7 students starts on primary school visits. Interviews are held and detailed pupil profile sheets are completed, including information on home languages. Pupils are then assessed and observed in lessons using a schedule developed by the school. An English specialist is given two periods per week to work on assessment with EMA staff. Together they set language targets on the basis of all the data collected. Progress against the targets is regularly monitored. Procedures and documents are clear enabling mainstream staff and the SENCO to contribute fully to this process. The close working of English and EMA specialists in setting targets is a strength of the school.

Using the Pupil Achievement Tracker

The Pupil Achievement Tracker (PAT) is a piece of software with diagnostic and analytical functions designed to support schools and classroom teachers. It enables schools to analyse and present summative data comparing school performance with national attainment in core subjects and there is the option of undertaking a question level analysis of national curriculum tests in the core subjects.

It is possible to include a range of background characteristics, thus enabling schools to track the progress of pupils learning EAL in comparison with non-EAL pupils and to track the progress of pupils in receipt of particular EAL support compared with those pupils for whom no support was provided. A feature is PAT software in its clear, graphic display of results.

PAT is useful for:

- senior managers and middle managers in order to consider trends in their school/subject in relation to national performance and to support decisions on appropriate provision.
- classroom and subject teachers using both the overall and question level analyses to identify aspects of the curriculum which need further development for either individual or groups of pupils.

Specifically, PAT can be used to:

- analyse pupil attainment by ethnicity or EAL in national tests at every key stage
- compare rates of progress of different ethnic groups or EAL learners with national rates of progress overall at every key stage and display results in the form of a line graph
- include 'extended' ethnicity categories as agreed by the LEA
- set key stage targets for groups of pupils based on national rates of progress for all pupils

- export selected information onto a spreadsheet for inclusion with other school held data or for printing hard copy.

It is also possible to customise PAT to suit a particular school or LEA in the following ways:

- import school data held on spreadsheets to create additional fields of 'pupil attributes' which could include other ethnic groups, language or faith communities
- add relevant information such as date of entry into the UK education system, thereby allowing an analysis of pupils according to length of education in the school or within the UK system (this would be particularly useful in the case of new arrivals)
- enter question level responses to statutory national tests or optional national tests which can then be analysed in terms of the assessment focuses in English, attainment targets or topic areas in science and mathematics (results produced in the form of a radar graph)
- add information about relevant support programmes and then analyse the attainment of a particular group of pupils in receipt of such support (for example pupils in a class where partnership teaching with an EAL specialist and mainstream teacher had taken place or a particular group of pupils has been supported by an EAL specialist teaching assistant).

PAT is currently under further development. In the future it will be possible to contextualise the value-added attainment data to include comparisons with groups of pupils nationally who share a combination of characteristics with pupils in any particular school.

CASE STUDY – NORTH LONDON LEA

With the agreement of all secondary schools, the Key Stage 3 Strategy Manager arranged to collect in all science and mathematics key stage 3 scripts and have the scores for each question entered onto PAT. This entailed four days per school of administrative time by staff employed by the LEA for this purpose.

The resulting analysis provided for all secondary schools by the LEA included question level analysis for individual pupils and a radar graph of pupil performance compared with national results.

Key Stage 3 Consultants for maths and science were provided with a question and topic level analysis for each school to support their discussion with the relevant departments. The impact of gender, SEN, EAL and different ethnic groups was also identified for each school.

Commercially produced software is also useful for developing a range of analyses and can provide functions such as year-on-year target setting (as opposed to targets for the key stage) and termly and half-termly monitoring.

Special Arrangements in National Curriculum tests

The national curriculum tests for key stages 1, 2 and 3 are designed to be accessible to the vast majority of pupils in the particular cohorts. It is likely that the majority of bilingual learners will not require special arrangements at all and others will only require special arrangements for some tests and examinations. However, where the learning of English as an additional language is likely to be a barrier to pupils performing to their full ability, it is possible to make special arrangements to help facilitate access to the tests.

To do this, staff preparing pupils that are learning English as an additional language for the national curriculum tests should consider individual pupils' assessment needs in good time before the tests take place. Schools should always refer to the details of key dates and special arrangements published in the

QCA *Assessment and Reporting Arrangements* booklets for the specific year to check details. This information can be found on the QCA website www.qca.org.uk.

Special arrangements that might be appropriate for pupils with English as an additional language include additional time or early opening of the test packs in specific circumstances for translation purposes (these need to be applied for in advance by a set date) or use of dictionaries, word lists and electronic spellcheckers.

Special arrangements must not provide an unfair advantage and the support given must not alter the nature of the test questions. The answers given must be the pupil's own.

At Key Stages 1 and 2 for pupils working at level 2 or below of the national curriculum, teacher assessment is the only means of statutory assessment. At key stage 3, pupils working below national curriculum level 4 in English should do the reading and writing tasks rather than the main tier papers.

Performance tables

Pupils who arrive in school new to English from overseas during the current or previous academic year may be removed from performance tables in some or all of the tests. Schools need to complete an application form for removal of pupils' scores from the Performance tables which can be obtained from the Test Administrator.

Local Education Authority (LEA) advisory role

LEAs play a key role in supporting schools in the process of managing support for minority ethnic pupils, including the analysis of data on the progress of bilingual pupils, action-planning and target-setting for improvement and training on effective strategies for teaching and assessing pupils learning English as an additional language.

LEA Strategic role

Some LEAs collect and analyse data on bilingual pupils beyond what is required for statutory data collection. This should not duplicate other performance information, however, where information on pupils' first language is collected and the analyses shared with schools, useful local comparisons between language communities may be made which support the strategic planning of provision for bilingual learners within the LEA.

It is important that inspectors and advisers from the local authority, especially those with a 'link' role to schools are aware of the schools' data on the achievements of all minority ethnic pupils including bilingual learners and include these data in their discussions with school managers.

LEA advisory role

LEA EMA advisory staff can provide advice and support to schools including guidance on assessment and provision of training on strategies to address the needs of bilingual pupils. LEAs have a key role in helping schools to review the range and purpose of current assessment procedures.

Many LEAs also provide helpful written guidance on the assessment of bilingual learners including planning frameworks and observation schedules.

LEAs should ensure that schools are familiar with the training materials for EAL assessment such as 'Marking Progress' and provide opportunities to disseminate best practice.

CASE STUDY – NORTHERN LEA

The LEA EMA advisory teachers have devised a programme of training for bilingual teaching assistants in first language assessment which includes a set of assessment tools and a recommended methodology. This training and the accompanying materials is offered to all LEA schools free of charge.

In some local authorities, schools can elect to buy EAL teaching and other relevant support, including first language support, from their LEA which is able to provide a range of services that individual schools would not otherwise be able to access. In these authorities, it is important that the work of the EAL specialist teachers and other support staff is integrated into school assessment practice.

Roles and responsibilities at school level

Leadership

- Create opportunities to inform staff about Ethnic Minority Achievement (EMA) and effective strategies for teaching and assessment within the school/classroom
- Provide all staff with information about the ethnic minority pupils in their class (ensure that assessments made by specialist staff are used and incorporated within planning)
- Develop a transparent rationale for the deployment of additional EAL staff in the short and long term
- Track the achievements of all ethnic groups within the school and compare with local and national data
- Ensure all staff are aware of positive achievements of ethnic minority pupils in the school
- Have an expectation that teaching assistants will contribute to pupil assessment
- Provide teaching assistants with training on carrying out and recording pupil observation and tracking.

Class teachers

- Find out about the language histories of the pupils in your class and take account of how long they have been learning English
- Create conditions for assessing bilingual pupils that allow them to demonstrate the range of their ability
- Incorporate opportunities for use of first language into assessment for learning procedures
- Consider the influence of behaviour, attitude and cultural expectations
- Liaise with specialist staff to develop a full picture of pupils' performance.

EAL teachers

- Observe specific pupils during lessons and in other settings and note their responses and involvement formally and informally
- Play a full and active role in contributing to the school monitoring and work sampling systems, and completing pupil profiles and records of progress for ethnic minority pupils
- Use this information to assess and monitor achievement in relation to national curriculum levels and QCA EAL steps
- Work in partnership with subject/class teachers and middle managers to contribute to teacher assessment and contribute to the evaluation of lesson planning and delivery
- Contribute to target setting for groups and individuals
- Support teaching assistants working with bilingual pupils
- Be an advocate for ethnic minority pupils, celebrating the achievement of bilingualism and highlighting achievement of all kinds
- Review the assessment tools used in the school to ensure they are as far as possible free from cultural bias.

Teaching Assistants

- Observe pupils while working with them in lessons and feed back information on their engagement and learning to the class teacher
- Track pupils as requested by the teacher
- Provide feedback to inform teacher's classroom planning.

Governors

- Monitor progress and achievements of pupils of all ethnic groups
- Ensure parents are informed about relative achievements of different groups and strategies to address underachievement.

Checklist of good practice in the assessment of pupils learning English as an additional language

Points to consider

- Being bilingual affords children linguistic and cognitive advantages so learning English as an additional language should not be seen as a learning difficulty
- Understanding usually precedes speaking and writing. Pupils with limited exposure to English can usually understand more than they can say
- EAL learners follow different pathways to fluency and may demonstrate an uneven profile in the development of listening, speaking, reading and writing
- Some older learners who have had significant educational experience and are literate in their first language may find reading and writing easier than speaking and listening
- Listening is an active skill for pupils new to English. It forms an important first stage of the learning process. Pupils may opt to be silent whilst acquiring a considerable degree of understanding. It is therefore important to assess listening separately from speaking at this stage
- Personality and preferred learning style impacts on rate of progress of (especially oral) language acquisition.

Conditions for assessment

To make the conditions of assessment as favourable as possible for bilingual learners:

- Ensure pupils are completely clear about the purpose of the task (this applies to all pupils but the likelihood of some bilingual pupils not understanding instructions is greater)
- Ensure opportunities for self-assessment and peer assessment as part of feedback, utilising shared first language of pupils where possible
- Provide opportunities for parents/carers and families to understand assessment information, pupil targets and the link between assessment and learning
- Ensure tasks are set in a familiar and meaningful context

- Ensure tests and tasks are as far as possible free from cultural bias (whilst recognising that no test can be completely culture-free) and provide additional support where necessary to remove barriers
- Ensure observations include situations where pupils can speak and listen in English in a non-threatening situation (eg as part of a small group activity)
- Provide opportunities for pupils to demonstrate understanding through use of their first language
- Encourage and promote use of dictionaries in first language/English
- Create opportunities to sample and analyse oral language related to a task
- Give pupils time to respond and try not to interrupt the flow of an answer
- Don't over-simplify questions – extend communication by using more complex language and allow pupils the opportunity to demonstrate the breadth of their knowledge.

For external tests:

- Create the conditions as described above, where this is permitted by the regulations of the external examiner
- Make use of the access arrangements for pupils learning English as an additional language in accordance with the regulations of the external examiner.

Glossary

EAL English as an Additional Language

EMA Ethnic Minority Achievement

LEA Local Education Authority

NC National Curriculum

PAT Pupil Achievement Tracker

QCA Qualifications and Curriculum Authority

SEN Special Educational Needs

SENCO Special Educational Needs coordinator (sometimes now part of the role of Inclusion coordinator)

Further reading

A Language in Common: Assessing English as an Additional Language (QCA 2000) www.qca.org.uk

Marking Progress: Training materials for assessing English as an additional language DfES/0196/2005

Primary National Strategy *Excellence and Enjoyment: learning and teaching in the primary years – Planning and assessment for learning* DfES (2004) www.standards.dfes.gov.uk/primary

Speaking, Listening, Learning: working with children at key stages 1 & 2 QCA/PNS 2003

Speaking, Listening, Learning: Working with children learning English as an additional language DfES (2005)

National Numeracy Strategy: *Assessment toolkit to support pupils with English as an additional language* DfES 0319/2002

Foundation Stage Profile: Handbook QCA/03/1006 (especially pp 117-118)

Key Stage 3 Strategy *Assessment of pupils learning English as an additional language* DfES (2003) www.standards.dfes.gov.uk/key_stage_3

Key Stage 3 Strategy *Targeting for success: raising the attainment of minority ethnic pupils and pupils learning English as an additional language* DfES 2003

Writing in English as an additional language in secondary schools and colleges Lynne Cameron OFSTED 2003 www.ofsted.gov.uk

Writing in English as an additional language at Key Stage 2 Lynne Cameron and Sharon Besser DfES 2004 www.dfes.gov.uk/research/

Special Educational Needs – Code of Practice DfES (2001)

Assessing the Needs of Bilingual Pupils: Living in Two Languages D Hall (2001) Fulton

Assessment for learning: Putting it into practice Black, Harrison, Lee & William 2003 Open University Press

Language Needs or Special Needs? The Assessment of Learning Difficulties in Literacy Among Children Learning English as an additional language: A Literature Review Tony Cline and Tatheer Shamsi DfEE (2000)

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