

NALDIC Response to Training our next generation of outstanding teachers DFE July 2011

The National Association for Language Development in the Curriculum (NALDIC) is the national subject association for English as an additional language (EAL). It is dedicated to promoting the learning, teaching and achievement of bilingual pupils in schools and draws its membership from those who work in this field in schools, universities and other educational institutions.

Executive Summary

To improve initial teacher training, NALDIC recommends:

- Strengthening the focus on EAL within initial teacher training given that one in seven of our pupils are bilingual, including the introduction of EAL specialist initial teacher training
- Ensuring that the teaching skills and subject knowledge to equip teachers to meet the needs of EAL learners is given an appropriately high profile within the revised standards for QTS
- Supporting Masters level training for specialist EAL teachers prior to any greater move towards school based training routes
- Ensuring that all trainee teachers are trained within environments that provide them with access to high quality practice and pedagogy in relation to EAL and bilingual learners, with strong links to universities and subject associations where much expertise still resides

Full Response

1. NALDIC has been lobbying for many years for a more considered response to linguistic diversity in schools. Past and present migration patterns to the UK mean that linguistic diversity is well established in many areas and has become, and will continue to be, a significant feature of the pupil population in the majority of schools in England. Approximately one in seven learners in our schools is bilingual or learning EAL¹. Of particular concern to the Association is how well teacher training ensures that teachers are able to meet these pupils' distinctive needs. We are therefore disappointed that no specific mention of this aspect of initial teacher training is contained within the proposed strategy.
2. The field of teaching EAL is a distinct academic and professional discipline with unique linguistic, cultural, and pedagogical dimensions that require specialised education and training. NALDIC has been concerned for many years that EAL is not recognised as a subject specialism in initial teacher education. It is disadvantageous to learners that there is no recognised subject specific route through initial teacher education. In turn, we believe that this hampers the development of pedagogy which is appropriate to the needs of EAL learners, who now comprise more than 14 per cent of the maintained school population. These limitations have been brought into sharper focus with the increasing number of EAL learners joining the English school system, for example following the enlargement of the

¹ Source Jan 2011 School Census - 16.8% of primary pupils and 12.3% of secondary pupils are bilingual or learning EAL
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European Union. However it is necessary to recognise that linguistic diversity is not a passing phenomenon but a permanent feature of globalisation

3. NALDIC is therefore disappointed that the strategy document does not identify the strengthening of training in EAL as a third specific area to be tackled in 4.18. Although mention is made of synthetic phonics and behaviour management as two specific weaknesses consistently identified by new teachers in their initial training, no mention is made of the concerns new teachers have expressed around their preparation to teach EAL learners and those from ethnic minority backgrounds. Although the year on year data does suggest a continuing positive improvement in these two aspects of training, only 41% of trainees rated their training to teach EAL learners as good or very good, a figure far below their rating regarding synthetic phonics and behaviour, the two specific weaknesses identified in the strategy.
4. We note in the introduction to the consultation that countries with the highest performing school systems have focused attention on the effective recruitment, selection and initial training of teachers so that all those who begin a career in the classroom are well equipped to do so. International research also tells us that '*investment in language support measures*' are likely to promote high performance for all pupils.² These measures include specialized training (either pre- or in-service) for second language specialist teachers and strong co-operation between them and mainstream or other subject teachers. At present, England lags well behind other countries in ensuring a strong basis for success for all learners.³
5. NALDIC is committed to promoting the best quality in training for all new teachers and sees it as vitally important that new teachers joining the profession are well trained to teach. In order to achieve the highest standards in teaching and for us to continue to compete internationally and to ensure that our education system is both highly achieving and highly equitable, the standards expected of all new teachers in relation to EAL learners will need to be a prominent feature of the revised professional standards. We do not believe that this is currently the case.
6. We hope that the review of the standards for QTS will strengthen the EAL aspects of knowledge and understanding and teaching and learning. The *Importance of Teaching and Learning* noted that the government will ensure that the new standards have a stronger focus on key elements of teaching, including....how to support children with additional needs...'. In our view, and in the view of many teachers and schools, additional language learning should be considered a key additional need and we hope to see this clarified in future documentation.
7. In relation specifically to EAL, postgraduate trained NQTs rated their EAL training significantly higher than undergraduate trained NQTs (41 per cent compared with 37 per cent). NQTs trained on employment-based programmes also rated this aspect of training above the sector average at 47 per cent compared with 39 per cent. This supports the comment in the consultation that %trainees who follow teacher training programmes that are led by schools, such as the Graduate Teacher Programme, are more likely to find their training provided relevant knowledge, skills and understanding to teach their specialist subject+(4.5).
8. The position is slightly better for those taking a school based route to QTS, and those training in metropolitan areas where optional modules in EAL are offered, particularly as part of a 3 or 4 year primary B.Ed with QTS courses. However, small scale research projects have indicated that teachers who have benefited both from initial and continuing professional development are significantly more able to respond to EAL learners' needs in line with identified good practice and relevant research than those who have experienced neither or only one of these opportunities (NALDIC,2010).
9. NALDIC welcomes the government's recognition of the strengths that universities bring to teacher training and the importance of good subject networks and specialist expertise that contributes to their high quality (4.4) Ofsted has repeatedly noted that the current generation of teachers entering the profession are the best ever and reported in 2010 that university-based ITT was of higher quality than school-based provision. We are therefore not fully convinced that a move from the present system of

² *Language policies and practices for helping immigrants and second generation students succeed*
<http://www.migrationpolicy.org/pubs/ChristensenEducation091907.pdf>

³ *Closing the gap for immigrant students: policies, practice and performance* OECD, 2010

university-led ITT for most trainees (4.6) is wise. The quality evidence quoted in Annex 2.6 shows that it is planned to move responsibility from the more effective to the less effective providers. If changes are made on these lines, particularly at a time of stringent financial restraint, there is the distinct possibility that quality will deteriorate rather than improve.

10. NALDIC agrees that universities must have an important and continuing role in the future of ITT. (4.14) University tutors are often subject experts, informed by wide professional experience, familiarity with current issues and often by their own research. University courses provide opportunities for trainees to teach in a number of schools and reflect and evaluate the experiences. Universities have good local and national subject networks, strong links to the research community and much innovative practice. Most offer courses at Masters-equivalent Level, supporting the move towards an all Masters profession.
11. NALDIC recognises that schools have a very important role to play in the training of subject teachers. Schoolsqdirect involvement was introduced through legislation in 1992 and has developed significantly since then. Involvement in ITT has a positive effect on practice within schools. Indeed one of the case studies quoted in the consultation has very strong provision and expertise in relation to EAL teaching and learning. In our experience however, this is sadly the exception rather than the rule.
12. Trainees need the advice and guidance of skilled subject practitioners in schools where they can observe excellent teaching and work within outstanding colleagues and departments. It is also important that they spend time working with teachers and departments in more than one school in order to gain a broad experience of different practices and teaching approaches. It is particularly important that trainees are provided with the experience of working in linguistically diverse classrooms, even if their training school is relatively monolingual. In our experience, having experience in linguistically diverse schools is an asset to the teacher in developing their own practice as well as a key support for future employability. It is for this reason that a number of HE providers currently provide EAL as a specific additional component of their initial teacher training. It will be essential in any gradual move towards school based training, that all new trainees will be guaranteed experience within such a linguistically diverse setting as well as a focus on the appropriate pedagogy to adopt.
13. Whilst much can be gained from learning through school based training, we do not believe that there is enough expertise within schools to adequately train teachers in the areas of EAL and ethnic minority achievement. Of particular concern in relation to EAL is the sourcing of appropriately trained specialists and experts to support school based teacher training re EAL, whether as a specialism or as an integral part of all teacher training.
14. EAL is a specialist subject within the field of applied linguistics. This means that to enter the profession as a specialist should require academic study and qualification at higher education level. This requirement has not been in place for many years and so it is unclear where the appropriately qualified and experienced school based expertise will come from. At present, much of this expertise is located within university education departments. NALDIC is concerned that a hasty move towards school-based training is therefore likely to have a negative impact, particularly if it undermines the strong partnerships between universities and schools that are so important for high quality training.
15. For the move to school based training to be effective, training schools must be able to call on a wealth of EAL specialist expertise. However, over the past 30 years, scant attention had been paid to the issue of developing EAL specialists. By not insisting on appropriate qualifications for EAL teachers despite acknowledging this as a specialist field, educational policy in the UK has undermined attempts to establish a national accreditation for EAL specialism. The result is that there is a distinct lack of appropriately trained specialists and experts to support school based teacher training re EAL,
16. This lack of a national accreditation for EAL specialists fails to recognise that there is a body of academic knowledge in the field of applied linguistics which forms the specialism, and instead has created the impression in schools that anyone who speaks English can do the job. Given that academic language competence is an issue amongst indigenous English-speaking pupils, there is a greater need for language development specialists. This language specialism goes beyond the teaching of phonics. Whilst not decrying the importance of phonics, phonics can only take the learner so far; additional language development strategies are needed to develop high order academic language competence which is essential for school success. Schools and pupils will need the support from skilled, appropriately trained and qualified specialist teachers and teacher trainers.

17. As part of any planned increase in school based training, the government will need to consider urgently the re-introduction of supported Masters level training for specialist EAL teachers who will be fundamental in training our next generation of outstanding teachers for the linguistically diverse classrooms of today. While the proposed strategy document concentrates on ITT, the ongoing professional development of teachers cannot be ignored. If any investment in new teachers is to be maximised they must enter a profession where life-long professional development is the norm, so they can continue to develop as teachers, and indeed as teacher trainers as the consultation suggests.
18. NALDIC acknowledges that there are difficulties in recruiting sufficient teachers, particularly in the STEM subjects. However, we are not confident that a requirement for higher academic standards on entry will improve recruitment (2.4). A good class degree does not necessarily equate with the potential to be an excellent teacher.
19. NALDIC believes that the suggested allocation of bursaries in relation to class of degree (3.7) is misguided. It seems predicated on the assumption that those with first class degrees have the greatest potential as teachers. This is not so. It also omits the potential of those with optimum personal qualities and the need to attract people from the widest diversity of backgrounds. NALDIC believes that since we need to attract good quality people to the teaching profession across all subjects, all teacher trainees deserve a bursary of some kind.
20. Information from our members, many of whom are from diverse ethnic and linguistic backgrounds, suggests that many are frustrated in their attempts to gain QTS in the UK. For such members, all of whom know that they wish to specialise in EAL, there is no available QTS route. For example, a qualified overseas teacher who already specialises in EAL in their country of origin will often be required to undertake QTS in a National Curriculum subject in order to eventually work as an EAL teacher. This causes difficulties for individuals, institutions and schools who need to place the trainee in a National Curriculum department for their placement rather than placing them within the EAL department. This is at a time when schools are desperate for qualified, knowledgeable specialists.
21. The lack of a recognised initial EAL teaching qualification has an impact on the quality of EAL teaching provided in schools and also has an adverse impact on the profession as a whole. Members frequently describe to us their experience of discrimination within the school workplace where their subject and teaching experience is called into question as it is not considered on a par with National Curriculum subjects. Those working in the field often have the rigorous education, credentials, and experience equivalent to that of their peers in other subjects. However, in many settings and schools, teachers of EAL are not respected as being part of a unique discipline, and often do not receive the same professional treatment or benefits as their peers in other subjects or disciplines.
22. NALDIC's position is that schools and agencies should recognize the field of EAL as a unique academic and professional discipline that is distinct from, but on par with, other subjects. The continuing anomaly within the system that there is no initial training route into EAL teaching has a disproportionate impact on black and minority ethnic staff and so is a limiting factor in extending the diversity of the profession. NALDIC is opposed to policies that treat EAL teachers differently from their counterparts with comparable credentials in other disciplines. We believe this is important to foster equity and integrity in schools and in society at large, and is especially pertinent in the current climate of opinion, which is often hostile towards individuals from minority ethnic and linguistic backgrounds.
23. In general, our long-term experience in this field suggests that there is inadequate provision for preparing trainee teachers to work with students for whom English is an additional language. This should be addressed through the provision of a) a specialist EAL PGCE qualification and b) opportunities for PGCE in NC subjects with EAL as a subsidiary and c) greater inclusion of EAL issues in PGCE courses and employment based training routes. A parallel development in community languages would also be welcome.
24. The government strategy should look to ways to retain teachers throughout the early years of teaching when the wastage is high, particularly in London and the South-East. Raising the status of the profession (2.4) and of EAL as a specialism would certainly help to do this, and an all Mastersq profession is one way. NALDIC strongly supported the MTL as a way to enhance professional development, especially in developing specialist teaching skills. Since the MTL is no longer promoted,

alternative professional development opportunities need to be put in place. The high cost of studying for a Masters degree in the future is likely to be a very real deterrent to those in the early years of their career who are already paying off a student loan.

25. NALDIC is concerned about the proposed removal of the requirement for GTP trainees to be supernumerary+(3.15) and the impact this could have on the quality of training. The entitlement for trainees to high quality subject training must be safeguarded. A new teacher needs time to observe excellent subject practitioners, and also to be observed by them with subsequent discussion between trainer and trainee. This is the crux of outstanding training and cannot happen when both trainers and trainees are fully timetabled for the classes. *Training our next generation of outstanding teachers* argues that it might be possible for %the right people+to excel in these circumstances, but such a strategy is fraught with danger for the quality of the training experience if this is extended for all.

We have chosen not to use the DfE's standard response form as we feel that for some questions, the choice of options available is not adequate to reflect our opinion. Moreover, we are concerned that in previous consultations, the analysis of the response options without due regard to the more detailed extended answers, has led to misleading conclusions being drawn.

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