



## **NALDIC Response to The Importance of Teaching The Schools White Paper 2010**

**December 2010**

National Association for Language Development in the Curriculum (NALDIC) is the subject association for English as an additional language (EAL). It is dedicated to promoting the learning 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.

According to PANDA/ RAISEonline 2005-2010 the proportion of pupils for whom English is an additional language has nearly doubled from 8.4% in 2004 to 15.3% in 2009. In secondary schools, the percentage of students for whom English is an additional language has risen from 8.6% in 2004 to 11.4% in 2009. Attainment indicators in English, mathematics and science at Key Stage 1, 2 and 3 over this period show that pupils for whom English is a first language consistently outperform their peers for whom English is an additional language in all three core subjects in these Key Stages. We put the case that being able to address the needs of EAL pupils should be accorded the same importance as catering for pupils with Special Educational Needs.

Despite the year on year increase, and in contrast to the statutory framework for pupils with Special Educational Needs, learners of EAL in our schools have no National Curriculum entitlement to EAL teaching and learning. Their needs are therefore additional to the National Curriculum in schools in England. As long as this situation persists, our position is that these pupils' additional needs require specific and clearly defined provision and specialist teaching.

Our comments concerning the recent White Paper can be found below.

### **Teaching and Leadership**

1. Reforming initial teacher training so that more training is on the job and focusing on key teaching skills (namely reading, maths, managing behaviour and responding to pupils' special educational needs) is covered within the White Paper. The paper cites new teachers reporting that they are not always confident about some key skills that they need as teachers, mentioning in particular the teaching of synthetic phonics (para 2.20). The government should be reminded that the annual NQT survey shows that NQTs persistently rate themselves least well prepared for meeting the needs of EAL and minority ethnic pupils, compared to all other aspects of their ITE course

including meeting the needs of SEN pupils and behaviour management. Yet this is not mentioned in the paper, despite the fact that there has been year on year increase in EAL pupils in schools nationally.

Without specific mention of the needs of EAL and minority ethnic pupils, the White paper gives the impression that attention to phonics and to pupils with SEN will also address the needs of EAL, and underachieving minority ethnic pupils.

2. Whilst much can be gained from learning on the job, we do not believe that there is enough expertise within schools to adequately train teachers in the areas of EAL and minority ethnic achievement. The focus on 'on the job' training also seems to go against the emphasis on the need for teachers to have good academic competence and subject knowledge (para 2.8, 2.9), as exemplified by the development of the MaST course and the SENCo accreditation, both of which require HEI-based training and not school-based training. EAL is a specialist subject within the field of applied linguistics. This means that to enter the profession should require academic study and qualification at higher education level. We hope that the government will support this requirement and counterbalance the erosion to this specialist field by the past government.
3. We welcome the emphasis on improving the quality of teachers in the White Paper. The former government had paid scant attention to this issue and indeed, by not insisting on appropriate qualifications for EAL teachers despite acknowledging this as a specialist field, it had undermined attempts by our professional body to argue for a national accreditation for EAL specialism. 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. The TDA was in the process of developing an EAL professional development route. However, this work was not able to progress without further directive from the present government. 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.
4. We hope that the review of the standards of QTS (2.35) will strengthen the EAL aspects of knowledge and understanding and teaching and learning. The document notes 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.
5. Para 2.55 states that assessment of pupils' work is an essential part of good teaching. Whilst APP has its inadequacies, teachers need guidance on what progression looks like. Relying on National Curriculum level descriptors has been found to be inadequate, especially when applied to EAL learners, whose language learning

development paths cut across curriculum subjects and have features that are not included in the NC level descriptors for English, developed for first language speakers of English and not for EAL pupils.

6. Good teaching that is sensitive to the needs of EAL learners will need to include appropriate assessment. The 2006 PISA report lists a number of factors that contribute to the closing of gaps between 'immigrant' and 'non-immigrant' pupils, including having language development frameworks and progress benchmarks. Britain is the only English-speaking country not to have developed a specific EAL scale to measure progress in learning English as an additional language, despite the recommendations in the PISA report.

### **Behaviour**

7. Bullying is specifically mentioned – but only in relation to homophobic bullying and SEN pupils. There is a single mention re taking '*prejudice-based bullying especially seriously*' and educating children '*about the differences between different groups of people and create a culture of respect and understanding*'. We are very concerned that 'equality', 'racism', 'racist bullying' are not mentioned by name in the entire paper, in contrast to the frequent mentions of homophobic and other prejudice related bullying.
8. We are concerned that the government is failing to give due emphasis to these areas of bullying and behaviour, which have consistently been highlighted in surveys as a major cause of bullying and poor behaviour. The government may wish to consult the Swindon Serious Case Review to appreciate the very serious problems that unchallenged racist bullying and behaviour can lead to.
9. The lack of attention to preventing racist bullying in the White Paper is further compounded by statements already made public requesting that Ofsted abandon community cohesion in its inspection of schools. Together with the current White Paper, this creates the impression that the government does not consider race equality to be an issue worthy of scrutiny and report, despite acknowledging racism to be an issue in its own EQUIA. (cf paragraph 18), and despite the strong evidence provided by Professor Steve Strand's research which shows that socio-economic variables could account for the attainment gaps for a number of minority ethnic groups, but not for Black Caribbean pupils. His research suggests that in-school factors, such as teacher expectations and institutional racism, play a significant part in understanding the relative gap for Black Caribbean pupils (p19, '*The limits of social class in explaining ethnic gaps in educational attainment*', 2009).

### **Accountability**

10. We would like to sound a note of concern regarding publishing how schools use the Pupil Premium. In a BNP or EDL dominated area, a school may not wish to court parental backlash by publishing information on how the Pupil Premium is used if the school is experiencing large numbers of new arrivals. This could lead to racial tension as the school is accused of 'diverting resources away from our White British pupils to foreign new arrivals'. Such direct racism is alive and well in many communities up and

down the country as a glance at any newspaper internet comment webpage will confirm.

11. Whilst we agree that schools are often best placed to address parents' concerns, parents may not all be equally prepared to express their concerns. For example, minority ethnic parents who may not speak English very well and may lack the confidence or linguistic ability to express their views. What incentives would schools have to ensure two-way communication with such parents?
12. We are concerned at the proposal to end CVA. This will be unfair to schools with large numbers of EAL learners at earlier stages of learning English. A simple comparison of raw attainment scores between such a school and one with very few such learners is likely to disadvantage the more linguistically mixed school.
13. We welcome the undertaking to *'focus more firmly on how well disadvantaged pupils do, and make sure that schools are held fully to account for using the Pupil Premium to raise the achievement of eligible children'*. However, it is not clear whether ethnic monitoring will continue in order for the focus on vulnerable groups to continue, or indeed whether EAL pupils come under *'eligible children'* or not, since there is no mention of them at all in the White Paper. Whilst we agree that the use of the pupil premium should be targeted and monitored, we would be very concerned if monitoring by free school meals eligibility was seen as the only way of judging *'fairness'*.
14. Differences in attainment between different ethnic groups and EAL learners may have lessened due to the strong focus on this over the past few years. It is however, far from *'solved'*. We would therefore urge the government to ensure that the need to publish such information is retained and is made widely available to parents and communities.

## **Curriculum, Assessment and Qualifications**

### ***Teaching of early reading:***

15. We would not dispute the effectiveness of systematic synthetic phonics - this is at the heart of the CLLD programme, but this must be within a broad and rich language environment. It is not enough to impart the ability to decode, children need also to gain meaning from their reading and also learn to read because they enjoy it.
16. We welcome the news that the government *'will provide the resources to support the teaching of systematic synthetic phonics....by providing funding for high-quality training and classroom resources'*. We would urge the government to ensure that attention is given to the particular needs of EAL learners who are learning to read. We would urge the government to consider that EAL learners may often be learning to decode in English at a much later chronological age than peers who have been in the education system since the beginning of the EYFS. We would hope that the government will consider the needs of these learners, who are a particular cause for concern.
17. Systematic research reviews indicate that whilst systematic synthetic phonics is a successful method for teaching children to read, particular care needs to be given to

EAL learners who will additionally need to make sense of the text linguistically. For these children, a strand of support relating to reading comprehension alongside decoding is essential.

### **Broad Academic core and a rounded education**

18. We welcome the inclusion of languages in the Baccalaureate proposal and hope this will support the revival of language teaching at KS4. However it is not clear whether all languages will enjoy equal status and support or only the languages of EU countries/and languages of 'global economy'. We are also concerned that no mention is made of primary languages and maintaining developments and progression.
19. Para 4.7 states that the NC must '*embody their cultural and scientific inheritance, the best that our past and present generations have to pass on to the next.*' The question is whose cultural and scientific inheritance will be embodied? And what will the subject content (4.9) consist of that will enable pupils to take their place as 'educated members of society' (ibid). We support the strive for academic excellence, but hope this does not mean narrowing down the curriculum so that it is neither inclusive nor reflects the British society in the 21<sup>st</sup> century and beyond.
20. The paper, from 4.15 onwards, promotes the teaching of reading and phonics. This appears to be a 'one size fits all' approach. Over-emphasis on phonics without paying equal attention to the development of higher order reading skills, is of limited usefulness to pupils learning English as an additional language as noted above. We would argue that it would be more fruitful to talk about developing academic language competence, thus encompassing a balanced focus on oracy as well as literacy and the relationship between the two.
21. We are concerned that the term 'deprived' is used to represent all underachieving groups, thus eradicating the distinctive teaching and learning needs of different groups. We feel that this misrepresents the needs of many underachieving groups. We know from research that poverty is closely linked to underachievement, however we would urge the government not to ignore the research which demonstrates just how important other pupil characteristics are in 'fair' outcomes. groups.
22. Comparing England's performance against international benchmarks can be helpful. However, experience from the past is that the comparisons are selective. There has not been any uptake on the recommendations made in the PISA 2006 report focusing on *Language policies and practices for helping immigrants and second generation students succeed*. Indeed, this paper avoids talking about minority ethnic and EAL pupils altogether, when all over Europe, this is becoming the focus of education reforms as more and more countries experience increasing numbers of new incoming students in their schools.
23. Para 4.44 talks about delivering 'rigorous, valid and reliable assessment which promote attainment and progression...' – we would welcome changes to assessment procedures to take account of the distinctive development paths of EAL pupils, such as those developed in other English speaking countries, and such as that recommended by the PISA 2006 report.

## **New School**

24. On admissions (5.7) – we welcome the assurance to maintain a level playing field on admissions and safeguarding the LA's role by ensuring that LAs 'play a critical role in coordinating fair admissions, promoting social injustice by supporting vulnerable children and challenging schools...'. However, and yet again, the paper cites only children with Special Educational Needs, whilst we know that other groups are also prone to discrimination in this area, if not more so but equally - namely refugees/asylum seekers and Gypsy Roma Traveller pupils, who were mentioned in the EQUIA report but not once in the White Paper, even though they are the most underachieving group nationally.
25. The paper underlines LAs role in helping schools to deliver an aspirational National Curriculum and to ensure that 'teaching and learning reflects the nature of their local community.' (5.29) However, it is not clear how 'by stripping away targets, rules, regulations and ring-fencing' will help schools to do that.
26. It is remiss of the paper not to specifically mention EAL and minority ethnic pupils amongst those specified under 'support vulnerable pupils' (5.53). The cumulative effect of not mentioning these groups at all throughout the paper will send out a message that they do not have distinctive needs and that their needs are not so important compared to SEN and LAC pupils.
27. The systematic failure to mention EAL and minority ethnic pupils is to deliberately ignore the gaps that still exist (cf Momentum Measure graphs produced by the NS) and which go beyond FSM/deprivation indicators. It is also ignoring one of the key issues facing 21st century schools in England and Europe in the face of global movements of pupils and families and how schools are going to deal with this without investment in training for teachers, leadership, without looking at curriculum provision and assessment.
28. The paper does give scope to LAs, as champions for vulnerable pupils, to develop own plans to support vulnerable children, and innovative approaches to providing services and deploying resources (5.40). However, and again, only SEN pupils are mentioned. There are a number of other groups that need LA championing – EAL, minority ethnic, GRT, refugees/asylum seeker pupils.

## **School Funding**

29. We welcome the commitment that 'Funding reform will be introduced in such a way as to minimise disruption and ensure schools' resources are not subject to sudden and dramatic change.' (8.10). Our position on funding targeted at support EAL pupils has been made clear in a separate response to the funding regulations consultation 2010. Principally, we would argue that the Ethnic Minority Achievement Grant, should not be merged with the Direct Schools Grant (DSG) and that any changes should be postponed at least until the government has completed its review of the system for funding schools beyond 2011-12.

In considering future funding arrangements, NALDIC would urge the DFE to be mindful of the following principles and alternatives:

- The needs of EAL learners are primarily, though not solely, linguistic.
- Pupils who enter the school system with English as an additional language require additional and appropriate support for their language learning. Additional provision to learn English is key to a nationally coherent and systematic approach to EAL learners' needs which has been lacking in school provision in the UK to date.
- The need for targeted, additional provision from EAL specialist teachers has increased, as has the need for improved response and greater expertise in the mainstream.
- Failure to take positive action to recognise this unmet need compromises the future well being of bilingual young people within our schools and damages our ability to compete internationally. International comparisons reveal that linguistically diverse countries which have a clear policy stance on the need to make provision for pupils to learn the language of the education system rank far more highly than those which do not.
- We would therefore urge the government to take this opportunity to consider more fully the English language needs of pupils learning English as an additional language and to consider these needs carefully in its review of school funding beyond 2011-12

### **School Improvement**

30. Whilst we support the use of Leaders of Education and leading teachers to drive school improvement, there is a need for specialists to play a key role in supporting school improvement in subjects, such as EAL, where quality and qualifications are not yet so well-established in mainstream schools (for reasons stated above in paragraph 3).
31. There are significant numbers of new pupils, particularly from EEC countries, with little or no experience of English entering the education system in both rural and urban schools. This has led to an increasing demand for support for EAL learners to levels which have not been seen since the 1970s. Without adequate funding it is proving difficult to maintain consistent development of effective work with EAL learners at later stages whilst the more visible and immediate needs of new arrivals require increasing time and attention. It is clear that there is currently inadequate provision available to meet the needs of many 'beginners' enrolled in both urban and in rural schools with little or no history of working with bilingual youngsters and no access to additional funding
32. Our concern for the well being of these young people in our education system continues to grow, particularly with the announcement that funding will no longer be ring-fenced to be used to meet their needs. The experience in Northern Ireland was

that the removal of ring fenced funding led to the collapse of the EAL services in four of five of the local boards with the consequent loss of support for EAL pupils in those areas. Questions were asked about the equality impact of these changes with reference to the Northern Ireland Act 1998. This has heightened our concerns that similar policy changes in England may have far-reaching negative implications for the well being and achievement of learners from minority ethnic backgrounds. This is particularly worrying at a time when the government is anxious to champion fairness and to ensure that all young people do well in our schools. **Fluency in English, acquired in a timely manner, is a key requirement for educational success within the UK education system. Lack of English fluency quite clearly prevents a large number of young people from reaching their potential.**

33. If EMAG is to be discontinued as a separate and ring-fenced grant and added to the Direct Schools Grant, spending on EAL becomes the direct responsibility of schools. Whilst many schools have made great strides in developing their capacity to support EAL learners, this is most usually where there are large numbers of these pupils in a school. Direct school funding does not necessarily support isolated pupils learning EAL around the country. Their teachers often have little or no experience of working with such pupils and require considerable support with resources and expertise. The source of this expertise is generally found within local authorities.
34. The skills and knowledge of local authority staff are needed to train mainstream staff so that all bilingual pupils can learn English and access the curriculum to achieve their full potential. We believe that it is therefore essential that local authorities have the right, with the agreement of local schools forum, to continue to retain monies centrally to ensure that central services can develop schools' expertise and provide the support that is so desperately required.

### **In conclusion**

We welcome the government's focus on the importance of teaching. We urge the government to take this opportunity to ensure that equal attention – such as that paid to pupils with Special Educational Needs – is paid to the provision for pupils with English as an Additional Language, a group that constitutes a significant percentage of our pupil population yet currently enjoys no statutory provision to meet their specific needs. A proper focus on academic language competence, led by appropriately trained and qualified specialist teachers, would contribute greatly to raising attainment and closing the gap between all groups, including White pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds.

We urge the government to redress the omission in the White Paper in mentioning the specific needs of learners of EAL and minority ethnic pupils, including Gypsy Roma Travellers (where the biggest attainment gap lies) by including them in future guidance to schools and local authorities when clarifying about accountability and the use of the Pupil Premium. This would be consistent with their own analysis in their EQUIA.

### **Contact Details**

NALDIC  
Building L46

University of Reading  
London Road  
Reading,  
RG1 5AQ  
Tel 0118 9869040.  
[enquiries@naldic.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@naldic.org.uk)  
[www.naldic.org.uk](http://www.naldic.org.uk)