

NALDIC Annual Report to the Membership: 2010-2011

Priority 1: To continue to develop the professional field of EAL

Priority 2: To develop NALDIC's advocacy role on behalf of EAL/bilingual learners and their teachers.

Priority 3: To continue to define and develop effective provision for EAL learners and the role of languages in learning.

Priority 4: To promote the role of bilingualism in education

Priority 5: To sustain NALDIC's role through investigating and developing new organisational models

In this annual report we outline the activities we have undertaken to address these strands and the progress made in enhancing provision for bilingual learners in our schools.

Much of the year has been devoted to putting the case for EAL in the face of all the changes in policy brought about by the coalition government. The changes that are having the greatest impact on the EAL field relate mostly to the funding regime, changes to workforce development, and changes related to new perspectives on equality. It is not easy, as you know, to influence government policies. Nonetheless, NALDIC continues to put the case at every opportunity; and we should take note where policy changes have been achieved, small as they may be in some cases, they are, nonetheless, significant.

Priority 1: To continue to develop the professional field of EAL

Expected outcomes: the continued promotion and awareness raising of EAL as a specialist curriculum subject area; of EAL as a distinctive pedagogic practice; and of the role of EAL specialist teachers and teaching assistants.

NALDIC has continued to work on securing the future of EAL as a specialism. We responded robustly to the Education White Paper *'The Importance of Teaching'* and urged the government to ensure that equal attention – such as that paid to pupils with Special Educational Needs – is paid to provision for pupils with English as an Additional Language, arguing that EAL learners constitute a significant percentage of our pupil population yet there is no statutory provision to meet their specific needs. NALDIC advocated for a proper focus on academic language competence, led by appropriately trained and qualified specialist teachers, as a basis for raising attainment and closing the gap between all groups.

Whilst the Education White Paper avoided talking about minority ethnic and EAL pupils altogether, 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. Over 2010-2011, NALDIC joined forces with European colleagues by participating in a very successful conference showcasing a pan European project to develop a curriculum which defines what all teachers need to know in order to teach additional language learners in their contexts. Importantly for us, this curriculum focused particularly on developing 'Inclusive Academic Language Teaching' as a core module in teacher education.

We also worked with the TDA to develop a training initiative for ITE providers, in the wake of research into the quality of EAL training in ITT programmes, and following the annual NQT survey showing only 35% of NQTs feel confident about meeting the needs of EAL pupils. A pilot training event was held in July 2011 in Leeds, with thirty representatives from HEI ITE providers. The training received overwhelming approval from the participants. NALDIC was awarded funding from the TDA to extend this training to three regions and will be providing an online forum to support ITE providers in developing their EAL training programme for trainee teachers.

We have continued to use social media and our online presence to promote awareness and develop EAL professionalism. In January, we set up the EAL-bilingual Google group to replace the forum previously hosted by BECTA. This has enabled the forum to continue seamlessly as a virtual support network for EAL specialists. We have also developed a series of podcasts related to pupils learning EAL. These podcasts are designed to help: trainee teachers to meet TDA standards on the way to QTS; NQTs and class teachers to understand and develop pedagogy and practice; and to help EAL staff build capacity through the use of quality training resources. We have also developed a new-look website to enable a greater range of services to be provided to members and to enable NALDIC to support the growing number of professional development initiatives that are being developed in the face of increasing EAL need and demand.

Priority 2: To develop NALDIC's advocacy role on behalf of the EAL field and those working in the EAL field.

Expected outcomes: Equitable provision for EAL learners.

Much of our advocacy work this year has been directed at lobbying to protect provision for bilingual and EAL learners against the backdrop of extensive cuts to services and staff. Through a programme of NALDIC meetings and focus groups we have developed briefings and responded to consultations including:

- NALDIC Briefing on additional cost estimates in relation to EAL learners - August 2011
- Provision for Ethnic Minority and Bilingual Pupils A Summary of Findings from a Freedom of Information Request May 2011
- NALDIC Response to Training our next generation of outstanding teachers July 2011
- NALDIC Response to School Funding Reform May 2011
- NALDIC Response to Inspection 2012 May 2011
- NALDIC Response the Importance of Teaching - The Schools White Paper December 2010
- NALDIC Response to Schools Finance (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2011 December 2010

We have collaborated with the NUT to shine a light on the worsening situation for EAL and bilingual learners through our NUT/NALDIC National Ethnic Minority Achievement Grant Survey in February 2011 which we followed up with a Freedom of Information request to all English local authorities in May 2011.

As colleagues will recall, the previous government's equality impact assessment of proposed changes to the funding for EAL and bilingual pupils noted that whilst an adverse impact was unlikely, there was not enough evidence for this assessment '*to be made with as much confidence as is desirable*'. In fact our work has revealed a hugely negative outcome on bilingual learner support up and down the country due to the changes to EMAG combined with massive cuts to local authority budgets. We protested against these cuts in March and have continued to speak out on this issue to politicians, the press and through our own publications and social media. At a more local level we have supported specialist teachers and teams whose vital work is being put at risk by attempts to reduce spending.

Priority 3: To continue to define and develop effective provision for EAL learners and the role of languages in learning.

Expected outcomes: Effective EAL pedagogy is made explicit, continues to be developed and disseminated.

Over this year we have strengthened and extended a number of the initiatives to bring EAL pedagogy to a wider audience.

We have collaborated further with Pearson Education to provide guidance materials for their set of teachers' guides for Edexcel GCSE Science. As with the guides for GCSE English, the Science guides follow the same format in providing lesson-by-lesson advice focussed on EAL learners. The set of three Science guides are now published. This set has added to the previously published series on GCSE English as a valuable resource for mainstream teachers and is a first for a major textbook publisher; NALDIC is pleased to have been involved in this initiative.

Our events committee organised NALDIC's 18th Annual Conference with Kings' College London focusing on the theme of 'Language Education for a Changing World – the European Dimension'. Many European countries are now also beginning to experience new arrivals in their schools. The conference allowed NALDIC to network with European colleagues, share experiences and learn about the development of a pan-European response to language education and teacher training.

Closer to home, the events committee has further developed 'The Distinctiveness of EAL' training package for specialist EAL teachers and delivered it to a group of EAL specialists, and another of trainers. This package has been very well received and we are delivering it in more and more locations in the coming year as NALDIC continues to receive requests for training.

Our active publications committee has produced four stimulating issues of our *NALDIC Quarterly* covering: EAL and Systemic Functional Linguistics; Language Education for a Changing World – The European Dimension; Language learning and teaching: crossing boundaries; and EAL and Additional Needs. We also published our first online only Occasional Paper 25, an investigation of patterns of language use and attitudes. The vitality of our publications committee is a testament to the influence of Angela Creese, who stood down in May 2011 after four very successful years as Chair of Publications. We would like to thank Angela for her immensely valued contribution.

Priority 4: To promote the role of bilingualism in education

Expected outcomes: An enhanced awareness and increased knowledge about the value of bilingualism to bilingual learners' academic achievement.

NALDIC has continued to promote the value of bilingualism through our publications and activities. This year, this was highlighted particularly in the NALDIC Quarterly issue on Language learning teaching: crossing boundaries which looked at the interface between learning EAL, MFL, Community Language vis-à-vis the bilingual learner. Our podcasts series regularly point out the importance of developing bilingual competency.

Under the leadership of our Chair Amy Thompson, we have worked in collaboration with others, cementing partnerships and links with organisation such as Language Alliance, ALL World Languages Special Interest Group, and the new Speak to the Future campaign for languages. We have also participated in two major European projects. We contributed to a Council of Europe project on 'Language In and For Education' culminating in a series of publications on the Council of Europe platform on

Languages and Schooling of Minorities and Migrants. We also took part in another Council of Europe project, based at ECML, on 'Majority Language Instruction as basis for Plurilingual Education'. This project allowed NALDIC to network with colleagues in other European countries and share experiences and good practice in developing an inclusive approach to education in a plurilingual context. A publication exemplifying teacher knowledge and pedagogical approaches is forthcoming.

Priority 5: To sustain NALDIC's role through investigating and developing new organisational models

Expected outcomes: NALDIC administration is perceived to be more responsive to members and contributes to an enhanced strategic role for NALDIC

As members will be aware, this year has been a particularly difficult one for charities and for the EAL field as a whole. During this year we have managed to further reduce our costs and with our income holding up, we have reduced our losses considerably from those we experienced in 2009/2010. Much of the credit for this should go to our support officer Maggs Harrison. Maggs has coped cheerfully with the inevitable disruption we have suffered whilst the University of Reading's London Road campus has been extensively remodelled around us. This has included almost a year of building works and a flood at our offices in June. Despite this, we feel we have maintained our level of service. Extending our ability to accept payment by credit cards has proved useful to members and others wishing to book conference places or purchase publications. In order to continue to reduce our costs and optimise our service, we have taken the decision to move even more of our communications and transactions on-line which has necessitated a major investment in new technology. We hope that members will see the benefits of this over the forthcoming year.

Conclusion

This year saw the single most challenging of times facing the EAL profession. NALDIC has devoted much of its time and energy to making the case for EAL and bilingual learners and supporting colleagues in the fight for maintaining provision for these learners. Despite the losses we have undoubtedly suffered as a result of changes in government policy, the continued activities on the eal-bilingual forum, the overwhelmingly negative response to the encroachment on the EAL profession by commercial companies intent only on profit margins, the oversubscription to our 2011 conference, and the overwhelming response to the ITE EAL training initiative are all very encouraging signs that the profession is alive and well.

We are already seeing new opportunities emerging out of the challenges. The need for EAL specialists remains. We will continue to build alliances with colleagues within the UK and beyond to provide an ever stronger platform to support our work.