

# New Inquiry into Teacher Training

## Executive Summary

This submission is on behalf of National Association for Language Development in the Curriculum (NALDIC). 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.

We have been concerned for many years about the fact that EAL is not recognised as a subject specialism in initial teacher education. NALDIC has done considerable work on this issue, having carried out a research project with the support of the DfES and the University of Birmingham in 2000, culminating in our publication 'The EAL Teacher: Descriptors of Good Practice'. We believe that it is disadvantageous to learners that there is no recognised subject specific route through initial teacher education and inconsistent opportunities for CPD and training post-qualification. We believe that this hampers the development of pedagogy which is appropriate to the needs of EAL learners, who now comprise more than 12 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 European Union. It is necessary to recognise that linguistic diversity is not a passing phenomenon but a permanent feature of globalisation and needs an appropriate and considered response.

This submission summarises the issues relating to ITT and CPD for those working with bilingual pupils in schools and EAL specialist teachers in particular. It outlines evidence for the Association's belief that this aspect of education is inadequately catered for by current practices and offers some suggestions for the future.

### ***Entry into the teaching profession***

- ***whether the current range of routes into teaching is effective in attracting and developing those with the qualifications, skills and attributes to become good teachers;***
  - ***the adequacy of current measures to improve the diversity of the teaching profession; and***
  - ***the extent to which existing ITT provision adequately prepares trainees for entry into the teaching profession, whether they intend to teach in primary schools, secondary schools, early years settings or further education settings. (Comments are particularly welcome on whether provision meets the needs of new teachers in working with pupils with special education needs and of new teachers based in schools operating in more challenging circumstances).***
1. The increase in EAL pupil numbers, in particular since 2004, has led to an increased interest in the development of specialist and non specialist EAL teaching skills and qualifications. Whilst overall pupil numbers are falling, the number of EAL pupils in both the primary and secondary sector is increasing. Latest figures (Jan 2008) show that numbers have risen by a third since 2004. Recognising this, the TDA remit now specifically includes 'work within the integrated qualifications framework to develop a pathway of qualifications for teachers and support staff to provide leadership in effective EAL teaching and learning' and the Agency has recently embarked on a 5 year strategy to achieve this.

2. The demographic changes in England have had clear implications for workforce supply, development and modernisation. Despite efforts by the TDA and ITT providers to improve the coverage of EAL in initial teacher education, **the newly qualified teachers' survey continues to highlight preparedness for EAL learners as one of the least positive aspects of trainees' initial training.** 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, forthcoming). Similarly whilst a specialist pathway now exists within the occupational standards, there is work to be done to support entrants to the specialist pathway and to evaluate and develop occupational training within this.
  
3. NALDIC believes that 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. We believe that 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 12 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 European Union. However it is necessary to recognise that linguistic diversity is not a passing phenomenon but a permanent feature of globalisation
  
4. 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. Similarly a bilingual teaching assistant or HLTA who already works with bilingual pupils supporting their English language development will need to undertake QTS in a National Curriculum subject in order to work as an EAL teacher. This causes difficulties both 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.
  
5. 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. NALDIC's

position is that schools, local authorities and government 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.

6. In general, our long-term experience in this field suggests that there is inadequate provision for preparing students 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 NC PGCE courses. A parallel development in community languages would also be welcome.

#### ***CPD provision***

- ***whether current CPD provision for new teachers, experienced teachers and head teachers supports and enhances their practice in school and, if so, to what extent***
7. As noted above, the newly qualified teacher survey indicates that a major gap for new teachers is their preparedness for working with EAL learners. A DfES funded research project in 2000 *The EAL teacher: Descriptors of Good Practice* (Franson, NALDIC, 2002) developed some descriptors of effective EAL specialist practice and concluded that there **was a need for a national qualifications framework and consistency across the sector**. *Support for minority ethnic achievement: continuing professional development* (OFSTED, 2002) was a small scale survey of local authority training funded by the Ethnic Minority Achievement Grant (EMAG) some of which related to EAL. This evaluated training events and provision in ten rural and urban local authorities. The report found that the majority of school- and centre-based courses were short, stand-alone events and that there has been a sharp decline in the number of long-term accredited courses. The report concluded that the picture of CPD was 'one of wide-ranging and good-quality professional development provision, but **provision that does not meet one of the most urgent training needs in this area, namely for more specialists**'.
  8. Our experience in the field leads us to argue that CPD needs to be differentiated by staff role and incremental however there is limited agreement about appropriate content areas for staff performing different roles within the school workforce at different stages of their careers. As a result, CPD and vocational training is not always sufficiently differentiated. For example, the content of much LA and private provider training is induction or entry level and, therefore, might reasonably be expected to form part of every teachers' initial teacher training if they are judged to have met QTS standard Q19<sup>1</sup>. Similarly, there is very limited provision for EAL early professional development (EPD) in the early years of

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<sup>1</sup> Know how to make effective personalised provision for those they teach, including those for whom English is an Additional Language, or who have special educational needs or disabilities, and how to take practical account of diversity and promote inclusion and equality in their teaching.

teachers' careers. There is some evidence that the absence of nationally agreed content areas has led to CPD and vocational provision that is reactive rather than progressive, and to development issues being displaced by short term foci. **The major gap is sustained and accredited CPD for EAL specialists/coordinators. Other issues include** In addition, EAL CPD and vocational training is inconsistent. There is a high level of variation between the training available to staff in different local authorities and different regions and a limited differentiated training for groups of staff at different stages of their careers. This means that high quality, relevant CPD and vocational training on EAL issues for mainstream and specialist staff across the school workforce is not yet consistently accessible nationally.

9. Our experience in this field leads us to suggest that there is insufficient provision for CPD for teachers and other adults working with EAL students. This should be addressed through the provision of accredited and differentiated training in EAL (for example, MTL modules, courses for teaching assistants etc) which builds into a cohesive training and professional development framework. This would have a positive impact on the life chances of bilingual pupils and would go some way to ensuring that pathways into and within the profession are equally open to adults from minority linguistic and ethnic heritages.

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