

## **SUBJECT SPECIALISM CONSULTATION**

### **NATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT IN THE CURRICULUM (NALDIC)**

**NALDIC** (National Association for Language Development in the Curriculum) is the subject association for teachers of English as an Additional Language. It is dedicated to promoting the learning and achievement of bilingual pupils and draws its membership from those who work in the field of EAL and bilingualism in schools, universities and other educational institutions. It promotes the effective teaching and learning of bilingual and EAL pupils who currently comprise almost ten percent of the school population. **NALDIC** was founded in 1992 and provides a professional forum for:

- the teaching and learning of English as an additional language (EAL)
- supporting bilingualism
- raising the achievement of ethnic minority learners
- the development and understanding of this field of education

Since its inception **NALDIC** has:

- promoted the development of policy, practice and research in the area of EAL and bilingualism
- disseminated information regarding the teaching and learning of EAL
- acted as a subject network for teaching, academic and research members
- advised government and professional bodies and on issues relating to EAL and bilingualism
- produced a range of publications, including books, occasional papers and a quarterly journal
- organised a range of major conferences and seminars around aspects of EAL and bilingualism
- drawn on international perspectives through its publications and events
- provided a voice for the profession

### **How do you assess the adequacy of the current sources of subject specialism support?**

**NALDIC** welcomes the government's increasing policy focus on subject specialism and the role of Subject Associations. The positioning of EAL within the education system and the adequacy of support accorded is an issue of particular importance for **NALDIC**. At present, EAL is not viewed as a distinct subject specialism within the UK educational context. **NALDIC** has long argued that effective teaching and learning for EAL and bilingual learners will be enhanced if EAL is recognised as a distinct specialism. To date, national policy initiatives have not fully recognised the distinctive language and learning needs of EAL and bilingual pupils in the statutory sector, nor have they recognised that a subject specialism exists to meet those needs. There is therefore a significant contrast between mainstream curriculum subjects and EAL teaching.

Statutory mainstream subjects are clearly defined in terms of a nationally recognised framework of curriculum, teaching content, teacher education and assessment backed by a range of National Curriculum, OFSTED and QCA documents for guidance. Mainstream subject areas (including 'new' subjects such as Citizenship) have thus been able to attract significant DfES funding and development which has enhanced the teaching and learning of the subject at school and class level. EAL in contrast has not, and has typically relied on localised or individual knowledge and development, an emphasis on overcoming communication problems, and locally sponsored teacher education, guidance and assessment.

In order to achieve the necessary step change in this area, we would argue that significant national development is required through the recognition of EAL as a distinct specialism and the provision of significant resources to meet the development of the subject in the UK context. It is useful to compare the position of EAL as a subject in the statutory UK sector with the position of; SEN, ESOL in the post compulsory sector and EAL in international contexts.

EAL teaching in the further education sector, for example, has seen from 2000 onwards the development of an EAL curriculum, complete with a skill based subject specification, a significant and mandatory CPD programme for all those involved in teaching ESOL in the FE sector and the development of a nationally mapped framework of qualifications. This was seen as the precursor to improvements to teaching and learning in this area. **NALDIC** has recently argued for a similar recognition in the development of a national strategy for EAL in the recent DfES consultation 'Aiming High: Raising the Achievement of Minority Ethnic Pupils'. (See Appendix 1 – Key Issues in the Development of a National Strategy for EAL).

Whilst pursuing the long term aim of subject recognition for EAL, NALDIC is keen to ensure and promote effective teaching and learning of EAL and bilingual learners in the current UK situation. The current context is that **for the learner of EAL in the mainstream classroom, the task of acquiring English and achieving academically, is a moving target: while the learner is acquiring English, the curriculum for the peer group is continually advancing** (see '*The Distinctiveness of English as an Additional Language: a cross-curriculum discipline*' 1999, NALDIC ). To enable EAL learners to achieve in this situation all teachers and support staff must ensure **access to and progress through the curriculum and English language acquisition through the integration of language and curriculum or subject content**. This places EAL, as a cross curricular discipline, in a distinct position from most subject specialisms requiring excellence in teaching and learning in all subjects to ensure raising standards.

Due to the nature of the discipline in UK schools, current sources of subject specialist support are clearly inadequate. EAL is typically locally led and managed. In schools, the subject is often the responsibility of a single individual or a single teacher supported by instructors and bilingual assistants. The leadership provided at LEA level is variable and evidence from OFSTED and other bodies has demonstrated that local LEA leadership and development in this area has greatly reduced since 1999. NALDIC is increasingly providing advice, guidance, resources and training in areas where LEA level support for EAL is no longer readily available.

Despite the fact that there is considerable body of national and international research on effective pedagogy and progression for EAL pupils, very little of this is readily available to mainstream subject classroom practitioners. Nationally available advice, guidance, resources and training is largely tied to specific subject areas (most notably English) but EAL pedagogy needs to be readily accessible to all subject teachers and disciplines. One of the major issues emerging from the TTA review of ITT was that subject and mainstream teachers were often ill-prepared during their training to work with EAL and bilingual learners. NALDIC has supported the DfES proposal to develop appropriate training for all mainstream teachers to be delivered at a local level by EAL specialists in its submission to 'Aiming High: Raising the Achievement of Minority Ethnic Pupils'.

A particular area of concern is that despite the growing body of international research on the effective use of ICT with EAL learners, very little of this is available to subject teachers. What advice and guidance exists is limited by the lack of EAL training available to mainstream subject specialists (see above). It is difficult to develop and extend ICT usage with EAL learners if teachers do not have adequate initial training in the educational needs of these pupils. The final and significant factor is a shortage of specific curriculum, EAL and first language resources to support access to and progress through the curriculum.

### **How best can we further enhance subject specialism, and are there different approaches needed for different subjects?**

**NALDIC** welcomes the government's increasing policy focus on the role of Subject Associations. In particular, NALDIC recognises its role in supporting the teaching and learning of bilingual and EAL pupils. NALDIC as a professional organization carries out a number of the future roles envisaged in the consultation.

□ As sources of support and advice for teachers on subject-specific matters, offering access to high quality, up to date materials about their subject, information and advice about how it relates to wider developments and advice on opportunities available for subject-specific training and development.

NALDIC has lobbied for pump priming of professional bursaries, best practice research scholarships, sabbaticals and other opportunities available under the Government's CPD programmes to focus on EAL. NALDIC has also been active in promoting ICT development and e-learning with a range of partner organizations.

□ As sources of expert advice to the Department's sponsored work. NALDIC has consistently offered specialist advice to departments developing areas which impact on the learning of EAL and bilingual pupils. Many initiatives have drawn on NALDIC's research and publications in their development. As a professional organization, NALDIC would like to see a more robust and systematic approach to joint developments. It is of concern to NALDIC that DfES teams have not always seen professional organizations as their 'first port of call' and that they have also failed to appreciate the time constraints on subject associations.

□ As organisers or sponsors of "secondary subject communities" – dynamic learning communities of secondary teachers in the particular subject with a focus on improving teaching and learning through subject professionalism. NALDIC has developed secondary subject specialist communities through training, on line networks in association with BECTA and special interest groups which it would be keen to extend.

□ As organisers or sponsors of "subject networks" – networks of subject teachers NALDIC is an active member organization which spans foundation stage, primary schools, secondary schools, subject specialists in universities and colleges and teacher trainers. The further development of on-line networks is currently being extended through our work with the TTA

□ As commissioner and quality assurer of subject-specific teaching materials, including e-learning materials. Although NALDIC is often approached to 'quality assure' materials and resources there are some inherent tensions in this role. In particular it should be noted that commercial development of materials and resources in this area is limited to a few 'specialist' companies. Without an EAL subject specification, few commercial publishers have been prepared to invest in the development of ICT or paper based materials in this area. Without national specifications, this situation will continue and it therefore falls to the DfES to bridge the gap.

□ As commissioners and quality assurers of subject-specific CPD. NALDIC has long lobbied for the development of appropriate, accredited CPD for mainstream and subject teachers and is currently involved with the DfES EMA division as a part of the

tendering quality assurance team. NALDIC would wish to ensure an involvement in the development of other CPD programmes to ensure that these reflect the needs of EAL learners.

As well as supporting the expansion of these roles and the key issues in developing a national strategy in EAL (see Appendix 1), an important way in which the government could facilitate real change and promote high standards of excellence in the EAL field would be by supporting the establishment of a **National Centre for EAL and Bilingualism**. We note the proposals to establish national centres for Science and believe that such an initiative would be of equal significance for the field of EAL and bilingualism.

So far, in spite of recent OFSTED, QCA and DfES attention to EAL, developments in the field have taken place on a relatively *ad hoc* basis. NALDIC has provided a focus for its members but is a professional association dependent on its membership and on the voluntary commitment of its management committee. There is a clear need now for a greater cohesion and consistency in the development and dissemination of initiatives in EAL and for practice and research to be brought together as the springboard for further development. The establishment of a National Centre for EAL and Bilingualism would contribute to this aim by promoting excellence in the field and thus raising standards of teaching and learning. The aims of such a centre would be:

- to promote knowledge and understanding of EAL teaching and learning and bilingualism in education
- to promote training in the field and to act as a validating body
- to promote research in the field, including teacher action research activities
- to act as a focal point for information exchange and dissemination, and as a resource centre/library and archive
- to be a 'centre for excellence' in the field
- to facilitate and link work taking place in the field in HE institutions, schools, LEAs and other organisations
- to contribute to the development of policy in the field, and establish links with appropriate education bodies

Until now many experienced school leaders, teachers and support staff have had little access to professional understanding of this area. Patterns of settlement and funding have meant that LEAs in many areas have been unable to provide schools and local teachers with the high level of support and development they require in order to effectively ensure that all EAL and bilingual learners achieve their potential. In addition, in a diverse school population where over 300 languages are spoken, a national centre for EAL and bilingualism would provide access to the linguistic knowledge and resources which are often lacking in regions or LEAs. A national centre of excellence would bridge these gaps by:

- Providing teachers with professional support, training and development
- Widening access to learning and participation
- Working with practitioners to develop specific curriculum support material and approaches
- Working with the existing national strategies to ensure that bilingual and EAL learners are able to gain appropriately from strategy developments
- Linking closely with specialist schools, partner organisations and universities to create a strong research based EAL network.

NALDIC has worked in some detail on the planning for such a centre, which has in the past evinced interest from ministers, and we would welcome further discussion on this proposal.

**Is there scope for the subject associations to work together more, for example, to share good practice or to develop guidance on ways in which one subject can be used to reinforce teaching and learning in another?**

As effective teaching in our field relies on the integration of language and curriculum content we would argue that subject associations must work together so that effective EAL informed approaches are embedded in subject teaching.

**Is there scope for subject based programmes to be more closely related to wider themes e.g. behaviour and attendance?**

The enthusiastic reaction to the KS3 strategy publications 'Access and Engagement in ...' subject areas has shown that subject teachers recognise the need for support for the integration of language and curriculum content, as has the success of courses such as the Australian 'ESL in the Mainstream'. The development of rigorous subject based programmes for EAL should be a priority for the department.

**How can the needs of adults other than teachers for subject specialist support best be met?**

There are a significant number of adults other than teachers working in our field and in general with bilingual learners. We have argued elsewhere for a four tier system of accredited training for staff on working with EAL learners, beginning with a mandatory induction focussing on EAL learners within mainstream classrooms and settings, accredited post induction training followed by HLTA training or equivalent. In addition to formal training, we recognise the need to develop on line networks and mentor systems particularly for staff working in isolated settings.

**Would cross sector networking (for example, across schools, colleges and universities) bring benefits to front line teachers?**

Yes. NALDIC's collaboration across schools, colleges and universities has undoubtedly brought enormous benefits to front-line teachers and should be extended.

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For further information and assistance regarding this response, please contact  
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## **KEY ISSUES IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF A NATIONAL STRATEGY FOR EAL**

### **A CLEARLY STATED POSITIONING OF EAL IN THE EDUCATION SYSTEM WHICH IS CONSISTENT WITH CURRENT RESEARCH ON EAL PEDAGOGY AND PROGRESSION**

- Positioning in the UK context based on national and international research
- The specific features of EAL in relation to UK schools where the task for the learner is to combine first language development, the acquisition of English, and access to and progress through the curriculum via the integration of language and curriculum content
- The recognition of the different linguistic backgrounds of bilingual pupils and the variety of pathways taken to learning and to the acquisition of English.
- The value of bilingual education both conceptually and academically

### **A COMMITMENT TO MEETING THE DISTINCTIVE LANGUAGE AND LEARNING NEEDS OF BILINGUAL PUPILS WITHIN THE EDUCATION SYSTEM AND THE PROVISION OF APPROPRIATE RESOURCES TO MEET THOSE NEEDS**

- The recognition that for the learner of EAL in the UK in the mainstream classroom where the curriculum for the peer group is continually advancing, the task represents a moving target (see 'The Distinctiveness of English as an Additional Language: a cross-curriculum discipline' Pages 11-12)
- The time taken to achieve full academic fluency and the importance of long term strategies to attain it.
- The need for a funding regime that is appropriately targeted, sets out clear expectations and provides long-term continuity and stability
- The need to map clearly the distinction between EAL and SEN in a way which both sets of needs are adequately identified and met.

### **AN ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF EAL AS A DISTINCT SPECIALISM**

- The establishment of a national centre for EAL and bilingualism to promote high standards of professionalism in the field.
- The development of an EAL curriculum
- The formulation of a code of practice for EAL
- The development of a consistent approach to formative assessment which recognises the distinctiveness of EAL.

### **THE PROVISION OF APPROPRIATE SPECIALIST INITIAL TRAINING AND CONTINUING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

- The establishment of a recognised professional qualification at different levels
- The inclusion of EAL in Initial Teacher Training
- The identification and dissemination of good practice in relation to EAL and bilingualism
- The identification of the knowledge and skills needed by all staff working with EAL pupils

### **AN ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF THE KEY ROLE OF FIRST LANGUAGE/MOTHER TONGUE IN LEARNING AND ATTAINMENT**

- A recognition of the importance of prior knowledge brought by bilingual pupils
- The role of L1(first language) in the maintenance of individual and cultural identities
- The role of L1 in supporting learning in the development of English and the work of bilingual staff
- The importance of parents and communities in relation to L1 development and learning