



Office for Standards
in Education

**More advanced learners of English
as an additional language in
secondary schools and colleges**



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HMI 1102
March 2003

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Document reference number: HMI 1102

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Introduction

1. One of the findings of the Ofsted report on the introduction of the Ethnic Minority Achievement Grant (EMAG), *Managing support for the attainment of pupils from minority ethnic groups*, published in 2001, was that the increase in new arrivals in almost all the 12 local education authorities (LEAs) visited meant that some schools had stopped providing regular support for more advanced learners of English as an additional language (EAL).
2. This issue is not confined to these 12 LEAs. One recent school inspection report, for example, rated the provision for pupils with EAL as unsatisfactory despite good provision for pupils new to English.

'Though students in Years 7 to 9 who are beginners in English make satisfactory, and sometimes good, progress, the majority of those at later stages of learning English and older students are not receiving sufficient support to extend their English language competence to the higher levels of which they are capable.'

3. Such an evaluation has resonance for many schools facing conflicting demands. Inevitably, many schools conclude that the needs of those bilingual pupils whose English is more advanced are less urgent than those who struggle to understand the curriculum. Facing the problem of deciding those needs to which to give priority, schools have to answer some key questions. For how long do bilingual learners need additional support? What is the nature of their support need? How does it differ from the language needs of English mother tongue speakers? And what is the best way of meeting this need given the available resources?

The survey

4. To help answer these questions, Ofsted carried out in the spring of 2002 an inspection exercise to identify good practice in Key Stage 4 and post-16 provision which takes account of the continuing need of many bilingual students for language support in their work on General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE), General National Vocational Qualifications (GNVQ) and General Certificate of Education (GCE) Advanced Level (A-level) courses. With assistance from LEA EMAG managers, 11 schools were identified and visited. In colleges, provision for bilingual students is largely through discrete special classes or learning centres. However, four colleges (three general further education (FE) and one sixth form college) providing in-class or, more usually, course-linked additional support, were selected. The schools and colleges are listed in annex A.
5. The school and college visits followed a similar format. First, a range of information was collected. This covered the nature of the student population and the number and roles of EAL staff (often, in colleges, known as English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) staff). The visits also looked at the procedures for identifying those who needed support; the priorities used for deploying staff; and the nature and impact of the support provided for more proficient bilingual learners. The aim of the visits was to identify good practice in working with students in the later stages of learning English so that they might achieve their full potential within the curriculum.

6. In addition to the school and college visits, an analysis of the written scripts of approximately 200 students was commissioned. All the Key Stage 4 scripts were drawn from GCSE mock examinations taken in the autumn 2001 or spring 2002 terms. Two pieces of writing were analysed for the majority of these students – one from English and one from a humanities subject. For post-16 students, scripts were taken from initial key skills tests, subsequent diagnostic tests carried out by language support departments, or samples of coursework from a range of subjects.

7. The objective of the analysis was to identify features of writing that EAL learners appear, systematically, to handle with less confidence than English mother tongue speakers. It was hoped that the findings would enable teachers to develop teaching approaches and materials to help bilingual learners write in English with greater confidence and fluency. The research is published separately; the main findings and implications for teaching are summarised in annex B.¹

¹ *Writing in English as an additional language at Key Stage 4 and post-16*, Lynne Cameron, School of Education, University of Leeds, Ofsted, 2003. Based on the project findings, the report offers advice to secondary teachers on evaluating the writing of EAL learners. To obtain a copy of this document, please contact the Ofsted Publications Centre on 07002 637833.

Main findings

Schools

- Pupils with EAL in most of the schools visited had below or well below average attainment at transfer in Year 7 and their attainment often remained below national averages at the end of Key Stage 3. By the end of Key Stage 4, most of these pupils had made significant progress, often attaining higher grades than predicted. However, in schools where they were not in the majority, they did less well in GCSE English examinations than English mother tongue speakers, and this remained true at A level.
- The schools were often carrying out ever more sophisticated analysis of attainment data in relation to ethnicity and mother tongue. This enabled progress to be tracked, helped to isolate problems needing investigation and led, in many instances, to a review of teaching and support.
- The schools generally targeted support on Key Stage 3, and especially the new Year 7 intake, but all of them recognised that many pupils with EAL need continuing help even when their spoken English is fluent. When decisions about support were taken at whole-school level and focused on specific departments or areas of work, the impact was more tangible.
- At Key Stage 4 and beyond, the focus was usually less on individual pupils with EAL than on the training of all staff. In the majority of the schools, a programme of professional development covering language and literacy and taking account of bilingual learners was in place. In these schools, senior managers saw the support of bilingual pupils as the responsibility of all staff and not just the EMAG team.
- In some cases, EMAG staff were influential in changing mainstream approaches through intensive and consistent work with individual subject departments as part of a broad cross-curricular review. In several of the schools where long-term partnership teaching at Key Stage 4 had been developed and monitored, the attainment of bilingual learners had improved significantly.
- Bilingual learners appreciated the additional support they had received and had clear and strong views about how that support was most effectively given.

Colleges

- In the colleges visited, EAL/ESOL staff had clear views about the needs of more proficient bilingual learners. There was evidence that, even when students had obtained a level 2 English qualification, their competence in written, academic English was often limited. The disparity between oral facility and competence in literacy could become more marked the higher the qualification sought.
- All the colleges had detailed procedures for identifying students who needed additional support, although only the sixth form college had analysed attainment data by ethnicity to help determine the use of support.

- Additional support to students was seen in the colleges as a universal service, offered on request to all, irrespective of prior attainment or the course undertaken. However, a major problem is the reluctance of many bilingual students to accept that they need additional help with their English. To overcome this, two colleges built additional support at a range of levels into the programmes of all students.
- All of the colleges had a range of EAL/ESOL provision, but generally there was little partnership teaching on mainstream courses. As in the schools, it was an effective form of professional development where it occurred.
- Only one college had developed a full approach to monitoring the effectiveness of EAL/ESOL support, although two other colleges carried out satisfaction surveys which provided valuable feedback.
- Students appreciated, in the main, the additional support they received and wanted more of it – but only if it was closely linked to the language demands of their mainstream work.

Recommendations

- The findings of this survey point to the need for senior managers in schools and colleges with more advanced bilingual learners to ensure that:
 - all staff understand the need of many bilingual learners for continuing language support and their role in providing it
 - staff have access to appropriately qualified and skilled EAL/ESOL practitioners who can advise or work in partnership with them
 - the deployment of additional support is agreed at school or college level and managed in such a way that all staff develop the confidence to work in multilingual classrooms
 - the provision of additional support is monitored to establish whether it is effective in raising attainment.
- The findings also underline the need for LEAs to make sure that:
 - the needs of more advanced bilingual learners are recognised and reflected in their formulae for allocating additional funding to schools
 - training that focuses on the needs of more proficient bilingual learners is readily available for teachers.

Schools

Characteristics of the schools

8. The 11 schools visited were in different parts of the country. Their intakes differed significantly in relation to socio-economic factors, the proportion of minority ethnic pupils and the range of languages spoken. Seven of the schools had sixth forms. Six were mixed, four were girls' schools and one took only boys. The number of pupils on roll ranged from 770 to 1875.

9. The school with the smallest proportion of minority ethnic pupils had just 28%; at the other end of the scale the proportion was 98%. The average for the schools was 67%; all but one had over 35%. Figures for pupils with EAL were slightly lower – from 24% to 96%. There was a very wide range of languages spoken, including Asian, European and African languages. Most schools had two or three main languages in addition to English, but the two London schools recorded 43 and 65 languages spoken.

10. On average, about 30% of the pupils with EAL received additional support. This included one-to-one, small group and more general in-class support. Most schools had relatively few pupils in the early stages of learning English as most of the pupils had been born in the UK. However, a small number of schools, mostly in the south east, had, in recent years, taken in a significant number of refugees and asylum-seekers who were often beginners in English and had considerable need for support. Two schools, for example, had received more than 80 refugees and asylum-seekers in the previous year.

Attainment

11. Year 7 pupils in seven of the schools had below or well below average attainment at transfer.

12. All of the schools were clear about the continuing language support needs of many of their pupils with EAL, even those who had been in the UK education system for a period of time:

- *'Our bilingual pupils often have low verbal reasoning scores compared with their performance in non-verbal tests, which means we need to put more emphasis on the language demands of subjects.'*
- *'Many advanced bilingual learners really struggle with academic work that is set in less concrete contexts.'*
- *'There are problems of reading comprehension, extended writing and expressive skills, with many of our pupils having difficulty with reading and internalising and then expressing clearly what they think.'*
- *'At Key Stage 4, most of our pupils with EAL are proficient in spoken English, but some have difficulties in writing and analysis. The mismatch between oral communication and writing ability is quite stark for some pupils.'*
- *'Even where bilingual pupils have gained a C or even B for GCSE English, they struggle with the literacy demands of A-level courses, for example, the language of mathematics or history and science course texts.'*

13. In general, the schools were engaging in sophisticated data analyses with respect to ethnicity and the achievement of bilingual pupils. Increasingly, the analyses covered all key stages and enabled good tracking of progress to be undertaken. This had enabled them to identify issues that needed further investigation and had led in many instances to a review of teaching and modified deployment of support, as well as specific interventions such as the review of setting arrangements and how option choices are approached.

14. Analysis revealed complex patterns. For example, in one school with a very diverse community, the mix of ethnicity varied significantly between year groups. The school had built up an attainment profile by ethnic group over time. Attainment on entry to the school was below national expectations. Average scores for several of the bilingual groups (Somali, Kurdish and Turkish speakers) were considerably lower than for other groups. However, within the individual minority ethnic groups, scores for UK-born pupils were higher than for those not born in the UK.

15. In some of the schools, analysis showed instructive differences in different tests or elements of tests. One school (with 90% EAL) had analysed its scores in cognitive ability tests and found a considerable difference between the scores in the verbal and non-verbal elements. In another school, with an advantaged intake, the EMAG coordinator had identified a similar pattern for bilingual pupils. Examples from the 2001 intake are shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Test scores of bilingual pupils

	Verbal score	Quantitative score	Non-verbal score	Key Stage 2 English	Key Stage 2 maths	Key Stage 2 science
Pupil 1	98	120	117	5	5	5
Pupil 2	99	116	117	4	5	4
Pupil 3	86	123	110	4	4	4
Pupil 4	104	117	115	–	–	–

16. Another school, with fewer than 25% bilingual pupils, compared the Key Stage 2 results of all its minority ethnic pupils with those of other pupils in Year 7. The data showed that the minority ethnic pupils entered with slightly better results at level 4 in tests at the end of Key Stage 2, but there were fewer among them who had achieved level 5.

17. Similar analysis of Key Stage 3 test data tended to show three important features. First, the schools with low attainment on entry to Year 7 were closing the gap in relation to national averages. Second, ethnic groups attain differently in different school contexts, and this applies to gender, too. Third – and most relevant to this survey – there continues to be unevenness in the performance of bilingual learners across the subjects.

18. Attainment in GCSE in virtually all the schools visited showed considerable added value for pupils overall. However, analysis sometimes indicated distinct differences in the progress made by different groups within the school.

19. One school had produced a series of scatter graphs to plot achievement by ethnic group between Key Stage 3 and GCSE. The graphs showed little difference

between the ethnic groups analysed, but there were significant gender differences in the figures for five out of the seven groups. Another school that compared performance between Key Stages 3 and 4 identified those ethnic groups that did not achieve as expected (in this case, Turkish, White UK and Black Caribbean). In several schools, pupils of Bangladeshi, Indian and Pakistani heritage outperformed the White UK pupils, while in others the reverse was true.

20. As several schools found, looking at option choices and results in individual subjects could also be instructive, with many bilingual pupils achieving GCSE A*–C grades in their home language, religious studies, art and design and technology, for example, but clustering around the C/D borderline in many other subjects. In some schools EAL pupils opted out of English literature, while in others they consistently achieved the best results in this subject.

21. An important analysis for the purposes of this exercise was the comparison of the grades achieved by EAL and English mother tongue speakers in English and a range of other subjects. The two schools with the smallest percentage of EAL pupils had carried out such an analysis with similar results. This showed that, in one school, although the various minority ethnic groups did very well when compared with the national picture, they achieved significantly fewer higher grades in English and English literature when compared with English mother tongue pupils. This was true irrespective of the ability band they were in. The picture for English was similar in the second school, but in mathematics the spread of grades was more even. In science the EAL pupils did less well; far fewer achieved A*–C grades, with a high percentage achieving an E grade.

22. Despite the rapid improvement in attainment between Key Stages 3 and 4 and the impressive value added, four of the seven schools with sixth forms scored poorly by comparison with national averages at A level in 2001. The exceptions were schools with relatively low proportions of free school meals and fewer minority ethnic pupils.

23. However, close analysis of the A-level English results in one of the high-achieving schools indicated that only 10% of students with EAL in Year 13 choose to do English (compared with 30% for English mother tongue speakers) and none achieved higher than a C grade (40% received a D). Of English mother tongue speakers, 52% achieved an A grade, 24% B and 24% C.

24. Several schools argued strongly that language made a significant difference to end-of-key-stage results. Those schools that had analysed value-added scores with respect to bilingual pupils had discovered that they performed above the school mean at Key Stage 3, Key Stage 4 and A level – an indication of the journey to be travelled by bilingual learners as they struggle to achieve full competence in their second (or even third) language.

The organisation of support

25. On average there were 4.5 staff funded by the EMAG working in the schools (excluding home/school liaison workers appointed in a few schools). However, the range was from 0.7 to 7.4 full-time equivalent (fte) staffing, serving populations of between 28% and 98%. Most departments had a mix of teaching staff and bilingual support staff or instructors. In several cases the entire department consisted of part-time staff, including the coordinator. In a few departments, there were unfilled posts because the schools were unable to recruit appropriately qualified staff.

26. Most of the schools had good information about the previous education and language competence of their bilingual pupils. They collected this by means of carefully constructed and sensitive pupil assessment sheets. These were then used to set individual targets. All the schools had conducted language surveys and many had detailed information about the pupils' use of home language(s) and English within the family and the wider community. It was not uncommon for all Year 7 bilingual entrants to be interviewed. This time-consuming process was thought to be necessary because transfer data from the primary schools was not made available or not sufficiently detailed. In a few schools, EMAG coordinators got round this problem by attending new intake evenings or visiting primaries themselves. All schools also had a strategy for the initial reception and induction of pupils joining the school later than the beginning of Year 7.

27. Information was then usually collated and entered into a database. The information included some or all of the following: National Curriculum Key Stage 2 data; cognitive ability test scores; other standardised scores, such as reading or spelling ages; data based on Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA) scales, or other language stage data; information about home language, including literacy details; any pre-UK schooling information; any special educational needs (SEN); and any additional language support offered.² As the pupil progressed through the school, the data would be updated.

28. Once the data were assembled, they were scrutinised carefully by EMAG staff to identify those who would benefit from extra support. In addition, there was usually close liaison with department heads and form tutors. They were invited to refer any additional pupils missed in the initial screening process who they considered needed help. In some schools, pupils were also encouraged to refer themselves for support.

29. Assessing the needs of early stage learners of English is relatively straightforward. Identifying the needs of pupils who appear fairly fluent in English is more complex. One school, for example, extends support to pupils who have been learning English for less than five years and whose National Curriculum English level is 3 or whose reading age is below 10. However, the target group for this investigation might well have higher National Curriculum levels or reading ages than this and a more sophisticated strategy is required.³ Some of these strategies have already been described in the previous section. Once identified, pupils were tracked over time, especially at key points in the system such as the end of Key Stage 3.

² *A language in common: assessing English as an additional language*, QCA, 2000.

³ For a description of the nature of the language differences between EAL and English mother tongue pupils and the length of time they can persist, see the research paper *Writing in English as an additional language at Key Stage 4 and post-16*.

30. All but one of the schools were required to supply language stage data on individual pupils to their LEA. EMAG managers used the data to allocate resources to the schools. In one LEA, National Curriculum performance data alone were used for this purpose. Of the remaining nine LEAs, four used or were about to use the QCA scales, the other five used EAL scales of varying kinds. In the best practice, language stage data were treated as a starting-point to which a range of other information was added to draw up a more useful profile of individual pupils.
31. Schools differed in the criteria used for the deployment of their EAL staff. Among the common criteria were: the language level of the pupils (however defined); new arrivals; the identification of pupils at key points in the school (such as Year 7 or Year 9); and departmental development plans.
32. It was common for Year 7 pupils and new arrivals to be the top priorities in the school, but in several of these schools Year 11 bilingual pupils were also given priority. Several schools commented that the EMAG grant focus on achievement had enabled them to consider not only the needs of pupils in the lower sets but also the needs of those in the higher sets. This had had a significant impact on outcomes.
33. Some schools used a substantial proportion of their resources to work systematically with one or two departments, with the intention of bringing about a change in the quality of teaching and learning in the subject. This sustained working with individual departments or on cross-curricular school priorities was a feature of much of the good work observed.
34. Matching staffing resources to the needs of pupils was a continuing issue for most EMAG staff. Where such decisions were taken at whole-school level the impact of specialist work was more tangible.
35. All of the schools visited had a range of support strategies for pupils with EAL. They included: full partnership or team teaching; in-class support; one-to-one or small group support; withdrawal for new arrivals as part of a time-limited induction process; the use of registration and tutor time for additional help; and the provision of pre-school, lunchtime and after-school clubs, often in conjunction with mainstream staff. Curriculum development linked to specific subjects was also a feature of the work of EMAG teams. The vast majority of this work was within the mainstream – on average, 80% of the time available. In a few schools with settled populations and few late-arriving pupils, in-class support was as high as 95%.
36. As noted earlier, most of these schools focused support time in Key Stage 3, and especially the new Year 7 intake. The impact of the government's Key Stage 3 Strategy was also evident in some schools where EMAG departments were closely involved in the programme.
37. In one school (64% EAL), the focus was less on working with individual pupils with EAL than on the training needs of all staff. The intention of the senior managers was that every teacher should feel competent and confident to teach multilingual classes. A programme of professional development concerned with language and literacy support had been in place for some years. This involved both the EMAG team and outside trainers. The Key Stage 3 Strategy, with its emphasis on literacy across the curriculum, had served to enhance work in this school.

38. A similar approach was evident, although at an earlier stage of implementation, in several of the other schools visited. The intensive work of EMAG staff with individual subject areas was a first step to a more broad-based, cross-curricular review of practice. The senior managers of these schools saw the support of bilingual pupils as an integral part of the work of all staff and not just the responsibility of the EMAG team. This was a long-term goal, requiring hard decisions about where to focus support and how long to offer it to only one or a limited number of subject areas so that developments became genuinely embedded.

Examples of support

School A

39. In this school (89% EAL), senior managers have recognised for some years that difficulty with language has been a barrier to success for many of their pupils. In addition to the usual range of EMAG support activities across the phases, it was decided to devote a significant amount of resources to developing partnership work in science. The school described this work as follows.

'In September 1999, the head of science requested additional support with two parallel Year 10 groups. The reason for targeting these groups was that most of the pupils in each group had achieved a level 4 in Key Stage 3 science. From previous years, it was recognised that the vast majority of these pupils would finish their GCSE course with grade D or E and some with grade F. Only a handful would achieve a grade C. The aim of the partnership was to increase the number of those gaining grade C.'

The head of EMAG and three science teachers were involved. All would work in partnership and the school would ensure that time was available for the teachers to plan and evaluate lessons on a weekly basis. Previous experience suggested that a focus on language would be of primary importance and the teachers began looking at different strategies in order to enhance language learning as an integral part of teaching and learning in science. Seven main approaches were identified: the use of visual, auditory and kinesthetic elements in each lesson; the provision of models and frameworks for written work; key words; coaching on techniques for answering exam questions; oral work; monitoring progress and building confidence; and revision classes.'

40. The GCSE results obtained by the two classes in 2001 showed that the work had been effective. A much greater proportion (37%) of pupils achieved grade C than would have been predicted from Key Stage 3 assessments and the experience of previous years. Very few pupils achieved lower than grade D. Boys and girls did equally well.

41. The partnership work with the science department continues. In addition to the focus on the C/D borderline, a focus on the A/B borderline is adopted in top sets. A Year 10 science lesson containing many of the approaches identified by the school was observed during the visit.

Year 10 science

The number of pupils in supported lessons was higher than in the average science class because of the double staffing: 28 pupils were present in this second ability set of three. The lesson on the carbon cycle was jointly taught by the science and EMAG teacher. The lesson plan identified both the science and language lesson objectives and the roles of the two teachers.

A visual presentation of the carbon cycle was demonstrated on an interactive whiteboard. The carbon cycle was constructed visually before the pupils' eyes, accompanied by a clear description of the process with definitions of key words. Understanding was checked regularly, sometimes by asking pupils to jot down what they understood on their individual whiteboards. This provided instant feedback to the teachers who adapted their presentation until all had grasped the key elements of the unit (respiration, photosynthesis, fossil fuels, recycling and so on). Pupils then moved in pairs to individual computers and replayed the carbon cycle presentation for themselves. In turn, each explained the process to his/her partner. In a plenary, one pupil was called on to explain the process to the whole class, with support from peers where necessary.

In the final phase of the lesson pupils were asked to write down five things that they had learned. They were reminded of the 'magic' word because when explaining the various processes. Both teachers provided models of scientific language, pointing out that only if pupils explained why something happens would they be able to achieve a grade C in the GCSE.

42. This skilfully crafted and managed lesson provided an excellent context in which more proficient bilingual learners could extend and refine the language they need for academic success. The science and language specialists created a rich language environment, providing models and support for pupils' responses. Opportunities for pupils to articulate (in speech and writing) what they were learning were built in throughout the lesson. The pupils engaged fully with the work, participating with maturity in all the activities. Many had understood the carbon cycle but struggled to express the process clearly in English, but, by the end of the lesson, the majority were able to make contributions such as: 'I have learnt that plants respire and as they photosynthesise carbon is recycled'.

43. The senior managers in this school believed that the partnership teaching in science was a model of how to work with bilingual pupils – and especially those who appear fluent and have considerable potential but who struggle to achieve higher grades in the GCSE. Although they were keen to disseminate this model to other areas of the curriculum, they were determined to ensure that it became fully embedded in the science department before the additional support was removed. They saw partnership teaching as a way of enabling the EMAG team to work more effectively, providing continuing professional development to subject teachers.

School B

44. Half the pupils in this school have EAL. Most are competent speakers of English but many, according to the EMAG department, need support with higher-order skills. A few years ago the Pakistani heritage pupils underachieved significantly but a clear focus on the language needs of more proficient bilingual learners in Key Stage 4 (especially those on the C/D borderline) has brought about considerable improvement. Now the achievement of White UK and Pakistani heritage pupils is broadly comparable.

45. Close analysis of performance data (language levels, National Curriculum levels, reading ages, standardised test scores) enables individual pupils to be targeted for additional support. Predictions of GCSE grades based on Key Stage 3 average point scores and standardised test scores are treated with caution, especially for pupils with EAL. Challenging GCSE targets are set and pupils' progress towards the targets carefully monitored. Standards have risen strongly in the school, which has high achievement at GCSE when compared with schools in similar contexts.

46. The following describes one of several good lessons observed in the school.

Year 10 food technology

The lesson featured practical work as part of a 'cook-chill' project. Most of the Asian heritage pupils cooked curry dishes, as did a few White UK girls. The majority of white pupils, however, were doing pasta, pizza and fried chicken dishes. Standards were high.

The subject teacher was supported by a bilingual assistant. The assistant focused particularly on pupils at the C/D borderline in a range of subjects. In this class, she was helping a boy whose oral skills in English were reasonably well developed but who needed considerable help with coursework. In this practical session she spent time talking with the pupil about the dish he was cooking, using both Urdu and English, and getting him to explain the process in appropriate language, paying attention to key vocabulary. She was subsequently available to help him with his portfolio of written work.

This pupil's cookery skills were excellent, showing high levels of skill and creativity. His assessment sheets gave evidence of considerable improvement in his ability to carry out research and produce appropriate written analyses in food technology. The projected GCSE grade of the pupil had moved from an E minus to a D over the period of the term. The teacher was confident that he would achieve a much higher grade by the time he took the GCSE examination.

School C

47. Over 90% of pupils in this school have EAL. The main languages represented are Gujarati, Punjabi and Urdu. Although the attainment profile of Year 7 pupils is below national averages, the proportion of pupils achieving level 5 or better in English at the end of Key Stage 3 is at the national average. However, the percentage achieving level 6 and above (13%) is very much lower than the national average (31%). At GCSE, the percentage gaining A*–C grades is close to national averages for both English and English literature.

48. In reflecting on its success with bilingual pupils, the English department lists the following as some of the most important features of its work:

- the integration of work on language and literature, so that language is taught through both literary and non-literary texts and decontextualised language work is avoided
- the number of staff who have worked in partnership with EMAG teachers
- the system of having mixed-ability classes in Key Stage 3 so that there are always models of good practice (in Key Stage 4 a top set is created and the rest of the pupils remain in broad ability groups)
- entering all pupils for GCSE English and literature and teaching them on the assumption that all will get C grades
- the use of teacher-produced materials to provide scaffolds for reading and writing
- the careful structuring of the GCSE course, which is designed to ensure early success, with initially high levels of support that are then progressively withdrawn
- the use of challenging texts (such as *Sense and Sensibility*, *Great Expectations* and *Hard Times*), aided by a multimedia approach
- a refusal to assume that, once bilingual pupils have reached a certain level of competence in English, they no longer need language support.

49. The English department was playing a significant role in current work on language across the curriculum and was in the process of disseminating its approach to language enrichment to a range of other departments in the school. An English lesson observed by HMI in this school exemplified many of the features listed above.

Year 11 English

This lesson on preparation for the unseen poem in the GCSE English Literature examination came towards the end of a unit on poetry. The lesson was jointly taught by English and EAL specialist teachers. After an introduction, pupils worked in groups on different unseen poems preparing a presentation for the following week. For the plenary, each group was to agree one important sentence about its poem.

The poems were challenging (including, for example, a Shakespeare sonnet) and well matched to groups. Good support materials provided structure for thinking as well as writing. A worksheet helped pupils tackle the task systematically. It posed a series of questions (for example, 'Who is speaking in the poem? Is the poet speaking to anyone – if so who? What is the mood/atmosphere of the poem – happy, romantic, frightening, passionate, sad, exciting, sinister, nostalgic? What, in a sentence, is the poem about?') It focused on poetic language and devices. The worksheet was accompanied by an aid ('language tips') to formulating responses.

Language tips	The mood/atmosphere of the poem is	created by... evoked by the words... reflected in the words... conveyed in... portrayed in...
The image of a ...	describes symbolises reflects conveys portrays represents illustrates	} the idea of... a belief in... a feeling of...
Using the poetic device of ...	makes the reader feel... produces an effect of... paints a picture of... creates an image of...	

The teachers had decided the composition of the groups, taking home language into account. Both teachers' subject knowledge was good, exposition was clear and the use of questioning techniques effective. The partnership teaching worked well and pupils were happy to receive support from either teacher. Classroom organisation and control were very good, the pace was brisk and the plenary successful, with good preparation for the next lesson. Pupils were able to work collaboratively and successfully discuss the meanings of the unseen poems. They identified the use of similes, metaphors and personification and the effect of such poetic devices. They were also able to discuss the mood of the poem. By the end of the lesson all groups had annotated copies of their poems and had produced a sentence capturing the essence of their poem. Attitudes were very good throughout the lesson.

School D

50. Virtually all the pupils in this school have EAL, although most are UK-born. Standards at entry have been rising over the years and the majority of pupils now arrive with an English National Curriculum level 4 and a level 5 in some cases. As with other schools with similar intakes, however, cognitive ability test results show a clear pattern of low verbal scores and higher quantitative and non-verbal scores. The EMAG team, therefore, is aware that many of the pupils still need support with their English if they are to achieve their full potential. In particular they have noted problems with reading comprehension and writing in English.

51. In attempting to identify underachieving pupils for targeted support, they noted that the following difficulties were often present in the pupils' use of English:

- the pupils may be orally fluent but have problems with literacy
- they reproduce words in writing with phonetic approximation of what is incorrectly heard or reproduced in their own speech
- they write at length, but with short, simple sentences, limited vocabulary and poor English grammar, sometimes reflecting other language structures
- there is frequent omission of parts of speech in sentences
- clauses and sentences tend to be linked only with basic conjunctions, such as 'and', 'because' and 'then'
- correctly used tenses are generally limited to the present simple and past simple.⁴

52. Over the years they have noted that difficulties of the kind detailed above mean that pupils appear to reach a plateau in their use of English. Such pupils rarely achieve native-speaker competence and struggle to attain a GCSE A*–C grade in English. With the aid of a small grant and the involvement of the LEA EMAG service, the EMAG team analysed in detail the written scripts of a sample of these pupils across Years 7 to 10.

53. Fourteen areas of difficulty were identified: comparatives and superlatives; idiom; spelling; possessives and apostrophes; capital letters; prepositions; countables and uncountables; pronouns; vocabulary; direct and reported speech; subject/verb agreement; passive voice; case; and tenses. Such difficulties are not, of course, limited to EAL learners.

54. The staff subsequently developed a matrix which identified four levels of achievement (adapted from the Australian *First Steps* material) which can be used to monitor individual progress. The areas of difficulty were also linked to the word, sentence and text levels of the literacy strategy. An example is given below.

Use of	Beginning	Developing	Consolidating	Extending
Tenses:	<i>Present simple and past simple: switching between the two.</i>	<i>Inappropriate use of a newly learned tense/structure. Common irregulars.</i>	<i>Use of all tenses with generally correct format and more clarity as to their use.</i>	<i>Most tense forms used correctly.</i>
Text Level	<i>Difficulty with maintaining tense within a piece of writing.</i>	<i>Use of all basic tenses but confusion as to when to use them, even within a sentence.</i>	<i>Can distinguish the three different ways of forming the future tense. Tenses not mixed up.</i>	

⁴ There is considerable overlap between the area of difficulty listed here and those identified in the research paper.

55. The next step in this work was to invite subject departments in conjunction with their EAL link person to complete an audit of writing errors in relation to the identified areas of difficulty. Once this was completed, the intention was that certain language features could be focused on within the various subject areas. This was beginning to happen in one or two subjects.

School E

56. In this school, where 64% of the pupils have EAL, the model of support is almost exclusively that of partnership teaching, with EAL staff linked to different curriculum areas. Diagnosis of need, targeting of support, and monitoring and evaluation of the impact of the support are all good.

57. Liaison with departments is a particular strength. For example, an action research project, 'Access for all in mathematics', was carried out with the involvement of members of the mathematics department, the language development team and the LEA support team. School data, showing minority ethnic pupils to be performing less well than their white peers, prompted this school-based research to identify strategies for raising the achievement of minority ethnic pupils. Although the focus of the research was Key Stage 3, teachers felt that the strategies were equally applicable to Key Stage 4 and had affected their teaching at that level too.

58. A key task was to identify the language demands of the subject and implement strategies for access for pupils at various stages of development. Among the strategies found particularly successful were: detailed joint planning to analyse learning demands; the use of oral work to improve access to written texts; display of key words; modelling of writing by pupils on the board; pupils being encouraged to identify precisely what they do not understand; and use of different questioning techniques. Improvements in performance were observed and reported, based on the professional judgements of the teachers.

School F

59. One of the strengths of this school is its careful profiling, tracking and monitoring of individual pupils. The quality of the data collected about individual EAL pupils' language use at home and in the community is exemplary. The school has a well-developed system for identifying pupils who need additional support. The school is careful, for example, to monitor those pupils on the gifted and talented register by ethnic group, by EAL and free school meals. All groups are well represented. Each department is required to analyse its GCSE results by ethnic group and also to produce an outline of how it supports the needs of pupils with EAL.

60. Of particular note is the close liaison between the EAL and English departments. The head of EAL is also the literacy co-ordinator. Over a period of years the English department, aided by the EAL staff, has developed a model of support which makes extensive use of differentiated tasks. A large number of resources have been built up over time. Individual assignments (for example, a GCSE wider reading assignment comparing *Great Expectations* with *About a Boy*) are presented in a format that leads pupils through the task with writing frames and keywords and phrases and even sentence starters provided for those pupils who need them. Equally, extension activities for the more able are also spelt out.

61. Other features of the work in this school were helpful writing audit sheets for pupils with EAL so that common difficulties can be identified and targeted for further work. The areas listed were similar to those identified in School D.

School G

62. Although the majority of EAL staff time in this school (which has 78% EAL pupils) is given to in-class support, some is reserved for mentoring in Years 10 and 11. At the start of Year 10 there is a thorough analysis of Key Stage 3 results, supplemented by teachers' opinion, to identify those pupils who could achieve five GCSE A*–C grades, a target currently reached by just under 30% in each year group. The EAL co-ordinator is a core member of the group of seven teachers who act as mentors for the pupils identified for special monitoring. He determines where language deficiencies are an element in depressing pupils' performance and then deploys his team accordingly. The EAL target group, currently about 12, has at least one individual mentoring session each term and may receive a great deal more in terms of in-class support.

Year 11 mentoring session

The mentoring session observed during the visit concerned a Year 11 pupil who had spent several months in Saudi Arabia during Year 10 and was well behind with his coursework. The EMAG co-ordinator gave focused advice, pulling no punches and guiding this pupil to make full use of the time available. His advice on answering examination questions was mainly concerned with content and structure, but had a linguistic element as well.

63. Lunchtime and after-school clubs play an important part in helping pupils of all ages and it is a strength that EAL support is almost always available. On the day of the visit to the school, 20 to 30 pupils were present in the library or adjacent ICT suite throughout the lunch hour and for an hour after school. EAL teachers and support assistants were present, along with specialist subject teachers, on a rota. The teaching, which was of good quality, was mainly directed to helping older pupils to answer examination questions, first to understand what was required, then to organise the answers effectively.⁵

64. The Key Stage 4 team meets twice a term to discuss progress towards meeting pupils' targets. Value-added measures generally show good progress through Key Stage 4, with GCSE results showing an upward trend over the last 10 years. It was a five percentage point dip in the proportion of pupils gaining five or more A*–C grades that prompted the current closer monitoring of Years 10 and 11.

School H

65. As with the schools already described, this school has a strong commitment to inclusion. With 64% of the pupils speaking languages other than English, language development has a high profile in the school. Senior managers believe that all staff need to understand the relationship between language and learning.

⁵ For a fuller account of the problems that can be posed by examination questions, see section 5 of the research paper.

66. To this end the school has, particularly over the past few years, built in a considerable amount of whole-school training on literacy and attainment, using not only the EMAG team but also outside experts in this field. The literacy management group, which includes representatives from all departments in addition to the SEN co-ordinator and EMAG co-ordinator, pre-dated the national Key Stage 3 Strategy. All departments have been required to embed attention to language development in their schemes of work and there are signs that virtually all staff feel confident working with multilingual classes, with or without additional support.

67. Another important feature of the school is its language college status – an opportunity, as the school sees it, to celebrate the linguistic diversity of the student body. In addition to English, German, French and Spanish, Turkish and Bengali are offered within the curriculum. Also offered after school are Japanese, Italian and Arabic. Valuing home languages has been an important factor in developing good community relations.

68. All the lessons seen in this school (English, science, geography, history) were planned and delivered by mainstream teachers on their own in a way that took account of all the pupils in the class, whether they were early stage learners of English or more proficient bilingual learners. Strategies commonly used by EMAG specialists were an integral part of the lesson and had in several instances been developed through previous joint working. There was a strong focus on talk, on the provision of visual support, matrices to help with organising information, ‘writing frames’, labels, key words and phrases. Through careful questioning, teachers routinely checked pupils’ understanding to ensure that important new concepts were clear to everyone. Pupil groupings had a clear rationale. In discussion, staff praised the whole-school and departmental training they had received, commenting positively on earlier opportunities for working with EMAG staff.

69. One example of a lesson is given below. All the lessons seen were graded highly.

Year 11 geography

The teacher was preparing the class for a forthcoming examination on alternative energy. The class had already covered this topic, so the lesson has been planned to revise the key features and vocabulary of this module. Firstly, the aims of the lesson are made explicit: (a) to revise spellings and meanings of key words; (b) to know the main alternatives to fossil fuels; (c) to understand how alternative energy is provided.

The first activity is for pupils to complete an energy crossword quiz with the help of prompt questions. This serves to remind pupils of the key vocabulary. Early stage learners of English are given letter prompts within the crossword. Following the completion of the quiz, the teacher prepares to show the pupils a video. Prior to its showing, she reminds them that there are seven alternatives to fossil fuels. She asks pupils to give some examples.

As they watch the video they are to make notes on a prepared matrix indicating the type of energy, where it is being used and how it works. Those who are relatively fluent in English are given an empty matrix to complete as they watch the video. Those who need more support are given some cut-out cards to place on the matrix and to act as prompts. Those whose English is less well-developed are given a full set of cards to classify in the appropriate columns. Pupils have been carefully grouped for maximum support and challenge. This is a successful lesson that involves all pupils whatever their level of English and achieves the learning objectives clearly identified at the start of the session.

Monitoring and improving the effectiveness of support

70. The schools monitor the effectiveness of the additional support they provide for bilingual learners in different ways. EMAG staff monitor the language development of targeted pupils by the use of carefully constructed profiles. There is informal feedback from heads of department and individual subject staff. In a few schools, pupils are also asked to comment regularly on the effectiveness of the help they receive. In one school, a senior manager, with the EMAG co-ordinator, carries out in-class observations of partnership work. In another there is systematic work sampling to see if the support is making a difference. Termly progress and achievement data are collected and any difference between predicted and achieved grades is identified.

71. Several schools, as already described, calculate value-added scores for EAL and English mother tongue pupils over the key stages. In each instance these proved positive, with bilingual pupils showing more added value than the cohort as a whole. Schools have for some years noted that pupils with EAL frequently make very good progress, especially by the end of Key Stage 4. The more sophisticated data analyses now carried out by some of these schools are able to chart this progress more systematically.

72. In one school, which has carried out value-added analyses on all pupils for several years, the EMAG co-ordinator is also asked to monitor the progress of supported pupils. This has shown that over the years the number of bilingual pupils achieving a D grade for English at GCSE has dropped. Only one was awarded a D in 2001; the rest achieved C or above. Previously, disproportionate numbers of pupils with EAL were in the bottom bands. Their distribution across the ability bands is now more equitable. This is a school where the EMAG co-ordinator believes that bilingual pupils, even those arriving in Year 7 with a National Curriculum level 2 or 3 in English, can achieve a GCSE grade C. Her faith in the pupils and the finely tuned support they receive (often by one-to-one contact at Key Stage 4) has been amply rewarded. Over the years, the proportion of bilingual pupils staying on in the sixth form and going on to university has risen steadily.

73. Where specific projects have been undertaken, such as the partnership work carried out with entire departments, results have been very encouraging. Carefully measured strategies such as these enable senior managers to state with some conviction that they understand what needs to be done to ensure that pupils with EAL achieve what they are capable of. The school perceives its main problem as finding the resources, the time and the skilled practitioners to carry out the work.

74. Senior managers in all the schools stressed the importance of whole-school training. They believed that only when mainstream staff understood the needs of bilingual pupils in the context of inclusive education would they adapt their teaching practice sufficiently so that all could participate to greatest effect. The amount of training provided over the years in many of these schools was considerable; the volume was in part because of a need to revisit the issues in a context of staff turnover.

75. Senior managers saw their role as being to identify quality and then to put in place the structures that would enable the work to be successful, providing clear leadership, finding resources, protecting joint planning time for mainstream and specialist staff, and monitoring outcomes. The aim was that EMAG staff would no longer operate

on the margins, but be influential in changing practice in the mainstream class. For this reason, effective partnership teaching was seen as one of the most productive forms of professional development.

76. Other strategies were also in place:

- the use of outside consultants to stimulate interest and give language and literacy issues in relation to bilingual pupils a high profile
- the requirement that departments develop internal guidance on working with bilingual pupils in the subject area, ensuring the embedding of good practice through schemes of work and departmental action plans
- the requirement for departments to monitor the performance of minority ethnic and EAL pupils and to address any discrepancies identified.

77. Another feature of several of the schools was their insistence on using staff flexibly if that served the needs of the school and its pupils. For example, EMAG staff might on occasion be used to release other subject specialists so that they could work together to identify solutions to recognised problems. Where this played to the strengths of staff generally and gave additional status to EMAG staff, it proved a powerful model for development.

What the learners say

78. HMI talked with pupils and students in each of the schools visited. Schools selected young people who, at some stage in the education system, had received additional help either by withdrawal or by in-class support. Some were UK-born, others had come directly into the secondary school from abroad. Most of the pupils were in Year 11 classes, a few were in Year 10 or the sixth form. A very wide range of home languages was represented, including Turkish, Albanian, Urdu, Punjabi, Bengali, Arabic, Russian, Mandarin, Gujarati, Azerbaijani, Twi, Farsi, Somali and Estonian.

79. The pupils were invited to talk about themselves, the languages they spoke and their aspirations. They were then asked to consider questions about aspects of school work or examinations they had found easy or difficult, any specific help they had found valuable and aspects of work they would like more help with.

80. What came through strongly from these interviews was pupils' motivation, their desire to achieve, their high educational aspirations and their commitment to the schools. A group of pupils from one of the northern schools was particularly forthright about the positive ethos in the school:

'This school is very friendly. It's like a family. Everyone is willing to help everyone else. You can talk about anything with the teachers. And whenever a teacher asks if there is someone willing to help a new pupil, there is always a show of hands. The school believes in us. And there is lots of fun for everyone.'

81. The last remark referred to the festivals celebrated at the school such as Eid and Christmas. The pupils appreciated the school's strong stand on equal opportunities and the valuing of all groups. They particularly mentioned the provision of a beautifully furnished quiet room that could be used for prayer by different groups.

82. When talking about aspects of language in school work that they found difficult, several groups mentioned two elements that presented particular problems: poetic language and the language of examinations. Pupils saw no easy way of resolving this except through continued practice and first-hand experience. Many confirmed that teachers gave them considerable help and advice on these elements, but they still found that the form of questions often seemed 'deliberately confusing'. They needed time to work out what was required and often remained uncertain after they had completed the question whether their interpretation was correct. For this reason, coursework presented fewer problems and they usually achieved higher grades.

83. Other difficulties commonly mentioned were: vocabulary, verb forms, pronunciation and using language clearly and well.

84. In talking about what helped, the following were mentioned by the pupils more than once:

- teachers who are approachable and helpful and 'believe in you'
- teachers who explain things clearly and simply ('some forget you are learning English and speak too fast in a difficult language')
- plenty of opportunities to talk things through to help understanding
- being expected to contribute in class but helped to do so
- a relaxed attitude (but not too relaxed) which makes you feel comfortable about admitting the need for more explanation
- support with subject vocabulary, including writing of new words on the board
- writing frameworks to help you present your ideas
- visual aids (pictures, films, diagrams)
- dictionaries in the home language and English
- copying things down to check later at home
- books with audiotapes for practising the language (good to take home and parents use them too)
- marking that gives you guidance on what has been done well and what needs to be improved, and how
- models of what is expected
- extra support from EMAG staff
- support in your first language
- pupil planners or action plans with specific targets
- induction (usually by temporary withdrawal from the mainstream)

- a 'buddy' system (a strategy in several of the schools, especially for new arrivals)
- other pupils (often by using the home language to aid understanding)
- mentoring by teachers or other adults.

85. Many of the groups commented on the issue of how any extra help should be given. Most were opposed to being withdrawn from the mainstream ('don't want to miss anything'), although a few had appreciated the opportunity to join an induction group for a short period. Many thought it was helpful to have two teachers, a subject and a language teacher, to ask for help in a mainstream class. However, several commented that they did not want the 'embarrassment' of having an extra teacher sitting next to them all the time, thinking that was even worse than being removed from the class altogether.

86. Many of the examples of teaching quoted in the case studies in this report exemplify the kind of partnership teaching which takes account of the sensitivities expressed by the pupils above. The joint planning, team teaching and strategies used in the lessons enable all pupils to understand the curriculum content without being singled out.

87. By and large, these young people impressed with their maturity. A particularly thoughtful A-level history student commented as follows:

'I don't expect the language teacher to help me with my history. I have plenty of ideas but I do need help with organising my work and with expressing myself in English. When I started my A-level course, I really struggled with the essays. So I decided to ask for help. The teacher had given me help before. If help is there, it's silly not to take it. Some boys have refused help and regretted it later. Everyone can improve. Now, even the more able boys come for help with their English. When I wasn't doing very well, my teacher believed in me and saw that I could do well if I was given help.'

88. Apart from helping him with his English, the teacher had drawn his attention to a wider range of reading material where the language used made the concepts easier to understand.

Colleges

Characteristics of the colleges

89. Like the schools, the colleges were situated in different parts of England. Each of the three general FE colleges had just over 20,000 students in total, but the number of full-time students was between 2500 and 5000. The sixth form college had 1800 full-time students. Two of the institutions described high deprivation levels among their students. The other two indicated average intakes reflecting the full socio-economic range.

90. The proportion of minority ethnic students varied from 11% to 72%, and the proportion with EAL from 5% to 55%. Students came from a very wide range of language backgrounds. All the colleges reported fluctuating populations as a result of migration. Students from European countries, for example Albania, were now arriving in significant numbers. One college had recently taken on a number of Bangladeshi assistants only to find a surge in numbers at enrolment from Ecuador.

91. All but the sixth form college offered a wide range of discrete EAL/ESOL classes. Only about 14% of bilingual students were on mainstream courses and receiving additional support. Support was provided largely outside the mainstream course but was, in principle, linked to it.

92. As with the schools, college EAL/ESOL staff were explicit about the needs of advanced bilingual students:

- *‘Some of their support needs relate to interference from their first language, for example, missing definite and indefinite articles in writing (Urdu speakers) or the misuse of tenses and prepositions (Cantonese speakers). They will have achieved the entry requirements for mainstream courses, but there is a mismatch between what their qualifications say they should be capable of and what they can actually do. This disparity becomes increasingly marked the higher the qualification level. These students often have poorly developed general study skills.’*
- *‘Bilingual learners on normal academic or vocational programmes frequently require support for writing formally. Getting the appropriate register for context and purpose is difficult for them, as is the understanding of the requirements of assignments, which can be excessively complex and jargon-ridden. New vocabulary can present a problem, particularly when teachers are unaware of the difficulties faced by learners for whom English is not the first language.’*
- *‘We find that many of our ESOL students have fewer strategies for deducing meaning from context and often have a limited understanding of idiom. Sometimes they are orally confident and fluent, but struggle to find anything to write in personal response to, say, a poem. This leads to writing that is far too brief when, to obtain higher grades in GCSE English, you need to be able to handle extended writing.’*
- *‘Interpreting questions is an area often found difficult. For example, we had a group of IT Foundation students whose practical skills were good but who did poorly in the written exams. We identified the need to work on the vocabulary in questions (for example the difference between ‘describe’, ‘explain’, ‘illustrate’, and ‘contrast’) or how to set about listing advantages and disadvantages. When the bilingual students redid the exam, they all passed.’*

- *‘The kind of things our EAL students need help with are: sentence construction, understanding written questions and documents more generally, checking work for errors, giving oral presentations, improving the style of their written work, essay planning and writing. Of course many English mother tongue students need help with some of these features as well.’*

Attainment

93. Among the colleges, only the sixth form college had analysed any of its attainment data by ethnicity. Analysis of the average point score in A-level examinations by ethnic group indicated that scores for Bangladeshi and Pakistani groups (the two major minority ethnic groups in the college) were below those of the White UK group. With the exception of the Chinese group, where numbers were very small and the results therefore not significant statistically, all bilingual groups had average points scores below the national average.

The organisation of support

94. The number of EAL/ESOL staff in the four colleges ranged from nine to 80 part-time teachers. Most of these were involved in the teaching of discrete classes for EAL learners. On average, about six full-time equivalent posts were designated for language support linked to mainstream courses. Most of the staff in these posts had qualifications in ESOL or the teaching of English as a foreign language (TEFL).

95. Their work was lodged within the basic skills area of a college’s work or within an access faculty. In the sixth form college, the language and curriculum support team was managed by the vice-principal.

96. All the colleges had detailed procedures for identifying those students who needed additional support. The majority of the colleges carried out initial language and literacy screening for all students. Subsequently, bilingual students would be referred for further diagnostic tests carried out by trained staff. Following this analysis of need and discussion with the student, an individual learning plan would be agreed and targets set. The progress of the students would then be monitored over time and feedback given to course and personal tutors.

97. Some students would be picked up at initial interview and referred directly to the language support unit for further diagnosis of need. But, as one ESOL co-ordinator put it, ‘some interviewers would be fooled by the oral fluency of some of the bilingual students’. Such students would be picked up only after coursework and assignments were undertaken within the mainstream academic or vocational courses. In one college, all full-time students do induction assignments in the first two weeks of the course to check whether the course is appropriate or whether specific support needs are evident.

98. A major problem is the reluctance of some students to accept that they need additional support with English. Two of the colleges had got round this problem by building additional support, at a range of levels, into the programmes of all students. This had successfully removed the stigma attached to additional support. However, while some tutors saw this support as essential and chased up non-attenders, others did not.

99. In the sixth form college all students complete a language assessment paper as part of their induction. This is marked by form tutors and students are identified for either targeted support or monitoring. At this point further diagnostic work is carried out by the language and curriculum support team and the level and nature of the support agreed with the student. The college was proposing in future to use the screening of key skills to identify support needs.

100. In the colleges, the provision of additional support is seen as a service offered to all, irrespective of level or prior attainment. If support is requested, it will be given. In practice, the amount given will depend not only on need but also on the availability of staffing. Within this universal provision, priority is usually given to basic skills needs and language support for speakers of other languages.

101. EAL/ESOL staff with experience of particular mainstream courses, such as information technology, or levels of qualification will sometimes be allocated to support in these areas. Occasionally provision will be driven by proven demand (such as access to science) or tutor interest (motor vehicle maintenance targeted at EAL students). For the most part, however, support, especially for more advanced bilingual learners, is offered one-to-one or in small groups in learning centres.

102. In contrast to the situation in schools, there was relatively little partnership or team teaching within mainstream courses in the three general FE colleges. In the best practice, the additional language support was closely linked to the content and demands of the mainstream course, and communication between ESOL and mainstream teachers was regular and detailed.

103. The situation in the sixth form college was different. There was an attempt to balance both the needs of course tutors and students. In-class support was built into all foundation courses, some intermediate level courses and GCSE retakes. Integrated support for level 3 courses (A level and equivalent) was by request. Support for individual students was usually on a one-to-one basis and largely consisted of help with homework and coursework assignments. There are always more students on the waiting list for additional help than can be supported.

104. A sophisticated system is used to decide what priority to give such requests. EMAG staff use the college database, which holds a range of information about individual students: their performance grades in all subjects, effort grades and attendance levels. This information is then weighed against a range of other factors such as the level of the course, the imminence of critical examinations, attainment in key skills, and take-up and attendance at previously offered support sessions. An 'at risk' list with a weighted points score is then produced and the most needy of the students on the waiting list are offered help.

105. Each of the three general FE colleges had a range of provision which included many of the following: discrete ESOL classes, from beginner to advanced levels; flexible access courses with ESOL built in; supported courses; learning centres; supported independent study; one-to-one and small group work linked to vocational or academic provision in the mainstream; additional English tuition (usually for English mother tongue speakers) and language support (ESOL) for bilingual students – although advanced bilingual learners often fall between these latter two kinds of support, on occasion qualifying for both. Any students retaking GCSE courses automatically qualify for help.

106. The support given one-to-one and in small groups (the kind of support usually offered to advanced bilingual learners) was in theory linked to work in the mainstream. This was not always the case in practice, and some support consisted of language exercises without any relevant context.

107. The work of the language and curriculum support team in the sixth form college was structured very differently. Here, the majority of the support was through partnership teaching on foundation and some intermediate courses. Mathematics and English GCSE retake courses also had subject and EMAG staff working jointly. Fewer A-level courses benefited from joint teaching but the outcomes of some very successful partnership work with a small number of departments were beginning to be recognised and other departments were showing interest in the same model. At the same time many EAL students benefited from one-to-one support related to their mainstream courses and often focusing on homework assignments.

Examples of practice

College A

108. In this sixth form college (with over half of its students having EAL), the language and curriculum support team has for some years worked in partnership with subject specialists. Until fairly recently, most of the support work has taken place in relation to level 2 (intermediate GNVQ courses and GCSE retakes). About half of the students with EAL manage to achieve higher GCSE grades at their second attempt. It is on these courses that pupils with the greatest support needs are to be found.

109. More recently, however, the needs of more advanced bilingual learners has received greater attention. The analysis of performance data has shown that the average point scores of many of the bilingual groups at A level are below those of the White UK group. A religious education teacher with experience of partnership working elsewhere invited the language and curriculum support team to work with her on an A-level course. Results improved considerably. A management group in the college is now looking at results in other departments and similar partnership working is being developed across a number of A-level courses. Philosophy is one example.

A-level philosophy

This was an ethics revision class just before the AS examinations. Approximately 25% of pupils had EAL but all were proficient bilingual learners and had had most of their education in the UK. The philosophy and EAL teachers planned the lesson together. It started with the EAL teacher showing the students a PowerPoint presentation which she had produced on preparing for examinations. The class considered how to organise their revision schedule and were then shown a series of strategies that might help them to revise the work they had covered on Descartes. They were shown how to summarise notes, and how to turn notes into helpful diagrams (and the reverse).

The EAL teacher had produced sets of small revision cards with, for example, key words and phrases on one side (eg cogito, res cogitans) and one-sentence explanations on the reverse. Students tested each other in pairs. They were then shown how to use these definitions to create a glossary for reference. Next, they looked at past examination questions and brainstormed answers to these in small

groups, reporting back to the whole class. They were reminded of the importance of explaining and illustrating their answers and they practised finding appropriate examples.

The lesson moved rapidly and was intellectually demanding. The two teachers circulated during the paired and group work, helping students to articulate their responses and clearing up confusions. They move from discussion to the writing out of definitions and, for the last 15 minutes, writing individual paragraphs in response to examination questions.

The students, who seemed anxious at the start of the lesson, left the room with greater confidence in their ability to tackle the forthcoming examination. The lesson had provided them with a range of support, both oral and written, which helped reinforce their learning.

110. The philosophy teacher commented on what she had learned from the EAL teacher: the need to offer structures to support spoken language, but also the importance of withdrawing this help; the importance of 'writing frames'; the need to ensure comprehension by giving students plenty of opportunity to talk through their ideas; the importance of identifying key words and making sure that all students are clear about their meaning.

111. As the EAL teacher commented, 'EAL support at level 3 is a difficult animal'. It is as much about higher-order skills as it is about language competence. Getting the elements in balance calls for considerable skill. The language and curriculum support team in this college has produced a helpful leaflet on partnership teaching. This sets out how EMAG staff can help other teachers and at the same time answers some of the questions that are raised.

College B

112. A feature of the work in this college was the good focus on the individual needs of more proficient bilingual learners in support sessions. An example follows.

A one-to-one language support session

The session was highly effective in developing the specific skills needed by this student to complete her course successfully. Unusually, this student's written English was stronger than her spoken English. Technically, her hairdressing skills were very good, but she had trouble on her hairdressing course understanding tasks. For example, when the class had to sketch a plan of the salon highlighting health and safety hazards, she produced a beautiful watercolour depicting every detail, down to the cleaning fluids, but missed the main point of the task. She had particular problems unravelling the idiosyncratic language used in National Vocational Qualifications (NVQ) assignments. A particular concern for her was chatting informally with clients – an essential skill for hairdressers. She also had trouble dealing with bookings on the phone.

In this session the tutor spent some 20 minutes having a general conversation, trying to mirror the sort of informal chat the student is required to make in the salon. She used English at speed and riddled her language with idiom to promote the student's skill in coping with colloquial language. The tutor also made no attempt to rein in her Birmingham accent.

In the second part of the session, time was spent productively role playing telephone bookings, where the student tried to use appropriate language and get the customer's details right. These were recorded on a dictaphone and subsequently their quality was analysed by the student and tutor together.

College C

113. In common with the other colleges, this college has effective screening and diagnostic procedures. Individual learning plans focus on linguistic and study skills and the integrated course support for all students removes the stigma of additional support. In particular, there is good liaison between support tutors and mainstream staff, allied to close monitoring and reporting of students' progress.

A pre-foundation science class

This class is designed for bilingual students as an access route into mainstream intermediate science GNVQ. It is taught partly by the science department and partly by ESOL specialists. The English element of the course has a strong scientific focus.

The students start with a reading exercise where they have to scan and then select appropriate detail from a text in response to prompt questions. The texts focus on astronomy and build on recent work done in the science part of the course.

Students quickly got to grips with the texts and coped very well with demanding language in terms of specialised vocabulary and complex grammatical structures. The texts were not adapted and the students were able to scan quickly to find the relevant sections to answer their questions. They coped well also with deducing meaning from context and most were able to answer their particular questions. Questions were graded, moving from closed, requiring one-word answers, to more demanding questions, requiring students to infer meaning, evaluate and offer views. Students were allotted tasks according to attainment and all worked on their own text in a focused manner. In a few cases, the later questions were too demanding or students did not reach them. It was clear that texts had been selected to progress from simplified, adapted texts to authentic materials used as students grew in confidence.

The teacher helped ably where students could not deduce meaning from context or find words in the dictionary or from peers: she remained, however, demanding and had high expectations. Students asked as a last resort, after struggling themselves.

Students reported back on what they had learned from their reading, although this stage of the lesson lost a bit of pace. Nevertheless, on balance, students worked hard, demonstrated good skills and benefited from the carefully structured reading tasks, which were matched to their individual levels of attainment. Attainment was generally good. Students had sound control of structures, had acquired appropriate scientific vocabulary (such as 'elliptical') and were fairly confident dealing with demanding texts.

Monitoring and improving effectiveness

I 14. In the general FE colleges, monitoring is largely through informal feedback to course tutors on the individual progress of students. Additionally, two colleges have carried out satisfaction surveys in which they sought tutors' and students' views. One college has just set up a system to monitor the effectiveness of support by reviewing targets and measuring progress. Another has recently started to track whether students receiving additional support actually achieve mainstream qualifications. A third is discussing how it might measure the impact of the ESOL support. Overall, systems for monitoring the effectiveness of support are not well developed, nor can any impact be readily identified. An exception is the sixth form college where not only is achievement by ethnic group monitored, but the impact of partnership teaching on the performance scores of individual departments is identified.

I 15. Because of the discrete nature of so much support for EAL in colleges, relatively little training for mainstream staff on the needs of bilingual learners has been carried out systematically. Informal feedback to course tutors on the progress of individual students is a form of professional development and serves to raise awareness of these students' needs. As support is increasingly linked to, if not provided in the mainstream, constructive dialogue becomes more possible. One college has produced a pamphlet on bilingual learners for mainstream staff. A second has carried out a series of training sessions for mainstream staff with the aim of raising awareness of the needs, both cultural and linguistic, of bilingual students. These have been well received.

I 16. The most systematic professional response on these issues was to be found in the sixth form college where the extensive partnership teaching model gave rise to continuing dialogue between EAL and subject teachers.

What the students say

I 17. Students in the colleges were asked the same questions as those in the schools. They were equally diverse in the range of languages spoken and previous educational experience.

I 18. Many of their responses paralleled those of the school students, especially in relation to what they found difficult. Here, they listed: constructing sentences; tenses; specialist vocabulary; appropriate register ('my English is too plain'); understanding complex language in written assignment briefs; spelling; punctuation; extended writing ('writing enough'); grammar; personal response to poetry in GCSE English; understanding questions; how to structure essays; and evaluating work.

I 19. In considering what they found most helpful, they mentioned the following:

- the initial diagnosis which helped them identify what their problems were and the individual learning plans arising from this
- the weekly support sessions (one-to-one or small group)
- support sessions that are integrated with the mainstream course
- help with finding the right vocabulary

- work on spelling and on the use of tenses
- help with proofreading ('spotting mistakes')
- help with planning assignments and revision.

120. Many of them would have appreciated more help, that is, more than one extra support session a week. As with the school students, their desire was largely for more of the same, but some felt that the focus of the additional support could have been more closely related to their main coursework.

Conclusions

121. The support needs of bilingual learners do not cease once they become orally proficient in English. It is common for pupils learning English as a second language to achieve reasonable spoken fluency after 18 months to two years in the UK education system. Becoming skilled readers and writers in a second (or third) language, however, generally takes considerably longer.

122. The higher up the education system, the greater the linguistic demands. For students to read and understand challenging material in GCSE courses and beyond, they need considerable first-hand experience of working on texts, guided by teachers who recognise the potential difficulties of such materials for bilingual students. Equally, when writing at this level, they need, initially at least, close help with structuring the kind of language necessary for academic success. This will include, for example, the language needed to write up science or mathematics investigations, to create an informal dialogue or to evaluate the impact of a historical event.

123. Mother tongue speakers of English need help with many of these aspects of language as well, but for bilingual learners the challenge is greater and, in some respects, different. Opportunities for extended writing in a range of forms, which poses particular demands for bilingual learners, need to be built into the curriculum throughout Key Stage 3 and 4.

The schools

124. The schools visited were chosen because they had recognised the continuing support needs of students in the later stages of learning English. They had come to this understanding through careful scrutiny and analysis of attainment and progress data, through discussions with specialist EAL colleagues, through audits of the quality of learning in multilingual classes, and through experimentation with different ways of deploying their additional resources under the EMAG.

125. Aspects of good practice were evident in all the institutions visited, although, inevitably, not equally so. The key features leading to improved achievement for bilingual learners were:

- high aspirations by all staff for minority ethnic and bilingual pupils and high aspirations among pupils themselves
- a tradition in the school of valuing ethnic, cultural and linguistic diversity, evident, for example, through resources, displays and the language used by staff and pupils
- high levels of awareness of issues for bilingual learners among senior staff and subject leaders
- a long-term emphasis on understanding language development in the school for all staff
- good use of attainment data and other assessment information for diagnosis of need, targeting support and monitoring the progress of individuals and groups

- a strong, well-led and respected EAL support team, with flexible use of staff which plays to their strengths
- a focus on joint working, including partnership teaching, in the core subjects and, where resources allow, other subject areas
- well-understood strategies, often embedded in schemes of work, for supporting bilingual learners across the curriculum
- high-quality feedback to learners through agreed marking strategies and the use of individual action plans
- a range of out-of-school provision, including study support and provision for mother tongue teaching
- serious attempts to monitor the impact of support.

126. All of the schools had seen the achievements of their bilingual learners rise consistently, with a consequent narrowing of the gap between the outcomes for bilingual and monolingual learners. And, without exception, all schools stressed that the basic teaching strategies developed to support bilingual learners in the classroom were potentially of value to all. Exploring the nature of teaching which was sensitive to the needs of developing bilingual pupils resulted in classrooms which valued active learning, a focus on talk, support for writing, and a consideration of how to balance the language and content demands of the subject being taught. Such elements were supportive of all learners.

127. In some schools the good practice was restricted to just a few departments and there was a need for wider dissemination. Some schools used data to identify individual need well, but did not consider needs at the level of ethnic groups as a whole. Conversely, others had excellent whole-school and ethnically analysed group data but needed to unpack this information more carefully in order to plan action in relation to individual pupils.

128. Some schools were able to point to evidence of the impact of support on attainment outcomes for bilingual learners, but in most schools this area needed further development. Although all schools had attainment results which had improved over time, some dramatically so, outcomes in some of the schools remained persistently below national averages. Finally, monitoring the quality of teaching and learning in the classroom was not sufficiently widespread.

Colleges

129. The discrete nature of much of the EAL/ESOL teaching in the colleges visited and the lack of attainment monitoring by ethnic group make it difficult to draw conclusions about the impact of additional support post-16. In the college where ethnically monitored attainment data was available and partnership teaching was well established, more advanced bilingual learners were making good progress and beginning to close the achievement gap.

130. Positive features found in some or in all the colleges were:

- effective initial screening and diagnostic assessment
- well-focused individual learning plans which embraced both linguistic and study skills
- good links with mainstream course tutors through regular liaison, and formal review and reporting of progress
- good individual and small group language support
- appropriately qualified and experienced language support staff
- integration of language support as part of the timetabled provision for all learners, removing the stigma sometimes attached to additional support
- a system enabling bilingual students to benefit from more than one strand of support
- a wide range of vocationally linked resources for the development of language and study skills
- support that is effective in developing higher-order linguistic and study skills and, more generally, independence in learning
- a range of professional development activities to raise awareness of issues with all tutors.

131. Although the sixth form college had analysed attainment data by ethnicity, the general FE colleges had not. There are clear advantages in introducing such monitoring of students' attainment on mainstream courses. In general, liaison between EAL/ESOL specialists and mainstream course tutors on student progress was good. However, colleges need to ensure effectively integrated language support with vocational and academic courses. One way of doing this would be to develop closer working practices between EAL/ESOL specialists and subject tutors through, for example, partnership teaching. Over time, this would ensure that all staff have a greater understanding of the continuing language support needs of bilingual learners. A further important area is monitoring the effectiveness of the additional support provided.

132. In encouraging greater awareness and closer co-operation among college staff on language development, it would be a helpful step for course tutors to review the language they use in assignment briefs. This was cited frequently by bilingual students as a key barrier to understanding and performance. Colleges could also usefully review initial admissions procedures to ensure that those bilingual students whose oral competence far outruns their literacy skills in English are not placed without support on courses where they will struggle to cope.

Annex A: the schools and colleges visited

Schools

Aylward, Enfield

Breeze Hill, Oldham

Camden School for Girls, Camden

Crown Hills Community College, Leicester

Elizabeth Garrett Anderson, Language College for Girls, Islington

The Grange, Bradford

Howden Clough Girls' High School, Kirklees

Mulberry School for Girls, Tower Hamlets

Parrs Wood High School, Manchester

Watford Grammar School for Boys, Hertfordshire

Westborough High School, Kirklees

Colleges

Liverpool Community College

Luton Sixth Form College

Newham College of FE

Solihull College of FE

Annex B: Writing in English as an additional language at Key Stage 4 and post-16 – a summary

The project

The Advanced Bilingual Learners' Writing Project, commissioned by Ofsted, investigated the writing skills of a particular group of students in schools and colleges – those who use English as an additional language and who, although at an advanced stage of formal education, may be underachieving in English. Over 300 pieces of writing from English and other subject areas were analysed to find features of writing that cause particular difficulties for this group.

Writing is a key skill for both formal education and for life beyond school and, without good levels of writing skills in English, bilingual learners are likely to be at a disadvantage. While, at one level, successful writing requires knowledge and application of the conventions of written texts, it is also a complex skill in which thoughts and ideas become concrete written words, sentences and paragraphs, and are organised into a text that is accessible for the intended readers. Furthermore, a written text is not only an encoding on paper or screen, but also represents the writer to others as someone with his or her own experiences, affiliations and opinions.

The focus group of pupils were between 15 and 16 years of age, in Key Stage 4, used English as an additional language and had been in UK education for at least five years. Major home languages were Gujarati, Bengali and Punjabi, with small numbers of a range of other languages. Their writing, at the GCSE C/D borderline, was compared with higher-grade EAL writing and English as mother tongue (EMT) students' writing at the GCSE C/D borderline.

Mock GCSE scripts in English and a humanities subject were analysed for each pupil. The analysis considered the quality of the whole text – use of genre, ideas, paragraphing – and the use of English in developing ideas at sentence, clause and word level. The analysis also looked at accuracy in articles, word endings, spelling and punctuation.

The scripts of a similar, but smaller, group of college students (16–19 year olds) were also analysed, with broadly similar findings.

Differences and similarities between the groups

- At whole-text level, less successful EAL and EMT writing both lacked content, and did not use paragraphing well to organise content. The less successful EAL group had more difficulties in finding and using ideas in writing.
- Some less successful EAL writers seemed to have ideas but did not express them clearly.
- Within the text, the writing of both less successful EAL and EMT groups tended to lack detail, and used simple sentence and phrase grammar to express connections.
- The strongest differences between the less successful EAL writing and EMT writing were found within texts, at the level of words and phrases, particularly in the use of 'small' words such as prepositions, delexical verbs (for example, *do*, *make*, *put*) and in aspects of word grammar such as agreements and endings.
- EAL and EMT writing at the C/D borderline showed similar patterns of problems with punctuation – quite severe and including problems with capitals and full stops – and spelling, where a few pupils produced the majority of errors.
- Higher-grade EAL writing was characterised by having more content and developing content to a more detailed level, although there was room for more effective use of paragraphing and of source materials in English examinations.
- As well as being more accurate, higher-grade EAL writing made greater use of grammar resources, with more variety of clause and sentences types.
- A small number of language features within the text remained somewhat problematic in some higher-grade EAL writing: prepositions, articles and subject/verb agreements.

Writing across the curriculum

The scripts show that problematic features of writing occur in all subject areas. While English requires the longest texts, the problems of generating and organising content are not restricted to work in English. For example, pupils who cannot develop topics into detail and use sentence grammar to explain the connections are likely to underachieve in geography and history, as well as in English. Similarly, the use of modal verbs to show hypothetical or conditional meanings is central to writing and thinking in science, as well as in the humanities.

Improving writing has an impact across the curriculum. English departments can take the lead in schemes to improve writing but ideas need to be accepted and adopted consistently in all subject areas. Furthermore, the close relationship of writing with thinking and with reading suggests that all three need to be addressed in an integrated way in any scheme for improvement.

Writing at length

- Very few of the C/D borderline texts were of the length required by the English examination.
- Writing fast and at length to produce extended texts is a distinct skill that needs to be practised, that is, it is not the same as writing several short texts.
- There is a question about how far the writing tasks and genres set in English examinations realistically require extended texts.
- The use of paragraphs links to the writing of extended texts. The organisation of texts through indicating main and supplementary topics or ideas, and use of paragraphs to display this organisation, are clearly points on which teachers could help.
- Pupils need to be taught techniques to expand and develop the content of their writing, taking what comes to mind and making it more useful for writing at length, particularly in English. Useful work would help students with strategies to generate ideas for given topics and to access ideas from source materials, for example:
 - brainstorming and mind-mapping around key words
 - using personal experience to add to content
 - developing topics by making links, breaking topics down to more specific sub-topics
 - extracting key words from sources, and using them to generate content, even if some of the text is inaccessible
 - organising ideas into a logical linear sequence.

Writing in a range of genres

- The requirement to write in very specific genres in the English tasks led to a need for pupils to adopt and use multiple layers of 'voices' which caused great confusion for all groups. Apart from formulaic openings and closings that seemed to have been learnt by rote, pupils seemed unclear about their purpose in their role as writer, about who exactly was their audience and how to address them.
- It may be that pupils can be helped to think themselves into their roles on such tasks as part of the writing process, although another view might urge that students be given tasks that require more straightforward genres and allow them to write as themselves.
- Ideas from source materials have to be found and understood, and changes made to genre and register. Students need to be taught how to do these things.

- Explicit discussion of the stance that a writer needs to take in different genres, and examples of how stance is shown in written language, could help pupils to make more effective use of their knowledge of the topic.

Use of language resources

- Less successful writing is likely to remain at a general level, or at a specific level. Students can be helped to use a wider range of vocabulary in the development of ideas.
- The organisation of texts through indicating main and supplementary topics or ideas, and use of paragraphs to display this organisation, is an aspect of writing on which many students need more help.
- All writers could be helped to write more complex clauses and sentences by:
 - using longer noun phrases
 - using more adverbial phrases to add detail about *when*, *where*, *why* and *how*
 - expanding phrases into clauses
 - using more advanced sub-ordinators (for example, *although*, *until*) to connect ideas
 - making more use of participial non-finite clauses (for example, *by riding bikes...*).
- Individual, explicit corrective feedback on the use of modals (for example, *may*, *would*) to express conditionality or hypothesis may be appropriate at Key Stage 2 onwards.
- Punctuation should be taught alongside how to use subordination. For example, non-finite clauses are usually separated from the rest of the sentence with a comma and use of the comma, therefore, is best seen as part of learning about non-finite clauses.
- With regard to the finding that prepositions (for example, *with*, *of*, *in*) and delexical verbs (for example, *make*, *do*) caused particular problems for EAL writers, it may be that unimportant inaccuracies in their spoken English become more noticeable and problematic in writing, and that these types of lexical errors reflect the process of learning English through mainstream participation, where meaning can be understood without noticing small details at word level. It may also be that some strategies used by teachers to support the meaning of EAL in subject classes, such as highlighting key words, may contribute to this phenomenon.
- Learning to write offers opportunities to notice these small features of English that might pass unnoticed in talk. Encouragement of accuracy and corrective feedback on these features in formal spoken language tasks and in writing from Key Stage 1 onwards may be helpful.

- Errors resulting from over-generalisation are ‘positive errors’ in that they show pupils’ internal grammar development. Explicit feedback on errors on an individual basis may be helpful in highlighting exceptions to rules and over-generalisations. Group or class language awareness work that explicitly elicits, displays and discusses patterns, such as word class and meaning links, could be done when writing errors suggest it is appropriate.
- Errors in articles, agreements and endings may sometimes benefit from explicit group or class teaching, but are more likely to respond to corrective feedback on an individual basis so that pupils can see how the correct form is needed to express their meaning precisely.

Planning for long-term writing skills development

Some of the problems identified in the report may respond to direct instruction, for example, comparative forms and how to qualify them, and expressing conditionality. Other aspects of writing need long-term development, that is, from Key Stage 1 or 2 onwards:

- writing regularly at length, with support, for example, guided writing
- extensive reading to become familiar with styles and genres
- noticing how writers use subordination and other resources to present ideas
- encouragement and support to try more ambitious phrases, sentences and texts
- development of signposting phrases and linking terms, for example, *another point; while some people think x, others disagree*
- drawing attention to correct use of prepositions and delexical verbs.

