

ENGLISH AS AN ADDITIONAL LANGUAGE

Provision for pupils with English as an additional language (EAL) varies between schools, depending on the context and the number, experience and qualifications of the staff involved.

In a school with a significant number of pupils learning English as an additional language (becoming bilingual), language support staff often work in partnership with class teachers, influencing mainstream teaching and learning strategies, providing additional resources, and targeting individuals at early stages of English who need focused support. There might be induction arrangements involving some limited withdrawal work for older pupils who have recently arrived in England. By contrast, in a school with few bilingual pupils, an EAL specialist might only be on site for half a day. Nevertheless, their impact on pupils' learning should be evident.

Inspect the range of support on offer to decide whether the provision meets effectively the needs of the pupils as a whole, including more advanced learners of English.²

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

Standards and achievement

Judge the **standards** of pupils learning English as an additional language in the same way as you would for other pupils. When judging their **achievement**, consider any additional information on the pupils' language and general competence and then decide whether they are working to their limits.

Take particular account of:

- significant differences in standards and achievement, for example between monolingual and bilingual pupils or different ethnic groups; and
- variation in achievement in different subjects, for example better scores in mathematics than in English.

Remember that EAL pupils' conceptual thinking may be in advance of their ability to speak English. Draw on other team inspectors' views of how well bilingual pupils achieve in each subject.

Using data

Refer to PICS and PANDA information to get an indication of the number of pupils with English as an additional language. Obtain details of ethnic backgrounds and the support available from Forms S1 and S2. Make full use of baseline assessment, national test and assessment data but also check other assessments carried out by the school. Check whether the school analyses the data by EAL or ethnic group.

Example EAL1: Pre-inspection notes.

About 50 per cent of pupils are from minority ethnic groups and almost 35 per cent have EAL. Despite low attainment at baseline, by the end of KS1 scores in En, Ma and Sc are above national averages. This suggests pupils achieve very well. However, Bengali-speaking pupils do less well than other groups. No Bengali-speaking child achieves L2a or L3 in writing, comprehension or maths. Is this related to insufficient EAL support staff, inappropriate deployment of staff, late admission to the school or teaching that is not meeting the needs of these pupils?

² It takes on five–seven years to become fully competent in a second language, although individuals will vary in the speed with which they acquire this competence. Fluency in spoken English is usually achieved within two years, but the ability to read and understand more complex texts containing unfamiliar cultural references and write the academic English needed for success in examinations takes much longer.

Analysing pupils' work

In the main, bilingual pupils will not produce separate EAL work. Analyse pupils' work as part of the more general sampling of work during the inspection. Ask for the work of pupils with EAL to be included in the sample with an indication of their level of English. Look at the records which the school keeps on bilingual³ pupils targeted for additional support.

QCA has recently developed new assessment arrangements to provide a nationally consistent measure of English language competence for EAL pupils linked to the National Curriculum. The outcome of their work, *A language in common: Assessing English as an additional language*, was published in May 2000. There is an expectation that the resulting extended National Curriculum English scales will be used by schools and LEAs for assessing early progress in EAL. It will take time for these new scales to bed in and for teachers to feel confident about using them for assessing the progress of pupils with EAL. Expect to find that schools with EAL are aware of the new QCA framework for assessment and have considered its implications for their assessment practice. The direct link to the National Curriculum English scales should enable more dialogue and shared assessment procedures between mainstream teachers and EAL specialists. Many LEAs are currently seeking to align their own EAL assessment scales with the new extended National Curriculum English scales.

Talking with pupils

Ask bilingual pupils what they think about their competence in English: what they find most helpful; what they still find difficult. Establish what they know and understand and if their work is sufficiently challenging. Gain insights into pupils' attitudes to work and judge whether the school could do more to improve their standards and achievement in English.

You may find pupils' attitudes to withdrawal work (where it exists) vary. Some pupils resent being pulled out of mainstream classes and feel they are missing vital work.

Pupils do not always view in-class support positively. Some pupils feel uncomfortable about being singled out by the support teacher or assistant. See whether support teachers or assistants effectively and sensitively adapt their methods of support to the needs and perceptions of the targeted bilinguals.

Lesson observation

In class lessons and withdrawal groups judge the attainment and learning of EAL pupils within the context of the National Curriculum.

Example EAL2: evidence from a Year 1 lesson

An EAL teacher works with six pupils in a small room off the main class area. The pupils are of mixed linguistic ability: some early-stage learners of English; others more advanced but lacking confidence; one monolingual who needs language extension. The whole class is working on fairy tales and rhymes. The previous day, the EAL teacher had baked gingerbread men with this group. They review this and then plan how to decorate the biscuits. Excellent opportunity to focus on talk: describing the baking process; remembering the ingredients; talking about the smells and the changes to the materials used; planning their designs – colour, body parts, etc. Good recall of the vocabulary and process ('We mixed the flour and spices', 'We cut out the shape'). Teacher prompts use of appropriate structures and capitalises on rehearsal of past and present tenses. Good progress in speaking and listening for all six pupils. When the group subsequently join the rest of the class, their ability to report on their work accurately and confidently equals that of the class as a whole – a significant achievement for these pupils.

[Attainment average (4); learning good (3)]

³ In this guidance bilingual refers to children who are in regular contact with more than one language for the purposes of family living. Their competence may be in one or all of the four skills (listening, speaking, reading, writing) in either or both languages and is likely to be at varying levels. Bilingual or developing bilingual are descriptors which encompass a wide range of starting points and levels of proficiency. English as a second language (ESL) and English as an additional language (EAL) are terms which refer to only one aspect of an individual's language repertoire. For most pupils English will quickly become their main language for education, career and life chances, but their first or community language will remain a crucial dimension of their social and cultural identity.

Example EAL3: evidence from a Year 3 Lesson

Science lesson on plants – their importance and the range of functions they perform (providing oxygen, food, materials such as wood for building, etc). Initial whole-class discussion appears to go well with pupils making relevant contributions. However, only the more advanced bilingual learners take an active part in the discussion and problems arise when pupils are asked to record their work. Single word prompts (eg oxygen) are displayed on the board, but no language models for recording the information are given. A few of the more fluent speakers of English in this predominantly bilingual class manage to record appropriately the reasons why humans need plants. However, those at earlier stages of English struggle to record anything, others only manage statements such as, ‘We need plants to eat and plants to grow’, ‘Some plants grow cosmetics’, ‘Some plants make medicine, ‘Wood makes paper too’. When questioned further, pupils find it very difficult to explain what they mean. Impossible, therefore, to decide whether or not the content of the lesson has been fully understood, or whether the issue is simply one of needing additional help with English to express themselves clearly. Learning is clearly unsatisfactory. Overall, on the basis of the written work, and with the exception of those few pupils whose English is fluent, attainment is below average and achievement is also unsatisfactory.

[Attainment below average (5); learning unsatisfactory (5)]

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

(This section should be read in conjunction with the teaching and learning criteria, printed on page 6 of this document.)

Observing teaching and learning in lessons

The teaching and support of EAL varies depending on the context of the school. In the majority of primary schools the work is in mainstream. In others there is a combination of in-class and withdrawal support (the latter might be induction provision for late arriving bilingual pupils). Some schools focus support on individuals or small groups at key points for example, prior to National Curriculum assessments. Teaching should be firmly placed within the context of the National Curriculum rather than consisting of de-contextualised language activities. Time limits for withdrawal work should always be set and outcomes reviewed regularly.

Key questions are:

- Has the work been planned in conjunction with the class teacher/mainstream subject specialist?
- Is there a focus both on language and subject content?
- Is the content sufficiently challenging even where the pupils’ English is still at relatively early stages? and
- Does the school keep a profile of the pupils’ developing language competence – including information on first languages – and use this to help plan future support work?

When observing the quality of teaching and learning in a lesson, note the impact of teaching on learning and whether some or all of the following features are present:

- enhanced opportunities for speaking and listening;
- effective models of spoken and written language;
- a welcoming environment in which bilingual pupils feel confident to contribute;
- a recognition that the use of the first language will enhance understanding and support the development of English;
- teaching that assists EAL learners to internalise and apply new subject-specific language;
- teaching that recognises that more advanced learners of English need continuing support;
- grouping strategies that recognise pupils’ learning and language development needs;
- clear targets in language and learning are identified and met; and
- the selection of visual aids is culturally relevant and of good quality.

When teachers work in partnership, establish the extent of joint planning and whether the skills of both teachers are being used effectively. What does the class teacher do differently as a result of having an additional adult in the room? How has his/her practice changed through working with an EAL specialist? What contribution is the language support teacher making to the improvement of standards? How effective is this collaboration? Does the headteacher timetable staff so that joint planning is possible?

Check that the same features of good practice are evident in withdrawal classes and that all work follows the National Curriculum.

Example EAL 4: evidence from a very good Year 5 science lesson about the sun, earth and moon.

The class teacher and EAL specialist jointly deliver this lesson that they have planned together. Mixed linguistic groups are used (including for EAL learners at an early stage, a pupil with the same home language). Each group has a large appropriate chart and a series of statements mounted on card in three colours. The colours indicate whether the statements are the pupils' own (elicited in the previous lesson), fairly easy or more advanced statements. Some examples are: in winter it gets dark earlier than in summer; it takes 24 hours for the earth to make a full rotation; there is no gravity on the moon. They are asked to discuss the statements and then place them in columns on the chart headed 'agree', 'disagree', 'not sure'. The teachers have also prepared a very helpful 'discussion planner' on the board to support pupils' collaborative talk ('I think that ...', 'I don't agree because ... One reason ... Another reason', 'I know ...' 'But/however/so ...'). They go through a few examples with the whole class at the beginning of the lesson, stop the class from time to time during the activity to discuss vocabulary or confusions of meaning, and hold a plenary at the end of the lesson for groups to report back on some of their card placements. Attainment in this mixed-ability class is variable but some very good understandings are emerging from the pupils' engagement with the activity which is both challenging and fun: 'There is no gravity on the moon because the earth takes up all the gravity', 'The tilt of the earth changes the seasons', 'The moon travels round the earth once a day', 'The moon reflects the sun to give us light'. Pupils collaborate very well and there is evidence of good exploratory language. Pupils are encouraged well to debate (put arguments and counter arguments) and make active use of the language and concepts they are learning.

[Teaching and learning very good (2)]

Commentary: the strong features of this lesson are the high level of collaboration between the class and EAL teachers in both the **planning** and delivery of the work. This ensures that pupils with EAL are provided with appropriate support to enable them to learn alongside their peers. Careful grouping of pupils enables developing bilinguals both to benefit from the language models of fluent English speakers, as well as check understanding in the home language where necessary. The tasks are **challenging** and achievable and serve to engage the learners. Language is modelled and scaffolded (for example, 'discussion planner') and there is good visual support for **learning resources**. The lesson draws on pupils' own knowledge and understanding initially (including those whose English is at early stages) and then extends this through the activity. The class teacher acknowledges the impact the EAL teacher has had on her planning and classroom **management** so that EAL pupils are able to participate more fully in class work.

Example EAL 5: evidence from a Year 5 (bottom set) literacy lesson. Class teacher plus EAL support teacher - who suspects some EAL pupils may be in this set for behavioural reasons. The majority of pupils have EAL needs, some have SEN as well. The school has a very high percentage of bilingual pupils.

Clear and lively presentation of a Yoruba poem with the name of the animal omitted during the first reading so that pupils have to guess what it is about and where it takes place. EAL teacher checks understanding of words (mortal legs) and meanings (How do we know the animal is strong?). Pupils are challenged to identify parts of the text to support their contributions. Good comprehension of poem aided by translation of it into Urdu by the (bilingual) class teacher. Class then moves to word level work exploring word roots, especially those that have found their way into English from other languages (one pupil offers 'banjo' and 'bungalow' but teacher doesn't pick this up). The examples aquatic, aquamarine, aqueduct are put up, but it takes much prompting for the pupils to isolate aqua and work out that it means water. In pairs pupils then classify approximately 20 words into five groups (telephone/telegraph/television; century/centenary/centipede/centimetre, etc). They sort the words very quickly but identifying the root takes much longer and the majority need considerable support. The next step, trying to work out the meaning using dictionaries, is very hard for many of them as their literacy skills are weak. Some of the words are unknown to them and the dictionary definitions are well beyond their understanding. In the plenary, which is well managed, one group shares a correct answer. They will continue with the work later.

[Teaching and learning satisfactory (4)]

Commentary: the class and support teacher work well together, exploiting their complementary skills. The lesson is well **planned**, with a range of interesting activities, which the pupils enjoy. Both teachers **respond** effectively when the pupils need extra help and by the end of the lesson some of the pupils have understood what a root word is and are using dictionaries appropriately to complete the task. However, the task is too **challenging** for a number of pupils in the class. Differentiation is by outcome, but for the less fluent speakers of English and those whose literacy skills are weak, it would have been better to start with a more familiar example (telephone/television/telegraph) and then ensure that the dictionary definitions were comprehensible (for example, dictionaries created with EAL learners in mind, teacher definitions of words). Greater clarity about the needs of those pupils whose English is still at early stages and those who also have SEN could have been used to differentiate more appropriately the demands made. Nevertheless, pupils' **interest** and engagement are sustained and some progress is made by most pupils by the end of the lesson. Both teachers recognise that further consolidation is necessary.

Example EAL6: evidence from a Year 4 lesson focusing on a small group of Year 4 pupils with EAL, withdrawn for extra language tuition. Composition of group is curious – including a child said to go on frequent trips abroad, one who is shy, one who lacks imaginative language, another who is a possible ‘elective mute’.

EAL teacher initially plays a card game with pupils (‘Whacky Cards’). The aim is to collect pairs of identical cards by describing what is on them. The purpose of the activity is to extend the pupils’ vocabulary. The pupils enjoy the card game but the teacher does 80 per cent of the talking. They then move to a computer activity in pairs involving traditional tales. The screen depicts a room with furniture into which can be pulled a range of well-known characters from stories such as ‘The Three Bears’, ‘Little Red Riding Hood’, etc. Potentially this is an interesting activity as pupils could retell the tales as they build up the ‘scene’ or create new stories using well-loved characters. In practice, interest in the technology takes over from the aim of the activity (to provide opportunities for talk) and the pupils spend the whole time moving all the characters about until they finish up with everyone from the four stories in the one room! Very little language is used spontaneously, and when questioned some unusual structures are offered, ‘The teddy is a window’, ‘The girl is a chair’, ‘The doll is by doll’, etc. Little language extension takes place and no clear progress is evident, although the ‘elective mute’ does contribute a few words towards the end of the lesson.

[Teaching and learning unsatisfactory (5)]

Commentary: the expectations are too low, the work is insufficiently linked to the National Curriculum at the appropriate age level, and **planning** is inadequate. **Resources** are used inappropriately; pupils are given no models by the teacher of what is expected. While the pupils enjoy the activities, they lead to no obvious gains in language learning. Many lost opportunities.

OTHER IMPORTANT FACTORS

Evaluate staffing – number, qualifications and experience – as you would for other areas. A range of factors, some historical, mean that the number of staff varies from school to school. The amount of EAL support has reduced over the past few years. It is important to assess whether the support available is managed well.

Where staff are bilingual and share the languages and cultures of the pupils, they have additional and valuable expertise to offer. Bilingual assistants can work effectively with small groups and with individuals. They are helpful in enabling new pupils to settle in and understand what is going on around them. Experienced EAL staff, bilingual and monolingual, should be able to play a strategic role in the school, producing resources, offering advice and training across the curriculum.

Determine whether the difference between pupils who need to learn English and those who have learning difficulties is clear and understood by all staff. Check whether there are good links with the SENCO if bilingual pupils have both language and learning needs.

See if the language support teachers or assistants have clear documentation including an action plan covering the following areas: the roles and responsibilities of EAL staff; admission and induction procedures for late arriving bilingual pupils, and the methods by which all pupils who need additional help are identified; the range of provision on offer; the rationale for staff deployment; what mainstream teachers can expect from both teaching and non teaching bilingual support staff (and their own responsibility for making this work successful); information on record keeping and how this is integrated into school procedures.

WRITING THE REPORT

When you report EAL ensure that comments are offered in the following key sections: How high are standards? How well are pupils and students taught? How good are curricular and other opportunities? How well is the school led and managed? Include in your reporting: whether pupils with EAL are being sufficiently challenged and supported so that they can achieve to their full potential; whether support takes account of those at early stages of English as well as those who are more advanced but still need support with developing literacy skills across the curriculum; whether the curriculum offered is culturally relevant and sensitive; whether senior managers are fully involved in monitoring deployment and the quality of provision now that many of them enjoy devolved funding for the support of minority ethnic pupils; whether the money is being used effectively for the stated purposes of the grant. Comment on links with bilingual parents particularly if the school is particularly effective or the reverse.

Where there are significant numbers of bilingual pupils in a school, it may, in addition, be appropriate to draw together the key findings on EAL into a discrete section. Equally it is important not to omit EAL issues in section 1, 'What sort of school is it?', where it proves to be a main strength or weakness.