# English as an additional language policy: Issues of inclusive access and language learning in the mainstream

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English as an additional language (EAL) in school education has been mainstreamed in England since the mid-1980s. The current EAL policy, rooted in a time when there was a perceived need to tackle racism, has been strongly motivated by principles of equality of access to educational provision. The integration of EAL students into the mainstream curriculum has been a policy priority. However, the development of EAL as language pedagogy within the mainstream curriculum has received insufficient attention. The three-fold aim of this article is (a) to give a conceptual account of the current EAL policy, which is built on a view of EAL as a pupil-support strategy without a recognised curriculum base, (b) to identify some of the strengths and problems of this policy in terms of curriculum provision, teacher practice and teacher training, and (c) to discuss some of the curriculum and pedagogic tensions and contradictions facing EAL within an educational environment that has been shaped by extensive curriculum specification and prescription. This discussion assumes that mainstreaming of EAL students is a necessary step toward genuine educational integration, but by itself it is not sufficient to promote effective language and curriculum learning.

**Context**

The United Kingdom (UK), as a nation state, has long experience of societal multilingualism within its borders because of the presence of Welsh, (Scottish and other varieties of) Gaelic, Scots and other indigenous languages. However, since the 1960s and 1970s the nature of this societal multilingualism has changed dramatically because of the arrivals of the large groups of new Commonwealth citizens whose first language was not English. And more recently its membership of the European Union has meant citizens from other member states can take up employment and residence in the UK. These movements of people have meant that English as an additional language has become an important social and educational policy concern. At present over 659,000 school-aged students are recorded as having a mother tongue other than English in England and Wales, about 10 per cent of the school population (DfES 2004). And it has been estimated that there are almost half a million adults whose first language is not English and 'who have little command of the English language' (DfEE 1999:19). These raw figures clearly do not accurately reflect the actual levels of English language competence of these speakers of other languages, nor do they tell us the types of language learning needs to be addressed. But they provide a glimpse of the considerable scale of this educational issue.

Young people can stay at school up to the age of 18 to complete their Advanced Level studies. Some leave school at 16 and go on to further education (FE) colleges to re-take their school leaving examinations and/or to follow Advanced Level or vocational studies. There is a school EAL policy, which covers all primary and secondary schools. The English as an additional/second language policy for the post-16 sector operating in FE colleges and other adult education institutions – generally referred to as English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) – is quite different from the one for school EAL. Although this discussion is mainly concerned with EAL in school, I will mention the ESOL policy and provision where appropriate to provide a fuller picture of the current policy situation affecting all students with EAL up to the age of 18 in different types of educational institutions.

Given the devolved nature of political administration in the UK, my observations and comments are largely confined to policies and practices in England. I will first describe the current school EAL and other related policies in curriculum terms. Next I will discuss some of the ways in which EAL has been understood, interpreted and enacted at the 'shop-floor' level by teachers in the prevailing policy environment. After that I will discuss some of the strengths and drawbacks in terms of teacher practice and teacher professional knowledge. The overall aim is to offer an informed discussion on some of the long-term educational and pedagogic questions engendered by the current policy and curriculum provision. It is assumed that

mainstreaming of EAL students is a desirable and necessary step towards greater social integration and participation by language minority students, but this process should be accompanied by a pedagogy that integrates EAL with curriculum content in systematic and principled ways (Davison and Williams 2001; Leung and Franson 2001a).

**EAL in school education**

The approach to EAL in England has shifted over the years from an English as a Foreign Language (EFL) perspective, which prioritised language learning and paid relatively little attention to the broader curriculum, to a particular interpretation of the idea of mainstreaming. Before the mainstreaming policy was put into practice, EAL students were often taught in separate language centres with little or no access to the mainstream curriculum for periods of time up to 18 months (see Townsend 1971; Leung and Franson 2001b). From the point of view of this discussion the most significant policy shift occurred in the mid-1980s when the mainstreaming of EAL received explicit official endorsement (see CRE 1986; National Curriculum Council 1991; School Curriculum and Assessment Authority (SCAA) 1996; QCA 2000; DfEE 2001 for policy statements). At the point of its inception this policy was designed to remove a barrier to equality of access to education, that is students should not be denied access to the mainstream curriculum, irrespective of their English language competence. Under this particular interpretation of mainstreaming, all students who are in the process of learning EAL, with the possible exception of those who are in short-term English language induction courses in some schools, are expected to follow the statutory National Curriculum in age-appropriate classes. In other words, EAL students are expected to learn English while engaged in curriculum subject work. EAL does not have a subject status in the National Curriculum.

It is important to note here that the National Curriculum is a standards-based framework with detailed content specifications and stages/levels of attainment in all the key subjects such as English, Science and Mathematics (see for example, DES 1989; DfEE and QCA 1999). In effect the curriculum specifications and assessment criteria for the National Curriculum subject English and its associated literacy curriculum serve as a set of common content specifications for both mother-tongue English -speaking students and those who are still in the process of learning EAL. EAL staff are encouraged to work collaboratively with their subject colleagues in mainstream lessons. Partnership Teaching (DES 1991), a model for subject and EAL teachers to plan, teach and develop the curriculum together, is the officially endorsed modus operandi for all teachers working with EAL students. In terms of teacher preparation, EAL is not a main subject specialism in initial teacher training and there is no mandatory specialist qualification. The last of the state-funded pre -service EAL (as subject specialism) teaching training courses in higher education institutions were withdrawn in the early 1990s. In one official press release it was re ported that 'the proportion of specialist staff with appropriate qualifications is now as low as 3 per cent in some LEAs' (OFSTED, 2002). Specialist EAL teacher training, where it exists, tends to be in-service, non-qualificatory, voluntary and localised (although there is a small-scale pilot in-service training project funded by the central authorities this year for the first time since 1992).

In general, EAL is seen as a supra-subject phenomenon; it is regarded as a general teaching and learning issue, and not a specific *language* teaching and learning issue. The idea that 'all teachers are teachers of EAL' is often stated in official policy and advisory documents. So in a sense the mainstreaming of EAL is more about student participation in a common curriculum, and much less about integrating the specialist pedagogic concerns of EAL-minded language teaching into the mainstream curriculum. This particular approach to an 'EAL-across the curriculum' perspective is built on a set of pedagogic principles which I characterise as 'person-oriented' orientation can be traced back to the liberal humanistic perspective on language development. An early proponent of this perspective was Levine (published posthumously, edited by Meek 1996), who saw mixed ability teaching in mainstream classrooms as a potentially effective response to meeting the language learning needs of EAL students. Levine emphasised the importance of 'letting children have *their own voice'* (Meek,1996: 15, italics in original). It is suggested that, for instance, in the English (subject) classroom the idea of students having their own voice means, *inter alia*, setting a teaching context where by EAL students are encouraged to engage with ideas and projects which reflect their own interests as well as to work collaboratively in small groups with one

another. In this perspective, social interaction between students and between students and teachers is seen as pivotal to additional language development. While the importance of the curriculum and the teacher's work is acknowledged, the focus of attention is on the 'dynamic and dialectical learning relationships' (Meek 1996: 118). The English language is considered in terms of (a) the 'underlying systems of rules which govern native speakers' use of English' and 'structure' (for example, sentence level grammar) (Meek 1996: 22–23) and (b) communicative competence in an abstract process sense:

> In so far as communicative competence equates with having learned language behaviour which is both appropriate and effective for the context of our lives, we all probably learn what we are able to do – no matter how different that is in kind or extent – in much the same way. That is to say, we are, and have been, open to external stimulae and motivation to learn the code and its appropriate use while, at the same time, having the opportunity to exercise an innate drive to learn on the code and on the situations and contexts in which particular parts of it are used ... If these observations are applied to the communicative teaching of an additional language, it must surely suggest a more active role for learners in the learning-teaching process, and a more interactive one, allowing development from the data of the environment.
> (Meek 1996: 123–4)

The language teaching agenda for the teacher in this conceptualisation is essentially responsive or reactive in that the kind of teacher intervention made is dependent on the needs or interests shown in the active work of the EAL student. In a fundamental sense the student takes the lead in this conceptualisation of pedagogy.

Teachers are expected to see EAL development as part of the overall learning needs of individual students. Conceptually, additional language teaching and learning are considered as an inherent part of the wider communication and participatory processes in the classroom. The 'EALness' of this approach lies in its emphasis on making classroom activities 'accessible' to all students. This perspective has been further elaborated in the officially promoted Partnership Teaching model (Bourne 1989; DES 1991; DfEE 2001):

> Learning is best achieved through enquiry-based activities involving discussion ... To learn a language it is necessary to participate in its meaningful use ...The curriculum itself is there f o re a useful vehicle for language learning ... A main strategy ... for both curriculum learning and language learning is the flexible use of small group work ... (Bourne 1989: 63)

At the very beginning of the introduction of the National Curriculum teachers were advised that:

> Like all students, bilingual students should have access to a stimulating curriculum which, at the same time, helps their language development ...
> - Oral and written responses at different attainment levels can be encouraged by the use of a balance of open-ended and structured tasks.
> - Matrices, true/ false exercises ... can help to ensure that achievement is not entirely dependent on proficiency in English.
> - Exercises with some repetitive element/ such as science experiments ... provide a pattern which supports language development.
>
> (National Curriculum Council 1991: 1–2)

A few years later broadly similar advice was offered:

> Effective planning ... makes use of variation in teaching styles, including direct instruction and one-to-one tuition, which offer students learning EAL talk opportunities for concentrated listening as well as participation in group talk requiring interaction. (SCAA 1996: 13)

More recently this approach is demonstrated in an official video showing EAL and subject staff working together to devise classroom activities which aim to make complex subject content more understandable and '*doable'* for EAL beginners by using visuals, devising student tasks with reduced (English) language demand, and encouraging EAL students to use their first language (with peers and teaching staff where possible) to gain understanding of subject content meaning where possible (for further details see DfEE 2001).

The school EAL policy does not provide tangible resources for the teachers in the forms of a dedicated curriculum, mandatory subject-based pre-service or in-service training, or teaching materials. EAL posts in school are part-funded by a time-limited supplementary central grant, the Ethnic Minority Achievement Grant, which is used to

cover a variety of initiatives related to the raising of attainment by ethnic minority (not just EAL) school students and related staff training. Seen in this light the school EAL policy approximates to Anderson's (1984) notion of a symbolic policy which, in effect, represents an official declaration of preferences with relatively low levels of material and/or legislative resources attached. This situation contrasts quite sharply with the post-16 policy and provision (see next section).

**Wider context: English literacy in the National Curriculum and ESOL for 16+**

EAL students are expected to develop their English knowledge and skills through the full range of school subjects. One particular recent curriculum initiative, the National Literacy Strategy (DfEE 1998), is of particular salience to this discussion. The literacy curriculum produced as part of this strategy was initially designed for primary schools. More recently many of its conceptual ideas and some of its curriculum contents have been extended for secondary schools. Because this initiative has gone through name changes as it developed and extended itself over the past few years, for reasons of brevity, from now on I will refer to the successive government actions in the past decade to increase the levels of attainment in literacy simply as the 'literacy strategy' .

The literacy strategy was developed as a response to the perceived failure of schools to produce the levels of literacy skills required for competitive international trade and technological innovation (Barber 1997). It was argued that a more disciplined and rigorous literacy curriculum was needed to supplement the teaching of English in the National Curriculum and to push up standards. At the same time, a series of achievement targets was set for different phases of school education, for example, 85 per cent of the 11-year olds were expected to achieve Level 4 (Level 8 is the highest) in national English tests in 2004.4 The initial National Literacy Strategy (DfEE 1998) sets out a term-by-term curriculum content specification, 'the Framework for Teaching', for the first six years of school education. The following is a small extract from the Year 1, Term 1 statement:

> **Word level work: phonics, spelling and vocabulary …**
> **Phonological awareness, phonics and spelling**
> 1 ... to practise and secure the ability to rhyme, and to relate this to spelling patterns through:
> – exploring and playing with rhyming patterns;
> – generating rhyming strings, for example, *f a t, h a t, p a t*;
> 2 ... to practise and secure alphabetic letter knowledge and alphabetic order;
> 3 ... to practise and secure the ability to hear initial and final phonemes in CVC words, for example, *fit, mat, pan*...
> 4 to discriminate and segment all three phonemes in CVC words ...
>
> **Sentence level work: grammar and punctuation ...**
>
> **Grammatical awareness**
> 1 to expect written text to make sense and to check for sense if it does not;
> 2 to use awareness of the grammar of a sentence to decipher new or unfamiliar words ...
>
> **Sentence construction and punctuation**
> 5 to recognise full stops and capital letters when reading and name them correctly ...
>
> **Text level work: comprehension and composition**
> **Fiction and poetry**
> **Reading comprehension**
> 1 to reinforce and apply their word - level skills through shared and guided reading;
> 2 to use phonological, contextual, grammatical and graphic knowledge to work out, predict and check the meanings of unfamiliar words and to make sense of what they read ...
> **Writing composition**
> 8 through shared and guided writing to apply phonological, graphic knowledge and sight vocabulary to spell words accurately ...
>
> **Non-fiction –**
> **Reading comprehension**
> 12 to read and use captions, e.g. labels around the school, on equipment ...
> **Writing composition**
> 14 to write captions for their own work, for example, for display, in class books ...
> (DfEE 1998: 20–21)

This highly specified literacy curriculum comes with an equally well-defined pedagogy. When the National Literacy Strategy was first implemented, schools were advised to set aside one hour each school day for the teaching of literacy. The Literacy Hour, itself, was to be organised into four segments: 15 minutes of whole class reading and writing, 15 minutes of focused word or sentence work, 20 minutes of group or independent work, and 10

minutes of plenary discussion. Although the National Literacy Strategy has not been made statutory (unlike the National Curriculum itself) , the powerful policy endorsement and public promotion meant that a vast majority of primary schools has incorporated it into their school day in the late 1990s. The literacy strategy in general has now been extended into the secondary schooling. While the official insistence on adhering to some aspects of its formal infrastructure, for example, the Literacy Hour, has been relaxed a little recently, the notion of literacy teaching, as defined and developed by the strategy, has impacted significantly on the teaching of English and EAL in school. Although this literacy curriculum, the Framework for Teaching, has been unmistakably designed to address the literacy teaching issues for the general English as Mother Tongue (EMT) school population, it also states that:

> It is important that pupils with English as an additional language derive full benefit from the National Literacy Strategy. The Framework for teaching, and the Literacy Hour in which its objectives are taught, emphasise careful listening, clear speech, supported reading and writing, phonemic awareness and access to formal styles of written English. These emphases, and the participative nature of whole-class and group work helps in teaching children who speak EAL, where teachers take full account of their specific needs. (DfEE 1998: 106)

I will look at some of the policy-related issues generated by the literacy strategy in relation to EAL in the last section of this article.

In the post-16 sector there is a different curriculum framework for EAL. The Adult ESOL Core Curriculum (DfES 2001) was introduced as part of a national policy initiative on adult education entitled 'Skills for Life'. It is linked to the National Standards for Adult Literacy (DfEE, QCA and The Basic Skills Agency 2000), which also provides a mapping framework for the various national curricula and key skills levels within the state sector education and training provision. The Adult ESOL Core Curriculum is a standards- and outcomes-based teaching and assessment framework. It is part of a national initiative to raise levels of basic skills and to create accessible conditions of educational entitlement. It has five levels: Entry 1, Entry 2, Entry 3, Level 1 and Level 2. Like many other additional language curricula, language, knowledge and skills are split into four components: speaking, listening, reading and writing. The level descriptors and the sample language and activities in this curriculum strongly suggest that a functional perspective, often found in materials produced for the international English language teaching market, has been adopted. For instance, for Entry 2 Listening we find:

> **Basic Skills Standards level descriptor**
> An adult will be expected to:
> 1 listen for and follow the gist of explanations, instructions and narratives ...
>
> **Component skill and knowledge and understanding**
> 1 recognise context and predict general meaning
> – be able to identify a situation and/or speakers, for example, in a personal narrative, informal conversation ...
>
> **Example of application and level**
> Recognise topic of conversation between friends, for example:
> – So, how'd it go on Sunday ?
> – Oh, it was a wonderful day ... lovely flowers ... she looked fantastic, but really nervous. The ceremony wasn't too long, and the party afterwards was great ... lovely food ... (DfES 2001: 124)

There is also a separate specification of key grammatical structures for each level. For instance, for Entry1**:**

> **Simple sentences**
> • word order in simple statements,
> subject-verb-object, for example: *She likes apples*
> subject-verb-adverb, for example: *He speaks slowly ...*
> subject-verb-prepositional phrase, for example: *He lives in London ...* (DfES 2001: 30)

It is clear that ESOL has been granted a fully-fledged curriculum status and a recognised body of disciplinary content. In many ways the Adult ESOL Core Curriculum represents what Anderson would refer to as a material policy because it provides 'tangible resources ... to their beneficiaries.' (1984: 116).

The official agencies are now introducing sponsored teaching materials, teacher training and teacher qualifications. From the point of view of educational policy study, the co-existence and co-presence of two very different EAL policies, which can serve an overlapping section of the student

population (16 to 18 year olds), is in itself an interesting phenomenon. I will comment on some of the issues raised by the incommensurability of these two policies in the closing discussion.

**EAL policy in practice**

Policies are 'operationalised statements of values' (Ball 1990: 3). The cumulative official pronouncements and advisory statements on EAL teaching over a period of some 20 years represent the preferred values of policy makers and policy backers. But promulgating a policy is quite different from its actual implementation, particularly when the policy concerned is largely symbolic in nature. To put it differently, how practitioners understand and work with policies is not necessarily a straightforward matter of technical and practical application. Ball argues that we need a much more localised understanding of how policy works:

> ... policies pose problems to their subjects, problems that must be solved in context. Solutions to the problems posed by policy texts will be localised and should be expected to display 'ad hocery' and messiness. ( Ball 1997: 270)

As Yanow (1996) observes, the relationship between policy and implementation outcome is not necessarily one-way and top-down. Participant mediation in the implementation process involves, among other things, interpretation and negotiation of policy meaning. At a local level, policy statements are often filtered through institutional and individual experiences, values and perceptions. This is almost certainly the case in teaching in England where the immense complexity in terms of curriculum, context and expertise undermines any attempt at uniform mechanical proceduralisation.

Teachers will encounter policy statements not as menus of practical actions to be followed, but as a set of licences and constraints which interacts with their own interpretations in the context of localised practices. This view doesn't suggest that one should deny the influence of policy. But we have to understand policy impact in terms of local practices, taking into account the constraints and licences it confers on practitioners. We will now look at some aspects of policy meaning and implementation at the shop-floor level.

There is little doubt that the mainstreaming approach to EAL in schools has produced some inspired teaching and remarkable student achievement. For instance, Travers and Higgs provide an account of the exceptional achievement of a Year 9 (approximately 14-year-old) French-speaking student, Chlève, from the Democratic Republic of Congo who managed to produce the following autobiographic piece after only 18 months in the English school system:

> The memory of my grand father
> When I was born I never know that this would happen to me. I never know
> that one day I will lost my grand dad.
> My grand dad was a person who had a good heart
> ...
> (Travers and Higgs 2004: 31)

Chlève's achievement is attributed to his personal ability and a particular teaching approach:

> Chlève has made remarkable progress. He is an articulate, able student, keen to learn. He has also been supported and challenged in the steps he's made. He has been provided with opportunities to work collaboratively, have access to artefacts, visual resources, to read and analyse models of fluent writing and make use of prompts ... A relationship has developed between Chlève and his teachers and other students, enabling learning and language development to happen. 'Human relationships are at the heart of schooling' writes Jim Cummins: The interactions that take place between students and teachers and among students are more central to student success than any method for teaching literacy, or science or math. (1996) (Travers and Higgs 2004: 29)

We can readily see the person-oriented perspective at work in this analysis of success. Chlève's achievement is attributed first and foremost to his ability, and the strong and supportive social relations that have developed around him. Classroom techniques (for example, using visuals) and strategies (for example, devising collaborative group work) are mere props in this account. The explicit insistence on foregrounding the affective human dimension (and the revealing of the student's potential) as the key factor for this student's achievement is highly significant. The learning of English (or science or maths) is incidental evidence of success, but it is not at the centre of the pedagogic discussion. Subject-based teaching methods are certainly not foregrounded in this approach to pedagogy.

This celebratory account of Chlève can be seen as a

piece of powerful affirmation of what the current EAL policy can produce (for further discussion see OFSTED 1994; 1997; 2002). It gives licence to focus on developing strong and positive human relations (therefore countering undesirable values and practices associated with racism and language discrimination), which is undeniably an important aspect of effective pedagogy. It also privileges the pedagogic value of prioritising students' immediate participation in classroom work nested in supportive human relationships and support. There are other similar official accounts of this approach, for example, DfEE (2001), DES (1991) and OFSTED (1997). This emphasis on the affective and the participatory dimensions of EAL dovetails very well with a strong public policy endorsement of equal opportunities and harmonious inter-ethnic integration in educational discourse concerned with ethnic minorities.

However, not all EAL students have the same affirmative learning experience as reported in the Travers and Higgs account. The fundamental disinterest in additional/second language learning issues has also meant that, in the past 15 years or more, there has been little systematic and sustained teacher training and professional development that prioritise EAL-minded language teaching and curriculum development. Some ten years ago, one school inspector's report observed that:

> Less effective in-class support [EAL and content teachers working together] was often characterised by a lack of collaboration between the teachers ... lack of agreement about the purpose of lessons and the respective role of teachers led to conflicting messages and tasks which pupils found confusing. [Support, often EAL] staff who simply acted as intermediaries between the class teacher and the pupils, by dictating model answers, did little to foster pupils' learning. (OFSTED 1994: 3)

Recent research that colleagues and I have undertaken in this area of education has indicated that there are some very serious teaching and expertise - related professional issues associated with the lack of systematic discipline-based training.

In a study of teacher assessment of EAL student performance, Leung and Teasdale (1997) show evidence that teachers operate native speaker norms when assessing EAL students' use of spoken English. In another study of EAL assessment practices in primary schools, Leung (1999) reports that, *inter alia*, students' personalities (as perceived by teachers) and 'ethnic minority' home circumstances (including parents' standing in the local community) are used as explanatory factors to account for their progress (or lack of) in language development and English language performance in school. Creese and Leung (2003: 13) report a recurring theme of EAL being conceptualised as a 'caring' discipline by mainstream teachers. For instance a secondary subject teacher, at the beginning of an EAL in-service training course, offered this account of EAL as a practice:

> It has always been my belief, my philosophy, that if every student is given the chance even though we have different levels, we will all be able to develop the potential that we have. So that is one of my main aims of entering this course ... First and foremost I want to see that they love the subject. There are some individuals who like to be there but some of them think, you know, because they are very weak in English they feel that they don't want to come, not that they don't want to come because they think I'm going to be harsh on them or something but I'm not, but what I want them to note is that we are just here to help them so they will be able to know that it is because of them that I'm here to help them and therefore they will be able to enjoy the lesson as we go along.
> (Creese and Leung 2003: 13)

Cable, Leung and Vazquez, in a small-scale study of the EAL beginners induction programs run by five secondary schools, find that there is a mixture of reasons:

> ... the avowed purpose of the provision was to enable students to learn English. However, other related purposes were also high on respondents' agendas. Providing a more focused English language learning experience with a concentration on fewer subjects was seen as a high priority by one of the induction programme providers. Preparing students for the demands of the mainstream curriculum and confidence building were cited as important by one of the other providers. One of the respondents highlighted the opportunity for students and staff to establish close relationships in a safe and secure environment as being a key function of the withdrawal [induction] group. This was described in terms of 'a break from intensive pounding' and to 'give their brain a break' ...
> (Cable, Leung and Vazquez 2004: 8– 9 )

These findings can be seen as manifestations and consequences of the specific approach advocated by the prevailing EAL policy, which has diverted attention away from, indeed de-legitimised, explicit EAL learning and teaching issues. The diverse interpretations and practices of EAL within the teaching profession signal a lack of clear and coherent understanding of EAL pedagogy. None of this would matter if EAL students were performing on par with other students. But there are signs of long-term underperformance. For instance, in a study of academic writing produced by 177 students aged 16 (or over) at school and further education college, including 130 focal EAL students, a majority of whom have been in the English school system since primary school, Cameron reports that, *inter alia*, there are discernible differences between the focal EAL and EMT students. The EMT students were predicted to be at C/D grade (that is not highest achieving) in their school leaving English examinations.

> The strongest differences between the less successful EAL writing (Focus group) and the EMT writing emerged within texts at the level of words and phrases, particularly in the use of 'small' word such as prepositions, delexical verbs (for example, do, make, put) and in respects of word grammar such as agreements and endings. (Cameron 2003: 9)

The research findings reported here, together with persistently low levels of English language and general school achievement among groups of EAL students from, for instance, the Pakistani and Bangladeshi minority communities, point to a need to understand both the strength and the shortfalls of the current EAL policy (for further discussion on ethnic minority achievement see, for example, DfES 2004; Gillborn and Mirza 2000).

**Inclusive education and EAL: A need for policy extension**

In this final section, three policy-related observations are made. First, the current mainstreaming practice in England has been successful in integrating EAL students in the life of mainstream schooling. It has also created an officially endorsed educational context for EAL and content teachers to collaborate on teaching and materials development. However, the person-oriented perspective on EAL has, so far, tended to focus on making the classroom processes 'accessible', that is helping EAL students to engage with content-learning activities through a combination of hands-on activities, visuals and so on. The central assumption is that EAL development will follow active participation in the curriculum. As we have seen earlier, talented and knowledgeable teachers and able students can produce remarkable outcomes. But the lack of systematic attention to EAL as a language teaching and learning issue has over time served to reduce the expertise base in the school system. The research into aspects of teacher knowledge and teacher professionalism, cited earlier, suggests that a person-oriented EAL perspective focused on classroom communication and participatory processes is conceptually ill-equipped to address additional language teaching and learning issues adequately. The requisite expertise is in short supply.

Legitimate and important EAL-minded language teaching and learning issues have rarely been addressed, for example, the need for a differentiated curriculum and pedagogy for the teaching and learning of lexicogrammar, pragmatic conventions and academic genres in the context of the National Curriculum for EAL students with different educational backgrounds, at different ages and at different stages of EAL development. (See Schleppegre and Colombi 2002 for a collection of relevant discussions.)

Second, the highly specified program of teaching of the literacy strategy has raised complex issues for EAL. The content of the Framework for Teaching (DfEE 1998), for instance, is an age-graded curriculum devised with EMT speakers in mind. While some EAL children in the early primary years may benefit from the highly specified teaching content, other EAL students who enter the English schooling system at a later age, say ten, with little previous English learning, may find the Year 5 literacy curriculum not helpful for their needs because it assumes progressive year-on-year accumulation and development of language and literacy knowledge in English. The current EAL policy, as we have seen earlier, is built on an assumption that teachers should respond to emergent student needs and interests; the mainstream literacy curriculum is a highly pre-specified, staged and teacher-led teaching framework. An adherence to this framework necessarily negates one of the strongest arguments for the person-oriented perspective, that is teachers'

freedom to respond to different student needs. Another obvious issue is the extent to which a mother tongue-oriented literacy program can be regarded as automatically appropriate for EAL students. For instance, how important is it for an early stage EAL student to learn about phonemes? (For a further discussion on the appropriateness of the mainstream literacy curriculum for EAL students, see Harris, Leung and Rampton, 2002)

Third, the co-existence of the two very differently conceptualised EAL policies, school EAL and ESOL for further and adult education, raises a very interesting point about the intellectual basis of policy making. As things stand at present, a young person at the age of 16, on leaving school and entering a further education college, can experience completely different kinds of EAL provision. Unlike the school situation where English learning is meant to be embedded in subject or curriculum learning, the ESOL provision in the further and adult education is very much a distinct and time-tabled subject. The Adult ESOL Core Curriculum (DfES 2001: 3) has been developed for migrant workers, refugees and asylum seekers, and members of settled minority communities who 'work long and irregular hours and therefore cannot attend classes regularly'. Would such a curriculum be suitable for the needs of a young person who has already studied in a local school for, say, five years and will now follow a university matriculation examination course? And would such disjuncture in provision for 16 to 18 year olds not undermine the respective stated educational bases and claims of legitimacy for both school EAL and ESOL policies?

EAL is an important area of school education and will be even more so in future as the population becomes more diverse. For the best part of 20 years, school EAL has been oriented towards social integration and inclusive non - discriminatory curriculum practices. There is no question that this is an important achievement for a multi-ethnic and multilingual society. However, the need for EAL to address language teaching and learning issues has not disappeared, no more than the issues of teaching and learning science would disappear in an inclusive approach to science. There is now a need to create some policy space to examine how EAL language teaching and learning can be developed more explicitly within the mainstream curriculum context.

**Notes**

1 For a detailed discussion on EAL policy developments since the 1960s see Leung 2001; 2002; 2003; and for an international comparative study see Mohan, Leung & Davison 2001.

2 This area of curriculum practice has received very little official attention. For a discussion see Cable, Leung & Vazquez 2004.

3 The National Literacy Strategy has been re - p resented as the literacy elements of the National Strategy for secondary education and the Primary Strategy for primary education in the past three years

4 This target has not been met. For national school test results see http://www.dfes.gov.uk/rsgateway/DB/SFR/s000581/SFR22-2005v3.pdf

5 See Skills for Life website http://www.dfes.gov.uk/readwriteplus/

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