Developing Quality Tuition

Effective practice in schools
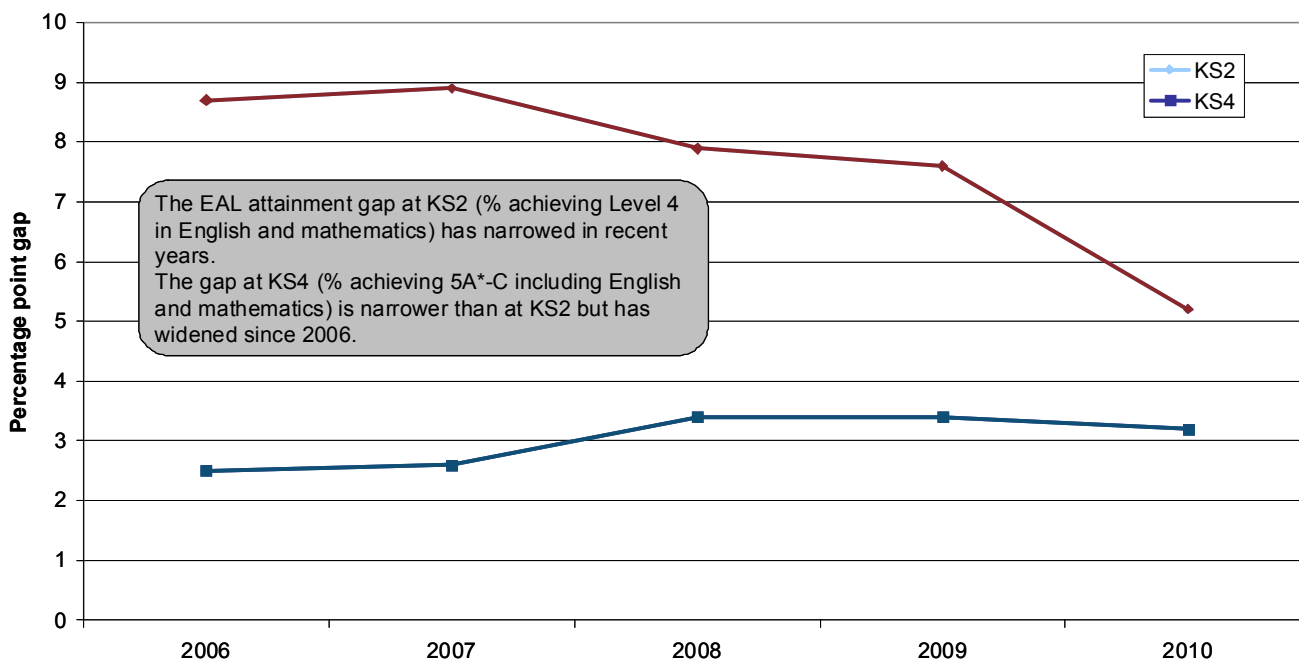

English as an Additional Language

Department for Education

How Schools Tailor Tuition for Their Learners with English as an Additional Language

Pupils learning English as an additional language (EAL) share many common characteristics with pupils whose first language is English. However, their learning experience differs because they are learning *in* and *through* another language, and because they may come from cultural backgrounds and communities that have different understandings and expectations of education, language and learning.
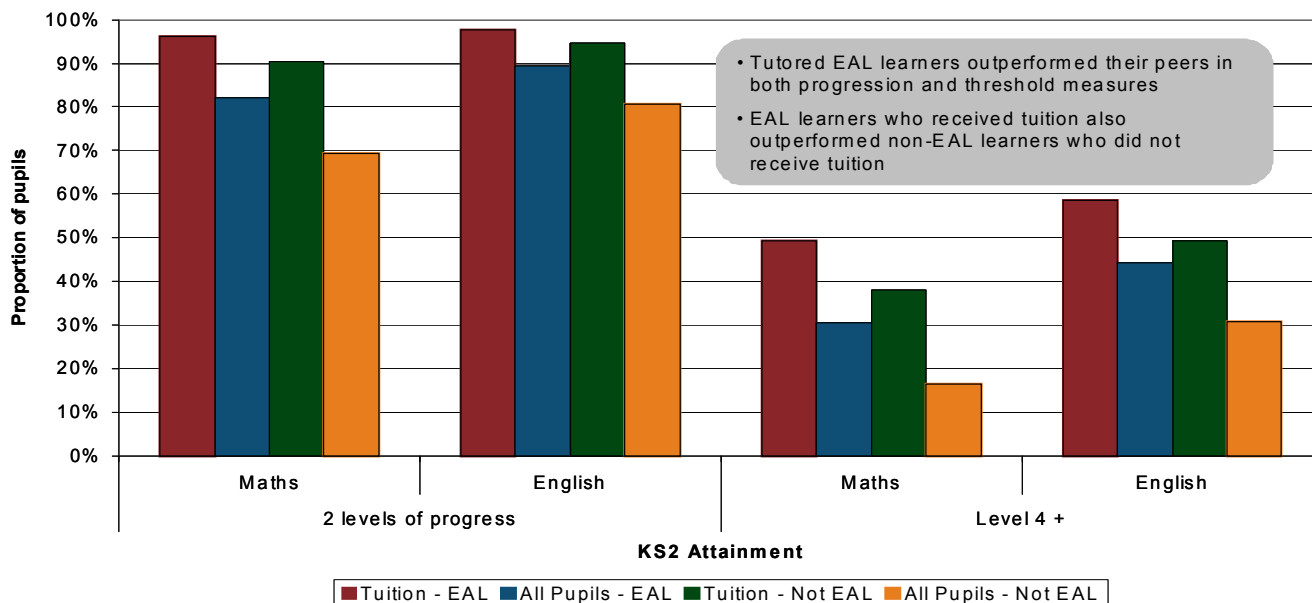
Percentage point gap in attainment between pupils whose first language is English and pupils who have English as an additional language

The EAL attainment gap at KS2 (% achieving Level 4 in English and mathematics) has narrowed in recent years.
The gap at KS4 (% achieving 5A*-C including English and mathematics) is narrower than at KS2 but has widened since 2006.

However impact analysis from national KS2 data shows that tuition can significantly improve both the progression and attainment of EAL learners

2010 KS2 attainment of pupils who were below L2 at KS1 (by first language)

source: 2010 unamended KS2 data and tuition database

• Tutored EAL learners outperformed their peers in both progression and threshold measures

• EAL learners who received tuition also outperformed non-EAL learners who did not receive tuition

* Similar data is available for KS4 (see KS4 Tuition Data Pack, March 2011)

How do schools tailor tuition for their pupils who are learning English as an additional language?

"If I think in my own language and then translate into English, I think of all the different words (vocabulary) that I can use (when translating)" (Year 6 Pakistani boy)

Findings from the schools visited

Senior leaders and teachers identified the following common features of EAL pupils' learning experiences:
- Schooling is highly valued by parents/carers: education has high status and is seen as a vehicle for economic enhancement.
- Any additional support may be viewed negatively by parents/carers because of a misapprehension that interventions are for pupils with special educational needs (SEN) or other learning difficulties.
- Pupils may have regular community and/or faith commitments after school and at weekends.
- Many EAL learners have abilities which they are unable to exploit because they lack fluency in the appropriate academic language.
- A consistent approach to teaching and learning is needed for EAL learners; the pedagogy for tuition needs to reflect that of the whole school approach to teaching and learning for EAL learners.
- EAL learners require a particularly interactive approach to teaching and learning. Tuition may not be appropriate for those beginning to learn English; group interactive approaches such as talk partners may be more suitable.
- Some EAL learners are shy or may lack the confidence to speak English in class.

"I used to be so worried because he was so quiet at home, since he started tuition he hasn't stopped asking questions" (Polish parent of Year 8 boy)

In order to meet these specific needs, the tuition for EAL learners had the following features:
- To ensure parents/carers fully understand the purpose of tuition, schools communicated in home languages (when needed) and encouraged parents to observe sessions.
- Where appropriate, tutors fluent in relevant home languages were used.
- Prior to tuition, tutors visited tutees in class, carefully explaining the purpose and expectations of tuition and negotiating targets.
- All tuition (English and mathematics) was focused on developing subject specific language.
- Tutors used a variety of assessment for learning approaches to identify misconceptions arising from language barriers, for example '*reading 3 x 3', where x is read as the letter 'ex' and not 'times' as in mathematics.*
- Updates on progress towards targets were regularly shared with parents/carers to celebrate success and maintain effective home/school links.
- Tuition was offered flexibly, e.g. in school time and at weekends to ensure it did not clash with pupils' community/faith commitments.

"Communications in home language (where necessary) secures buy in and a commitment..." (Headteacher)

"The fact that Saturday tuition fits in with after school religious education was particularly well received by the Bangladeshi community" (Headteacher)

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