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## Effective learning for pupils for whom English is an additional language: Cranford Park Primary School

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### Brief description

The school is raising the achievement of pupils for whom English is an additional language, so that by the time they leave at the end of Key Stage 2, pupils have fulfilled their potential by exceeding the national expectations in attainment in English for their age, or have considerably narrowed the gap with other pupils.

### Overview – the school’s message

‘Inclusion is at the heart of Cranford Park. The school serves a very diverse community and we have created a vibrant and stimulating environment, which reflects and celebrates difference. A team of experienced and well-qualified specialist teachers, under the guidance of our Director of Inclusion, works to support the needs of all our children for whom English is an additional language, particularly those at the earliest stages of English acquisition. All pupils are supported to reach their full potential. Individual learning programmes ensure that the progress of all groups within school is good. The key to our success is ensuring that carefully targeted intervention runs alongside, not instead of, high-quality classroom provision. Rigorous monitoring and assessment systems feed into individualised target-setting and guarantee that each child is given the right support.’



*Sarah Evans, Head of School*

### The good practice in detail

'My daughter took off with her English in the Nursery.' So said one proud parent of his daughter who although born in the United Kingdom started school speaking almost no English, having spoken Arabic at home. When pupils start school at Cranford Park, either in the Nursery or in later year groups, most of them can speak at least one other language at home and for many of them English is not their first language. Take the Year 6 pupils who left Cranford Park in July 2010. The language and communication assessments carried out by the school when they first started showed that they were well behind the expected level for pupils of the same age nationally. Nevertheless, by the age of seven, they were catching up rapidly so that their skills in reading and writing, while still below average, were closer to those of all pupils nationally. Many of them had the potential to do much better than this and, consequently, they pressed on into Key Stage 2 where, according to the [RAISEonline 2010 Full Report](#), their standards in English by the time they were 11 were above the national average for all pupils. So how was this achieved?

## Diversity and inclusion

First and foremost Cranford Park Primary is an inclusive school. According to the most recent [inspection report](#), 'The exemplary level of care, guidance and support enables all pupils to be fully involved in the school.' The welcoming environment that acknowledges and celebrates pupils' backgrounds and experiences provides a context in which all pupils can participate without fear of making errors. The pupils themselves can develop their bilingual skills acting as interpreters for new arrivals or recording bilingual audio books at lunchtime for Reception children. According to one Year 3 pupil, 'I helped a girl in my class who was new to this country by teaching her English and speaking to her in Somali.' They are proud of their culture and religion and the languages they can speak other than English. Many are continuing to study their first language at a higher level. At school, in curriculum projects or events such as cultural festivals, they have done research to deliver presentations to their peers about their country of origin or heritage. They have also taught other pupils something of the other languages they can speak. One parent said, 'I was pleased when my [Arabic-speaking] child came home and had learnt some Punjabi at school.'



*Reception class*

## Experienced and highly trained staff



*Year 4 extended writing class*

English as an additional language is not an 'add on' for the school – it is at the heart of its work and all staff, both teaching and non-teaching, have a part to play in ensuring that pupils experience high-quality learning in the classroom as well as through specific intervention programmes. Teachers take full responsibility for all their pupils' learning. EAL support teachers are on hand to advise other teachers about how to help children access the learning in class or identify blocks or gaps in learning. Team teaching, particularly for

new or inexperienced teaching staff, is used to equip class teachers with a range of strategies to teach learners of English as an additional language. During writing lessons, the EAL specialist teacher demonstrates effective strategies, such as scaffolding and the use of visual clues, and repeated opportunities to rehearse the language needed for the task.

These strategies are also used by teachers when unsupported. In one science lesson, for example, key vocabulary lists and models of mini beasts were made available for EAL learners, enabling them to access a version of the main activity rather than by making the work easier. All pupils are encouraged to work independently and teachers enable pupils to transfer the skills that they have previously acquired in reading into writing. Specialist staff are taking further post-graduate qualifications in bilingual education to develop their skills further in teaching English as an additional language.

## Targeted intervention programmes

There is a strong focus on learning to make sure no one falls behind. Through detailed monitoring and tracking, those pupils below the expected level or at risk of falling behind are quickly identified and individual needs are targeted, for example through the extended writing group. All pupils are assessed carefully using [step descriptors](#) linked to the National Curriculum for pupils at an early stage of English, to ensure that they receive the appropriate support and are making the required progress. A pupil who has had little or no previous schooling will not have the same needs as a pupil fully literate in his or her home language who has had regular schooling, even if both are at a similar level in terms of their spoken English. Writing intervention is carried out in close partnership between the support and the class teacher, and the same themes are studied at an appropriate level with both teachers to ensure continuity and full integration into the mainstream learning. The school is fortunate to have a rich resource of many bilingual teachers and teaching assistants who can use their bilingual skills to engage pupils and support them through two languages.



*Reception children in an EAL intervention group with EAL support teacher*

## The school's background



[Cranford Park Primary School](#) is a large primary school in Hillingdon, London for children aged 3 to 11. It is part of The Park Federation. A very large majority of the pupils have been identified as speakers of English as an additional language of whom about a third are at an early stage of English language acquisition.

Are you thinking of putting these ideas into practice; or already doing something similar that could help other providers; or just interested? We'd welcome your views and ideas. Get in touch [here](#).

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