

**Research into the needs of 14 – 16 learners with English as
an additional language**

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Appendix: Interview schedules

1 Introduction

The National Foundation for Educational Research (NFER) was commissioned by the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA) to investigate the need for a qualification in English competence for learners aged 14 to 16 who have English as an additional language (EAL).

2 Methodology

A small number of schools were identified with learners aged 14 to 16 who were relatively new to English (i.e. those students unlikely to be entered for GCSE English or whose level of proficiency in English might cause significant difficulties in other curriculum areas).

Three interview schedules were devised: one for EAL learners; one for senior managers or practitioners working within the schools attended by those learners; and one for EAL advisors working within local authorities (LAs).

All the interviews took place in March 2007. Face to face interviews with small groups of EAL learners were carried out in six schools. Interviews with senior managers and practitioners from the same six schools and from a further two schools were carried out either face to face or over the telephone. Telephone interviews were conducted with two local authority EAL advisors and a further three advisors sent information by email in response to the same questions.

3 Summary of key findings and recommendations

3.1 Teaching and learning of English

The eight schools included in this research varied in their provision for newly-arrived EAL students, depending on resources and staff available and school or LA policy. In some cases schools had to find provision from their existing budget, while in others the LA provided either resources or peripatetic teachers or teaching assistants.

Methods of support include:

- Full integration in the mainstream curriculum from the time of entry into the school, with varying amounts of support from teaching assistants or peers, coursework clubs, homework clubs and so on.

- A reduced curriculum supplemented by separate lessons in small groups. These lessons may be for English learning, support with other subjects, assistance with homework or course work, pre-examination support, or a combination of these.
- Use of a ‘buddy’ system to help new arrivals.
- Intensive English lessons for varying amounts of time on arrival, followed by continued support.
- Attendance at English lessons at a local college either for some time each week, for an intensive course on arrival or, in one case, full time for students arriving in year 11.
- Provision of out-of-school learning experiences and activities (e.g. visits in the local community) as a basis for language learning within school.

3.2 Resources and training

Local authorities differed in the amount of support and in-service training given to schools and staff to help specifically with newly-arrived EAL students.

Support may be:

- Funding of additional resources – e.g. provision of bilingual resources for a particular language group (bilingual dictionaries/texts, computer translation programmes, etc).
- INSET days or courses for teachers of English, teaching assistants or teachers of other subjects.
- Supply of peripatetic teachers, teaching assistants or bilingual support assistants.

Several schools considered that the resources available currently for supporting EAL students were inadequate. Two schools referred particularly to a lack of appropriate age-related resources for key stage 4 students who were new to English and another school mentioned a need for more resources to help teach EAL students in subjects other than English.

Some schools and local authorities stated that it was important for practitioners working with EAL students to have the time and opportunity to share best practice with others (e.g. through networks).

3.3 Assessment

- Schools were mainly aware of the QCA framework, ‘A Language in Common: Assessing English as an Additional Language’, but differed in the extent to which they used it.

- Schools varied in the extent to which they had procedures for initial assessment to identify the language needs of newly-arrived students. Some had no formal procedure, others used checklists or tests.
- Specific identification of the academic potential of newly-arrived students was a concern for one school, which used non-verbal reasoning tests for this purpose.
- The majority of students follow the GCSE English course alongside their peers but this can be problematic as they are not always able to keep up with others. The literature element of GCSE can be particularly difficult.
- Some schools enter all students for GCSE, others only if they feel they are able to achieve a grade.

3.4 Qualifications

Qualifications other than GCSE English which were mentioned by schools or LAs as having been offered for EAL students included:

- IELTS (International English Language Testing System)
- City and Guilds ESOL certificate (presumably Certificate in ESOL Skills for Life)
- ASDAN qualifications
- AQA Entry Level Certificate in Adult Literacy
- Edexcel Entry Level BTEC Certificate in Skills for Working Life
- Trinity College Certificate in ESOL Skills for Life
- International GCSE

The first five of these are included on the Section 96/97 lists as accredited for teaching to under-16s, although in the case of IELTS this appears to be only the higher levels of the qualification. The Trinity College ‘Skills for Life’ ESOL qualifications are accredited for over-16s. International GCSE is not included on the 96/97 lists. Not all of these qualifications are specifically intended for EAL students (for example ASDAN qualifications are for students with special educational needs) and not all of them are English language qualifications. Some focus on social or life skills and facilitate the development of English in real life contexts.

In the case of the AQA qualification, one school specifically referred to this as the Entry Level Certificate in Adult Literacy. Other schools and LA advisors referred more generally to an ‘AQA entry level certificate in English’. It is not clear if this was the same adult literacy qualification listed above or the AQA Certificate in English, which is also offered at Entry Levels 1, 2 and 3. Similarly, ASDAN qualifications include certificates in Life Skills, Communication and Adult Literacy and it is

somewhat unclear which of these were being offered to EAL students. One school specifically referred to the ASDAN Life Skills qualification as something they were considering for their students but the local authority that reported ASDAN qualifications were being used in their area did not specify which of these qualifications were being offered.

The managers and practitioners interviewed did not all appear to be aware of what was available and which qualifications were on the approved DfES list. In some cases it appeared that practitioners were struggling to find the best qualifications to meet the needs of their students. However, they were not necessarily the members of staff who were responsible for making decisions about which qualifications should be offered so it is possible that others in the school were more knowledgeable.

3.5 Need for additional qualifications

There appeared to be some considerable support for offering qualifications other than GCSE for students newly arrived at key stage 4. Opinions were mixed on whether this should be by accreditation of existing qualifications or development of a qualification specifically for key stage 4 students. The main concern seemed to be that such a qualification should make it possible for those who were not able to gain a grade at GCSE to be able to demonstrate that they had made some progress. For example, suggestions were made that qualifications should be offered incrementally from Entry Level upwards or that modular structuring should allow students to demonstrate attainment in different aspects of English. It was felt that the potential for such a qualification to demonstrate attainment in small regular steps would not only be viewed positively by parents but would also be useful in building students' confidence.

There was a general feeling that any qualifications offered should be recognised and have official status, so they were of use for employment or further education. In some cases respondents felt that such qualifications would need to be linked or equated with GCSE English grades or National Qualification levels. In general, it was felt that such a qualification should cover all language skill areas and that the inclusion of 'life skills' using age-appropriate content would be particularly useful. It was suggested by some that any new qualification should be complementary to GCSE, so that it would not be necessary to teach a separate curriculum and that students could progress onto GCSE wherever possible.

It should be noted that there was not a lot of support for the idea of having a separate English curriculum for newly-arrived students. Most schools favoured integration within the mainstream with appropriate support. However, there are clearly particular issues in English classes where EAL students with limited language skills are learning alongside their English-speaking peers and a feeling that the GCSE curriculum – particularly literature elements – is not totally suitable for some of these students. Among those who did favour a separate curriculum, there were concerns about the

resource implications, particularly in schools which did not have a large number of students who struggle with the mainstream curriculum.

3.6 Recommendations

Given the different educational experiences and the widely differing levels of proficiency of students learning English as an additional language, it may not be possible to find one qualification that meets the needs of all students who may have difficulty accessing GCSE English.

Based on these initial findings, it is recommended that there should be:

- Further investigation of the needs of key stage 4 EAL learners, in particular differentiating between the needs of students who have received little or no formal schooling prior to their arrival in the UK and those who have considerable literacy skills in their home language.
- An investigation as to which, if any, of the Section 96/97 qualifications could best meet the needs of EAL students of this age group.
- Consideration as to whether other qualifications (e.g. ESOL ‘Skills for Life’) not currently accredited for under 16s should be extended for use with students in this age group.
- Consideration given to development of a new qualification with content tailored to the age and needs of 14-16 year old students - to help prepare them for post-16 education or employment. To be most useful to those interviewed in the current research, such a qualification would probably need to be modular, to give the opportunity for certification at different levels, and to enable links with the mainstream English curriculum and GCSE.

4 Case study 1

4.1 School background

This school is an 11-16 comprehensive school located in an outer London borough. It has approximately 1000 students. It is in the second from lowest national band for GCSE attainment and in the band which has the highest proportion of free school meals nationally.

The main first languages spoken by students in the school are Bengali, Urdu, Gujarati and Punjabi. Most of the EAL students in the school are from established communities. One or two new students arrive from overseas every week. Students from Eastern Europe are on the increase, especially those from Lithuania, the Ukraine, the Czech Republic, Poland, Romania, Yugoslavia and Bulgaria. There are also many from Afghanistan and African countries. Many are refugees. The levels of English proficiency these students have are rarely high and mostly low to middling. Students from Eastern Europe tend to acquire English most quickly, followed by those from West Africa, although individuals do vary.

4.2 Interview with senior manager and EAL practitioner

The interview was conducted over the phone with the head of Ethnic Minority Achievement (EMA) who is also the head of EAL. Some questions at the end were answered by a staff member in the EAL team as the head of EMA and EAL had to leave.

4.2.1 Learning needs of EAL students

The interviewee felt that the learning needs of newly-arrived EAL students are very different from those of other students. The former students need to learn English skills before they are able to access the curriculum. He also commented that Afghan students in the school have mostly had little or no schooling before they arrive in the country and therefore also need to develop social skills.

The interviewee felt that the majority of EAL students do not achieve their full potential at key stage 4. He went on to explain that after two years in the school they tend to have reasonable communication skills, especially playground slang. However, even after they have been in school for three or four years they may generally only reach a reading age of 11.

Peer support and clubs are considered as important factors in motivating EAL students to be successful in learning English. More importantly the interviewee felt that ESOL courses need to be recommended at 6th form level, especially for those doing vocational courses. The school is considering offering an ASDAN qualification

but this requires a lot of administration and some of the course content is focused around social skills for SEN students which is not appropriate for the newly-arrived EAL students as their needs are language oriented. Borough Heads of Departments are currently looking into the need for a qualification directed towards English skills.

4.2.2 Organisation for teaching and learning

The school currently has two full time EMA teachers, two part-time EMA teachers, who come in three days a week, and a full-time teaching assistant. They currently also have one bilingual support assistant but the funding for this has recently ceased so this member of staff will be leaving soon.

The EAL department is considered to be a good source of information for other form and subject teachers. The department issues paperwork and guidelines and teaches differentiation skills. The latter involves helping practitioners to understand the different learning needs of EAL students compared with their non-EAL peers. Newly-arrived EAL students are given an initial assessment and this information is passed on to the relevant staff.

The school has a lot of special provision to meet the learning needs of newly-arrived EAL students. As much as possible new arrivals are placed in a class with a student who speaks their home language. Newly-arrived EAL students take a class in essay writing and comprehension in years 10 and 11 in place of one GCSE choice. Work experience skills are also enacted in drama and pre-exam support is given in the form of practice runs. As well as this, there are breakfast, lunch and after-school clubs that provide coursework and homework help and offer the chance for socialising. Teachers also have new timetables each term allowing for change to enable the school to reach out to as many students as possible.

More classroom-specific initiatives to help meet the language needs of newly-arrived students include teachers using keywords in the introduction to lessons. Bilingual dictionaries are provided and students are also encouraged to buy their own. Students work mostly in groups, often with their non-EAL peers. The students are encouraged to develop speaking and listening skills through drama activities and presentations.

Further resources the school has include a bank of helpful information for departments, seven banks of computers, access to good websites and a computer network for keywords (bilingual). The school library also has bilingual texts. The interviewee was keen to stress that the most important resource the school has is its staff.

The interviewee stated that the key stage 4 English curriculum is appropriate for newly-arrived EAL students as he feels that new arrivals should experience the same education as the rest of the students, so long as they are supported. To make the curriculum accessible is challenging. He did not feel that EAL students would benefit from a separate curriculum in English. He felt the levels should be the same but the framework should be bilingual.

A key problem that students face in subjects other than English is a teacher-talk barrier, because dialogue is in a different language from their own. Repetition of key words and concepts helps to overcome these barriers, as well as group work. It is important that students are actively involved in lessons as it fosters learning. He also thought that it was important that students are fully integrated in the normal social and educational activities of the school and not treated differently. The school has abandoned induction lessons and instead homework clubs are now an important mechanism for helping the EAL students.

4.2.3 Assessment

The school uses the QCA framework 'A Language in Common: Assessing English as an Additional Language' to assess the learning needs of EAL students. The interviewee commented that the initial transition from steps to levels was hard but now the school uses the framework. An informal assessment is also given to students upon entry into the school resulting in a written profile, given to all staff, that outlines suggestions for dealing with the student. This assessment was developed by the school in conjunction with a team at the local teachers' centre.

Not all newly-arrived EAL students do GCSE English. Their language ability determines whether or not they will do the GCSE. When they are entered, the students normally achieve a grade E or below. Some students take a qualification offered by WJEC and study for this at school. (This qualification was said to be on the DfES Section 96/97 list, but insufficient details were given to identify which one it is). The local authority does not recommend a particular qualification for students to take. The school has been considering offering an ASDAN qualification, but as it is tailored towards students with special needs and concerns 'life skills', it may not be applicable for all newly-arrived EAL students. The interviewee did think that more existing ESOL / EFL qualifications should be given official accreditation but was keen to stress that a range of awards are given in the school so that progress is recognised. He would not like EAL students to be offered the chance to take other English qualifications which are not officially accredited because he feels they have no status.

A formal qualification in English specifically for key stage 4 EAL students is supported by the interviewee as currently some students leave school with nothing. Such a qualification should be manageable and practical and include such skills as form completion, letter and email writing as well as the traditional reading, writing, speaking and listening skills. All the levels of the National Qualification Framework should be addressed within this qualification. The interviewee believes that both students and parents would view this type of qualification positively.

4.2.4 Practitioner needs

The staff have received a range of specialist training for teaching EAL students over the years, both in and out of school. The interviewee feels that partnership teaching and differentiating strategies (between the learning needs of EAL and non-EAL students) are initiatives that teachers and other practitioners would benefit from to help them work successfully with EAL students. Currently within the school's local authority there is funded training available.

4.2.5 National strategies/local authority initiatives

The interviewee feels that regular secondary EMA network meetings are beneficial for the school in the development of its provision for EAL students.

4.2.6 Other remarks

The interviewee was keen to stress that as some students speak several languages, these should be fostered at school and the students should continue to use the skills they have in their mother tongue.

4.3 Interview with students

4.3.1 Background

Five students were interviewed; four male and one female student. All the students are in year 10 (aged 14-15). One student left half way through the interview. The students come from a range of countries: India, Afghanistan, Lithuania, Tanzania and Pakistan. They have been living in England for periods ranging from seven or eight months to five years. Two of the students have been at the school for only a few months whereas one student has been there five years. The other two students have been there for one to two years. The students speak a range of languages at home including Urdu, Hindi, Lithuanian, Swahili, Punjabi as well as English. Only one student had learnt some English before coming to England. This was for one year in their previous school.

4.3.2 General feelings about school

The students like a range of things about school, including the playground, Astroturf, computer room, air-conditioning, library, playing pool, the gym, and all the sports they do, especially football. The things they do not like are the toilets, temperature and fighting / bullying.

4.3.3 Learning English at school

All the EAL students get extra help with learning English in the school. Some students go to weekly after-school, lunchtime or breakfast clubs. Other students get special help in groups of no more than 15 students. Most of the students said they get help with all skills and subjects, with a special focus on speaking. One student said the help they get is very specifically with English only. The students think the support they get is useful because they learn how to write essays properly and they learn new words and how to speak English. The students suggested that booklets for each subject containing important vocabulary would be helpful, as well as more dictionaries being available for them to use. The students do talk with other non-EAL peers in small groups in lessons and think that either groups of two to four or four to six students are the optimal group sizes to work and discuss projects in.

4.3.4 Learning English outside school

All the students learn English outside school through a private club where they also study other subjects with family and friends. They think this is very good.

4.3.5 Learning other subjects

The subjects that the students find difficult are English, as well as maths and science. In English they find coursework hard as well as exercises where they have to compare information or they have to empathise and think from the writer's point of view. In science the vocabulary is difficult. One student did not find any subjects hard.

The students find a range of subjects enjoyable; media, geography, personal social education, PE (especially dance), maths and art. Reasons for enjoyment include that the students like to be active and that they find the subject interesting.

All but one of the students said they sometimes find it hard to understand what their teachers are saying. They find that teachers use difficult words so they often need to ask the teacher to explain things to them individually. One student suggested more pictures could be used in lessons to aid understanding.

4.3.6 Feelings about learning English

All the students like to speak in lessons as it helps them to progress. If they do not understand the teacher then they will ask a friend or the teacher to explain things to them. Interestingly, two students commented they would ask the teacher only when they were by themselves. If the students do not understand their peers they will ask them to explain things again.

The kinds of things the students write in English include autobiographies, their coursework, presentations as well as straight forward copying activities for those students with very limited English. All the students write their school notes in English. All the students enjoy writing in English to help them improve their

proficiency in the language. In terms of reading, the students read books, poetry and newspapers. If they find these difficult to understand they will ask someone, perhaps a teacher, for help. As with writing, the students enjoy reading in English to help them improve.

4.3.7 Assessment

The students said that their teachers find out about their ability in English by looking at their work, grading it and occasionally giving them a test. Three of the students think they should be given tests every week to help the teachers know what level of English proficiency they have.

One student said they took an English improvement certificate in year 9. This is an internal qualification which was taken at the school. None of the other students have taken any qualifications in English. All but one of the students said they are going to take GCSE English. One student thought this could be achievable but another felt this would be hard. The other students did not comment on whether they thought it would be easy or difficult. The student not doing GCSE English is going to take another qualification offered by WJEC. The student is studying for this at school and thinks this is more suitable than GCSE English. None of the students knew if any of their other friends are taking different qualifications in English.

4.3.8 Other remarks

One student said they have done a 'Bank Award' which is a qualification which allows them to work in a bank.

5 Case study 2

5.1 School background

This school is located in a North London borough. It is an 11-18 comprehensive school with approximately 1300 students. It is in the lowest national band for GCSE attainment and in the band with the highest proportion of free school meals (over half the students).

The main first languages of EAL students in the school are Turkish, Bengali, Gujerati and increasingly Brazilian Portuguese and Polish. The EAL students in the school are a mixture of newly arrived students as well as those from established communities. There are fewer and fewer new arrivals each year because there are very few places available in the school, as students are increasingly staying at the school for longer periods of time.

The levels of English proficiency that newly-arrived EAL students have upon arrival vary. The Polish students for example have already learnt some English in Poland through the education system there. They also bring with them transferable skills as a result of a good prior education, which helps them to achieve highly. However, students from areas where schooling is not as extensive tend not to have good English proficiency upon arrival and do not make such rapid progress.

5.2 Interview with senior manager and English teacher

The following interview was conducted with the school's Head of Ethnic Minority Achievement and some answers were supplemented with information from an English teacher who specifically helps EAL students.

5.2.1 Learning needs of EAL students

When newly-arrived EAL students first come to the school some of the learning needs are similar to those of other students who arrive at the school. They need an induction programme where they are shown the school and the systems. They also need to be told about the way progress is monitored through exams and through reports to parents. Over and above that, the English proficiency of newly-arrived EAL students is assessed when they first arrive at the school using a test the school has devised. This consists of speaking and listening activities as well as the reading of a passage and writing activities that get increasingly difficult.

The head of EMA did not think that EAL students who arrive in the country during key stage 4 achieve their full potential at this level. If they arrive during key stage 3 then she believes they might achieve their potential by key stage 4. She stated the critical language age factor as an important theory to bear in mind when considering

achievement. The younger they arrive at the school, not only do they get more time exposed to the language, but also they are younger and can pick up the language with greater ease.

The head of EMA thought it is important that students see there is progression for them after school. This helps motivate the students to work hard. Modelling is also important and she has found this particularly so amongst the Brazilian community. Increasingly they have Brazilian families who want their children to come to the school after they have seen other Brazilian students doing well there.

5.2.2 Organisation for teaching and learning

The school has two EAL teachers (one of whom is the head of EMA). Although they have no bilingual teachers or learning support assistants, the two current teachers speak French and Spanish and one is currently learning Brazilian Portuguese. Other subject teachers do not receive any training in ways of supporting new EAL arrivals. However, as the school is a community school the head of EMA was keen to express that everyone does their bit to help out. The Modern Foreign Languages department is particularly helpful and often provides support with interpreting and translating wherever possible.

In terms of special provision for newly-arrived EAL students, after they have been assessed, they are withdrawn from normal classes for a few hours a week to work with the EAL staff. What is done in those few hours a week depends on the needs of the students but can include literacy, letter formation as well as help with work in other subjects.

In terms of being effective at meeting the language needs of newly-arrived EAL students, the head of EMA thought that during the previous last year the school was very effective. However, this year they are low on staff and therefore she thinks they are being less effective. She feels the learning of English as a second language is best achieved by providing mainstream teachers with the time to discuss, with each other, how to teach EAL students in their classes with the help of the EAL specialists in the school.

EAL students spend the majority of their time at school working in small groups with their non-EAL peers. The head of EMA thinks this is a large contributing factor to the learning of English. The school has access to some good published resources, but mostly uses internally made resources to support the development of EAL students. The local authority is starting to get involved in the provision of resources and has developed helpful KS3 Science materials that include aspects of best practice in teaching EAL students. The head of EMA thinks that it would be helpful for teachers to have more time to look more carefully at the various issues of the learning of EAL students, combined with time to plan how to use established materials for teaching EAL students.

The English teacher, who specifically helps EAL students, spoke about how appropriate the key stage 4 English curriculum is for newly-arrived EAL students. She believes that for very newly-arrived students the curriculum is not easy to access. However, as the school has a policy of entering as many students as possible for the GCSE English exam, she has to try to make the curriculum accessible at some level to all students. Students who are literate in their first language, and have been well schooled in their home country, are more familiar with the structure of working and ease into the curriculum more easily. She does believe that the curriculum is flexible and can be simplified so she uses the content of the curriculum, but at a much simpler level for students who have a low level of English proficiency.

The head of EMA did not think that EAL students would benefit from a separate curriculum in English. She felt that EAL students should do the same qualification as their peers as the 'currency on the street' is a GCSE English Grade C or above. However, in her view the National Curriculum does not necessarily provide an appropriate framework for supporting the language development of EAL students. These students need a route into the curriculum as they have a limited vocabulary and their comprehension is also at a low level. The school has really had to help EAL students to enable them to access the curriculum.

The specific barriers that EAL students experience in other subjects include cultural contexts. An example given was that of some year 8/9 girls struggling in food technology. They struggle with certain methods of cooking like the 'rubbing method' and 'creaming in' which they do not understand as 'cooking'. They are able to cook well generally, but when they need to study specific techniques they can struggle. Evaluating their cooking (i.e. 'too soft'/'too crunchy') is also something they find hard as they do not have comparable experience to draw on. Focusing on key concepts, structures and requirements can help EAL students in all subjects.

5.2.3 Assessment

The school uses the QCA framework 'A Language in Common: Assessing English as an Additional Language' to assess the learning needs of EAL students. This is seen to be useful as it dovetails into the National Curriculum for English and allows EAL students' progress to be seen in relation to their peers. The head of EMA however feels that this framework does not consider language acquisition sufficiently. As EAL students are learning English as their second language, the features of language learning that these EAL students achieve are not age appropriate in comparison with the curriculum and therefore are not featured within it. Therefore there is no means of acknowledgement of their progression within the curriculum. The school previously used the Hilary Hester stages of English learning at the school, but they no longer use these as it was suggested by an OFSTED inspector that the QCA framework would be better.

Nearly all newly-arrived EAL students take GCSE English. The school tries to enter as many students as possible, precluding only those they think will get a 'U' grade. If they think they may achieve an 'F' or 'G' then they will put the students in for the

exam. As the students do both a language and a literature paper then the school may enter some struggling students for only the language paper and not the literature one. It is not clear if what is meant is that students will not sit the literature paper within an English GCSE or whether they will not do a separate English literature GCSE. What is clear however, is that literature is an element of the curriculum that EAL students find difficult to access. The grades EAL students achieve depend on many factors including the length of time they have been in the country, their home language and their previous educational experience.

This year the school is for the first time also entering students for the Trinity College ESOL 'Skills for Life' qualification. The school is doing this as an experiment for this year to see how it goes. The head of EMA was hoping that the syllabus would be easier and more accessible for EAL students with very limited English. However, although she likes the lessons and work that has come out of the ESOL qualification, she does not think it is necessarily a better alternative to the GCSE. A certain level of proficiency is still demanded of the ESOL qualification and perhaps this is higher than GCSE in grammar as there is a specific focus on grammatical errors. The head of EMA was not sure if this qualification is on the DfES Section 96/97 list. The local authority does not recommend a particular certificate for EAL students. The head of EMA was not sure if students in other schools are taking ESOL or EFL certificates.

The head of EMA thought that it would be great if more ESOL/EFL qualifications could be given official accreditation, but went on to say that the school would not be able to offer any due to a lack of resources. She also commented that these qualifications would probably be more suitable for students who come into the school earlier on.

When asked about the possibility of having a new formal qualification in English specifically for key stage 4 EAL students, the head of EMA was not too sure. She said less Shakespeare and fewer poems for EAL students would be welcomed. If a new or additional qualification was introduced she was adamant that it would have to be marked and assessed according to a standardised level, with the possibility for students to achieve higher grades than they currently can for GCSE English. She hoped that these qualifications might provide a better learning experience for students who struggle with the current English curriculum and the new qualification should also help students to prepare for post-16 education or work. She would like to see a broad curriculum spread being tested with a heavy emphasis on language learning. She believes that the qualification should be pitched at entry level/level 1 of the National Qualification Framework and be linked to vocational college courses with ESOL guidance.

The school took part in another experiment last year where any new EAL students who arrived in year 11 were put on a course at the local college. There they studied a range of subjects and also had EAL support through tutorials. This was a full-time, 25 hours a week course. It was viewed as very successful and the programme is running again this year. The parents of the students who have attended the course have fully supported it. There are some students who have chosen not to attend this course and

remain in year 11 at school. The head of EMA has noticed the benefits of the college course when comparing the progress of students in the programme with those who remain at school. It is the student's choice as to whether he or she wants to attend the course. Many students seem to prefer to be at school and would rather study there than college. However, the majority recognise the benefits and will attend the course at college. The school does not have the resources to offer such a withdrawal unit within the school itself and does not think other secondary schools would be able to either.

5.2.4 Practitioner needs

The head of EMA started as a modern foreign languages teacher and became more interested in EAL because of the large numbers of EAL students in her classes. She did an RSA diploma in EAL and then went on to teach on the diploma course. She also has a degree in race relations and ethnicity.

She thinks that teachers and other practitioners should have the time to analyse the curriculum and decide what is appropriate for the teaching of language development. She would like to see all subject teachers do this as increasingly it is relevant to all practitioners. She said that currently the training available from the local authority in preparing to work successfully with EAL students is mostly geared towards teaching assistants working in primary schools. There is an Ethnic Minority Achievement Grant which the school uses to employ staff and which is also used for training, resources and other things related to EAL learning.

There was not enough time to discuss in more detail the national strategies and local authority initiatives the head of EMA would like to see in the future.

5.2.5 Other remarks

The head of EMA wanted to make it clear that she thinks it is important that, if there is a separate qualification for EAL students, care should be taken that this does not become a 'second class qualification'. EAL students need to have something that is of the same currency and value as the English GCSE.

5.3 Interview with students

5.3.1 Background

Five students, all in year 11 (four were 16 years old and one was 15), were interviewed together in one group. There were two male students and three female students. All the students came from different countries: Bangladesh, Kurdistan, Turkey, Ethiopia and Somalia. They spoke the following languages at home: Bengali, Kurdish, Turkish, Amharic, Farsi and Arabic. The students had been in the UK and at this school between one and half years to three years. Three of the students had not

learnt any English before coming to England, one student had studied English for about one year prior to arriving in the country and one student had been learning English since primary school.

5.3.2 General feelings about school

When talking about their feelings about different aspects of the school, what the students liked the most is the mixture of cultures, the extra help they received with their English and their lessons. One student commented that there was nothing in particular that they liked about the school. One student spoke specifically about not liking the bullies in the school and racist people. There was also a general feeling that they did not like their 'normal' English lessons.

5.3.3 Learning English at school

The students go to the same English lessons as non-EAL students but they are given three extra lessons a week (equating to three hours) with other students learning English. In these lessons they mainly get help with their English language learning but they also get help with understanding what is required of them in other subjects. One student commented that if they are behind with coursework, for example, they can come to these classes and get extra help and time to work on their coursework.

They have two teachers who teach them in these three hours a week. Not all the students were in agreement as to whether three hours a week was enough. However, they all felt that the lessons help them with their English language learning. They feel that having more teachers who can help them specifically with their English learning, as well as trips out of school to learn more about England itself, would be really useful.

When the students are in their main classes, most of them like talking with other students (non-EAL) in small groups and they think this is a good thing. One student, however, was not in agreement and she explained that she rarely spoke in such small groups as she has experienced others in the group laughing at her when she has said something 'wrong'.

5.3.4 Learning English outside school

All the students learn English outside school though through different means. Watching television, going to the cinema, listening to music, speaking to family members in English and going to after-school clubs were the main activities listed that EAL students do to help them learn English.

5.3.5 Learning other subjects

The students find English, geography and maths the hardest subjects at school. They found it hard to vocalise exactly why they find these subjects hard though one student

said that spelling was hard as well as writing. The students said they enjoyed the following subjects; art, science, sport, music and foreign languages (if they were those of their mother tongue). One reason they gave for enjoying these subjects was that they do not have to rely on language knowledge in lessons that included practical elements.

There was a general feeling from the students that most of their teachers are good at explaining things. They said they find it hard to understand teachers who have accents. To improve lessons, the students felt that teachers could explain more and perhaps create more after school/weekend clubs for different subjects.

5.3.6 Feelings about learning English

Most of the students said they generally do not speak much in lessons as they are embarrassed and say that the other students look at them ‘funny’ even if they know the answer to a question asked, for example. They enjoy speaking in their EAL class and with their EAL friends.

On the whole the students feel comfortable in asking teachers or other students to explain things to them if they do not understand. However, one student said he is shy and does not like to ask either his teacher or other students, only in the extra EAL classes. Another student said she does not like to ask other students anything as they can be very nasty.

Writing in English is something the students enjoy and think is good practice, although they do not like to be told what to write. Specifically they like writing poems and stories. All the students said that the notes they take in classes are in English. They tend to write emails in their first language however.

In terms of reading, one student said they do not read anything in English, whereas the others said they read stories, novels and the dictionary. They were mixed in their feelings about whether they like to read. One student said that it is good to read to improve your English and to increase your knowledge. However, one student finds reading hard and therefore not enjoyable. If there are things the students do not understand in their reading they do research on the internet to help them and they also use a dictionary to look up word meanings.

5.3.7 Assessment

‘Tests and essays all the time’ is what the students say the teachers use to find out about their ability in English. They do not think they should have more or different tests. They think teachers talking to them would also help the teachers find out about their ability in English.

None of the students have taken any qualifications in English yet but they will all take their GCSE English. Some of the students think this will not be easy, but not too hard either, whereas others think it will be hard or even very hard. They especially think

that the English literature exam will be hard. None of the students said they were going to take any other qualifications in English or know anyone else who will be taking a different certificate either in their own school or a different school.

5.3.8 Other remarks

The students said that they would really like to get out of the classroom more and learn about England and go on trips to find out more about the country. They think this would be an enjoyable way to help them with their English language learning.

6 Case study 3

6.1 School background

This school is located in a borough on the outskirts of London. It is an 11-18 comprehensive with approximately 1300 students. It is in the lowest band for GCSE attainment and in the band with the second-highest percentage of free school meals nationally.

The main first languages spoken by the children in the school are varied. Some of the most common languages spoken by students who arrive at the school with little or no English include Somalian, Albanian, Punjabi and Polish. However, Hindi, Urdu and Farsi are other common first languages of the students in the school. The school has a mixture of EAL students from established communities as well as newly arrived students. The majority of EAL students are bilingual with no specific need for extra help with English learning. It is currently mostly Polish students and students from Somalia who arrive at the school with little or no English.

The school expects there to be waves of changes in the nationalities of students they take in who have little or no English proficiency with the expansion of the EU and expect different communities to establish in the local area over time. Increasingly they are finding that students arrive at the school with less and less proficiency in English, though this is not specific to any particular language group. They find that the students from Europe pick up English more quickly than other students, but this is also dependent on previous educational experience.

6.2 Interview with senior manager, two teachers and a Learning Support Assistant

A group interview was conducted with four people: the EAL coordinator, a learning support assistant specifically for EAL students, the head of maths and an English teacher.

6.2.1 Learning needs of EAL students

The most important need for newly-arrived EAL students is to be able to access the curriculum in all subjects. The school tries to build up the literacy abilities of students as soon as they arrive in the school, often using visual aids as part of an induction pack as language is the main barrier these students face. They find that some students are very able in certain subjects but because of language barriers they do not end up in the top sets for subjects. Eastern European students for example are often very good at certain aspects of maths such as number skills and algebra but fall down on data handling and statistics as a result of language difficulties.

There was a feeling amongst those interviewed that students can reach their full potential at key stage 4 if they arrive at the school or in the English education system by year 7. However, if they arrive in year 10 for example, then it is less likely that students reach their full potential. If the students arrive in year 11 in this school then they will have missed out all the coursework done in year 10 which precludes them from achieving their full potential. The school has this year started to compare EAL achievement to the school achievement and is finding that achievement for EAL students across subjects is just below the average for the school.

The most important factor motivating recently-arrived EAL students to be successful in learning is the students' own desires and attitudes. The school finds that students who embrace extra help with English and have a good attitude and work hard achieve the most. These students consider the opportunity to work in small groups on their English as a reward. The school also has a rewards policy where 'good news notes' are given as well as credits and prizes. This is a policy used with all students in the school, but is also used specifically for EAL achievement within normal curriculum work.

Home background is also a large contributing factor to student motivation in English language learning. An example was given where students whose parents do not speak English are not so concerned about a phone call home when they have misbehaved as their parents will not understand what the school tells them. Students whose parents do not speak English also have a slower rate of English learning than those students whose parents do speak English although they may pick up the 'street language' quite quickly.

6.2.2 Organisation for teaching and learning

The school has an EAL coordinator and one Learning Support Assistant specifically for EAL students. The school is hoping to employ another Learning Support Assistant for EAL students in the next few weeks.

Form and subject teachers do not receive any specific training in ways of supporting new EAL arrivals. This has been identified as a training need. The English department does have an induction pack they can use with newly-arrived EAL students. The origins of this pack could not be remembered. This pack contains very simple activities that can be done with students new to English.

Staff said that policies on how to provide the best support for newly-arrived EAL students in the school have been changing continually and has included withdrawing students from a normal timetable altogether and fully immersing students in the main curriculum. The thinking has now converged to a half-way ground where students are withdrawn from the normal timetable for a period of time and remain within the main timetable the rest of the time. However, there are currently not sufficient staff to allow the school to do this to the extent they would like to do so.

At the moment, students are placed straight into the main curriculum and paired up with a buddy who speaks their native language where possible. This has worked especially well with the Polish students. However, there are considerations for the students with whom they are paired up, as they will feel an obligation to translate for another student and help this student as well as complete their own work. Students have about one hour of extra help with their English outside of main classes. The school does not consider this to be an ideal situation as they would like to provide more support but are hindered by a lack of resources.

At the moment the school does not feel that they are very effective at meeting the language needs of newly-arriving EAL students in terms of their academic language proficiency. They do not feel they do anything particularly special for EAL students that they do not do for other students who struggle with literacy. They want to be able to understand better the difference between newly-arrived EAL students and those with literacy difficulties to allow them to provide better provision. They hope to encourage more use of dictionaries, i.e. have students carry dictionaries to aid them in translating. They do not necessarily want to restrict this to just the students as it is felt that there would be a benefit to teachers also using dictionaries in the students' home languages. An online translation programme was also mentioned as desirable for the school. However, difficulties with this were also recognised with possible limitations to the number of languages it would support and considerations for when use of the programme would be restricted and where it would be encouraged.

It was felt that the other students help students new to English the most in terms of their social language proficiency; they pick up the 'street slang' very quickly and student interaction fosters this learning. Student interaction occurs all the time as EAL students work with their non-EAL peers in all subjects. Students at the school are very used to a lot of languages being spoken across the school. There is a strong sense that staff would like newly-arrived EAL students to be placed in the top sets in subjects so they experience better English modelling. However, this is not always possible.

There is a strong sense that the resources available to the school for supporting the development of EAL students are not adequate. The teachers mostly make their own resources and spend time planning how to aid the learning of these students. What is lacking are not books on how to teach English, but resources that help with teaching EAL students other subjects like geography, history, maths, science etc. The school feels there is a real gap in resources in this area.

The school thinks that the key stage 4 curriculum is appropriate for newly-arrived EAL students, for those who are able to get a grade. However, if students arrive in year 11 they miss all the coursework done in year 10 so they are limited in what they can achieve. They do not think that it is difficult to make English lessons accessible and interesting for newly-arrived students, but they do think it takes time and commitment.

The feeling from the school is that newly-arrived EAL students would benefit from a separate curriculum in English. They feel the English GCSE does not recognise the

progress that these students make. A 'beginners' English GCSE was suggested that perhaps does not include studying Shakespeare.

The barriers that newly-arrived EAL students experience in other subjects are mostly language specific. For example in maths, even though all students study and learn 'key' important words, when unfamiliar words are used in assessment situations for example, this can really throw students. Such words could be words that are not necessarily important to the question and can even be unfamiliar names. The staff think this can really affect the chances of EAL students succeeding in particular questions.

Also, simply navigating through exam papers can be tricky for students with limited English as they can fail to understand simple instructions such as either/or and choices they can make about what questions to answer. The school has experienced students answering all questions in an exam paper when for example they only needed to answer one out of four. The school finds that students can often hide their issues with reading and comprehension very well in the classroom by asking their friends to verbalise what they have to do if they do not understand. These students would benefit from having questions and instructions read to them in examinations or have staff ask them which question they are going to answer so that students are clear about the instructions. Students would still answer questions at their own level but would not be unduly penalised for not comprehending the most basic layer of instructions about which questions to answer for example.

The school thinks that ideally newly-arrived EAL students should have an induction period where they are mainly withdrawn from the main key stage 4 programme but still experience things such as form time and subjects like PE and art, to start to integrate with their peers. They would study for the more academic subjects separately. The school also think they should have the flexibility to put students back a year. This is especially important when students arrive in year 11 for example when they miss all the coursework done in year 10. Students with limited English could be put back a year or spend year 11 focusing on coursework.

6.2.3 Assessment

The staff were not entirely sure if they use the QCA framework 'A Language in Common: Assessing English as an Additional Language'. They queried if this was the framework from the DfES. If so, they said this was very useful and flexible and allowed the practitioners to mix and match using different parts of it when appropriate. They do not use any other language scales or EAL assessment frameworks.

It is the expectation of the school that all students sit GCSE English. If the school does not enter students then it counts against the school. The choice of whether a student should sit GCSE English is not influenced at all by whether a student is an EAL student or not. The only time when students do not sit GCSE English is if they have been out of the school on an extended work experience placement and therefore

have missed a significant proportion of the curriculum. This might happen with one or two students out of 220. Students are normally entered for the English GCSE and the English literature GCSE and if there is any doubt about whether an EAL student should sit the GCSEs they would perhaps not sit the literature GCSE but always would do the English GCSE.

The staff said that the grades achieved by newly-arrived EAL students depend mostly on when they arrive. If they arrive in year 10 or 11 then they will struggle to get an A-C grade. If they arrive earlier in the school system then there is a chance they may get an A-C grade. Having said that, the attitude of the student is the most significant factor and hardworking students can achieve high grades. Similarly, if students have come from good education systems in their home countries then their achievement is generally higher.

The school has no facility to offer anything other than GCSE English, such as an alternative certificate and they are unsure if the local authority recommends a particular certificate or if students at other schools take ESOL or EFL certificates. The students in this school simply do as many GCSEs as possible. Realistically they feel it would be better if an alternative qualification was available that reflected the learning of the English language.

The school envisages this qualification as being a specific 'EAL English' GCSE. EAL students would have the chance to take this qualification as soon as they are ready to; possibly as early as in year 9. It would be especially useful for less advanced key stage 4 students to do this in place of the English GCSE, as it would allow students to feel that they leave the school as successful students and to demonstrate the improvements in their English proficiency. The qualification should focus on achieving a good standard in spoken English and listening skills as well as a good standard in reading and writing. From experience the school believes that speaking and listening are the skills that are picked up most quickly and would therefore require less teaching time in the curriculum associated with this new qualification. Reading and writing would need more teaching time. The actual exam could be structured like a current modern foreign language GCSE and assess basic functional English at roughly level five standard in the current curriculum or level 1/2 of the National Qualification Framework; grade C at GCSE.

The school believes that presenting this type of qualification to students would have to be done carefully. Students would have to be assured that taking this qualification would not be 'being in the bottom set' but simply an indication of their stage of English language learning. It would be important that the content of the course is appropriate for teenagers. There was some concern that such a qualification would not be cost-effective to run in every school as there may not be enough students in any one year group to merit the classes. A central learning venue organised by the LEA for all students in the authority may provide a better platform for the qualification.

6.2.4 Practitioner needs

Neither the head of maths nor the English practitioner had received any specialised training for teaching EAL students. The learning support assistant has been on a course but was unsure who had provided this course. The course focused on working with EAL students in groups and gave ideas for ways of working with them. The ESOL coordinator has had no formal training aside from the lectures and seminars attended during her PGCE. However, she has worked closely with EAL needs in the last four years in different schools she has worked in. She worked with an EMA specialist when teaching history and has taught English to Polish students when living in Poland. She has attended meetings with other ESOL coordinators in other local schools. There is also an LA adviser who comes to the school twice a week to support the staff with EAL students and help with planning. The school receives money from the LEA per EAL student.

The school would provide funding for the ESOL coordinator to go on a course focusing on EAL learning but as yet she has not found an appropriate course. It is the feeling that all staff need a certain amount of training as with increasing numbers of students with a low level of English proficiency, more and more it is becoming an every day classroom issue.

6.2.5 National strategy/local authority initiatives

The LA adviser who comes in to help planning for EAL students has been seen as a very useful way in supporting the school in the development of its provision for EAL students. There are many more initiatives they would like to see in the future, both for their school specifically and nationally.

The school would like to see the introduction of a rolling withdrawal programme where students can be taken out of normal classes whenever appropriate. The monitoring of progress and training of staff is also seen as of paramount importance. The school is already moving forward with improving their links with communities. For example, the school had been finding that when students from Somalia were given a detention they were telling their parents they had received the detention because of racist teachers or because they were being picked on. As a result of language difficulties the Somali community were previously not involved in school activities. The school built bridges with the community by having a Somali parents' day at the school. This involved being introduced to the school and aspects of the education system. The staff said that some Somali parents were shocked to discover such a large population of Somali students attend the school. The parents' day at the school proved to be very successful.

A few years ago the school had been praised in an OFSTED inspection for the harmony of the cultures. However, recently there have been some large playground fights that have been related to differences in culture. The school is therefore keen to extend their relationships with all the different communities and cultures in the school in a similar way as they have done with the Somali community.

On a more national level the school thinks that the pressure from the government for students to learn English is good as this helps to avoid segregation and aids with career opportunities and the mixing of communities. They would like to see schools have the authority to keep some students back a year if they feel it will benefit the students to do so.

The school would also like league tables and targets set to take into account the number of EAL students that are in schools. They feel that results that do not take this into account can trigger negative media reactions and OFSTED reports and declining numbers. One comment was that this then encouraged teachers to start teaching more to the tests in a bid to get better marks for the school.

6.2.6 Other remarks

The school wanted to make it clear that appropriate age-related resources for EAL students with minimal English is something they lack. The resources they would like are those that are aimed at teaching teenagers English (i.e. no counting teddy bears) as well as resources that help teachers teach other subjects such as maths, science, geography and history to students with a low level of English proficiency. They feel this would really help to increase the aspirations of students.

It was also made clear that staff felt that the area of EAL is a frustrating area to work in. Many subject teachers have tended to feel that EAL is not important for them and that they are science/maths/history teachers, not EAL teachers. Increasingly however, with more EAL students in classes with limited English, this is an issue for everyone and cohesion and planning across subjects is of paramount importance.

6.3 Interview with students

6.3.1 Background

Four students were interviewed; a boy and a girl in year 9 (aged 13) and a boy and a girl from year 10 (aged 14 and 15). The students have been living in England for differing periods of time; three months, nine months, two to three years and three and a half years. Two of the students have been at the present school for only three months, one student for six months and one has been there since she was in year 8. Two of the students are from Afghanistan, one from Iran and one from Poland. The students from Afghanistan speak a range of languages at home including Beluchi, Hindi, Farsi as well as English. The student from Iran speaks Farsi and the Polish student speaks Polish at home. Only the students from Iran and Poland learnt English before they came to England; the Polish student for two years in school in Poland and the Iranian student for ten months before arriving in the country.

The students answered questions in a group while the EAL coordinator and EAL teaching assistant were present in the room. They found it hard to express some things they wanted to say due to limited English language ability and it is likely that they did

not understand all the questions asked. One Afghan student translated some of the questions for the other Afghan student; however, the latter student did not answer many questions. All of the students, aside from the Iranian student, have extra EAL help. The Iranian student has been taken off the EAL programme as a result of good English proficiency.

6.3.2 General feelings about school

The students said they like all their teachers in the school, as well as all the assistants. One student said she likes all the subjects, whereas other students said that they like English and Science. A common subject they all like is PE. They commented specifically on liking basketball, volleyball and football. One student said she also likes art. When asked if she likes PE and arts because she does not have to speak so much, the student said this is not the reason and that it is because she is good at these subjects. There were few comments about what the students do not like about school; maths and English were mentioned but otherwise nothing else was specified.

6.3.3 Learning English at school

Three of the students get extra help with learning English. This is for one lesson a week when they are withdrawn from their normal class. The other student used to have this extra provision but does not any more, because he has caught up enough to stay in the normal class. Although the students think that the extra hour is a good way to help them to learn English, they found it hard to express any more exact reasons why it is helpful.

In their extra class they focus very specifically on English language learning through exercises in reading, writing, speaking and listening. In this class they do not focus on, or get help with, other subjects. The students did say however that there is a specific teacher who comes in to help them in science classes.

One student who has recently joined this school noted that at his old school they used a piece of software called 'Success maker' on their computers which helped students with things such as vocabulary when working on the computer. He also described how there is audio through headphones that also helps when reading is difficult. He said this would be helpful to have at this school.

6.3.4 Learning English outside school

All the students learn English outside of school, either by watching TV / films, listening to music or doing exercises from text books. Particular things they watch on TV include 'Ugly Betty' and 'Superman'. One student who likes to listen to music said he likes hip hop even though some of it is 'nasty' and also R&B.

6.3.5 Learning other subjects

All except one student (the one most proficient in English) were limited in the answers given to questions about the learning of other subjects at school. They repeated some things that were said under the section about their general feelings about school. They were not able to express why some subjects were harder than others. The student who is more proficient in English commented that he likes learning science and therefore finds it easy. He went on to say that he uses the internet on a daily basis to look at a site called skool.co.uk and specifically at the pages on science.

The students said that they find it hard sometimes to understand teachers when they speak too fast. They said that lessons could be improved by having more one-to-one time. The student who has recently arrived from a different school in England commented that in his last school the teachers were always asking him if he had understood everything and if he needed any further help. He said teachers do not do this in this school but instead just teach all the time and talk *at* the students. He said that there is probably not enough time for teachers to spend their time always asking if everyone was OK. He said having more teachers to help in this school would be beneficial. He also commented that he found it hard to learn sometimes when other students in the class misbehave.

6.3.6 Feelings about learning English

All the students said that they do not speak much in class. One student said that he mostly knows what to say but would write the answer instead of putting his hand up. If they do not understand something in class, the students ask the teacher to explain things again or ask the students around them what to do. One student said she uses the dictionary she carries around with her to help her. When they do not understand their peers they adopt a similar approach.

Writing and reading emails and stories as well as sending text messages are occasions when the students read and write in English. The Polish student commented specifically that she enjoys sending English emails and that she emails her friends in Poland in English and they reply in English. If there is anything they do not understand, the students tend to use dictionaries to help them or will ask someone to help them. One girl commented she has a lot of friends and family to help her out with her English.

The students take notes in classes in a mixture of the languages they know including English. One student however, said he writes his notes only in English. Having had no schooling at all before arriving in England, English is the only language he can write in.

6.3.7 Assessment

The students did not say much about assessment. One student recalled the tests she had to do when she first arrived which tested her reading, writing, listening and speaking skills. Further to this, the students said they did not know if they should have more tests, or what else their teachers could do to find out about their ability in English.

Three of the students said they had not done any qualifications in English. One student said that he had but he could not remember the name of it. He studied for the qualification at his previous school in England and also took the test there.

The students in year 10 said that they were going to take their GCSE in English and commented that although they think this will be a hard exam that it is important to do it if they want to do more studying or get a job. The students in year 9 were not sure about the English GCSE but the teachers present in the room clarified that they would take the GCSE.

None of the students said they or any friends were taking any other qualifications in English and neither did they express an opinion as to whether they would like to do a certificate in English.

6.3.8 Other remarks

The Polish girl explained that she found some things in school very easy because she has already studied them in Poland. She expanded by saying that the things she is learning in maths now, she already learnt in Poland last year.

7 Case study 4

7.1 School background

These interviews took place at a 11-18 school in the north-west of England. The school has approximately 1200 students. It is in the highest band for GCSE attainment and in the band with the second lowest percentage of free school meals nationally.

The main first languages spoken by EAL students in the school are Polish and Tagalog. They have others in the school with a variety of home languages but these are not new arrivals and have English skills equivalent to those with English as a first language. The school has had around 20 new EAL students in the last two years whereas previously they had had very few who had arrived with the intention of staying long-term. The standard of English on arrival varies. Some have learnt English at school but the Polish students in particular have very little functional English.

7.2 Interview with senior manager

The interviewee is the assistant headteacher and has special responsibility for EAL students. He is also responsible for overall supervision of key stage 4, including curriculum and pastoral aspects.

7.2.1 Learning needs of EAL students

The interviewee felt that the major problem with newly arrived students was in assessing their academic ability independently of their English language proficiency. The school uses a non-verbal reasoning test to help with this. Enabling access across the whole curriculum is difficult not just because of language but because of differences in teaching style and social and cultural background. Some students are put down a year when they first arrive to give them more time for language acquisition, but he considered that most seem to be achieving what the school considers to be their potential.

To motivate students to learn English, the importance of academic success is highlighted for those with high academic potential. The importance of integrating is emphasised. Students want to make friends with English-speaking peers but because of the number who have arrived recently this is more difficult for them and they tend to stick together. The importance of learning English to participate in clubs and activities such as football is also emphasised.

7.2.2 Organisation for teaching and learning

The school employs two Polish-speaking teaching assistants and a part-time teacher of English as a Foreign Language who works for 15 hours a week. Students have an

intensive programme of language teaching for one or two weeks on arrival and then have a separate English lesson daily. They have a reduced curriculum for as long as necessary until they are comfortable with the language and able to be fully integrated with the mainstream. Following this, they continue with a co-ordinated language programme in small groups. They also use an online English/Polish translation program and the TEFL teacher continues to monitor them in their lessons.

The school has had an INSET day run by an LA adviser and there is to be additional INSET for teaching assistants to help them support EAL students in class.

The interviewee felt that the school was reasonably successful in helping students with their academic English needs but less so with their social language. This was mainly because the large number of students means that they tend to mix with their own language group and because they speak Polish at home.

The EAL students work in groups with their English-speaking peers in all subjects but tend to be quieter than others. There can be resentment from others if the group is being assessed as they sometimes feel that their chance of a good grade is reduced if they have a Polish student in the group.

The resources available to the school were not considered adequate and the burden on the school's budget was considerable since no additional funding was available. Examples of additional costs mentioned were buying dictionaries (for example a science dictionary which costs £60), translation of reports and letters home and support for examination candidates who might need assistance from a TA and therefore a separate room and invigilator.

The key stage 4 English curriculum is very difficult for these students and would not be possible without the help of TAs. A separate curriculum for EAL students might be beneficial if there were sufficient numbers to deliver it separately. In other subjects, the greatest barrier is language. The experience of living in England and the differences in teaching methods mean that adjustment takes too long for some to be able to do as well as they could. The fact that they live in Polish communities was seen as an additional barrier.

Suggestions for additional support mainly focussed on the students' social needs and their need to move away from spending time only in the Polish community. Mixed language football teams and encouragement for more mixing between the sexes were suggested as ways of supporting more integration. In school, the interviewee suggested that additional TA support would be useful particularly in the early months.

7.2.3 Assessment

The school does not make much use of QCA's 'A Language in Common' to assess learning needs. No other specific language scales or assessment frameworks are used.

Newly-arrived EAL students normally prepare for GCSE English as it is part of school culture for all to do the GCSE course, but they might not all take the exam.

This will be the first year in which the school enters newly-arrived EAL students for GCSE. They hope some might achieve grade C or D.

Students do not take any other English qualifications and none are recommended by the LA. The interviewee did consider that it would be useful to have additional accredited qualifications but that a new qualification taking into account the specific learning needs of these students might be preferable. He felt that this would be most useful if it was matched with GCSE so it is possible to make a comparison and that a certificate should be offered first at entry level, then incrementally up to higher levels. He thought the advantage would be that such a system would make it possible to show progression in English and that it would not have the disadvantage of being based on English culture and therefore would be more accessible to newly-arrived students. The qualification should be based on a mixture of written tests, oral assessment and supervised coursework and should cover all skills. He felt it would be especially useful to have a focus on English needed for learning. In the interviewee's opinion, students would hopefully see this type of qualification as recognition of the progress they have made and parents would probably be quite positive.

7.2.4 Practitioner needs

The interviewee had attended an INSET day provided by the LA. He felt that additional training in question-asking, classroom strategies such as buddy systems and examples of good practice would be beneficial. As already mentioned, the LA has provided INSET and it also provides general training for TAs which is not specific to language support. Funding for EAL support was withdrawn by the LA last year however, and he considered that this should be restored, should be ring-fenced and that it should be devolved to schools on a per-capita basis.

7.2.5 National strategy/local authority initiatives

Apart from the INSET day referred to above, the only funded support provided has been an online English/Polish translation program. Initiatives which would be useful would be development of appropriate courses for both students and staff, a forum for sharing good practice, and steps to encourage more social interaction and parental involvement.

7.2.6 Other remarks

In closing remarks, the interviewee commented that it was taking too long for both local and central government to catch up with the situation faced by schools with an influx of newly-arrived students with limited English. In particular, he felt that funding should be available since, at present, the additional funds needed for these students meant reduced funds for others and this is causing some tension. He also thought it would be useful for students to have an intensive programme of 'anglicisation' before they started at school.

7.3 Interview with Teaching Assistants and TEFL teacher

The second interview was with a group of two Polish-speaking teaching assistants and one teacher of English as a Foreign Language. In addition to their usual role, the TAs sometimes act as translators and communicate with parents. The TEFL teacher teaches English to small groups of students, working with one group of five students daily, and two other groups each with three students once a week.

7.3.1 Learning needs of EAL students

The group considered that as well as their language learning needs, there are cultural differences which cause difficulties. Students struggle with practical and creative work as they do not have such subjects in Poland. Students find it difficult to develop their ideas because of language difficulties and the older students in particular tend to stick together in their language groups and not share ideas with other students.

Many of the students are academically able but may not reach their full potential at key stage 4 because of their language proficiency. However they have made significant improvements and become more confident.

The younger students are generally well-motivated, wish to do better than their peers and have good parental support. Motivating the older students and persuading them that education is important for their future can be difficult. The older boys are sometimes held back by their 'pride' and the group felt that they need be made more aware of the importance of achieving good grades.

7.3.2 Organisation for teaching and learning

The school has two TEFL teachers who between them work for five mornings (a total of 15 hours per week). One of the bilingual TAs works every morning (20 hours a week) while the other works all day Monday to Wednesday.

Newly arrived students are taught in small groups for one hour each day, covering the whole range of English skills and including help with homework and tests. Students are all assigned a 'buddy', which is most effective with younger students. The TAs support students in history, geography, science, IT, English and religion. Students also get a lot of support from library staff and the library has a Polish section. The group felt that the programme was working well but would probably improve with experience.

The group considered that the school has adequate resources to support students but that provision could be improved if more resources were available. In particular, more bilingual course and text books to add to the few they have already would be useful.

As far as the curriculum is concerned, the group reported that it is difficult for the English teachers to make lessons accessible for EAL students while also moving

forward with English-speaking students. They felt that a separate EFL course running alongside the normal English curriculum throughout the school would be beneficial. In other subjects, the main difficulty is in subject-specific language, particularly in science. Practical lessons are also difficult because the students have no previous experience of this type of lesson, coursework is a new experience for the students, and they generally find it difficult to express their opinions.

The group considered that the best approach to the curriculum was for the students to be integrated with others but with supplementary lessons to help them access both social and academic vocabulary. The students tend to sit together in class so it would be beneficial for them to have to speak English in a separate lesson.

7.3.3 Assessment

The group did not feel that they were qualified to answer most of the questions on assessment. They did however feel that a qualification along the lines of an EFL certificate would be useful and that some of the TEFL courses and qualifications available could be adapted to suit EAL students at school. They specifically mentioned IELTS (International English Language Testing System) and the City and Guilds EFL certificates.

7.3.4 Practitioner needs

One of the teaching assistants in the group has experience of teaching Polish. The EFL teacher in the group has a Trinity College teaching certificate and has been teaching English for five years. All had attended the one-day INSET training which was provided by an LA adviser. The group felt that they would benefit from additional training to help them become better informed about the culture and education system of the students, understand their emotional needs, and better understand their language needs and difficulties.

7.3.5 National strategy/local authority initiatives

The group did not know of any local or national initiatives and did not have an opinion about what they would like to see in the future.

7.4 Interview with students

7.4.1 Background of students

Five students were interviewed in a group. All were Polish and their ages ranged from 14 to 16. Four were in year 10 and the fifth in year 11. Two had been in England for two years and the others for less than a year with the shortest time in this country being five months. All spoke Polish at home and all had learnt English from when they first started primary school in Poland.

7.4.2 General feelings about school

The things they liked most about school were the teachers, who they said tried to be nice and to help them. One liked PE and rugby best, another liked the school uniform and another having only five lessons in a day. The things mentioned as being liked the least were that some students are discriminatory towards them, particularly younger students, and the length of the school day.

7.4.3 Learning English at school

The group felt that the method used by the school of separate English lessons in small groups and support in lessons from TAs was a good way to help them. They felt that once they were more comfortable with English it would be better not to have the TA in class but to continue with the separate English lessons. In their extra lessons they learn English and also get help with other subjects. They also attend homework classes run by TAs at lunchtime. The group reported that they work with others in class and think this is useful.

7.4.4 Learning English outside school

Outside school, the students reported listening to CDs and in some cases watching English as well as Polish TV. One watches English films on the computer. Another mentioned wanting to play rugby as a way of improving his English.

7.4.5 Learning other subjects

The subjects reported as being the most difficult were science because of the vocabulary, and citizenship because of the cultural differences. Subjects mentioned as easiest were art, PE, maths, history, IT and business studies. The students did not give many reasons for their preferences apart from a general enjoyment or liking the teacher. All said they had no problems understanding teachers.

7.4.6 Feelings about learning English

The two students who have been at the school for the shortest time (5 months and 7 months) said they did not speak much in lessons. The others said they did and did not report any problems with this. If they have problems understanding teachers, all said that they would ask a friend, the TA or the teacher, and all seemed happy to do this. If they do not understand other students they would ask them to repeat what they have said – again, this did not appear to be a problem for them.

All the writing in English done by the group was school-related. The two who had been in England for a short time did not like writing in English but the others were happy with it. All said they make notes in English. Reading matter in English mentioned was magazines and the internet, and if there are difficulties they either use a dictionary, ask a friend or use the context to help.

7.4.7 Assessment

The group said that their teachers find out about their level of English by talking to them and they thought this was a good way to do this. They did not want to have more tests. None of the group have taken any qualifications in English and all said they would be doing GCSE English and had no plans to take any other qualification. They would like to take a certificate in English as it would prove that they had learnt English, especially when applying for jobs or to go to college.

8 Case study 5

8.1 School background

These interviews took place in an 11-16 comprehensive school in the north-west of England. The school is in the second highest attainment band for GCSE results and in the band of schools with the second lowest percentage of free school meals nationally.

The home language of the majority of EAL students in the school is Polish, with a smaller number of Slovakian and Czech. The school has had 27 newly-arrived students with English language learning needs in the current academic year and had 15 in the previous year. Before this the school had very little experience of working with EAL students. All these students will be long-term residents. The standard of English of these students on arrival varies from minimal to reasonably proficient. Three of the recently arrived students had a level of English proficiency sufficient for them to be able to access the curriculum alongside their English-speaking peers.

8.2 Interview with EAL tutor

The main responsibilities of the EAL tutor are to help recently arrived students to integrate. She works part-time, two days a week and provides English support to students working either individually or in small groups.

8.2.1 Learning needs of EAL students

Many of the students are reluctant to be in this country which sometimes causes initial problems. They find the education very different and are used to a more didactic teaching style and a higher level of discipline. They consider that the curriculum is two or three years behind that in their previous schools. Their major language learning problem initially tends to be vocabulary.

The students are either at KS3 or only just reaching key stage 4 so the EAL tutor did not have a lot of insight into specific problems at key stage 4. She is working with six students who are preparing to take GCSEs (including English). Of these, three girls could potentially do well and intend to continue with school post-GCSE. The other three who are boys are less focussed. All the students are having particular problems with science terminology.

The tutor felt that the key to motivating students was to ensure that they saw the importance of reaching a good enough standard of English to be in mainstream classes and to be able to access the curriculum.

8.2.2 Organisation for teaching and learning

The school has one specialist EAL teacher for two days a week (the interviewee). There are two EAL teaching assistants, one of whom is Polish speaking. Other teachers in the school do not receive any specific training to support the new arrivals. Newly-arrived students receive support from learning support assistants within mainstream lessons. The focus of this support is on all skills – speaking, listening, reading and writing.

The interviewee thought that the school was very supportive in terms of employing staff to ensure students language proficiency is improved and ensuring continuous monitoring of students progress.

On the issue of resources, the tutor reported that the resources she requested were supplied by the school. She supplements these with her own. Additional reference material is available off-site, but this tends to be mainly for primary level. The school library has a Polish language section which contains both fiction and non-fiction.

The tutor felt that the best way to support these students was for them to be integrated into mainstream classes, but to be supported by separate language lessons.

8.2.3 Assessment

The interviewee was not aware of the QCA ‘Language in Common’ framework. The school uses an ESOL scheme of work which was developed by an EAL teacher at the school. This makes reference to both National Curriculum levels and levels of the Common European Framework for Languages. (This was also referred to by the manager who was interviewed, and it is in fact based on the ‘Language in Common’ scales.)

The EAL tutor did not have any direct involvement with decisions about entering students for GCSE. She reported that the students with whom she is working are all likely to take GCSE and that they are not taking any other English qualifications.

On the question of whether another qualification should be available for EAL students, the tutor felt that this would not be relevant as the aim is to integrate students with their peers. She felt that it might be interesting to offer students the chance to take a non-accredited qualification, but it would probably be expensive and of limited use. She was also doubtful whether an accredited qualification specifically for EAL students would be relevant or useful. She did, however, think that students and parents might welcome such a qualification.

8.2.4 Practitioner needs

This tutor had not received any specific training for teaching EAL students, but she is a foreign languages teacher. She did feel that training in teaching English as a Foreign

Language might be useful. However, no training is available at local authority level and all funding for ESOL has been removed.

8.2.5 National strategy/local authority initiatives

The interviewee was not aware of any national or local initiatives to support schools in provision for EAL students. She thought it would be useful to have training and meetings on a regular basis with other EAL teachers.

8.2.6 Other remarks

In her final remarks, the tutor said that she would welcome further training, funding and resources to support her in her work.

8.3 Interview with senior manager

The second interview with staff was with a member of staff who is the SEN co-ordinator and KS3 strategy manager.

8.3.1 Learning needs of EAL students

The interviewee reported that the students have most problems accessing literacy-based subjects. Their number skills are very good but they have learnt different mathematics conventions. Their understanding of some topics in maths is limited compared with their peers. The only other respect in which their learning needs differ is that some health and safety issues are difficult to get across in workshops or laboratory-based lessons.

The manager felt it is important to provide stimulating activities to motivate students to learn English. The area has a large Polish population and families get support from the community. The school also has a partnership with a local college. Parents are generally supportive of school and communications with parents are made in Polish wherever possible.

8.3.2 Organisation for teaching and learning

The school employs an EAL teacher for two days a week. The local authority has withdrawn funding for EAL teaching so the school has to provide the funding for this. However, the LA had organised an INSET day earlier this year for teachers of other subjects.

New arrivals initially receive language tuition for two hours a day. From September 2007 there are plans for a Family Resource Centre based in a neighbouring primary school specifically to meet the needs of new arrivals. After the initial support, students

are fully integrated into the mainstream according to ability with some having the assistance of a teaching assistant. The school has five of these.

In mainstream lessons, EAL students are expected to sit away from other EAL students and work in groups with their English-speaking peers so that they improve their language skills. The interviewee felt that the effectiveness of the school's approach depended to some extent on individual student response.

The school generally has to fund its own resources due to the lack of EAL funding from the LA. Some of the resources used are developed by the school while some books and dictionaries have been purchased. The LA did, however, fund a subscription to an online Polish/ English resource.

The interviewee considered that the English curriculum was not suitable for new arrivals with limited English, even at entry level. She felt that the students would benefit from a separate curriculum as long as sufficient and appropriate staff and resources were available.

In subjects other than English, students have difficulties understanding written questions, even in a subject such as maths. They also had particular problems with science vocabulary. To help with this, it would be useful to have differentiated materials and subject-specific bilingual vocabulary lists. Additional teaching assistants would also be of benefit especially if these were Polish-speaking. One aid which has proved useful is the interactive whiteboard.

The interviewee considered that the most beneficial approach for these students was for them to have separate language lessons as a supplement to their mainstream learning.

8.3.3 Assessment

The interviewee reported that the school uses the QCA 'Language in Common: Assessing English as an Additional Language' framework and finds this very useful in pinpointing students' position on the EAL scale in comparison with National Curriculum levels. The framework also ties in with the P scales for Special Educational Needs. The school also uses an EAL Initial Assessment Framework which was developed by the LA support service.

Most of the EAL students will be entered for GCSE English, but only if they are able to cope and it is thought they are likely to gain a level. Some students are also entering for a Foundation pre-GCSE certificate at a local college. The interviewee reported that this qualification is on the DfES Section 96/97 list, but did not give more specific details of the certificate or the examining board.

No other qualifications are taken by students or recommended by the LA and the interviewee did not have any knowledge of other qualifications so could not report on their suitability. She did feel that it might be useful to offer EAL students the chance

to take other English qualifications which were not on the Section 96/97 list, as long as these were valued and recognised.

She also felt that it would be useful to have a formal qualification in English specifically for key stage 4 EAL students as this would demonstrate that they have some English skills which are useful for either employment or further education. She thought that this should be based on a mix of testing, coursework and teacher assessment and should be skills-based, covering vocabulary, speaking, listening and understanding, speaking (including discussion) and writing. This should be at Entry Level and would probably be welcomed by both students and teachers as a 'safety net' so that they were able to get a qualification even if they were not successful at GCSE.

8.3.4 Practitioner needs

The interviewee had attended an INSET day run by the local authority. She felt that useful additional training for practitioners would be observation of good practice of EAL and foreign language teachers. No training or funding for training is available from the LA.

8.3.5 National strategy/local authority initiatives

The interviewee referred several times throughout the interview to the fact that the LA has withdrawn all funding for EAL provision or support. She felt that the main way in which the LA could help would be to restore this. Resources Centres for new arrivals – both students and parents – would be of great benefit.

8.3.6 Other remarks

The final remark from the interviewee was that introduction of a new English qualification for EAL students would be a very useful supplement.

8.4 Interview with students

8.4.1 Background of students

Eight students were interviewed in a group. Three were boys and five girls. Of these, only one was currently in key stage 4 (year 10). Four were in year 9, two in year 8 and one in year 7. Their ages ranged from 12 to 15 and all were from Poland and spoke Polish at home. Four had been in England for two years, one for a year and a half and the remaining three for less than a year. The most recently arrived had been in the country for only seven months. The length of time spent in this school varied from a year and a half to four months. Six had learnt English before coming to England but two had not. The two who had not were among the most recent arrivals.

8.4.2 General feelings about school

The students liked the fact that they had less homework than in Poland and some new subjects – particularly drama, art and other practical subjects. They appreciated the school facilities such as computers, laptops and interactive whiteboards and also enjoyed having longer breaks so they could spend time with their friends. The aspects they disliked were the school hours and the shorter summer holiday along with the fact that holidays in term time were frowned on. They also disliked the school uniform.

8.4.3 Learning English at school

The students reported that they had one hour of English every day in their first term but this had been difficult as those in the group had different levels of English. Some spent one day a week learning English at a local college. All the students had personal dictionaries and dictionaries were also available in the school library. They were able to get help in class if they asked for it but some teachers were better than others at helping with vocabulary.

They felt that the type of help they were given was useful except that those who attend college miss lessons – although teachers help them to catch up. They did however feel that those who had been in the country for only a short time would benefit from more help.

Some additional help with course work is given to those who are preparing for GCSE. The students also work with their peers in small groups in lessons and felt that this was beneficial, but reported that they are sometimes ignored by the rest of the group.

8.4.4 Learning English outside school

Two of the students speak some English at home. The students also reported that games on TV are a useful way of learning English. They did not report or suggest any other way of learning English outside school.

8.4.5 Learning other subjects

The subjects which were considered most difficult were science geography and maths (specifically, maths terminology). Some reported that French was particularly difficult. The subjects considered easiest were the more practical ones – cooking, drama, PE, music, textiles, CDT, graphics and art were all mentioned. They felt that this was because they were not so language-based. They felt that examinations might be difficult for them because of language problems.

The group reported that some teachers speak too quickly or have regional accents which are difficult to understand. However, they did not have any specific suggestions for how lessons could be improved to help them understand more.

8.4.6 Feelings about learning English

The students felt that they were as involved in their lessons as other students, except that they were perhaps less likely to be asked to read things out. If they cannot understand the teacher, it seems they generally do nothing about it, although some suggested they might ask the teacher at the end of the lesson. If they are unable to understand other students, they will ask for an explanation if the student is a friend, but otherwise will ignore it.

The students reported that they write many different types of things in English – including, in one case, a diary. They did not report any particular problems with or dislike of writing in English and said that they mainly took notes in English. When reading they usually ask friends about words they do not understand or use an internet translator as using a dictionary takes too long. They preferred reading in Polish as they can understand better – particularly colloquialisms. When reading in English they need to stop to find out meanings and then forget what is happening in the book.

8.4.7 Assessment

The students had not been given any tests of their English. They felt that teachers could find out about their level of English through their normal class work and did not think they should be tested. None of the students had taken any qualifications in English and all said they were going to do GCSE English. They felt this would be difficult for them unless they spent some more time learning English. They were favourable to the idea of taking some sort of certificate in English as they felt this would help them improve.

9 Case study 6

9.1 School background

This 11-16 comprehensive school is located in an outer London borough. It has approximately 1200 students and is in the highest band for GCSE attainment and the band with the second from highest percentage of students receiving free school meals.

The main first languages spoken by students in the school are Urdu, Punjabi and Gujarati. Currently the school has about fifty students who are recent arrivals in the country. Generally these students have no English when they arrive. The majority of EAL students in the school however, are from established communities. The school has growing numbers of students from Eastern Europe and Afghanistan.

9.2 Interview with senior manager and English teacher

The interview was conducted with the two members of staff at the school whose main responsibilities are teaching English and managing EAL provision.

9.2.1 Learning needs of EAL students

Many of the students who arrive at the school have not had any experience of school and often have no cultural understanding of academic education. The students also do not always arrive with their parents and are therefore either in care or living with other relatives.

The staff did not think that newly-arrived EAL students normally achieve their full potential at key stage 4 because they do not have enough time to develop the necessary skills to do so. They did not feel that the key stage 4 English curriculum is appropriate for newly-arrived students. They did not necessarily think that the students would benefit from a separate curriculum in English but felt that the entire curriculum needs further work. They felt that there are several things that can be done that help to motivate these students to be successful in learning English, including mentoring (especially to help with understanding new concepts and vocabulary) and encouraging them to reach their targets and providing them with an aim for future achievement. In other subjects the students have the barrier of needing to learn English first before they can acquire the necessary technical vocabulary. They thought that proficiency in English is best achieved for these students if they are integrated within the normal social and educational activities of the school but have supplementary language lessons as well.

The school has two specialist teachers, 14 community mentors and a home school liaison officer. They do not have any bilingual assistants. All teachers in the school receive a pack relating to EAL teaching and information on new arrivals. As well as

this, all newly-qualified teachers (NQTs) go on a course about teaching ethnic minority students. This course was designed by the EAL department at the school and is accredited by the national Open College Network.

Newly-arrived EAL students constantly work with their non-EAL peers in a wide range of circumstances. The school has different kinds of provision to help to meet the learning needs of newly-arrived EAL students. In-lesson support from the EAL department is provided for these students. Students in years 7 to 9 are also withdrawn from normal lessons for one hour a week and in year 10 and 11 the students have a Learning Support option which focuses on English. The two staff members think that the school is very effective at meeting the language needs of newly-arrived EAL students. They are able to provide in-class support through partnership teaching and planning which greatly benefits the students. The bank of community mentors who support EAL students are also a very valued resource for the school. The school also encourages students to develop their home language and organise community language clubs and work towards GCSEs and A-levels in their home language.

9.2.2 Assessment

The school uses the QCA framework ‘A Language in Common: Assessing English as an Additional Language’ to assess the learning needs of EAL students. They find this very useful. They do not use any other language scales or EAL assessment frameworks.

It is the school’s policy that all students are entered for GCSE English. Newly-arrived EAL students normally achieve a grade C or below for this GCSE. These students also take the AQA entry level certificate which they study for during their Learning Support sessions. The interviewees did not know what the DfES Section 96/97 list is and therefore could not say if this qualification is on it. They think this qualification is appropriate for the students but would like to see more ESOL/EFL qualifications be given official accreditation. They do not think that EAL students should be offered the chance to take English qualifications which are not officially accredited. The local authority does not recommend for the school to enter students for a particular certificate and they do not know of any students at other schools who are taking ESOL or EFL certificates.

The interviewees thought that it would be useful to have a formal qualification in English specifically for key stage 4 EAL students and that this should comprise coursework and teacher assessment of reading, writing, speaking and listening. They thought that the qualification should cover all the levels of the National Qualification Framework. They expected that students would find this kind of qualification motivating because students could achieve success. Similarly, students’ parents would also view the qualification in a positive light.

9.2.3 Practitioner needs

The interviewees have received in-house training for teaching EAL students. They think that teachers and other practitioners need help with understanding how students learn English in order for them to work successfully with EAL students. A modular MA course, provided by the local authority and accredited by the Institute of Education, is available to staff, as well as funding for this course. The interviewees said that there were no national strategies or local authority initiatives that have been particularly useful in supporting the school in the development of its provision for EAL students and that the school has created its own. What they would like to see in the future is more funding and more opportunities to share good practice.

9.3 Interview with students

9.3.1 Background

Two sets of interviews with students were conducted; one group of four students from year 10 (aged 14-15, two male and two female students) and one group of five students from year 11 (aged 15-16, four female and one male student). The students come from a range of countries: Poland, Nigeria, Pakistan, Sweden, the Ukraine, Germany and Iran and speak a range of languages at home including Polish, Yoruba, Hausa, Punjabi, Swedish, Arabic, Tamil, German, Farsi and English. Some of the students have been living in England for only six months and others have been here for three and a half years. Most of the students have been at the school for six months to a year, although one student has been there for three years. Only one student had not learnt any English prior to coming to England. Some students studied English for two to four years in their home country. Two students studied English for ten years before coming to England. One student had not learnt any English before arriving in the country and another student said they had learnt only very little.

9.3.2 General feelings about school

The things the year 10 students enjoy about school are very much the social aspects of being at school. The year 11 students talked more about liking it as a new experience in their lives and liking the education, the chance to learn new things and teachers' help. Not being understood is something the year 11s dislike about being at school, whereas the year 10s dislike lessons, rules, wearing a uniform and some of the teachers.

9.3.3 Learning English at school

The students talked of different ways in which they get help with learning English in school. Several of the students attend special lessons in small groups with other EAL learners and have learning support teachers helping them. The latter they said help them gain confidence and understanding especially as it is individual attention so they

feel they make good progress this way. One student also mentioned books they are given to help them. Two students said they do not get any extra help with learning English. As well as help with English, the students said they get help with other subjects. The students talk with others in small groups in lessons and most thought that this was a good thing though one student did not think this was good. It was not clear why he thought this.

The year 11 students and two year 10 students did not think there were any further ways the school could help them with their English. The other year 10 students suggested encouragement with retaining proficiency in their home language as well as being paid to learn English.

9.3.4 Learning English outside school

Only one of the year 11 students said they learn English formally outside school. This particular student has additional private lessons for six hours a week with homework. The year 10 students all said they learn English in different ways; watching TV, evening classes and using the computer. One student commented that they would go to clubs if they were reasonably priced.

9.3.5 Learning other subjects

The students in year 11 all find English difficult and one student also struggles with science and PE. The problems they have include finding the language difficult to understand as well as finding speaking, writing and vocabulary hard. The year ten students find business, English, science, ICT and RE most difficult. The reasons for finding these subjects difficult are also language oriented. All the year 11 students find maths easy and one student also mentioned textiles as easy. Interestingly, maths is considered easy because the students understand it and have often done some of it before or the methods are the same in their home countries. The year ten students find art, maths, media, ICT and PE easy because they do not have to worry about the language.

The students were divided in whether or not they find it difficult to understand what their teachers are saying. Some students think the teachers speak too fast and find it hard to understand them especially if they have accents or use difficult vocabulary. Other students say that they understand the teachers fine. To help them understand more, the students suggest more individual attention, teachers speaking more slowly with simpler vocabulary and more practical help.

9.3.6 Feelings about learning English

The majority of the students do not like to speak much in lessons. They get embarrassed or are too shy to speak. Some students do speak increasingly more as they are starting to feel more confident to do so.

If they do not understand the teacher the majority of the students ask their friends or peers to explain things to them. Some students ask the teacher for help or use a dictionary. When they do not understand another student they tend to turn to the teacher for clarification although they may ask the student themselves. Two students said they do nothing if they do not understand another student.

Most of the students said they write essays in English and some students said they write poems, stories and letters. All the year 10 students said they like writing in English if it is not too difficult. The year 11 students were more mixed in their response. Some find it hard and have difficulties with words and spellings and construct their ideas in their first language before writing them in English.

The students tend to write their school notes in English, especially if they consider what they are writing to be important or if they are told to make English notes. Writing notes in English also helps them to improve their English proficiency. Only one student said they make notes in their first language.

In terms of reading the students read all kinds of different things in English including sports magazines, newspapers, literature and library books. The year 11 students were unanimous in saying they use a dictionary if they struggle with their reading. The year ten students suggested asking for help as well as using a dictionary. Not all the students enjoy reading in English saying it is hard to understand what they are reading and they need to concentrate hard. Other students like to read in English, finding it interesting, informative and challenging as well as helping them with their vocabulary.

9.3.7 Assessment

The year 10 students all said the way their teachers find out about their ability in English is through tests and felt that teachers could also talk to them and ask them questions to find out more about their ability. The year 11 students said that their teachers do talk to them, set work and tests that help to find out their English proficiency. One student suggested teachers could use homework as an additional tool for ascertaining information about aptitude in English. Only one student said they should have more tests, the other students did not think tests were a good idea.

Two students have taken the 'Adult Literacy Entry Level Certificate' (AQA). One student took this certificate in Poland and the other student studied for it at this school. All the students in year 11 have also achieved certificates in 'Learning Support'. It is not clear what this qualification exactly entails or who provides it. The year 10 students mentioned 'Improving English' tests which are assumed to be school-based. All the students are going to take GCSE English and all think this will be hard. None of the students are going to take other qualifications in English or know of friends in this school, or other schools, who are taking other qualifications.

9.3.8 Other remarks

One student commented that English worries them and it makes them nervous. Another student said that they hope improvements will be made for those in similar circumstances as themselves. It is not clear exactly which circumstances are being referred to though it most probably refers generally to the provision for newly-arrived EAL students to England in schools.

10 Case study 7

10.1 School background

The school is an 11-18 school with approximately 800 students. It is very ethnically diverse and is situated in a West London borough. Almost three quarters of the students do not speak English as their first language. The largest ethnic groups of students are of Indian, White British and Black African descent. The school has a significant number of refugees and asylum seekers who join the school at different times during the academic year. The majority of these students are at the early stage of learning English and a small minority of the school population enter the school without records of their attainment or achievement. The proportion of students with learning difficulties or disabilities is above average, and the percentage entitled to free school meals is very high (in the highest band nationally). Approximately one-third of students attained A*-C grades which puts the school in the lowest attainment band nationally. Most of them gained grades in English and mathematics. The main languages spoken by students in the school are Punjabi, Gujerati, Somali, French, Tamil, Nepalese, Polish, and Portuguese.

The EAL department consist of an EAL coordinator, and two EAL teachers, together with a part time EAL consultant. Many of the teaching assistants had also received training for supporting EAL students.

10.2 Interview with EAL practitioner

The interview was carried out by phone with an EAL teacher from the school.

10.2.1 Learning needs of EAL Students

There are significant differences between the learning needs of EAL students from established communities, who come to the school with relatively well developed language and literacy skills in English, compared with those of new arrivals to the country. The teacher considered that a significant proportion of new arrivals are not fluent in their own spoken language. Many have received little or no formal schooling, and therefore have no literacy skills and many lack basic skills such as the ability to use a pencil, even new arrivals in key stage 4. This is particularly the case for students of African origin. A general difficulty faced by students new to English, whether they have received previous schooling or not, is articulating the sounds of the English language that are significantly different to those of their own. Also many new arrivals are not able to receive support at home to help them develop their language skills, as parents and carers are often unable to speak English either.

It was considered that many new arrivals do not achieve to their full potential at key stage 4 as many have other social and emotional difficulties that are compounded by the frustration of the language barrier. Attitudes, both their own and that of the family to learning English were considered to be a significant predictor of success.

10.2.2 Organisation for teaching and learning

Factors that were considered to be important in motivating new arrivals in learning English were:

- Regular opportunities to interact with peers who are at a more advanced stage of English learning are important, as this has been shown to be a very effective form of modelling of spoken language, facilitating more rapid development of language skills. It was not considered to be good practice to group new arrivals together all of the time as there were then few opportunities for this kind of peer modelling.
- It was thought to be extremely important for new arrivals to experience success in their learning. A way of ensuring this was to break down the curriculum into small steps with clear indicators of attainment, with regular celebration of attainment.
- Visual stimuli were also thought to be crucial to supporting developing understanding.
- A key learning experience that facilitated the most rapid learning was providing the students with real life learning experiences, such as visits in the local community and other kinds of trips that then were used to form the basis of learning in the classroom.

A range of organisational strategies are used to facilitate provision of support for newly arrived EAL students, beginning with an induction programme to support their integration into the school. This is particularly important for students who come from very different cultures. A combination of within class support, together with withdrawal of individuals and groups is considered to provide the most flexible and effective structure for support. The progress of each student is carefully monitored and those who are not making appropriate progress are allocated more support, whereas those who are making good progress may have reduced support if that is appropriate.

Opportunities for working with students who had more advanced English skills in pairs and small groups were considered important not only as a means of facilitating modelling of language use in different contexts, but also as a way to enable students to develop social language proficiency. Approaches to grouping of students differ across subjects and also in different lessons within subjects. A wide range of grouping approaches were used in English lessons to facilitate ability and mixed ability working, together with a variety of individual, pair and group work.

Many commercial texts published for key stage 4 students are too difficult for new learners to access and books for younger students often do not have age appropriate contexts or content. A range of materials have been developed by staff in the school to support the learning of EAL students at an early stage of learning. Attempts are made to link materials to the interests and learning needs of the students. Links to everyday life are thought to be very important and many activities focus on developing everyday language.

New learners find accessing subjects across the curriculum difficult because of general language barriers. However there are specific difficulties with subjects such as history, where different types of text are used, requiring understanding of the genre and knowledge of specific vocabulary. Those students who learn English quickly are able to learn effectively across the range of subjects, whereas those who have more difficulties (because of having no previous literacy skills or because of other special needs) find practical subjects more accessible.

10.2.3 Assessment

The QCA framework ‘A Language in Common’ is used as the basis for assessment of progress in learning English for EAL students. The steps are found generally to be appropriate. More detailed criteria for attainment have been developed to supplement these to provide more information on each aspect of learning in speaking and listening, reading and writing. Additionally expected outcomes for each stage of development have been collated together to inform both summative and formative assessment. These supplementary materials were developed originally by the Borough, and have been further adapted by the SEN team within the school.

A significant proportion of students arriving during key stage 4 will either not be entered for GCSE, or attain very low grades. Regular meetings are held by the EAL team to discuss student progress, where evaluations of progress from other subject teachers are also considered to inform recommendations regarding which GCSEs students should be entered for.

10.2.4 Other English language qualifications

EAL students who are unlikely to gain a grade C or above in GCSE English are entered for the AQA Entry Level Certificate in English. The staff at the school have taken the decision to offer this certificate, rather than it being a local authority directive. The reasons for choosing this qualification are:

- It has three levels of attainment that facilitate demonstration of progress in learning at quite a low level, enabling many students to achieve success.
- The aspects being assessed are complementary to GCSE English, and therefore a separate curriculum does not have to be taught, enabling students to progress onto doing GCSE where possible.

A limitation of the AQA Entry Level Certification was identified, as some new arrivals in key stage 4 will not attain a sufficient standard in English to even gain Entry 1 by the end of the key stage, because of poor literacy skills.

Additionally many of the students with low levels of English are entered for some of the BTEC ‘Skills for Working Life’ qualifications. Although these are not English Language qualifications, the programme facilitates language and literacy development in real life contexts – something identified as a key for motivating learners who have

to learn English for the first time in key stage 4 and have little previous academic background.

It was considered that a new nationally recognised ESOL/EFL certificate would be valuable and that it would be welcomed by students and parents/carers. Discussion of the features considered to be important for such a qualification raised the following points:

- The curriculum should be closely aligned with the English GCSE curriculum, to enable students to progress easily to GCSE if they develop sufficiently quickly.
- There should be a graded series of levels, with the initial levels being at a lower stage than entry level to enable those with no previous education to receive recognition of attainment and progress.
- The related curriculum should have a life skills focus for the lower levels of attainment, particularly as students new to English are particularly motivated to learn in real life contexts.

10.2.5 Practitioner needs and training

During the current academic year, staff training days have focussed on approaches for differentiating for EAL students across a range of subjects. Also regular training is provided for NQTs on strategies for supporting EAL students. In addition the school is in the process of establishing a database of resources, focussing on different ways of differentiating for EAL students. An EAL consultant is employed by the school on a regular basis to support developments in the way in which EAL students are supported. Training is provided periodically by the Borough. A new initiative consists of local schools hosting training events, so that staff at the school can share good practice.

11 Case study 8

11.1 School background

This large school is for students aged 11-18 years, in a West London borough. Currently, the school is at full capacity and is regularly over-subscribed. Students come from a wide range of social backgrounds, many of them coming from economically disadvantaged areas. Overall, unemployment in the area is average. There are currently over 1400 students on roll. About 90 per cent of students come from minority ethnic groups, a very much higher proportion than average. A higher proportion than average are not fluent in the English language. There are around 100 refugees and some students from traveller backgrounds. About 23 per cent of students receive free school meals and this proportion is above the national average. Students' attainment on entry is below the national average. About 30 per cent of the students have special educational needs. The level of mobility is high and many of the students do not start and continue their education from year 7 to the end of year 11 in the school. Overall the results in GCSE attainment are close to the national average.

The main home languages of students at the school are Punjabi, Urdu and Somali. There are also students from Afghanistan, a range of African countries, Sri Lanka, Portugal and some Eastern European countries at the school. The population of the school has changed over recent years with new arrivals predominantly coming from Somali and Afghanistan several years ago, but more recently new arrivals have mainly come from Eastern European countries. A high proportion of new arrivals have little or no English when they start at the school.

11.2 Interview with senior manager and head of EAL

The EAL department consists of a head of department and two EAL teachers. The interview was carried out by phone with the head of the EAL department and additional information was provided by the deputy head teacher of the school.

11.2.1 Learning needs of EAL students

Many of the EAL students who are newly arrived from other countries have not received any previous schooling. Some have difficulties with social skills because of their backgrounds and a small proportion have been traumatised by experiences they have gone through. Those newly arrived students who have had previous schooling and who acquire language rapidly do as well as, or better than established EAL and non-EAL students within the school. However new arrivals who are illiterate in their own language or have special educational needs progress at a slower rate. These students find practical lessons more accessible. Generally newly arrived EAL students are very motivated to learn English.

Many newly arrived EAL students find learning in a range of subjects particularly difficult if they have not had previous schooling. Development of conceptual understanding is particularly difficult as they have little previous understanding on which to base new ideas. Additionally it is very difficult for them to understand explanations because of their limited vocabulary.

11.2.2 Organisation for teaching and learning

There is a significant amount of cross-departmental working to discuss learning needs of individual students, enabling the EAL department to work more effectively in targeting support. Also a student support referral panel has been established to ensure allocation of resources according to need and this operates through a traffic lights system. To ensure that EAL students who are admitted mid-term get appropriate support immediately on entry into the school, the head of the EAL department carries out an assessment of learning needs for these new students prior to entry into the school.

The school does not provide an intensive course for students new to English; because of the demands of staff time this would not be feasible and they consider that this is possibly not the most effective way to facilitate integration into the school community. Support for EAL students takes place in a variety of ways including some withdrawal of groups and in-class support with groups and individuals. Integration of early stage learners is carried out as much as possible. Grouping of students new to English includes working with other students at a similar stage of development in language and literacy, and also work is done in mixed ability groups as this is a key means of facilitating peer modelling of language.

It was strongly emphasised that there is a severe shortage of commercially available age-appropriate resources for learners new to English in key stage 4. In particular, texts that are at a suitable level in terms of the sentence structures and vocabulary are often in contexts more suitable for younger children. Relating learning to real life experiences was thought to be extremely important in motivating early stage learners of English, particularly those with poor language and literacy skills in their home language. Trips within the local area were used as a focus for learning.

Students newly-arrived in key stage 4 who are at an early stage of English learning find it very difficult to access the curriculum. A great deal of emphasis is placed on differentiation across all subjects to enable these students to access activities. Staff within the school are also very aware of the social and emotional needs of newly-arrived students, and programmes are developed according to individual need, to facilitate personal, social and emotional development.

11.2.3 Assessment

The QCA framework 'A Language in Common' is used as the basis for monitoring student progress. No supplementary criteria for assessment have been developed, although materials have been produced to support differentiation through each of the stages of early language and literacy development. It was considered that an expanded set of criteria for assessment would be useful.

It is the policy of the school to enter as many students as possible for GCSE English, together with as many other subjects as they are able to do. Early stage learners are also entered for the IGCSE qualification. This has been adopted because of the tiered system which allows less advanced learners to have the potential of attaining higher grades than would be possible in GCSE by taking the Foundation Papers (targeted at students who would gain grades C-G at GCSE). Progression to higher tier papers is possible, offering a qualification approximately equivalent to A* to C grades at GCSE. A fundamental principle in the decision to offer this additional qualification is the necessity for students at an early stage of English learning to have attainable goals that enable them to achieve success. However this qualification was thought to be beyond a significant proportion of the EAL students at the school. Students in the earliest stages of English learning are entered for the AQA 'Entry Level Certificate in English'.

It was considered that an appropriate additional ESOL/EFL qualification would be very beneficial for students at an early stage of language learning in key stage 4. In addition it was suggested that there was a great need for qualifications in a range of other subjects that were at level 1, and that there was potential for extending the curriculum to offer a range of more accessible subjects which students would perceive as relevant.

Discussion relating to the possible nature of a nationally recognised English qualification highlighted the importance of having modules that enable students to build up certified credit over time, with a combination of course work and examination, which leads to an overall qualification at the end of the programme. Again the reason for this was the importance of there being attainable steps which demonstrated progress. Also it was suggested that separate accreditation for different aspects of English attainment would be useful, particularly as many of the students were articulate in discussion but had low level literacy skills. A general point that recurred during the discussion was that many EAL students lacked confidence and therefore any qualification that demonstrated attainment in small steps would be important in building up the confidence of these students. Also it was mentioned that it would be good for parents to be able to see progress through the possibility of students being able to gain certificates on a more regular basis than is possible with GCSE-type qualifications.

11.2.4 Practitioner needs and training

Subject teachers undergo training as needed to facilitate effective support of EAL students through a twilight system within the school, with sessions run by the EAL team. Other training is periodically provided by the Language Service within the Borough and this was thought to be particularly valuable. The school has published a booklet on how to meet the needs of EAL students using a range of approaches to differentiation. As part of the action planning process for the school, more whole school training is planned to focus on meeting the needs of EAL students.

A key factor in training of practitioners to enable them to meet the needs of EAL students more effectively was to facilitate recognition of the particular learning needs of EAL students. Currently an extensive programme is being run by the Borough for mainstream teachers, consisting of four twilight sessions and four full-days, providing a very good insight into the particular needs of EAL students together with ideas for strategies to support their development. Funding is available within the Borough for training. However it was suggested that greater allocation of funding to enable teachers to have more non-contact time would be beneficial in enabling specialist staff to support one another's professional development within the school and also so that they could give more time to training of ITT students.

12 Local authority interviews

12.1 Interview with EAL adviser from a London Borough

This interview was carried out by phone.

12.1.1 Support provided to new arrivals

New arrivals who are also new to English are provided with a range of support that is designed to meet individual needs. Schools do this in different ways depending on resources available. Approaches include one-to-one support, either in class or with students being withdrawn, induction groups etc. for all of these approaches the basic principle is inclusion. There is no specialised curriculum for students who are new to English.

12.1.2 Additional qualifications currently offered

Individual schools offer additional qualifications for students at an early stage of learning English. The qualification adopted is decided on by schools, and depends very much on the needs of the students. Examples include the AQA 'Entry Level Certificate in English'. There is a collegiate approach to EAL within the LA, with regular meetings between EAL staff from secondary schools to discuss a range of issues including additional qualifications.

12.1.3 Views on the development of an additional qualification for EAL students

It was considered that an additional qualification that was nationally recognised would be very useful for a range of students within the LA. Such a qualification would need to be on a scale for assessing attainment at different levels to take into account progression of EAL students.

Students would find an additional qualification to be valuable, particularly if they are only able to gain a low grade at GCSE, as it would enable them to achieve demonstrable success, and provide a structured measure of progression. Having a qualification that was recognised by employers is also important. Also it was suggested that different aspects of English learning should gain credit separately, so that for example a student who was particularly strong in spoken language would be able to demonstrate attainment, even if their literacy skills were still at an early stage of development.

Other materials or qualifications suggested for consideration in development of a further qualification were: IELTS, the Common European Framework, an Australian assessment (the name of this is not known) and NALDIC materials.

12.1.4 Other suggestions

Within the LA there currently exists a Local Fluency Scale which is a four stage model used to support formative assessment, which complements the Language in Common document.

It was thought that further development of the stages in the Language in Common document would be useful in facilitating assessment of students' learning needs. If such a document were developed the following points would need to be considered:

- It is necessary to ensure that the stages are age appropriate, taking into consideration factors such as the level of cognitive development.
- The framework should be based on the existing framework, rather than development of a completely separate framework.
- Production of exemplar material demonstrating attainment at different levels were thought to be particularly needed, for example samples of different types of writing with analysis identifying the key indicators of literacy development at different stages for EAL students. In addition extending this to exemplify development of language and literacy in different National Curriculum subjects was thought to be worthwhile.

12.2 Interview with EAL adviser from a County Local Authority

This interview was carried out by phone.

12.2.1 Support provided to new arrivals

A new arrivals pack has been developed to provide schools with generic strategies in how to meet the needs of children. Also INSET training is provided, together with consultancy support. If the development of English is not progressing at the expected rate, a member of the EAL team makes a visit to the school to assess the student. A refugee consultant also forms part of the team. A range of approaches are used within schools to support learners at an early stage of English development, including some one-to-one support which may be within the class or with students withdrawn for specialised work, bilingual support staff and teaching assistants working with individuals and groups. Also a buddy system is in operation in some schools, where a more advanced learner is paired with a learner with very little English (this pairing usually takes place with students with the same home language). The ultimate aim of all this work is effective integration of students into mainstream classrooms. Regular meetings are held with National Strategy colleagues, to discuss developments in policy and practice.

12.2.2 Additional qualifications currently offered

Different schools have opted to enter students for qualifications in addition to GCSE English. This is a school decision and is based on their assessment of the needs of individual students. One student was entered for the IELTS qualification instead of GCSE as a means of gaining University entrance. However this qualification has cost implications. Some schools enter students for ASDAN qualifications for students with Special Educational Needs.

12.2.3 Views on the development of an additional qualification for EAL students

It was strongly expressed that schools would welcome a nationally recognised qualification in addition to GCSE for students at an early stage of language acquisition.

Some teaching assistants have expressed the opinion that they would like the opportunity to work more with EAL students on aspects of English that are related more to vocational aspects and everyday life. Therefore a qualification that recognised development of language and literacy skills that were related to these areas would provide more opportunities for this kind of work.

The form that a new qualification should take was discussed and the following points were made:

- there should be different levels of attainment;
- different aspects of English (reading, writing and language development) should gain separate accreditation as this would facilitate development of self-esteem through enabling students to see progress in their language learning which require smaller developmental steps than would need to be attained to gain GCSE;
- the focus of the assessment should be on every day skills at the lower levels, progressing to more advanced skills at the higher levels.

12.2.4 Other suggestions

Some schools use supplementary materials to support formative assessment. It was considered that the addition of more steps to the 'Language in Common' framework would be very beneficial in supporting practitioners in formative assessment of learning needs. In the development of further guidance, consideration of students' level of cognitive development in the secondary school is important, together with prior knowledge of language structure gained from their home language. It was also suggested that practitioners would benefit from detailed descriptors of what is expected in each area of English as EAL students progress from an elementary stage of learning to fluency.

12.2.5 Innovative developments

A pilot is being carried out with involvement from the Secondary National Strategy team, working in four schools within the LA. This does not involve a specialised curriculum for EAL students but it is based on a novel approach. Approaches for teaching and learning are being developed that are based on analysis of students' learning needs, and taking into account students' opinions. Detailed assessments have been carried out into students' language skills and written work in order to identify common errors made by EAL students at different stages of learning. Also students were interviewed to find out about their ideas of how they learn best. The key areas that the students identified as being significant in enabling them to learn effectively were:

- having a process of target setting, where the targets were identified in consultation with the students;
- identification of clear and specific success criteria at different stages of their learning.

12.3 Email from an EAL adviser in an English Unitary Authority

12.3.1 Support provided to new arrivals

This small authority has a very good reputation for supporting refugees and asylum seekers and has an established and flourishing British-Asian community. Over the past three years, many families from the enlarged EU have moved into the area and the schools are dealing with a greater number of students who have English as an Additional Language. The inclusion service consists of the Team Leader/EAL Teacher and two EAL Teaching Assistants. When schools are approached by families, language/literacy assessments are made of the student by the team leader and the findings/recommendations passed onto the school. Where possible a TA is assigned to the student for a set period of time. Resources are supplied to the school. All secondary school staff have received training from the inclusion service in such areas as awareness raising, differentiation and subject specific issues. Background material on culture and first language is issued to staff. Students with no English are withdrawn from certain lessons and given basic English lessons. Their progress is closely monitored and review meetings held once every half-term.

It was stated that there was a strong belief within the team that EAL students should access English through following the school curriculum. Teachers differentiate their work accordingly. Training staff is a key area of the work and currently the team leader is working with individual departments on their delivery of KS3/4 subjects.

12.3.2 Additional qualifications currently offered

After assessments, recommendations are made to the Heads of MFL/Examination Officers as to whether to enter children for GCSE in First Language. Appropriate booster lessons and mock exam papers are arranged for schools. GCSE/GNVQ are the only qualifications undertaken.

12.3.3 Views on the development of an additional qualification for EAL students

As colleges and employers recognise GCSE qualifications, it was considered to be unlikely that another qualification is necessary or viable and that anything which diverts children from their GCSE studies should be avoided. However if this existed as perhaps a parallel course, for example through twilight sessions this could be appropriate.

12.4 Email from an EAL adviser in an English Unitary Authority

12.4.1 Support provided to new arrivals

The EAL team supports these new arrivals once they are given a school place. They may have a modified timetable, with extra periods of study support, but go into mainstream classes for the rest of the time. Support is usually a mixture of teaching (approx two hours a week) and support from a bilingual classroom assistant, if one is available (approx three hours a week). No specialised curriculum has been developed to support language and literacy development of EAL students.

12.4.2 Additional qualifications currently offered

Schools are keen for students to do GCSEs if possible, even if the grade will be a G. Students have also been entered for 'Certificate of Achievement in English' and AQA 'Entry Level Certificate in English'.

12.4.3 Views on the development of an additional qualification for EAL students

This would be beneficial, especially if it led on to ESOL qualifications at FE. The English Language GCSE curriculum is not appropriate for the language needs of many students at an early stage of English learning in key stage 4.

12.5 Email from an EAL adviser in a Metropolitan Authority

12.5.1 Support provided to new arrivals

The LA employs four EAL consultants who offer advice and guidance to schools on inducting and supporting newly-arrived students in key stage 4. This sometimes is simply visits to schools, centrally provided training or bespoke training for individual schools. Additionally there are three peripatetic teachers who offer support in the form of practical help with strategies for induction procedures and classroom pedagogy. This often takes the form of 'coaching' for nominated teachers and/or teaching assistants. They also offer practical help with materials for and assessments of newly arrived students. Schools are also referred to websites and other sources of materials they might find useful with students. Other support is given in the form of funding, either as student bursaries or as grants for home language support for induction support for students/families.

The authority has not developed a specialised curriculum, favouring instead the earliest integration of students into mainstream classes. However some schools are selective about the range of mainstream subjects offered and supplement these with some specific language teaching and 'basic skills' type provision. The students in years 10 and 11 arriving from other countries have the option of taking up a financed college place rather than enrolling in a school. Some schools are becoming centres for newly arrived communities around the city and are therefore becoming adept at both induction processes and longer term support strategies. A key role that the local authority regarded as being of great importance is to network schools together so that they can share their experiences and expertise.

12.5.2 Additional qualifications currently offered

The LA does not recommend alternatives to GCSE as such but some schools do offer them. These are either 'basic skill' types or specialist ESOL qualifications. Most schools organise GCSE examinations in students' home language as a route into qualifications. This 'alternative' qualification route is also followed by some schools for EAL students who are not recently arrived.

12.5.3 Views on the development of an additional qualification for EAL students

It was considered that this looks backwards to the old ESL-GCSE which in the end had very little currency because it was always seen as a poor substitute by employers and further/higher educational establishments. Its advantage was in leading schools towards an English language programme embedded in practical English skills which was a useful starting point for many recent arrivals. Its shortcoming was that it was rather narrow in its content and breadth and consequently did not help students cope

with other subject areas. If a new national qualification is to be developed it does need to address these issues and somehow be given a status that makes it worthwhile for the students to undertake.

Appendix: Interview schedules

Interview schedule: senior manager/practitioner 3

Interview schedule: EAL students 16

Telephone and email interview schedule: LA advisors 30



Interview Schedule: Senior Manager/Practitioner

School: _____

Introductory information:

The NFER has been commissioned by QCA to undertake research into the provision for 14-16 year old EAL learners, focusing specifically on provision for EAL students who are recent arrivals in the country and have more limited English proficiency. When answering the following questions please do so in relation to this specific population of students. No individuals or schools will be identified in the report arising from this research.

1 GENERAL QUESTIONS

a) What are your main responsibilities within the school?

--

[Omit the next 4 questions if they have already been answered by another member of staff.]

b) What are the main first languages spoken by students in the school?

--

c) Are your EAL students mostly newly arrived to the country or from established communities? *[How many new arrivals do you have?]*

--

d) Has the population of EAL pupils changed in your school in recent years? *[Are they from different countries or language groups? Are some of them in the school for relatively short periods of time?]*

--

e) What levels of proficiency do they usually have on arrival? *[Does this vary by individual or by language group?]*

--

2 LEARNING NEEDS OF EAL STUDENTS

a) In what ways are the learning needs of newly-arrived EAL students different from those of other students?

[eg students for whom English is their first language, or EAL students who have been had all or most of their education in the UK]

[What barriers to learning do these students face, both in English lessons and across the curriculum?]

b) Do you think that these EAL students normally achieve to their full potential at Key Stage 4?

[Why/Why not?]

c) What factors are important in motivating these students to be successful in learning English?

[Do they need to have something to aim for, e.g. a certificate?]

[How important are peer support / mentors / parental and community support?]

3 ORGANISATION FOR TEACHING AND LEARNING

<p>a) Does the school have any:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• specialist EAL or Ethnic Minority Achievement (EMA) teachers / staff• bilingual teaching or learning support assistants
<p>b) Do other form or subject teachers receive any training in ways of supporting new EAL arrivals?</p>
<p>c) Is there any kind of special provision to meet the learning needs of newly-arrived EAL students? <i>[Do newly-arrived EAL students receive additional support either in or out of class?]</i> <i>[Does this have a specific focus – eg speaking and listening / reading / writing?]</i></p>

d) How effective do you think the school is at meeting the language needs of newly-arrived EAL students?

- in terms of their social language proficiency
- in terms of their academic language proficiency (so that they can access the curriculum)

e) Do EAL students have opportunities to work with non-EAL peers in small group work? *[Is this across the curriculum or specific subjects?]*
[Do you think working with others contributes to the learning of English?]

f) Are the resources available to the school adequate for supporting the development of EAL students?
[Are resources suitable for the age and interests of the students?]
[What additional resources would be useful?]

4 ORGANISATION FOR TEACHING AND LEARNING - *Curriculum issues*

a) To what extent is the KS4 English curriculum appropriate for newly-arrived EAL students?

[How difficult is it to make English lessons accessible and interesting for these students?]

b) Would EAL students benefit from a separate curriculum in English?

[Does the National Curriculum provide an appropriate framework for supporting language development of these students?]

c) What specific barriers to learning do EAL students experience in other subjects?

d) What kind of additional support would they benefit from to overcome these barriers?

[How difficult is it to make lessons in other subjects accessible and interesting for these students?]

5 ORGANISATION FOR TEACHING AND LEARNING – *English learning*

How do you think that the learning of English as a second language is best achieved for students of this age:

- fully integrated within the normal social and educational activities of the school?
- supplemented by separate language lessons?

[Explore reasons]

6 ASSESSMENT - *Internal/diagnostic assessment*

[A senior manager who does not have specific responsibility for EALs may not know the answers to the following section – omit if necessary.]

a) Do you use the QCA framework ‘A Language in Common: Assessing English as an Additional Language’ to assess the learning needs of EAL students?

b) *[If yes]* How useful is it?

c) Do you use any other language scales or EAL assessment frameworks?
<i>[If yes]</i> d) Who was this framework developed by? <i>[Ask if it is possible to have a copy of any additional EAL assessment framework or language scale used by the school]</i>

7 ASSESSMENT – GCSE English

a) Do newly-arrived EAL students usually do GCSE English?
b) What influences the choice of whether they should do GCSE English? <i>[student/parent preference? their language ability? school league tables?]</i>

c) <i>[If yes]</i> What sort of grades do they usually achieve?

8 ASSESSMENT – *Other English language qualifications*

a) Do your EAL students take any other formal qualifications / certificates in English? <i>[eg English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) or English as a Foreign Language (EFL) qualifications?]</i> <i>[If yes – ask for names of qualifications/certificates]</i>

If answer to a) is yes, ask the following questions

b) Where do they normally study for and take them? <i>[school? FE college? privately?]</i>

c) Are these qualifications on the DfES Section 96/97 list? ¹

¹ Note for interviewer: Section 96/97 lists the qualifications and courses which are approved by the Secretary of State for students in the 14-19 age group – ie accredited qualifications. Explore whether the interviewee is aware that these are the only qualifications which can be offered by schools.



d) Does the local authority recommend a particular certificate? <i>[Which one(s)?]</i>
e) Do you know of any students at other schools taking ESOL or EFL certificates? <i>[Which one(s)?]</i>

9 ASSESSMENT – *Need for other qualifications*

a) Are the certificates/qualifications in English currently available for these EAL students appropriate? <i>[for their needs / level /age]</i> <i>[If interviewee knows which are on the section 96/97 list of accredited qualifications, explore whether there are appropriate qualifications on this list]</i>
b) Do you think that more ESOL/EFL qualifications should be given official accreditation? <i>[Why/why not? Which ones?]</i>

c) Do you think that EAL students should be offered the chance to take other English qualifications which are not officially accredited?

[Why / why not]

d) Do you think it would be useful to have a formal qualification in English specifically for Key Stage 4 EAL students?

[Why/why not]

If the interviewee thinks that additional qualifications are needed, either existing qualifications or development of new ones, ask the following questions.

e) What form do you think any new or additional qualification should take?

[Testing, coursework or teacher assessment?]

f) What skills should be tested?

[speaking, listening, reading, writing]

<p>g) Which levels of the National Qualification Framework should they be at? <i>[Entry, Level 1, Level 2]</i></p>
<p>h) How do you think students would view this kind of qualification?</p>
<p>i) How do you think parents would view this kind of qualification?</p>



10 PRACTITIONER NEEDS

[Ask the first question if interviewee is directly involved with teaching EAL students. If not, begin with the second.]

a) Have you received specialised training for teaching EAL students?

[If yes: What did this involve?]

b) What type of training do you think teachers and other practitioners need to help them work successfully with EAL students?

[Explore this question for both English teachers and teachers of other subjects]

c) What kind of training is available within your LA in preparing to work successfully with EAL students?

d) Is funding available for this kind of training?

11 NATIONAL STRATEGY / LOCAL AUTHORITY INITIATIVES

a) Are there any NS / LA initiatives that have been particularly useful in supporting your school in the development of its provision for EAL students?

b) What kinds of initiatives would you like to see in the future?
[at national level? from the local authority?]

12 CLOSING QUESTIONS

a) Is there anything else you would like to say about this topic that I haven't asked you?

b) Is there anything that you would like to ask me?
[Record any questions asked and your response]

Thank you very much for your help with this research.

Interview Schedule: EAL Students

Name of school: _____

Number of male students: _____ Number of female students: _____

Please read this before you start:

Introductory information:

I am from NFER and I am doing some research about students who are learning English. I want to find out about you and your learning at school. Everything you tell me will remain confidential. We won't tell your school what you say and we won't use your names in the report.

1 GENERAL QUESTIONS *[Each student to answer in turn – please record each student's answer]*

a) How old are you?

--

b) What year group are you in? *[Year 10? Year 11?]*

--

c) Where do you come from? *[which country?]*

--

d) How long have you lived in England?

--

e) How long have you been at this school?

--



f) What language do you speak at home? <i>[What's your first language/mother tongue?]</i>
g) Did you learn English before you came to England? <i>[for how long?at school?]</i>

2 GENERAL FEELINGS ABOUT SCHOOL

a) What do you like most about this school?
b) What do you dislike about this school? <i>[not like]</i>



3 LEARNING ENGLISH AT SCHOOL

a) Do you get help with learning English in school?

[Do you have a special teacher / helper / classes for English?]

[Do you get extra help in class / lessons? How?]

[Are you given any books to help you with English? Are these useful?]

b) Is this a good way to get help? *[Why/Why not?]*

c) What *[else]* could the school do to help you with English?

[Would you like extra classes? A special teacher? etc.]

[If there are additional classes]

d) Is this with other students who are learning English?

<p>e) What do you get help with? <i>[speaking /listening/reading/ writing?]</i> <i>[just help with English, or help with other subjects?]</i></p>
<p>f) Do you talk with other people in small groups in lessons? <i>[Is this a good thing to do?]</i></p>

4 LEARNING ENGLISH OUTSIDE SCHOOL

<p>a) Do you learn English outside school? <i>[at home / at a club / evening classes / CDs / etc?]</i></p>
<p>b) Is this useful? <i>[Why/Why not/What else would you like to do?]</i></p>



5 LEARNING OTHER SUBJECTS

a) In this school you have lots of different lessons. *[subjects]*
Which subjects are difficult?

b) Why is *[subject]* difficult for you?
[If they only mention language issues, ask: Anything else?]

c) Which subjects are easy?

d) Why is *[subject]* easy for you?
[If they only mention language issues, ask: Anything else?]

[If not mentioned previously]:

e) Do you find it difficult to understand what your teachers are saying?

[Do you understand some teachers better than others? Why?]

f) Could lessons be improved *[made better]* to help you understand more? *[How?]*

6 FEELINGS ABOUT LEARNING ENGLISH

a) Do you speak much in lessons?

[Do you like speaking in class? Why/Why not? How does it make you feel?]

b) What do you do if you can't understand the teacher?

[ask the teacher/ask another student/nothing/look it up later/etc.]

c) What do you do if you can't understand other students?

d) What sort of things do you write in English? *[notes, essays, emails etc]*

e) Do you like writing in English? [*Why/why not?*]

f) Do you make notes in English or in your own language? [*from books/writing things the teacher says*]

g) What kinds of things do you read in English?
[*in class/outside school*]

h) What do you do if these are difficult?
[*Do you use a dictionary/wordlists/ask someone to help*]

i) Do you like reading English? *[Why/why not?]*

--

7 ASSESSMENT - *Formative assessment*

a) How do your teachers find out about your level / ability in English?
[Do they give you tests? Do they talk to you to find out?]

--

b) In what other ways do you think your teachers could find out about your level/ability in English?

--

c) Do you think they should give you more tests/different tests?

--

8 ASSESSMENT - Existing qualifications

<p>a) Have you taken any qualifications in English? <i>[explain term if needed-the terms 'certificates' or examinations' may be more familiar]</i></p>
<p><i>[If yes]</i></p> <p>b) What is the name of the qualification? <i>[certificate]</i></p>
<p>c) Where did you take <i>[study for]</i> this? <i>[before coming to England / at school in England/ FE college / other]</i></p>

9 ASSESSMENT - GCSE

[NB younger students may not yet know if they are going to take this]

a) Are you going to take GCSE English?

[If yes:]

b) Do you think this will be easy or difficult for you? *[Why/why not]*

[If 'no' or 'don't know']

c) Would you like to do GCSE? *[Why/why not]*

11 CLOSING QUESTIONS

a) Is there anything else you would like to tell me that I haven't asked you about?

b) Is there anything that you would like to ask me?

Thank you very much for your help with this research.

Telephone and email interview schedule: LA advisors

Local Authority: _____

Introductory information:

The NFER has been commissioned by QCA to undertake research into the provision for 14-16 year old EAL learners, focusing specifically on provision for EAL students who are recent arrivals in the country and have more limited English proficiency. When answering the following questions please do so in relation to this specific population of students. No individuals or schools will be identified in the report arising from this research.

1 GENERAL QUESTIONS

What kind of support (if any) is provided within your LA for schools with EAL students in the 14-16 age range who are at an early stage of English language learning (ie have recently moved from abroad)?

--

Has your LA developed a specialised curriculum to support language and literacy development of EAL students?

--

Are there any qualifications that your LA recommends for EAL students, such as certificates (particularly those who may not be entered for GCSE or may not be in a position to attain a very good grade in GCSE)?

--

Do you think that the development of a nationally recognised certificate or accreditation of an existing one would be useful?

--

If there are any policy documents that you think would be relevant to our current study, would it be possible to send copies of these? Please do not send them if you would not be happy for these to be discussed in a public document.

--

Thank you very much for your help with this research.

