



Guidance

Curriculum  
and Standards

# Primary and Secondary National Strategies

## New Arrivals Excellence Programme

A resource to support the development of  
induction procedures for new arrivals

Case study booklet



**Strategy managers,  
EMA managers and  
consultants,  
headteachers,  
teachers and  
teaching assistants  
in primary, middle  
and secondary  
schools**

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Creating Opportunity  
Releasing Potential  
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## **New Arrivals Excellence Programme**

### **A resource to support the development of induction procedures for new arrivals**

The case studies featured on this DVD-ROM provide examples of how six schools in different contexts have developed a range of provision to support newly arrived pupils.

A short written case study for each school is provided in this booklet and each school is featured separately within the DVD in sequences of no more than 30 minutes. You may wish to choose the case studies most applicable to your circumstances and these can be selected from the main menu on the DVD.

#### **The six featured schools are as follows.**

1. Large urban primary school in the north west of England  
Focus: a holistic approach to meeting the needs of new arrivals: many languages, many cultures, one community.
2. Large urban primary school in London  
Focus: partnership work to meet the language and learning needs of new arrivals and their families.
3. Large primary school in a shire county  
Focus: supporting isolated bilingual learners: whole-school inclusion for new arrivals and their families.
4. Large urban secondary school in London  
Focus: induction programme for Key Stage 3 new arrivals.
5. Large mixed 11–18 comprehensive school in London  
Focus: *English Language and Literacy in the Curriculum* (a course for students in Key Stages 4 and 5).
6. Small Roman Catholic secondary school in a shire county  
Focus: supporting isolated bilingual learners within the curriculum: one school's response to Polish new arrivals.

## Case study 1

### **School: large urban primary school in the north west of England**

### **Focus: a holistic approach to meeting the needs of new arrivals: many languages, many cultures, one community**

#### **Background**

This school is a large community primary school with 411 children on roll. In 2004 the intake was increased to two-form entry and a new wing was added to house the Reception and Key Stage 1 classes; in addition 59 children attend the Nursery full-time. Many children travel some distance to attend and the school is oversubscribed. 98% of children are from minority ethnic groups, the highest proportion being of Pakistani heritage. Only 7% of children have English as their first language and 96% of children are Muslim.

A significant number of children leave or join the school throughout the school year, often coming straight from abroad with limited English. The school has a high mobility rate – in 2006 only six children went through the school from Nursery to Year 6. The school has 43% of children eligible for free school meals (more than twice the national average). 11% of children have been identified as having learning difficulties, predominantly moderate learning difficulties, and two children have a statement of special educational needs (SEN).

'This school is special in being a school where children of different faiths and cultures mix happily and easily. It has built a well justified, strong reputation for its sensitivity to the myriad of heritages and values of the local, largely Muslim community. Parents want to send their children to this school. Their high respect and regard for the headteacher and staff was evident in the 240 questionnaires returned and in parents' glowing comments to inspectors. The praise is well deserved. This is a happy, welcoming school where children thrive and make exceptional personal progress. Many make rapid progress in understanding and speaking English. With this comes increased confidence in trying new experiences, taking on responsibilities and having a say in how the school runs.' (Ofsted 2006).

## What is being done?

Central to this school's success is the passion, drive and commitment of the headteacher, who has a very clear view about what makes a successful community school. The school has excellent relationships with parents/carers, the local community, local religious leaders and other agencies in the UK and abroad which enable the children and staff to benefit from a range of experiences. For example, new members of staff sometimes accompany the headteacher on trips to Pakistan, Palestine and Saudi Arabia in order for them to appreciate the cultural, social and educational experiences that some of the children bring with them. Letter writing programmes exist between children in Year 5 and Year 6 and children in a school in Pakistan so that they can exchange experiences and ideas. In both cases this leads to a better understanding of the importance of celebrating the richness and diversity of the community that makes up the school.

In addition, a number of initiatives are in place which are beneficial for new arrivals joining the school at any point in the school year.

- All new arrivals go directly into class with in-class support from bilingual teaching assistants who may or may not speak their home language but are the adult link for those children as they settle into the school.
- All new arrivals who are new to English will be assessed once they have settled, and targeted for planned intervention and support.
- There is a well thought out buddy system which matches new arrivals to children who speak their first language if possible. Buddies are given a checklist which covers what they need to do.
- In addition, lunchtime buddies are in place to support the particularly difficult 'free time' around lunch and their role is to help children select food they would like and to look after the new arrivals in the playground.
- Playground helpers ensure that there are always activities to do in the playground and to help sort out any difficulties that may arise.
- A 'friendship wall' mural in the playground has been designed by a member of the community where children can go if they are feeling lonely so that they can immediately find a friend.
- The Ethnic Minority Achievement (EMA) coordinator has devised a new arrival assessment pack which has been developed for Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 and distributed to all teachers along with suggested strategies for working with bilingual learners.

- Training has been provided to all new staff working with new arrivals.
- The school employs a number of multilingual and multicultural staff which means that many, but not all, languages of the children are also spoken by members of staff.
- The multilingual staff means that the school has the ability to carry out initial assessments in home languages, in most languages but not all.
- The use of home language is actively encouraged in the classroom and around the school in order for children to be able to transfer skills and knowledge from the first language to English. This is true whether adults in school share that language or not.
- The headteacher is resourceful in finding support for those children whose language is not shared by other children in the school. He believes there is always someone who can speak that language in the local area and enlists the help of local contacts in the community, the mosque, university students, local colleges and so on to provide language support for those children.
- The school provides an on-site crèche which helps provide a caring environment for younger siblings and helps younger children settle and feel more secure. The crèche is supported by parent helpers.
- The school runs classes for parents/carers in aerobics, ICT, parent/child workshops, adult education and so on. Themes are determined by the parents/carers and in this way the school responds and listens to what the community wants.
- The school offers mother tongue teaching in Arabic at Key Stage 2.
- The termly displays specifically celebrate the rich and diverse languages of the school.
- The school provides halal food at all meal times and a prayer room.
- There is a breakfast club every day and numerous after-school clubs offering a variety of activities.
- In addition there is a Saturday afternoon KIWI Club which offers children the opportunity to go on trips which they plan themselves. All trips and transport are funded by a local children's fund.
- The school has substantial links with local communities that add to an inclusive start for new arrivals and this is evident from the rich displays all around the school. An example of this is the multicultural seed planting project that Year 6 were involved in with a local gardener.

- The school has significant involvement in supplementary schools.
- Of the governing body, 14 members are from minority ethnic communities, and some are very high profile figures in the community. This ensures that the school maintains an ongoing dialogue with the communities that are represented in the school and that their needs are heard.

## Outcomes

All of the above initiatives contribute to a safe, secure and stimulating environment in which children can develop intellectually, personally and spiritually. Children are clearly happy and this is loudly articulated by the School Council.

A key aim of the school is to respect and value the cultural heritage of the children. To this end they make the most of the local environment, the community and their links with international schools. Clearly, having a significant number of bilingual staff is a real asset and contributes to making the integration of new arrivals a key feature of the school's inclusion work. However, the headteacher makes clear that the school's inclusive approach does not rely on bilingual staff. Welcoming and including every child is the philosophy of the school and it is the school's job to secure progress for all its children. A child's lack of English is not the problem. The challenge for the teacher is how best to meet the needs of that children whatever languages they speak.

## Feedback

*'I think that within the school the child should be able to feel whoever they are, even if there is only one child, that there is somebody that they can identify with, that they can say, "Ah! That represents me, that represents my culture, that represents my language", so they feel good about themselves, and once you feel good, you feel confident, you feel secure, you can learn.'* (headteacher)

*'New arrivals make accelerated progress here, a school where they can see their culture, language and heritage not only reflected around them but actively celebrated.'* (headteacher)

*'If I give this community nothing more than confidence in itself I've done something. We really like the parents and we really like the children and we have a duty to do our best for them – care enhances respect. Here everybody is recognised and valued. We value what they bring with them: their language, knowledge, calligraphy and culture.'* (headteacher)

*'My advice to other teachers welcoming new arrivals would be to see the whole child, see them as someone you can learn from.'* (head of diversity)

*'The most important thing for new arrivals is to help them feel really safe, valued and secure in school. We give them a few weeks to settle and then we assess them. We think of different ways to assess their needs in a way that is not too stressful for them.'* (EMA teaching assistant)

*'What I like about this school is they celebrate everybody; if you are a Christian they celebrate Christmas, if you are a Muslim, they celebrate Eid.'* (school council member)

*'What I like about the school is the way they celebrate everybody, the richness, the diversity, the culture, that is what they do best.'* (governor)



## Case study 2

### **School: large urban primary school in London**

### **Focus: partnership work to meet the language and learning needs of new arrivals and their families**

#### **Background**

The school is a large urban primary in London with 440 children on roll, at least 96% of whom are bilingual. The school is situated in an area of socio-economic deprivation and there is considerable mobility as previously well-established Asian families are moving away and more rented housing is becoming available for newly arrived families.

'This is an outstanding school which offers a caring learning environment which is both stimulating and secure. The outstanding leadership of the highly respected headteacher is underpinned by excellent teamwork between pupils, parents, governors and staff, all of whom have been key elements in creating and maintaining the school's success. Pupils love coming to school where they thrive physically, linguistically, intellectually, and socially. Their outstanding personal development is supported by similarly excellent levels of care, guidance and support. As governors explain "We don't just deliver the curriculum, we nurture future citizens". As a result, this highly successful and over-subscribed school acts as "the hub of the local community" and is wholeheartedly supported by its parents who value both the high academic standards and the way their children's confidence and abilities in all areas are developed and sustained.' (Ofsted 2006)

The school admitted 50 newly arrived bilingual learners between September 2006 and March 2007. These new arrivals speak Panjabi, Urdu, Somali, Tamil, Malayalam, Pashto, Farsi, Russian, Albanian, Polish and Romanian and many children arrive in the school new to English. Many children also arrive directly into school without any prior schooling. Some children living locally have had to wait without schooling for up to nine months until a place becomes available in this school.

#### **What is being done?**

The headteacher's first aim is to ensure that when the children walk through the door for the first time, they feel that they are 'at home'. Contact with parents/carers is therefore of key importance to the school.

Once the children are accepted in school, but before admission, the headteacher holds a lengthy discussion with parents/carers to find out about their background and how settled they are in the country, to see what problems they are facing such as housing, transportation and overcrowding, as well as the health and educational background of the children. The requisite forms are completed together at this interview with support from translators, if required.

Following this interview, there are agreed induction procedures which are known and followed by all school staff. New children are introduced to teaching assistants and they are accompanied on a tour of the school by a peer buddy chosen for having similar background or language skills. This buddy will support the new arrival in school and also in the playground and at lunchtime.

The school EMA coordinator provides an induction pack for class teachers. This includes a profile of each child using their home language and an initial language assessment using the QCA English as an additional language (EAL) step descriptors. Small achievable targets are shared with the child, class teachers and the parents/carers. Class teachers have access to inclusive teaching strategies for children new to working in English and can receive support with planning from the EMA coordinator.

The EMA coordinator's role is to ensure that the new members of staff understand how the school's induction procedures should be implemented. The headteacher asserts that 'it is crucial that every person who is working in this school is a language teacher because this is the most important part of education that children need to achieve'. Every staff meeting provides opportunities for professional development and reinforces a clear message that every lesson counts for every child; that every child has to achieve and that every child must make some progress during each lesson, including children who are new to the classroom or new to school.

Teachers, especially at Key Stage 1 and in Years 3 and 4, promote children's use of their mother tongue in all the work that they do, especially in science and mathematics. In Years 5 and 6, English is used more frequently in order to familiarise children with the terminology of the national tests. Most classrooms have support from bilingual teaching assistants.

The EMA coordinator usually works in partnership with class teachers. The teachers also plan with her and she suggests resources and the strategies which will help.

One particular priority recognised by the school has been to identify how to best meet the needs of Somali new arrivals, and particularly Somali boys, whom the school felt to be at risk of underachieving. A disproportionate amount of time was being spent on behaviour

management which had a negative impact on the learning of this group of children. Meetings were set up with parents/carers and grandparents. The contrast between children being free to spend time outside when in Somalia and the potential dangers of being out on the streets in London were explored. Sessions for parents/carers were held to help them understand and deal with the boys' anger. A youth worker who understood both cultures was able to explain how some of these tensions were causing their work to suffer. Refugee support classes for children and parents/carers were also held which included external visits to the library, and travel by tube to central London for visits to galleries, museums and gardens. ICT classes and Saturday and Tamil classes (with about 120 children) are now externally funded following school start-up and the school also funds Somali classes which are held on Saturdays.

The filmed lesson was a Year 6 science revision lesson prior to national tests at the end of Key Stage 2. The class reviewed key learning by working on the properties needed for a good bath mat – friction and absorbency. They discussed the properties and wrote answers to questions using the previous year's test paper. The class teacher and an EAL specialist support teacher used specific teaching strategies to support the new arrivals. They had examples of different bath mats and related the topic to children's experiences in school. They provided practical demonstrations of the concepts and used response partners (AB talk), eliciting key vocabulary from the class and the group of new arrivals. New arrivals were able to access this lesson through support from their peers within the group, guided by the questioning of the EAL teacher.

## Outcomes

- Overall, all Year 6 children apart from children with SEN affecting cognition and learning and two very recent arrivals, attained at least level 4 in all three subjects at the end of Key Stage 2 in 2006. This Year 6 cohort included seven children who had arrived in Years 3 and 4.
- Children expressed their appreciation of the support they have been given at the school by buddies, class teachers, teaching assistants and the EMA coordinator.
- Families are helped to settle and this has a positive effect on children in school. Where there are particular cross-cultural issues with a new group, these are dealt with in a sensitive and positive way.
- Overall, the school has found a way of maximising capacity to meet the needs of new arrivals. Staged support is built into inclusive classroom practice and all staff are made aware of effective practice in working with bilingual children whether they are new to English or more advanced learners.

## Feedback

*'With the parents we not only run classes for English, but also how to help your child with basic maths, number calculations, but also what this part of London is all about, what England is like, what sort of people live in this country, this area is just a small part of the life in London...so the children go with parents with about four or five staff...and it's really lovely to see the parents realise that some of these places are free, if they could travel by tube they could bring their own children.'*

*'We take them to the library and ensure they become members and the excitement you see when they actually see books which are in their own language, because some of the local libraries still stock them.'* (headteacher)

## Case study 3

### **School: large primary school in a shire county**

### **Focus: supporting isolated bilingual learners: whole-school inclusion for new arrivals and their families**

#### **Background**

This school is a large primary school with 408 children on roll. As places become vacant, they are often filled by newly arrived bilingual learners. 10% of the children on roll are from ethnic minorities and 17 of these arrived between September 2006 and March 2007. These new arrivals speak Polish, Tagalog and Tamil. Some new arrivals stay for only a very short time, in some cases as little as six months, as their parents are on short-term job contracts with accommodation provided near the school.

#### **What is being done?**

The vision of the school is to provide an inclusive education where every child matters, including the newly arrived bilingual learners. The headteacher is committed to ensuring appropriate provision right from the start and has put in place a number of initiatives to improve provision. A key focus is on welcoming parents/carers in order to support children to settle. The school is implementing a strategy for new arrivals and the teaching of English as an additional language (EAL) in order to build and maintain capacity so that all staff will in the future feel confident to meet the needs of bilingual learners.

The following initiatives are in place or are in the process of being put in place.

- A senior manager oversees induction, deploys teaching assistants including one bilingual teaching assistant, and tracks, analyses and inputs data into the school system so that progress of new arrivals can be checked regularly.
- The school draws on support from the local authority (LA) for carrying out early profiling and support for children speaking languages not spoken by the bilingual teaching assistant.
- Children as young as six and seven years old are being trained to work as interpreters.
- Parents/carers are welcomed as volunteers or work in non-teaching posts at the school.

- The local authority EMA service provides bilingual teaching assistants where possible. The volunteer parents/carers learn English by coming into school to help alongside their children.
- Bilingual resources are used in the classroom.
- The school is taking part in a national 'Leading and sustaining development' initiative and is focusing on a comparison of writing expectations in the bilingual learners' countries of origin.
- School staff are available to talk to parents/carers at the end of every day in the playground and invite them into school for a wide range of activities, including the daily act of collective worship.
- Joint working between personnel involved in social care, early years and adult education work ensures that families on very short-term contracts have access to English classes.
- The administrative staff ensure that parents/carers can ask questions about education in the country and about the school by means of an interpreter if necessary.
- Social care, housing or immigration issues are passed on as appropriate to the relevant authorities.
- The bilingual teaching assistant ensures that children are introduced to the school when they start and provides flexible teaching or pastoral intervention in agreement with class teachers.

The school believes that the first half-term in the school is vital. There are occasions when conflicts occur between newer arrivals and the more established children. Such incidents are dealt with by asking children to reflect on what it would be like for them if they were placed in a similar situation where language and culture are very different. The LA's programme on 'Rights, responsibility and respect' is delivered in the school and supports shifts in children's thinking about welcoming new arrivals so that they are more respectful of each other, help those who are new to the community and understand that new arrivals may not have had the same access to learning in the past as they have in England.

Staff, too, can be anxious about meeting the needs of new arrivals. There is support within the school from several staff, particularly an LA-funded lead EAL teacher. The bilingual teaching assistant is attending specialist 'Support for EAL' training run by the LA EMA service. Such training is particularly important where school staff have not had much experience of teaching bilingual learners or access to relevant professional development. Participation in this EAL training programme enables consistency of approach to be built up across the school.

The lesson filmed for the DVD took place in a Year 3 literacy lesson, with a focus on fables. The literacy focus was on the use of time connectives. The children were asked to rehearse the themes of the Aesop's fable 'The Boy Who Cried Wolf' and transform the story into 'The Girl Who Cried Shark'. They practised dramatic facial expressions, planned dramas in small groups which they then performed and listened to a model story, identifying the use of time connectives. The children went on to write the beginning of their stories, either on paper or using ICT. Some of these story beginnings were shared with the whole class in the plenary.

The class teacher used a range of teaching strategies in the filmed lesson. These included: talking with response partners (the usual pairs were extended to a group of three so that new arrivals could be grouped with children who could provide good role models of spoken English); providing computer images of sea creatures; using drama activities as a preparation for reading and writing; repetition of key choruses; and paired writing on the computer.

## Outcomes

- The new arrivals feel fully integrated into the school. They expressed their appreciation for the support they are receiving from friends and teachers.
- If children arrive at the school before Year 3, it is expected that they will be able to attain level 4 in all three subjects at the end of Year 6.
- Families are helped to settle into the school and the community and according to the class teachers this has had a positive impact on the children's development in school.
- All staff are expected to include new arrivals in all aspects of school life.

## Feedback

*'We believe that most parents want to find out and do what's best for their children and so we aim to help them settle. We recognise that it's not just the language, not just the friends, it's a completely different environment for new arrivals in an area where there are few community contacts for back-up.'* (headteacher)

*'We'll give them a week or two of observation and then I will discuss my observation and the class teacher will discuss her findings with me, and then we'll decide what's the next course of action and how much scaffolding and support they require.'* (bilingual teaching assistant)

*'The strategies I use are based on the curriculum. I will prepare writing frames. I will use cue cards, and also any vocabulary that the child doesn't understand I would explain to the child.'* (bilingual teaching assistant)

*'Some of these children are quite young and they've taken on quite a lot of responsibility as interpreters to help others. They've had a lot of help themselves in the past and now they feel that they can give something back by helping other new arrivals to the school. They've been flattered by the fact that they've been asked to undertake this role but have grown considerably in stature with the responsibility.'* (headteacher)

*'An example of one of our very successful new arrivals is H. He came to us from India with his mother who spoke no English at all and an older brother who came into Year 6. H didn't speak to anybody for his first three months. He's now been with us for 18 months and he chatters all the time, constantly talking to people about what he's learning about. He found out what an open evening was all about and asked if he should bring his mum and dad. Lo and behold at 3.30 pm he was there with mum and dad on the doorstep bursting to bring them in and show them all the things he'd been learning. It was lovely.'* (headteacher)



## Case study 4

**School: large urban secondary school in London**

**Focus: induction programme for Key Stage 3 new arrivals**

### Background

This school is a larger than average secondary school in north-west London with a large sixth form. The school has held technology college status since 1997 and has been an extended school since September 2005. This area of London has a diverse population with two thirds of the students coming from ethnic minority backgrounds and half learning EAL. Pupils come from a broad range of social and economic backgrounds. A total of 62 languages are spoken in the school and about 15% of the pupils come from countries which typically have a high proportion of refugees.

'(This school) is rightly proud of its diverse and harmonious community. Students enjoy coming to school and feel safe, and their parents think well of the school. The strong pastoral care and very good relationships between staff and students enable students' good personal development. Specialist teams support well those students who are vulnerable, have special educational needs or are at early stages of learning English. The school's excellent work with partners ensures students' well-being. Students contribute widely to the community and sixth formers support younger students effectively in activities and through mentoring.' (Ofsted 2006)

The school wanted to meet the needs of those pupils arriving at any point in the school year who were relatively new to English and to facilitate their integration both into the school and the curriculum. With advice from the LA they developed a subject-specific induction course for new arrivals at Key Stage 3.

### What is being done?

The school EMA coordinator identifies and assesses all newly arrived pupils who are new to English, new to schooling and new to the UK, using the National Curriculum QCA Language in Common (LiC) steps. Pupils who have been in the UK less than one year and who are step 1, step 2 and level 1 threshold (and are therefore below level 2 of National Curriculum in English) are eligible for the course. A letter is sent home to parents/carers in translation with a verbal follow-up if necessary, explaining the rationale behind the course and why their child has been selected.

The induction course is delivered for two hours per week (as a double lesson and always at the same time) for one term. For these two hours pupils will be offered a 'taster' of mathematics, English, science, history, design and technology, geography, drama, personal, social and health education and art. Each two-hour unit is subject-specific and key vocabulary is used. The emphasis is on speaking and listening but all four language skills are employed. The remainder of the time the pupils are all in the mainstream with some additional targeted support.

The EMA coordinator contacts heads of department requesting very specific contributions to the induction course. This requires subject teams to consider the language demands of their curriculum area. Each department needs to provide examples of very specific key skills and concepts that can be delivered in a two-hour period. This personalises the course content to each school. The EMA team, working closely with mainstream colleagues, then make the appropriate materials for that subject.

The course operates on a rolling programme, so a new eligible pupil can join at any time and complete the 12-week course. There are pre- and post-course questionnaires for the pupils to complete in order to ascertain pre-course aspirations and post-course satisfaction. This highlights the importance of pupil participation and hearing the new arrival's voice.

Pupils are assessed at the start and end of the course using the LiC or National Curriculum English levels and this is disseminated to mainstream staff, parents/carers. As pupils graduate from the course they receive a certificate of achievement awarded in assembly as the school celebrates their success.

The course is for Key Stage 3, Years 7, 8 and 9 together but can be adapted for Key Stage 4 and tailored to option choices.

## Outcomes

- The school is more aware of the needs of this vulnerable group and recognises that responsibility for inclusion is a whole-school issue.
- Senior management teams work closely with the EMA team and recognises and support the way in which the team contributes to raising the achievement of newly arrived pupils.
- Mainstream staff are more aware of the needs of this group and therefore better equipped to provide structured, contextualised, achievable tasks in their mainstream classes.
- Materials developed (in partnership) for the induction course are used by mainstream teachers and in the homework clubs.

- The course has provided good professional development opportunities for mainstream teachers in raising their awareness of the language demands of their subject.
- The induction course has been very successful for newly arrived pupils, not only because 100% of pupils move up the LiC scales but also because it:
  - inducts pupils into aspects of school life;
  - helps them develop effective social strategies;
  - supports access to the curriculum;
  - introduces pupils to a variety of teaching and learning styles;
  - provides appropriate cognitively-demanding teaching and learning activities;
  - draws on pupils' prior knowledge, educational experiences and linguistic competence;
  - provides opportunities for in depth assessment.
- Pupils are more confident and better prepared for mainstream teaching and learning.

## Feedback

*'When we look at this again, I think we might allow more time for departments to plan and prepare work together during the school day and to build it into the school improvement plan.'* (deputy headteacher)

*'Students come out of the induction course knowing a little bit more about the key skills needed in the history classroom such as an understanding of chronology, information extraction skills, sequencing and biography work, which helps them in the mainstream lessons. They also recognise the key words and are familiar with some of the formats used in history. Students are therefore more prepared and more confident when approaching history lessons.'* (head of history)

*'The induction course has been very useful for students who are new to English because it provides them with a way into the language of the curriculum. The course is intellectually challenging and obviously if mainstream teachers have the same high expectations, the students will be able to rise to the challenge.'* (head of EMA)

*'The induction course has been very helpful I have learned lots of English and it helps with learning subjects like history, geography and art.'* (student)

## **Case study 5**

**School: large mixed urban comprehensive in London**

**Focus: *English Language and Literacy in the Curriculum* (a course for students in Key Stages 4 and 5)**

### **Background**

This school is a large, mixed, 11–18, comprehensive school in west London. Its intake is ethnically very diverse and 60% of pupils are learning EAL. Mobility is high and a significant number of pupils are from refugee families.

Attainment on entry is below average but outcomes at the end of Key Stage 4 have risen dramatically over the past few years. In 2006 53% of pupils achieved 5+ A\*–C GCSEs (44% including English and mathematics) and the school was named as one of the country's top 100 most improved schools.

A particular feature of the school is the provision it makes for students who arrive in the UK at 16 plus with little or no English. Each year the school accepts 20–40 students who may have arrived late in Year 11 and are seeking a school rather than a college place.

In 2003 the 14–19 Forum in the LA recognised the dearth of provision for late arriving students new to English and requested that its Language Development Service (LDS) develop a course which would aid integration of such students into school while ensuring their progression as learners on appropriate academic or vocational courses. This school was invited to pilot the new course with teaching support from the LDS.

The EAL department in the school has developed a wide range of strategies to support developing bilingual learners. These include a buddy system for new arrivals; initial profiling; short-term induction courses (Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4/5); in class partnership working with subject specialists; support for pupils to gain accreditation in their first languages; and mentoring by sixth formers for pupils in Key Stage 3.

The new course provided the school's EAL department with an option at Key Stage 4 and Key Stage 5 that not only carried accreditation but opened up pathways into academic and vocational education for late arriving students.

## What is being done?

The *English Language and Literacy in Curriculum Learning* (EL&L in CL) course was piloted in the school between 2004 and 2006. It provides accreditation for EAL learners aged 14–19. It has been successfully followed by young people with limited or disrupted schooling and who are new to English language and literacy, as well as those who have had age-appropriate schooling in their country of origin, but who need to learn English rapidly to continue with their education in the UK.

The new course was offered as a GCSE option for Key Stage 4 late arrivals (three periods a week) and as an access course (ten periods a week) for students joining the school in the sixth form. Students in both key stages follow academic or vocational courses in addition to this course. In Key Stage 4 students will also be taking GCSE English and at Key Stage 5 students will follow GNVQ, AS and A2 level courses as appropriate.

The course, which can be offered at a range of levels (from entry levels 1, 2 and 3 through to GNVQ level 1) depending on students' previous educational experience, focuses on the development of English but, equally importantly, on school and curriculum-related knowledge, understanding and skills which students need to access the mainstream curriculum.

The course is built around two main themes: *Negotiating social relations in school*, which includes topics such as making informed decisions, asking for help and responding to racism and sexism and *Finding and using curriculum information*, which includes topics such as using media, taking notes, using libraries, using public sector and public information and drafting and re-drafting. These cross-curricular topics and the language needed to develop them are of immediate relevance to the students in their other curriculum courses. This is language learned very much in context, helping students to understand how the school system and curriculum is organised while developing skills to help learning in other subjects.

The course integrates language development with age-appropriate curriculum content for students entering the school system for the first time, and materials have been developed to tailor teaching to the needs of individual students in Key Stage 4 and Key Stage 5. Inevitably, gathering, writing, adapting and differentiating the materials for this course has taken time and commitment from the EAL team, but the students' appreciation of the course and their success at the end of the pilot have, according to the teachers, 'made it all worthwhile'.

The knowledge and skills taught throughout the course have enabled accreditation to be sought through the ASDAN Certificate of Personal Effectiveness (CoPE) at either National Qualification level 1 (GCSE Grade E or GNVQ equivalent) or level 2 (GCSE Grade B equivalent).

The lessons filmed for the DVD were part of the 'Using media' and 'Using public sector and public information' topics (part of Theme 2, *Finding and using curriculum information*). The aim of the Year 12 lesson, for example, was to equip students with the understanding and knowledge of how to access public information. Tasks included listening to a recorded message and practising writing a formal letter to obtain information. Subsequently students will plan an itinerary for a relative about to visit London and research and plan the visit in detail. The starter activity served to remind the students of a number of London landmarks which they might like to include in their itinerary. The main part of the lesson introduced them to language and strategies they would need to carry out the task successfully: select appropriate sites (the photographs); understand more about their historical, cultural or social significance (the dominoes game); research any necessary information (how to get there, opening times, what to see) by listening to a recorded message; writing a formal letter to the education department of the National Gallery. As part of the course, students plan and carry out in small groups a range of activities (outside school hours) such as visiting places of religious worship, famous London landmarks and even each other's homes. This element of the course is greatly appreciated by the students as is made clear by the Year 13 students on the DVD when reflecting on what they had most enjoyed about the course.

## Outcomes

In summer 2006 the first group of students completed the EL&L in CL course and all received accreditation at level 1 (GNVQ equivalent) or level 2 (GCSE equivalent). All the students chose to continue with their studies either at a local college or at the school, following a wide range of subjects at GNVQ, AS or A2 level. Their career aspirations are equally diverse: nursing, interior design, the diplomatic service – to name but a few.

## Feedback

Staff have commented both on the students' rapidly improving English language competence and on their growing confidence as learners in other curriculum subject areas. The associate headteacher adds:

*'We've also seen these students absolutely integrated into the sixth form, being an intrinsic part of it, not an add-on. Many of the students that have benefited from this course have been real leaders in charitable activities, in leading on events and public performances in school, have raised money and raised awareness. And that for us is, I guess, what it's all about.'*

And the students themselves had this to say about the course in their final evaluations:

*'It helped me a lot, not only about language but also life skills and knowledge.'*

*'I enjoyed talking with other people, we worked as a team.'*

*'I really enjoyed working in groups with students giving ideas.'*

*'The course was fun, dynamic and entertaining.'*

*'I have learned about the book systems in the library, how to find books on computers.'*

*'I reckon that all the themes are useful and realistic.'*

*'The course was very good and everyone should be taught this course.'*

## Case study 6

**School: small Roman Catholic secondary school in a shire county**

**Focus: supporting isolated bilingual learners within the curriculum: one school's response to Polish new arrivals**

### Background

This school is a relatively small 11–18 secondary school in an area of socio-economic deprivation with 663 young people on roll: 18% of the young people are from ethnic minorities; 11% of these pupils are learning EAL. A total of 20 languages are spoken in the school. Between June 2005 and July 2006, 30 new arrivals were admitted to the school. As it is a Catholic school it admits young people from a wide area and is allowed to exceed its standard pupil admission number.

### What is being done?

The school has little previous experience of working with bilingual learners but has taken on the challenge of providing for an increase in new arrivals, the majority being Polish speakers. A number of strategies have been put into place to improve support for new arrivals.

- The school employs two Polish speaking bilingual assistants who are making a significant contribution in school and sixth form both in terms of developing language for the curriculum and coordinating provision.
- Procedures for admission and induction for new arrivals have been developed in response to the growing need. Staff have drawn on training for induction processes provided by the LA EMA service. Young people can have 'taster days' before they join the school and one Year 6 recently-arrived Polish speaker has already joined in activities at the secondary school before starting there.
- Opportunities to take qualifications in home languages have been encouraged. Young people have seen the benefits in obtaining such qualifications, for instance one pupil interviewed on the DVD had been initially sceptical about a GCSE in Polish but realised that it was the passport to an interpreting job with a bank.



- The school has supported home language classes which take place at the weekend.
- Care for all individuals has been adapted to meet the needs of new arrivals. One Polish speaking Roma pupil who had been out of school for a year started school again on a phased basis. Young people in the school expressed the view that bullying, where it occurs, is rapidly dealt with by school staff.

One of the filmed lessons was of a Year 7 science lesson on forces, specifically convection. The pupils contributed to a whole-class discussion, watched a demonstration and worked individually and in pairs on questions in the textbook. There were two Polish speaking new arrivals in the class.

The subject teacher used several strategies to help develop language and content: he put key vocabulary in Polish on the interactive whiteboard, provided clear diagrams on the board and a practical demonstration. A key focus was developing independence and pupils showed red cards when they needed help. They also chose when they wanted to share their work with a partner. Bilingual learners are free to write in their books in their home language. In this science lesson one of the Polish speaking teaching assistants helped explain the concepts.

The other filmed lesson was of a small group of Year 7 Polish speakers. One of the Polish speaking teaching assistants planned to cover generic science language. The young people used Polish and English in discussing the concepts and checked understanding of the relevant section of the textbook in English. Bilingual dictionaries are frequently used in these sessions.

## Outcomes

- The school is adapting to meet the needs of newly arrived bilingual learners by finding resources within the school, drawing on expertise within the authority and employing its own bilingual teaching assistants.
- The young people feel welcomed and supported in the school and, in turn, support each other. Eight out of ten reported that they were happy at school in a 2007 survey. Parents of new arrivals say that they feel their children are well looked after.
- The pupils gain confidence through having their home language recognised and valued.

## Feedback

*'The most important thing I think the school did was to employ the Polish speaking teaching assistants. We do actually look at the Polish reports coming from schools in Poland... that gives us quite a lot of information...because the aim is of course to put them in appropriate sets for their ability rather than based on their ability to speak English – I think there's a critical difference there.'* (headteacher)

*'I see us in a partnership with the local Polish community. We are hosting, and it's just started, a Polish community school on Saturday, and we work with them closely as we do with the Chinese community school on a Sunday.'* (headteacher)

*'We have some support from the county through EMA service and they are leading an inset shortly to help teachers in the classroom develop strategies for helping EAL students, with the aim of encouraging improved literacy within a subject context.'* (headteacher)

*'This school has signed up to be part of our local EAL programme and by signing up they have shown that they are committed to building capacity and putting in some sustainable provision for bilingual newly arrived pupils. As part of the EAL programme they complete an audit of their current EAL provision. At the end of the audit they can recognise some areas they are achieving well in and they can celebrate that success and identify other areas where they need to improve if they are going to cover the needs of bilingual pupils.'* (head of EMA service)

*'I translate my key words into Polish. Other words I think are relevant for them, I supply them with a Polish dictionary so that they've got access to some of the words that are new so that they can keep up with the concepts we're learning. I've gone about getting translated test papers for (the two Polish speakers in Year 7 science) because I have found from that that I can assess their science knowledge and ability as opposed to their language ability and that's let me see that one of them is working at a higher level, slightly higher than the rest of the group, which was quite an eye opener, and that's a strategy that I think is important because it's their science I want to know about not their language ability.'* (science teacher)

*'I work very closely with the teaching assistant for our Polish students so she knows what we are learning, some of the key words that I want the children to know and some of the key concepts that I expect them to learn. I pair them up with students that I think can help them but then I encourage peer-assessment...I encourage the two Polish boys to support each other.'* (science teacher)

*'I use a lot of visual prompts, a lot of models that they can see so it is not necessary to follow the English explanation.'* (science teacher)



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