Aims of this intervention

To support every 5–11-year-old child new to the English language who is beginning their education in an English-speaking mainstream curriculum by providing teachers with the tools needed to support these learners’ basic interpersonal and communication skills and achieve a smooth transition into their new learning environment.

This resource can be used with the English National Curriculum, International Baccalaureate Primary Years Programme (PYP), International Primary Curriculum (IPC) and other English-speaking curricula.

It is important to note that English as an additional language (EAL) is a term used in England to describe learning English in an English-speaking environment. This is believed to be a good term to recognise that some English learners may be acquiring English as their third or fourth language. The term EAL can be used interchangeably with English as a second language (ESL).

New arrivals in the 5–11-year-old mainstream education system

The number of children entering English-speaking education systems (the mainstream) is increasing worldwide. Current statistics in the UK alone indicate that almost 12 per cent of pupils in state-maintained schools are learning English as a second, third or fourth language.

‘The total number of pupils in primary and secondary maintained schools learning English as an additional language (EAL) has risen from 653,800 in 2003 (9.6 per cent of the school population) to 789,790 in 2007 (12 per cent of the school population)” (http://nationalstrategies.standards.dcsf.gov.uk/node/96156 accessed 26 April 2010).

Hayden (2006) stated that there are an ‘estimated 1.5 billion users of English worldwide, divided roughly equally between native speakers, ESL and EFL
users... by 2015 half the world’s population (approximately 3.5 billion) will be speaking or learning English... English being increasingly perceived as the international language’ and ‘English-medium education is likely to continue to increase in the short term at least’. With these significant facts we see that English is becoming the international language. ‘English is both the preeminent world language and the primary medium of instruction and administration in many areas of international education’ (Grimshaw, 2007).

In many schools there are increasing numbers of children with little or no English entering English-speaking mainstream lessons. This often leaves them with unique frustrations due to limited English language proficiency and disorientation. These frustrations include difficulties such as understanding instructions, expressing themselves and integrating socially with adults and peers. Teachers often feel unable to cater sufficiently for these new arrivals, largely due to the learner’s low level of English proficiency. This results in communication issues and difficulties in catering for the new arrival’s beginner English alongside that of their native-speaking peers. Teacher training in England is normally tailored to first-language learners and often fails to incorporate significant training, firstly in teaching additional language acquisition to children, secondly in teaching additional language acquisition through the curriculum, and thirdly in supporting learners with cultural orientation.

As an estimated half of the 1.5 billion users of English worldwide are speaking English as a second language, it is no wonder that there is a vast number of courses in training teachers specifically in how to teach English as a second language to adults. However, comparatively, there are only a handful of courses for training teachers to teach young learners of English as an additional language. This may be because the majority of EAL new arrivals attend a primary English speaking mainstream education where they expect to receive their English-speaking tuition. One well-renowned course from South Australia, ‘Teaching ESL students in Mainstream Classrooms’, not only trains teachers but also trains them to deliver the training to other teachers (http://www.decs.sa.gov.au/curric/pages/ESL/pd/?reFlag=1, accessed 13 November 2010). There is an increasing number of degree and postgraduate courses offering training in this context.

Within the primary mainstream education system in the UK there has been an increase in courses catering for children speaking English as an additional language. However, they tend to be add-on courses for teachers who have already completed their initial teacher training, and provision for teachers of EAL is still in its infancy. This results in a relatively underskilled population of mainstream teachers offering inadequate provision for these children: ‘... only a third of respondents to an EAL survey sponsored by the TDA felt that more provision took place within the classroom than outside’ (NALDIC, 2009). The issues have been highlighted by Jupp (1996: 44) who stated the factors that hinder children’s learning in this context:

- students’ limited proficiency in English, especially the sort of English used in the acquisition of literacy and in the acquisition of curriculum concepts;
- lack of communication with non-bilingual parents at a time when home and school need to be working together in supporting the child education;
• lack of parental understanding about the expectations of the school and vice versa;

• family difficulties connected with migration, such as racism, socioeconomic status and unemployment;

• an ethnographic centralised curriculum, which is tailored to the majority and leaves little scope for multicultural or multilingual perspective;

• an assessment system based on national tests that are based upon the attainment of the monolingual majority, take little account of the progress made in English-as-a-second-language bilingual children, nor the language and cultural difficulties that tests bring;

• class teachers’ lack of training in strategies that support language development;

• lack of understanding about the relationship between developing second-language proficiency and special educational needs;

• lack of bilingual support to enable children to learn in their home languages.

These increasingly problematic issues have yet to be fully addressed. This book offers advice, guidance, resources and support for teachers managing beginners to English in the mainstream English-speaking school. It includes:

1 factors to consider when young learners acquire an additional language;

2 strategies to help new arrivals embrace their new cultural experience;

3 assessing the new arrival in their English language skills;

4 managing beginners of English learning to use a second language writing system;

5 effective learning during survival language intervention sessions;

6 using effective language-learning strategies;

7 managing new arrivals in the mainstream classroom;

8 resources to support new arrivals;

9 evaluating EAL provision for new arrivals and setting targets for whole-school improvement.

In this resource I refer to children who are absolute beginners of English who enter into an English-speaking mainstream where English is the medium of instruction as ‘new arrivals’. Parents who place their children in schools where English is the medium of instruction are usually, ‘committed to the idea of their children becoming proficient in English’ (Sears, 1998). They can be ‘a person who has migrated to the country from overseas, e.g. asylum seeker, refugee, families coming to work, family reunion, children of overseas students, unaccompanied children’ (QCA, 2008), or a new arrival in a bilingual international school with
mobile, expatriate families where the parents are typically employed in business or as diplomats or international civil servants, or host-country families with an international outlook who choose bilingual education for their children (Sears, 1998).

Any new arrival entering the English-speaking mainstream will want to access the common language as quickly as possible in order to ‘survive’. This type of language is referred to by Cummins (2003) as Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills (BICS), the skills needed for oral fluency and developing appropriate social language. This needs to be accomplished before learners can access cognitive/academic language proficiency (CALP). This refers to the linguistic knowledge and literacy skills needed for academic proficiency. The resources in this intervention focus first on the BICS and on forming a platform for the later use of CALP.

With this in mind, it is important to remember that children learning English as a additional language are going to need long-term support.

It takes on average five to seven years to become fully competent in a second language, although individuals will vary in the speed with which they acquire this competence. Fluency in spoken English is usually achieved within two years but the ability to read and understand more complex texts containing unfamiliar cultural references and to write the academic language needed for success in examinations takes much longer.

Inspecting Subjects 3–11: English as an Additional Language (Ofsted, 2000, quoted in QCA, 2004b; findings by Cummins (n.d.) and Cummins and Nakajima (1987))

There are many external and internal factors influencing a new arrival's rate of second-language acquisition. External factors include learner attitudes, gender, age, social class, ethnic identity and language input, which are influenced by social environment and internal factors, which include language transfer, the cognitive process undertaken and grammar universals (Ellis, 1994). Each factor has its own unique relevance to the individual learner. Some aspects are clearly noticeable and others are hidden. Within this resource I have focused on the aspects of additional-language acquisition that, with positive intervention, can inspire teachers to affect the experience of the new arrival's transition into the mainstream English-speaking system.

Reviews of this intervention

This programme has been based on tried-and-tested research. The programme was first introduced in Lawdale Junior School in Tower Hamlets, London, and later used in other schools within the borough. It has since been revised in order to offer even more effective provision.

Caroline Scott has written an excellent resource for the ever busy teacher. These lessons, for the new entrant with little or no English, provide a supportive
structure to ensure children experience success in their new environment. Caroline Scott’s book considers and supports the whole child and the worries and anxieties they will be experiencing as they start a new life in what is likely to be a new country, new home, new friends and new school. Her programme stresses the importance of a welcoming, positive environment as essential to securing progress for these pupils.

The programme is based on sound educational research and practical experience of trialling the programme. It is carefully focused on what language the new entrant immediately requires to access their needs in a new school. Learning is reviewed and then developed by a daily programme that identifies key vocabulary and structures with a strong focus on oral practice.

Resources are identified and supplied but Caroline understands that the most important resource at this time in a child’s life will be the people around them and has a homework programme that supports the engagement of the child’s family. This is a very useful resource that has a place in every school. It is thorough and easy to use for either a trained TA or class teacher. Most importantly, it will set children with EAL on the road to success.

Annette Oliver, Headteacher, Lawdale Junior School, London

We have used Caroline’s approach to teaching English as an additional language for some years now and it has been particularly successful with newly arrived pupils at Key Stage 2 who are early-stage learners of English. Schools in Tower Hamlets who have used Caroline’s programme have reported good progress for their pupils.

Tower Hamlets Ethnic Minority Achievement Service, London

The programme is a step-by-step guideline to help teachers bridge the gap of learning for EAL students. It has personally given me the tools to provide the students with the primary, essential information they need to build a solid foundation in English.

Lena Ramzi, teaching assistant, Cairo

Lots of ideas that should be encompassed in the whole-school plan.

Key Stage 1 Co-ordinator Susan Hills who has taught in Durham, Norfolk and North-East Lincolnshire in both independent and state schools

It has made me more aware of the difficulties faced by ESL students on a daily basis across the curriculum.

Year 4 teacher, Lynne Cadenhead, Aberdeen

**About Communication Across Cultures**

This intervention has been developed by Caroline Scott for Communication Across Cultures, an organisation that develops multicultural and multilingual learning opportunities for young learners worldwide by offering innovative and inspiring teacher-training and learning resources.
Communication Across Cultures aims to develop young learners’:

• language-learning skills through effective learning and teaching strategies;
• access to new languages within a broad range of curriculum subjects;
• ability to take responsibility for their own language learning and learning in the future;
• global awareness, emphasising an understanding and respect for different cultures.

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