Raising the Achievement of Bilingual Learners in Primary Schools: Evaluation of the Pilot/Programme

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Content

Acknowledgements

Executive Summary

Background

In January 2004, it was announced that the Primary National Strategy (PNS) would work in partnership with the Ethnic Minority Achievement (EMA) Unit within the DfES, to develop a pilot project in 21 local authorities (LAs), with the aims of increasing 'the confidence and expertise of mainstream primary teachers in meeting the needs of advanced bilingual learners' and of closing the attainment gap between bilingual learners and those whose first language is English.
(http://www.standards.dfes.gov.uk/ethnicminorities/raising_achievement/whats_new/EAL_Pilot/).

Within participating local authorities, the pilot was led, and the pilot consultant managed, by the respective managers of the Primary National Strategy and the Ethnic Minority Achievement Service. This helped to ensure that the pilot was embedded within the Primary National Strategy – and thus able to access its structures for professional development – while local specialist expertise was utilised. In some authorities, the collaboration between the two perspectives was innovative as respective managers/teams had not previously worked together.

The structure of support was that whereby pilot consultants, appointed by the local authority, and trained and supported by the local authority as well as by PNS regional directors, provided participating schools with a programme of whole-staff professional development sessions and an allocation of time to be used flexibly to meet the specific needs of the school.

Once a consultant was employed, his/her input to particular schools was negotiated following a structured audit undertaken by the school's senior leaders and relevant middle managers, the consultant and relevant local authority advisers. A leadership team within the school was responsible for implementation of the pilot.

Key Findings

The findings are presented under the research questions which structured the evaluation. 'Transient' findings – that is, issues which arose at the beginning of the pilot but were resolved and ceased to be concerns in the course of the evaluation – are not reported here.

The effects of the pilot in improving teacher confidence in meeting the needs of their bilingual pupils

Across all case study schools, which themselves represented a range of school profiles and background characteristics, the confidence of teachers and teaching assistants was reported to have been enhanced. Teachers' increase in confidence was relative to the gains in:

- insight into the general difficulties encountered by key stage 1 and 2 pupils on account of their dual language use and the reasons why these difficulties inhibited the pupils' attainment in national tests
- insight into the specific difficulties encountered by individual groups of pupils within the bilingual cohort (e.g. languages with different profiles of tenses or anomalies in vocabulary)
- understanding of the rationale behind, and scope of, 'EAL pedagogy'
- awareness of how 'EAL pedagogy' related to good teaching as promoted in other current initiatives such as Assessment for Learning
- understanding of how the discrete pilot strategies could be integrated into regular classroom routines and approaches and benefit all pupils in the class whether or not they were bilingual learners
- extension of the individual's repertoire of strategies, techniques and presentations to enact the enhanced understanding and awareness and transform theory into action in the classroom
- opportunities to observe new models and get constructive feedback from the consultants
- support organised by senior leaders, which ensured consistency within the school, allowed for discussion and the sharing of ideas and resources, and thus increased motivation and ensured innovation was sustained.

There was evidence that the pilot activities made a significant contribution to bringing about these gains. Staff in the case study schools reported that the effect of pilot activity had encouraged bilingual pupils:

- to have higher expectations of themselves
- to be more confident
- to ask more questions and 'expect to understand'
- to be more prepared to use their home language in school
- to be more 'on task' and focused.

The effects of local authority management arrangements and school improvement interventions in supporting schools to meet the needs of their bilingual learners

There was evidence that local authority management arrangements and school improvement interventions were powerful in terms of supporting the pilot within some of the case study schools. However, much of this potential was as yet unrealised. For example, some consultants relied substantially on support

from the Regional Directors, rather than their LA management team. While this is unsurprising, it carries strong messages about facilitating conditions which need to be recognised at a time when the programme is being more widely applied.

Local authority management was most effective where it facilitated:

- a judicious choice of pilot schools based on sound knowledge of a school's position regarding provision for bilingual pupils and the capacity of the school to make good use of the pilot resources
- clarity both about the pilot itself and its application to schools in the authority (including the target group of pupils), and the communication of this vision to participating schools
- the appointment of a consultant who had the relevant pedagogical knowledge and expertise and the skills necessary to work not only strategically with school senior leadership teams to effect school improvement and change, but also operationally, with teacher practitioners in the classroom
- the inclusion of the necessary senior leadership within the authority to support pilot activities and to engage in collaboration in order to promote a coherent local authority approach via other current interventions and across specialist teams
- the identification of, and access to, sources of resources
- means of monitoring and evaluating the progress and outcomes of the pilot in order to support and disseminate as appropriate
- the identification of networks and provision of opportunities for the sharing of good practice.

Other Findings

The most successful interventions and practices in achieving the aims of the project

Across the case study schools, reference was made to a wide range of routine practices and specific interventions which aimed to raise the standard of achievement of bilingual pupils: some of these were related to, and/or adapted from, other interventions in which the school was engaged; some were pilot-specific; and some were already in existence in the school but took on a wider significance when linked to pilot activities.

Specific interventions and changes in policy and practice at school level were successful when they:

- were grounded in an action plan which facilitated their implementation, set accessible targets, allocated adequate resources and made the contextual arrangements for implementation and sustainability

- were applicable right across the curriculum (i.e. not just within literacy or numeracy, even if grounded in these)

- were applicable right across the school (i.e. not confined to key stage 2 or a particular cohort of pupils)

- raised the standard of achievement of all pupils (not just the target group)

- addressed specific difficulties that had been identified by the school

- were resource-light, serviced by resources which could be produced by teachers themselves or readily available from other sources

- were able to be assimilated into regular classroom routines and planning, and were compatible with other curriculum practices and pedagogic approaches which teachers valued

- caused reflection on, and subsequent action on, other aspects of the curriculum and school life which could support bilingual learners more effectively (e.g. contact with parents)

- took teachers out of their comfort zone but encouraged them to challenge themselves rather than to have imposed challenge

- generated immediate positive feedback from pupils within the classroom thus encouraging teachers to continue with the practice, whatever it was

- were supported by school structures (facilitated by the senior leadership team) and effected changes in staff deployment (e.g. in relation to teaching assistant support, the use of leading teachers)

- were grounded in purposeful and manageable record-keeping which informed practice.

Particular teaching approaches referred to widely (i.e. applicable across a range of contexts) which seemed to be of particular benefit to pupils, enhanced their understanding and developed language use were:

- use of curricular/layered targets to plan for language development and curriculum access

- planned opportunities for speaking and listening using 'talk partners', talk frames and role play

- prioritising of speaking and listening as a prelude to writing

- use of first language by children to learn – rather than limiting use of first language by adults for explanations.

Other **positive elements** of the pilot included:

- focusing schools' attention on the needs of bilingual pupils, reminding teachers of effective practices which they may have used previously but which had become low priority

- establishing means of analysing assessment tasks and results of assessments in order to identify exactly what pupils found difficult

- establishing means of monitoring the progress of bilingual pupils and setting relevant targets and, thereby, challenging expectations about what they could, or could not, achieve

- encouraging different LA providers to collaborate and present messages in a coherent and unified way in order to make a stronger impact.

Within schools, **the reception by staff and impact of the PDM programme** was most favourable when it:

- was negotiated from the outset by the senior leadership team and the consultant
- was jointly delivered by (internal) school staff and the (external) consultant
- made explicit reference to the particular profile of needs in the school at the time
- offered new ideas and approaches while reminding staff of practices in which they may have engaged in the past but which presently lay dormant
- was accessible by all staff, including teaching assistants, at the same time (so the school had 'the common experience')
- was supported by effective use of consultant time to ensure that 'the talk' of the PDM became enacted in practice (with targeting of support and input carefully planned by the senior leadership team).

Implications

Challenges to the EAL programme

The pilot became a programme before the evaluation was completed. This is justifiable given the positive reception that it received in the majority of schools. However, the evidence from the evaluation was that the programme had the greatest immediate impact when an effective consultant had support from local authority colleagues (at a personal level, to share ideas and expertise, and to orchestrate the sharing of good practice) and went into a school where there was strong commitment to the programme on the part of the senior leadership team (who, again, were able to *manage* the process of implementation). Arguably, the actual materials were the least important part of the equation. Thus there are questions over the degree to which the programme will flourish without any of the elements identified above unless its messages are incorporated into other ongoing interventions.

The findings from the research gave rise to a series of developmental questions for different agencies involved in the programme. These questions could be applied to authorities and schools which may participate in the programme in the future.

Questions for local authorities

- what information is being used to identify schools that might benefit from the programme?

- how is the expertise gained by previous pilot schools being used as a resource within the authority?

- is all relevant expertise and experience in the authority, wherever located (i.e. in a non-pilot school, in a specialist service, in a community resource), being used to generate the practice which will contribute to realising the key pilot outcome of raised achievement of bilingual pupils?

- how can the programme help to foster good working relationships between EMA and PNS teams?

- are the contribution and responsibilities of all relevant senior leaders within the authority clearly delineated in the programme action plan?

- has the action plan been subject to relevant consultation without going through unnecessary bureaucratic channels?

- has the person appointed to implement the programme got the relevant experience for the tasks involved and, if not, has professional development been made available?

- is regular mentoring/coaching/line management available to support this person in what is a challenging role?

- have monitoring and evaluation plans to measure pupil progress been established at the beginning of the programme?

Questions for new schools in the EAL programme

- is the leadership team clear about the purposes of the programme and the way in which it will meet needs current in the school?

- have roles and responsibilities been clearly delineated in the light of the corpus of information about implementation in other schools?

- how can responsibilities for taking forward the programme in schools be most effectively allocated to promote individual development, capacity-building and general ownership?

- what arrangements are being made for the optimal use of staff time (e.g. systems for sharing and accessing materials; sharing ideas)?

- what informal and formal arrangements will best engage parents and carers?

- what are the implications of the programme for the linkages between the schools and their communities and how could these contribute to raising pupils' standards of achievement?

- is on-going support from the local authority available in a manner acceptable to, and helpful for, the school?

Questions for established pilot schools

- what have been the most significant outcomes of the pilot?

- have these been finalised (i.e. task completed) or do they need sustaining and embedding?

- what arrangements are in place to engage new members of staff who have not had the 'common experience' of the PDM programme?

- how are innovations in teaching practice and school leadership and management being built upon, developed and embedded in other initiatives?

- what systems are in place to assess the effects of changes made (i.e. in assessment data)?
- what is the best use of expertise gained at middle management level (e.g. by the EAL coordinator)? Should the post-holder continue in the role or should the role pass to another member of staff to develop his/her skills?

Questions for DfES (or its representatives) on initiating a programme

- what national, regional and local agencies need to be fully engaged in this initiative at the design stage?
- how can the new messages which this programme is intended to give be related to existing messages (so that there is a perspective on existing practice/policy rather than a change of track)?
- is the lead time adequate for effective planning so that the initiative is as strong as possible before it is implemented in the field?
- are the systems and mechanisms for delivery as simple as possible and do they make the maximum use of existing systems and mechanisms?
- has a relevant LA team been recruited and adequately trained?
- are there plans for the identification and dissemination of good practice in order to maximise the effects of this particular programme?
- how will the DfES promote the nationally produced materials/resources/information in order to engender confidence in potential users who may have other competing claims on their attention?

Messages from the EAL programme for other educational programmes/interventions

A key strength of the EAL programme was its ability to reach a broader range of pupils. While the extent of its adaptation may not have been in the original design and, ironically, may have been a factor of confusion about its exact designation, much of the programme's success in schools lay in the fact that it could, with careful planning, apply to all bilingual learners – not just the 'advanced' bilingual learners for which it was originally conceived – and to a range of settings in which they were being educated (for example, schools with high or low proportions of these pupils). Indeed, given the fact that schools persistently highlighted differences between the achievement of different ethnic groups (caused not only by differences in language usage but also cultural factors such as parental involvement and social factors such as mobility in school placement), this flexibility was critical. While the programme identified its target group as 'advanced bilingual learners' this group, despite having a common definition, is not homogeneous and different needs are represented within it.

A second key strength of the programme was its compatibility with other initiatives and priorities. Its centrality within the Primary National Strategy and its contribution to the inclusion agenda and delivery of the *Every Child*

Matters outcomes were significant given the past history of provision for bilingual learners.

However, there were some weaknesses which could be instructive for other educational programmes/interventions. While too long a lead time may be demotivating and reduce the momentum of implementation, too short a lead time is liable to result in inadequate preparation, too little time for the most effective appointments and the potential for confusion as to the purposes of the initiative. In this particular case, there was evidence that some authorities may have been limited in their choice of candidates for consultants' posts and/or did not have adequate time to support these candidates before they had to take up their post. In addition, there was unease about the fact that the PDM programme was not finalised and the materials were incomplete at the start of the pilot; this did not help the confidence either of the consultants (who had to prepare to deliver sessions without adequate time to absorb the messages or exploit their potentialities) or of headteachers who felt accountable to their staff to guarantee an effective programme of whole-school training. Messages about the cohort at which the programme was explicitly directed were often misunderstood along the lines of communication.

Research aims

The broad aims of the evaluation were:

- to assess the effects of the pilot on the attainment of bilingual pupils in the primary schools participating in the pilot and in improving teacher confidence in meeting the needs of their bilingual pupils;
- to examine local authority management arrangements and school improvement interventions in supporting schools to meet the needs of their bilingual learners; and
- to identify the most successful interventions/practice in achieving the aims of the project

Research methods

Seven local authorities were selected to participate in the evaluation.

phase 1 (May 2004 – March 2005)
- telephone interviews with the Primary Strategy Manager, the manager of the EMA service and the pilot consultant
- visits to 19 schools across the seven authorities to interview a range of staff (total of 116 interviews)
- telephone interviews with two further schools

phase 2 (April 2005 – March 2006)
- telephone interviews with local authority managers (as phase 1)
- follow-up visits to 13 phase 1 schools
- visits to a further four schools recommended by the LAs for having made interesting developments in their initial year of the pilot

- telephone interviews with a further seven phase 1 schools

Three interviews were conducted with the regional director(s) in the course of the two phases.

*phase 3(*ends April 2007)
Pupil performance data will be analysed for the years 2004, 2005 and 2006 and any patterns with regard to schools participating in the pilot will be noted. The report of this analysis will be available in spring 2007.

1   Introduction

1.1   Context

In January 2004, it was announced that the Primary National Strategy (PNS) would work in partnership with the Ethnic Minority Achievement Project Team of the DfES, to develop a pilot project in 21 local authorities (LAs), with the principal aim of increasing 'the confidence and expertise of mainstream primary teachers in meeting the needs of advanced bilingual learners' and of closing the attainment gap between bilingual learners and those whose first language is English.
(http://www.standards.dfes.gov.uk/ethnicminorities/raising_achievement/whats_new/EAL_Pilot/). Approximately 45 LAs participated in the pilot as associate LAs.

The Aiming High Consultation (DfES, 2003) considered the development of the Primary National Strategy:

> *it will both broaden its remit and focus increasingly on ensuring pupils at all levels maximise their progress. This will include a clear focus on enabling teachers to meet the needs of pupils from all ethnic groups* (DfES, 2003, p.17).

One of the aims emerging from the consultation was:

> *to develop a comprehensive EAL strand as part of the strategy which will include…meeting the needs of more advanced learners of English…and…training and support for mainstream staff to improve their competence and confidence in meeting the needs of bilingual learners* (DfES, 2003, p.30).

The pilot project which is the focus of the present evaluation report was set up to try to meet this aim.

Primary National Strategy (PNS) management of the pilot
Two regional directors were appointed to lead the development of the pilot programme. They worked nationally with LA teams to develop the key principles and messages, key tools and processes for use by LAs and schools and CPD materials for consultants and schools. The Directors focused on capacity-building in the LAs, providing regular regional training sessions for pilot consultants, review and reflection sessions for PNS and EMA managers.

Local Authority management of the pilot
The pilot was jointly managed by the local authority Primary Strategy Managers (PSM) and EMA managers. One of the aims of the pilot was to develop alignment and collaboration amongst the two teams. The LA teams

worked closely with the two Regional Directors for the pilot to implement a whole school improvement model (the necessity of this approach was articulated in the Aiming High consultation (DfES, 2003).

Implementation at school level
Senior managers were asked to identify a leadership team to manage the initiative as the intention was to build up the knowledge and expertise of these people. The leadership team usually included the headteacher/deputy head, literacy and numeracy coordinators and the person responsible for EMA in the school.

The pupil cohort
The pilot concerned advanced bilingual learners. Ofsted (2005) defines these as:

> pupils who have had all or most of their school education in the UK and whose oral proficiency in English is usually indistinguishable from that of pupils with English as a first language but whose writing may still show distinctive features related to their language background.

The intention of the pilot work was to improve attainment amongst bilingual learners in literacy and numeracy, by drawing upon, and making available to whole school staffs, already existing knowledge of effective pedagogy and practice for pupils with English as an additional language

The diagnostic visit
A school's involvement in the pilot started with a diagnostic visit during which LA officers (the pilot consultant and other representatives including the link inspector, the literacy and numeracy consultants and the EMA manager) and the school leadership team (headteacher, EAL, literacy and mathematics coordinator).evaluated the existing provision for EAL learners using the school's performance and self-evaluation data, considered alongside feedback from the LA consultants on lesson observations and audits of the learning environment and planning. The suggested format for the visit was that observations and audits should be carried out in the morning followed by discussion and action planning in the afternoon.

The Raising Achievement Plan (RAP)
The visit resulted in a Raising Achievement Plan (RAP) which identified the targets and an action plan to meet them (the RAP was written termly). These RAPs were drawn up according to a common framework. Headteachers interviewed in the course of the evaluation said that they appreciated the familiarity of the structure of the pilot (i.e. the pattern of identifying needs through an initial diagnostic visit and drawing up short term plans (RAPs)), which was similar to the structure of the Primary Leadership Programme (PLP) and the Intensifying Support Programme (ISP). In the majority of schools, the termly RAPs were developed by the headteacher with members of the leadership team and the pilot consultant.

Professional development to support the pilot

The pilot consultants provided a series of up to eight Professional Development Meetings (PDMs), as well as additional support in the classroom and to members of the leadership team in each of the participating schools in the local authorities (LAs). Each pilot school received up to ten days of the pilot consultant's time. The first PDM was developed by the regional directors of the pilot as a fully scripted hour, dealing with EAL principles, pedagogy and practice. Subsequent PDMs were presented to consultants as outlines, with key messages and some suggestions for activities, so that consultants could tailor the content to make it appropriate for the local context.

The key organising strands for school based development were:

- leadership and management;
- teaching and learning: language development
- teaching and learning: curriculum access
- teaching and learning: assessment for learning
- conditions for learning
- partnerships beyond the classroom.

In May 2004, the National Foundation for Educational Research (NFER) was commissioned by the Department for Education and Skills (DfES) to undertake the evaluation of the pilot *Raising the Achievement of Bilingual Learners in Primary Schools.* This present report is the final report and follows a series of interim reports. The content of the earlier reports is not reproduced here in full: rather this report focuses on the lessons learnt and the way forward for the programme as more schools participate and existing schools seek to embed practice in regular routines.

1.2 Research aims

The aims of the research were:

- to assess the impact of the pilot on the attainment of bilingual pupils in the primary schools participating in the pilot
- to assess the effects of the pilot in improving teacher confidence in meeting the needs of their bilingual pupils
- to assess the effects of LA management arrangements and of LA school improvement interventions in supporting schools to meet the needs of their bilingual learners
- to identify the most successful interventions/practice in achieving the aims of the project.

Further aims of the research were:

- to measure and assess the impact of the pilot on bilingual pupil outcomes such as attainment, motivation, behaviour and attendance
- to identify and assess the different processes and practices at LA, school, teacher and pupil levels that lead to different outcomes
- to identify the different training options, resources and guidance materials provided to reach the aims of the pilot
- to assess the impact of training, resources and guidance materials on teaching, learning and management of raising the achievement of bilingual pupils in the pilot schools
- to assess the different practices in terms of improving teacher confidence in meeting the needs of bilingual learners
- to assess perceptions of pilot directors, LA managers, schools, leaders, teachers and pupils with regard to the success of processes and practices in the pilot
- to assess stakeholder perceptions of the impact of the pilot in meeting its aims.

1.3 Report content

The NFER research team has reported regularly to DfES on the progress of the pilot to date. Thus, in phase one of the evaluation we reported on inputs and the implementation of the pilot. In this final report we report on the emergent outcomes and perceived changes from the various stakeholders. This report primarily focuses on the findings from the case study school visits in phase two. It also draws conclusions and poses questions for LAs and schools. It makes reference to three previous unpublished interim reports presented to DfES in August 2004, March 2005 and August 2005 (Taggart *et al*., 2004, 2005;White *et al.,* 2005) respectively. A summary of the main findings from these reports follows in Section 1.4. A summary of the methodological approach to the evaluation also follows in Section 1.4 with full details given in Appendix 1.

An analysis of pupil performance data (from 2004, 2005 and 2006) will be reported in 2007 to explore whether the pilot projects lead to any discernable improvement in the key stage 2 performances of pupils at pilot schools.

1.4 Report context and summary of findings from previous reports

1.4.1 Summary of research methodology

This report is primarily based on data gathered in follow-up visits to, or telephone interviews with, staff in 20 pilot schools that had been the subject of case study visits in the autumn term of 2004, following the implementation of

the pilot across 21 LAs. The schools were selected from seven LAs participating in the pilot (with the aim of securing ongoing contact with three schools per authority) and included a range in terms of geography, authority type (e.g. metropolitan, London borough), 'traditions' of provision for pupils with EAL and contextual issues. The initial case studies and the follow-up research involved semi-structured interviews with the headteacher, members of the leadership team for the pilot, class teachers and teaching assistants (TAs). (See Appendix 1 for full details of the research methodology)

1.4.2 Summary of findings from previous reports

Findings from the initial visits to schools in autumn 2005, which focused on the implementation of the pilot, were reported in Taggart *et al.* (2005). This unpublished report identified that insufficient lead-time for the pilot had been a general problem, with schools having to marry the pilot agenda with pre-existing school development plans. Staff at all levels commented favourably on the potential of the pilot to raise the attainment of learners with EAL. The evidence indicated that the pilot could be implemented in a range of settings (e.g. profile of school roll, socio-economic background of school, experience with EAL), although in some schools there had been initial confusion about the target pupils for the pilot, especially with regard to the term 'advanced bilingual learner', and the balance in the focus of the pilot between this group and pupils who were 'newly-arrived' to the country. The report identified two main factors that facilitated effective implementation of the pilot in schools and ensured that it was well-received by staff:

- Initial recruitment of schools and EAL needs analysis that was well-managed (i.e. the process was constructive for the school staff involved and was not critical of existing performance).
- Professional development meetings that were tailored to the context and existing EAL expertise of the school, and included practical strategies that could be readily adopted by class teachers.

The report noted that the structure of the pilot had already been modelled and 'proven' within the Primary National Strategy – this engendered confidence amongst school staff. The strategies introduced in the initial PDMs and through modelling were new to some schools although, in others, the pilot was revitalising strategies that had lain 'dormant'. The innovative aspect of the pilot was the extension of what had been regarded as a 'specialism' to all teaching staff. Schools also highlighted the time that the pilot made available for staff to discuss, plan and to develop more systematic approaches to providing for learners with EAL. However, setting aside time for the PDMs was a major commitment and in some schools late initiation of the pilot meant that plans for staff's general professional development had to be revised to accommodate the pilot PDMs.

Two additional interim reports (Taggart *et al.,* 2004 and White *et al.,* 2005*)* focused on findings from telephone interviews conducted with pilot consultants and pilot managers from the PNS and EMA teams in the seven

LAs selected for this evaluation. The earlier of the two unpublished reports (Taggart *et al.,* 2004) was conducted in June 2004 at the inception of the pilot and highlighted the problems encountered by LAs in recruiting suitably qualified pilot consultants which resulted in some appointments being delayed. At LA level, managers welcomed:

- the whole-school approach to raising standards for advanced bilingual learners
- the higher profile given to bilingualism and to EAL pedagogy.

Follow-up interviews were conducted with the same LA staff in June 2005 and reported in White *et al.* (2005). This unpublished report highlighted a greater understanding and collaboration between the EMA and PNS teams that had developed as a result of their joint management of the pilot. The flexibility of the pilot was also evident in the various consultancy models adopted, with some LAs sharing the role between two, or in one authority between four, people. The issues identified in relation to the role of the consultant included:

- a demanding workload
- the breadth of knowledge and skills required for the role
- the loss of momentum in schools following the departure of an attached consultant.

The pilot consultants were generally satisfied with the training they had received, although they felt that there was too short a lead time for its assimilation before they had to deliver programmes in schools. Similar concerns were also raised about the availability of materials and information for schools.

2 Interpreting the development of the pilot in schools

In this section, the ways in which schools had interpreted the various aspects of the pilot, including leadership, Raising Achievement Plans (RAPs), the target group of pupils, the Professional Development Meetings (PDMs) and consultancy time will be discussed in detail. For more information on these aspects see section 1.1.

2.1 Schools' approaches to the leadership of the pilot

At the beginning of the pilot, senior managers were advised that they should have a leadership team to manage the initiative – as with the Primary Leadership Programme (PLP) and the Intensifying Support Programme (ISP).

The model suggested for the EAL pilot was a team including the headteacher/deputy head, literacy and numeracy coordinators and the person responsible for EMA in the school. This was to encourage a more inclusive approach to raising the achievement of bilingual learners. The majority of pilot schools in the evaluation used the existing leadership/senior management team to steer the pilot as it often included the relevant staff. Schools wanted to avoid logistical complexity and build on leadership relationships which they felt had already worked effectively. In a minority of schools, a specific leadership team was set up to manage the pilot. In one school they created an EAL management group, comprising the personnel suggested by the pilot. The headteacher felt this way of managing the pilot had had a positive impact on distributed leadership within the school, as the key stage coordinators were able to work closely together, drawing upon their own areas of expertise (i.e. English and mathematics).

The commitment, team spirit and enthusiasm of the leadership team and/or the headteacher were reported by many interviewees to have driven the pilot. The EAL consultants felt that the pilot worked best when the headteachers were fully involved from the beginning, attended all the PDMs and made the pilot a priority for the school year. It had also worked extremely well where the headteacher had a clear vision of how the pilot would benefit the school.

In a few schools, it was evident from interviews with two pilot consultants in phase two, that some leadership teams had taken considerably longer to contribute positively to the pilot – usually where the school had not regarded the pilot as a key priority, or where their own EAL expertise has been perceived to be more developed than that offered by the pilot consultant. In one of these schools, the consultant felt that she had eventually got the leadership team on board, but the pilot messages had still not been

disseminated to class teachers, as this school was resistant to the idea of the consultant team teaching in the classrooms.

2.1.1 Role of the EAL coordinator

In the majority of schools, an EAL coordinator was appointed to manage the pilot. This was often a more senior member of staff but a few were class teachers. In many schools, the EAL coordinator had a key role in driving the pilot and acting as the mediator between the consultant and other staff. As a result, in the majority of schools the whole school embraced the pilot. These EAL coordinators had considerable experience of teaching EAL learners and were able to draw on their existing knowledge as well as training from the pilot. In one school, the headteacher appreciated the skills of her EAL coordinator (a former EMA consultant). As she explained, 'It's a bit like having a consultant in school, which is different from schools where they have dragged someone in to be the EAL coordinator….and the person doesn't have any experience of EAL'.

In one school, the headteacher felt the EAL coordinator had benefited from the input from the Primary Leadership Programme (PLP), which had given this teacher the confidence to lead and direct the EAL pilot. As part of this role, she had begun to carry out observations in classes to monitor the progression of EAL learners. The EAL coordinator's involvement in the delivery of a training session was a key turning point for the school as staff saw how she was using EAL strategies to improve her class teaching and were keen to follow her lead.

However, a few schools chose not to appoint a specific EAL coordinator and, instead, one or two senior members of staff (including the headteacher) co-led the pilot.

At one school, the headteacher believed that the role of EAL coordinator was too time consuming for one person and that, because it was a whole school initiative, it should be managed by existing leaders. The headteacher led the initiative but worked closely with the whole leadership team to ensure it fitted closely with the other priorities on the School Development Plan.

In another school, the headteacher and deputy head had played a significant part in leading the pilot, as the headteacher had run the majority of the training for the pilot. The headteacher was very committed to improving teaching and learning for her EAL learners and had even started to attend the consultants' training, which she found invaluable.

2.2 How schools tailored and developed the Raising Achievement Plans (RAPs)

Planning for the pilot was by means of a termly RAP, which recorded detailed objectives in four areas: leadership and management, teaching and learning, conditions for learning and partnerships beyond the classroom. As noted in the previous unpublished interim report (March 2005), there was a great variety between schools in the process of drawing up the initial RAP as well as its content.

During the pilot year, the majority of schools had continued to produce termly RAPs as expected. Most schools were happy to use the pilot proforma as it was logical and they felt it was of benefit. A few schools had not used the suggested proforma but, instead, had designed their own RAP, or incorporated it into their School Development Plan. In one school, the consultant encouraged the key stage coordinators to write the RAP in the way that was most useful to the school, rather than trying to fit their plans into the set format. In another school, the EAL project aims and objectives were incorporated into the SDP and no separate RAP was drawn up. Indeed, this seemed to be happening in several schools in the second year, as they found that the programme needed to be embedded within their SDP in order for it to be sustainable.

There was a noticeable difference since the phase one interviews, because over the course of the pilot year, the leadership teams had begun to take ownership of the subsequent RAPs and were more committed to writing these documents. Staff had a better understanding of the pilot when they were writing RAPs in the second and third terms, since they could place them in the context of the whole pilot, something that had been difficult to do at the beginning of the pilot.

Some teachers felt that their first RAPs had been over-ambitious and they had not been able to meet all the success criteria. Thus, several schools commented that the second and third RAPs were focusing on embedding and monitoring the targets they had been set in the first RAP. Other teachers felt that their initial RAPs had been too vague and in subsequent RAPs the success criteria, and means to achieve them, became more focused.

The majority of schools saw the benefits of drawing up termly RAPs. These benefits included:

- the focusing of people's minds through short term plans
- allowing teachers to take ownership of their actions
- clearly setting out who was accountable for the actions
- establishing success criteria
- putting a time frame on objectives.

In the main, teachers commented that the subsequent RAPs were more useful than the initial documents as they were more comprehensive in laying out the targets, the means to achieve these, and the allocation of roles and responsibilities.

Nevertheless, in one LA, the process of writing RAPs had not helped to drive the pilot forward, mainly because the initial RAPs had been written by the consultant and schools felt they had no ownership.

> In one school, the original RAP was kept for the whole year, despite a new consultant being appointed part way through the pilot year. The staff in this school were disappointed that there was no real discussion or planning about the future of the pilot, despite the change of consultant. Although there was a meeting between the staff and the new consultant, a new RAP was not drawn up.

2.3 Schools' definition of their target group for the pilot

As reported previously, at the beginning of the pilot, there had been some misunderstanding in many schools about the target group of pupils for the pilot. It had taken several schools some time to accept that the pilot focus was on advanced bilingual learners rather than newly arrived pupils. As with any new initiative, schools take what is of prime concern to them, and in some cases they began by focusing on newly arrived pupils, rather than advanced bilingual learners. However, the majority of interviewees understood this by the time of the phase two visits.

Nevertheless, it was evident that most schools regarded the pilot as an inclusive programme, whose strategies were helping all EAL learners and, in some cases, monolingual pupils as well. In many cases, the message of it being an inclusive programme came directly from the EAL consultant. Strategies employed as a result of the pilot were largely used within whole classes (rather than individual groups of pupils) and, therefore, were thought to benefit the majority of pupils. Many class teachers commented, for example, that the increased use of speaking and listening was benefiting all pupils.

In two schools, the headteachers were aware at the outset that they had relatively few pupils who could be classed as advanced bilingual pupils but a significant population of pupils who were newly arrived to the country. Before joining the pilot, they had identified how it might benefit their school. One considered that the pilot was advocating good teaching practice and would benefit all the pupils; the other felt that there were aspects of the pilot that would be applicable to the pupils.

Some schools, usually those which were experienced in their teaching of EAL learners, identified their target group of pupils to be the advanced bilingual learners as the pilot intended. In these schools, they felt that the resources and strategies were explicitly helping advanced bilingual learners.

In a few schools, staff had chosen to focus on certain year groups: they had wanted to apply the pilot to a few year groups to make it more manageable. In these cases, schools tended to avoid changing the way staff worked and planned in year 6 and concentrated the consultancy in other year groups in the school, so that year 6 could prepare for the National Curriculum tests. These schools felt less confident about experimenting in year 6 than in other years and planned to implement successful strategies gradually, as individual year groups moved up through the school.

Phase two interviews suggested that in one case study school the headteacher and EAL coordinator continued to believe that the pilot was focused on the high achieving bilingual learners, rather than the plateau learners (pupils who reached a particular level and then had problems making further progress) they felt it should help. This apparent misunderstanding of the term 'advanced bilingual learners' persisted and both interviewees commented that they never resolved this apparent conflict over the target group. The EAL coordinator commented, 'we just limped along, we didn't get deeply involved because it didn't meet our school needs'.

2.4 Schools' use of the Professional Development Meetings (PDMs)

Speaking with staff in the case study schools (in autumn term 2005) one year after the pilot was initiated, it was apparent that in approximately two thirds of schools there had been positive developments in the way the PDMs were being organised and delivered. In these schools, dialogue amongst the consultants and school staff had made the PDMs into helpful, engaging sessions, which were adapted to meet the school's needs. During our initial visits in autumn 2004, several staff had perceived the PDMs negatively, considering them 'theoretical' and 'dry'. In some cases, where staff had many years of experience of teaching bilingual pupils, and were familiar with some of the ideas expounded in the PDMs, staff said that they felt 'patronised'. In approximately a third of the schools, less positive perceptions were still expressed in the second round of NFER visits.

At the start of the pilot, the swift implementation and the reported lack of a detailed and comprehensive overview of all the PDMs, both for the schools and the consultants themselves, had inevitably made it difficult for people to form a judgement about the usefulness and relevance of the PDMs proposed. Nevertheless, as the pilot progressed, the consultants began to receive the pilot materials and their own training on these, further in advance of having to

deliver the material to schools. Staff commented that this had had positive implications for the way the material was being delivered, as the consultants had time to reflect on the content and were able to tailor the material for the schools.

Adaptations were made to the programme structure of the PDMs in several schools and they were often joint decisions made by the EAL consultant and the school leadership team. The set of eight PDMs that were envisaged at the beginning of the pilot were reduced to five or six in many schools. Some schools combined some of the PDMs, and others omitted material which did not specifically relate to the objectives on the school's RAP. One of the benefits of the PDMs articulated in interviews was that they had provided opportunities for the whole school to focus on addressing the needs of EAL learners, given teachers an opportunity to talk to one another across year groups about appropriate strategies, and ultimately had led to the development of the pilot.

In those schools which were particularly positive about the programme of PDMs, the headteacher and/or leadership team had often taken the initiative to tailor the sessions with the consultant. Prior to the delivery of the PDMs, the leadership team had seen the significance of the pilot as a resource to help them meet the school's particular priorities. For example, in one school the first PDMs were considered to be too theoretical and, therefore, the staff negotiated subsequent PDMs with the consultant. In this school, the PDM programme was adapted to link with another initiative – a new approach to the teaching of the skills of writing – with which the school was involved. The staff appreciated that this integration had helped to embed the pilot in the school, as consistent messages about improving literacy for EAL learners were being delivered to staff.

2.4.1 The delivery of the PDMs

In the majority of schools, the EAL pilot consultants (who were funded by the Primary National Strategy) delivered the PDMs, although in a few schools other LA personnel (e.g. literacy consultant, Ethnic Minority Achievement (EMA) advisory staff) jointly delivered some of the material. In some schools this had the advantage of using other skills and expertise and also enabled the pilot messages to become embedded within the work of the EMA services as well as the Primary National Strategy. Typically this joint approach involved the use of literacy consultants to support the development of writing and the numeracy consultant to help schools with the language associated with mathematics. However, in one school, the headteacher noted that there had been a lack of joined up thinking at local level in how support from other consultants could be integrated into the EAL pilot. The NFER's earlier report (August 2005) quoted a consultant from another authority who touched on this issue: 'It would have been more useful if all the key players across the LA had shared in the key messages and the training right at the start'.

In four schools, members of staff jointly delivered the PDMs with the consultant, an arrangement which the schools found hugely beneficial. Teachers and the consultant were able to plan the sessions together and suggest practical ideas to the rest of the staff. It allowed teachers to take ownership of the PDM programme and adapt the material to the school's needs.

In one school, joint delivery had worked extremely well, particularly as the consultant had recognised the PDM programme would need to be tailored from the outset. When planning the initial PDMs, the consultant showed the outline of the programme to the leadership team, who were able to pick out those sessions which best matched the school's needs, as well as suggesting further adaptations. As the EAL coordinator explained: 'so we did the ones that were most relevant and in a way that suited us'. The evaluation sheets completed at the end of the PDMs showed that the staff were very positive about the content and delivery.

In other schools, the tailoring of the PDMs took a lot longer and it was only near the end of the project that some schools were receiving tailored support with which they were satisfied. In these schools, the process appeared to be slower for different reasons:

- some schools did not communicate early enough with the consultant (out of politeness)
- some consultants took longer to realise that in order for the pilot to be successful, they needed to be flexible in responding to school priorities within the overall aims and priorities of the programme
- some consultants did not have the confidence to deviate from delivering the fixed package.

2.4.2 The content of the PDMs

There was consensus amongst a whole range of school staff that the most useful PDMs were those which were of a practical nature and which contained strategies and resources that could be used directly in the classroom. Those PDMs which teachers in the case study schools valued included those on:

- speaking and listening
- guided talk
- curricular targets

> Several staff appreciated the use of role play within the sessions as it engaged them in a meaningful way.
>
> Some case study schools reported that the consultant led part of the PDM in another language, which brought home some of the issues EAL learners face daily. As one teaching assistant explained, 'even if the vocab is not there in English, the concept is there in another language and you can clue into that, and that was an important thing for all of us to recognise'.
>
> In another school, several class teachers and TAs (both monolingual and bilingual) found the role plays in Bengali interesting as it allowed them to build up their confidence of using the first language and taught them the importance of visual aids and repetition.

A few interviewees commented that they would like the PDM programme to have drawn more upon the substantial amount of existing effective practice within schools. Some interviewees also felt that the existing knowledge in those LAs with a long history of teaching EAL learners could have been better exploited and perhaps incorporated into the PDM material.

2.4.3 Difficulties arising when the PDM programme did not fit

In approximately a third of the case study schools the PDM programme had not been tailored to their needs. The staff complained that they had not gained the knowledge and practical applications that would have been useful to them on a day to day basis. In the schools where the consultants appeared not to be as flexible, tensions arose. For example, in one school the headteacher reported that she would like to have taken aspects of certain PDMs that were relevant to her, but was advised by the consultant there was a fixed programme to follow. The consultant had not appreciated that in order for the PDMs to be successful, there needed to be a great deal of negotiation and flexibility in the programme. This was one of the factors contributing to the school's withdrawal from the pilot at the end of the first autumn term.

Teachers in those schools that were unhappy with their programme of PDMs also complained that the delivery of the PDMs had failed to engage them and had assumed too little about their existing knowledge of teaching EAL learners. In these schools, there was insufficient dialogue about the staff's needs between the consultant and leadership teams.

As these teachers explained:

> 'As an experienced teacher, I want someone to come in and give me exciting ways/ideas that I have not thought of, so give examples of what other schools are doing.'

> 'We are active learners and want to engage, be motivated and stimulated, not just have a lecture or dry, boring facts thrown at us.'
>
> 'Whoever is delivering the training needs to know that teachers who have been teaching Asian pupils for many years don't need to start right at the beginning, especially when staff have done ESL in the mainstream training.'
> 'The delivery could have been more tuned in to an inner city school. We found the support from our two school improvement officers and a literacy consultant more beneficial than the PDMs'. The improvement officers were former headteachers and were able to engage the school more easily than the pilot consultant.

Across all the schools, responsibility for translating the key messages from the training into classroom practice was not always clearly delineated. One headteacher felt that lack of follow-on from the training into classroom practice was a weakness of the pilot and that schools joining the programme should schedule their staff meetings to follow on from the PDM programme. In some schools headteachers/leadership teams established expectations as to the strategies staff were expected to implement; as one headteacher explained, 'otherwise staff will just forget it'. In schools where explicit guidance had not been given, the possibility that the training might be 'forgotten' was exemplified by comments such as: 'There were good things that we could take away, but nothing was followed up'. However, there were examples in which training was being successfully translated into classroom practice on account of regular practice. Typically, this was in schools with cohesive staff groups (e.g. smaller schools or schools with effective year group teams) where discussion between staff was sufficient to generate the momentum to effect change.

2.5 Conditions for positive and effective consultancy

As reported previously at the beginning of the pilot (Taggart *et al.*, 2004), of the seven original case study authorities, five had appointed one consultant to work with the ten (approximate) schools; one had appointed two consultants and one had had established a team of four consultants (part time). Schools each gained approximately ten days of consultancy time and in the majority of cases, schools negotiated the deployment of this resource. Part of the consultant's time in the school was allocated to deliver PDMs but, as noted above, most schools decided to cut down the original eight PDM sessions and chose to use their consultancy time in other ways, as best met their needs. Schools commented that the most effective method of using their consultancy time for capacity building was for their consultant to act as a coach or a partnership teacher.

Approximately two thirds of the schools achieved the sustainable aim of establishing a gradual process of improvement as a result of an ongoing

consultancy relationship. In most schools, the consultant had spent time working with several members of staff including the leadership team, class teachers and TAs, but in a few schools this support had been targeted solely on the leadership team as these teams were reluctant to allow the consultant to work in the classroom with teachers. In a couple of schools, where several members of staff were experienced in EAL teaching, support was targeted to NQTs and other class teachers who were less familiar with teaching EAL learners. Several interviewees commented that they greatly appreciated the continuous support from the consultant that allowed the momentum of the pilot to continue.

2.5.1 Consultancy time well received in schools

It was reported that effective use of consultancy time included:

- Partnership teaching with strategically targeted year groups or individual class teachers on specific priorities identified in the RA (see Example 1 below).
- The consultant working with class teachers to help them in the planning of EAL strategies into existing units of work (see Example 2 below).
- The opportunity for teachers to discuss any issues or confusions individually with the consultant. One class teacher appreciated the openness of the consultant and the opportunity to discuss her concerns with guided talk.

- The consultant observing and monitoring practice within the classroom, after strategies had been introduced, using both quantitative and qualitative methods. In one school, for example, the consultant held discussions with pupils and staff to gain feedback on the pilot; this proved to be very informative and fed into their overall evaluation plan.

Example 1

In one school the consultant worked with year 3 teachers on guided reading, which involved the consultant selecting and grouping the target pupils, modelling a guided reading session, and team teaching with the teachers.

In another school, the consultant had held one-to-one sessions with the class teachers on speaking frames. One class teacher explained that these sessions usefully brought her reassurance that the way she was using the speaking frames in the classroom was correct.

Example 2

One teacher, who had very limited experience of working with EAL pupils, found the work that the consultant did alongside her in the classroom invaluable. The consultant helped her to plan a whole unit of work and gave her ideas to develop for subsequent lessons.

2.5.2 Essential consultancy skills

There was a degree of consensus about the characteristics of the effective consultant. Consultants were valued when they:

- had the necessary expertise in pedagogy for EAL learners
- had the skills of working with and training colleagues
- were responsive to a school's needs
- were approachable and readily available for advice and to share expertise
- had previous practical experience of working with EAL learners in a classroom (e.g. practitioner, EMA consultant), in order to gain credibility amongst staff
- were enthusiastic, particularly with the delivery of the initial PDMs.

2.5.3 Difficulties arising when consultancy time was insufficiently flexible

However, in approximately a third of the schools, the opportunity to negotiate the use of consultancy time was limited by the consultant's professional capacity, particularly with respect to specific skills and knowledge. This situation was possibly exacerbated by:

- the hasty appointment of consultants
- a change in consultancy during the pilot year
- the lack of support for the consultant from the LA (PNS manager; EMA manager)
- a lack of support from the school leadership team.

Consultants were reported to have been ineffective in supporting some of the schools which, thereby, had not had the benefit of:

- the pilot being adapted to meet the school's specific needs
- the modelling of good practice in a manner relevant to staff
- the modelling of strategies and lessons
- observation of lessons with subsequent feedback.

It was evident that one of the major contributing factors for schools' withdrawal from the pilot (either during the first year or at the end of the pilot year) had been the lack of appropriate consultant support received.

2.5.4 Amount of consultancy time

As reported previously, most LAs had appointed one full time consultant to lead the pilot. Most of the schools felt that the amount of consultancy support was pitched at the right level but, in two large junior schools, staff commented

that one of the challenges had been to ensure consistent pilot messages got through to all staff. In some cases this had been difficult because the consultant had not had enough time to work with as many individual teachers as they had hoped.

In the two local authorities where more than one consultant had been employed, some schools had benefited from receiving support from the consultancy team since they had drawn upon complementary areas of expertise. The consultants reported that they had appreciated having colleagues 'to bounce ideas off each other'.

2.6   Developing whole-school involvement in the pilot

In several schools, interview evidence suggested that some members of staff felt marginalised from the pilot. Often this was due to poor communication and dissemination by the leadership team. In interviews, class teachers frequently did not know what the RAP entailed, or the purpose of the consultancy work in the school and its outcome. Where there had been inadequate information about the consultancy work, some teachers felt aggrieved that other colleagues had received additional support but the same opportunity had not been offered to them. From the EMA staff who were interviewed, it was evident that leadership teams had often overlooked the contribution that these teachers might make to the pilot. There was the danger that they felt marginalised. There were anomalies when headteachers praised the expertise of their EMA staff but failed to consult them on key aspects relating to the pilot.

3 Examples of learning and teaching strategies adopted in pilot school classrooms

At the beginning of the pilot year, most senior staff reported that their intention was to focus on the underachievement of bilingual pupils by encouraging or requiring class teachers to include strategies for addressing this underachievement in their regular planning, particularly for the core curriculum. Staff reported that they would be putting an emphasis on pupils' oracy and were seeking to develop this first within literacy and numeracy lessons.

It is important to note that, although in the main the pilot strategies themselves were not innovative, there was evidence of schools using approaches that were new to them; in some cases there was a revitalisation of strategies, and in others, the reconfiguration of existing strategies. A particularly innovative aspect of the pilot included the work on the use of first language. Interview data yielded the following examples of developing practice.

3.1 Planned opportunities for speaking and listening

Interviews with staff in phase two showed that all case study schools were encouraging a greater use of planned speaking and listening activities, not only in the core subjects, but across the curriculum. Class teachers recognised the importance of maximising the time available for practising spoken language and minimising the time in which pupils were only listening. As one headteacher explained, 'teachers used to talk at children and explain words; now they realise children need to talk…we have moved a long way'. Speaking and listening activities were planned mainly for use in the whole class. However, in some cases, activities were focused on a smaller group of pupils. For example, in one school, speaking and listening activities were planned using roles in dialogue. Children were each designated a role – chair, reporter, scribe and observer – and were asked to debate a particular issue. One class teacher felt this had worked well as the children became better behaved as it focused their attention on the role they had to play.

3.1.1 Speaking frames and guided talk

The initial case study visits to schools in autumn 2005 indicated that speaking frames, introduced through the pilot, had been tried with initial positive outcomes in schools. The follow-up visits also highlighted how teachers focused on improving language structures for children, using these frames and guided talk. Teachers had become more aware of modelling and scaffolding the language for EAL learners, recognising the importance of speaking in structured sentences and rephrasing sentences to aid comprehension. The pilot

gave the opportunity to make other materials, such as speaking frameworks (Palmer, 2004), more widely available to schools. The following illustrates how a school had effectively implemented guided talk across the whole school.

> The consultant led a training session on guided talk for the EMA teachers and the EAL coordinator in that school. The EMA teachers carried out some partnership teaching with the pilot consultant and modelled the guided talk for other members of the staff. This raised the profile of guided talk and gave the EMA teachers greater credibility with other class teachers. This work in literacy linked in closely with the work the mathematics coordinator was doing on guided talk and problem solving.

Several class teachers recognised the importance of planning a speaking and listening activity before a writing or numeracy task since it allowed EAL learners an opportunity to 'rehearse the language' and say words that otherwise they would only be required to write. In a few schools, teachers had noticed that their pupils' grammar and accuracy of words (in terms of using the correct vocabulary) had improved in their written work, and thought this was a knock-on effect from the increased speaking and listening activities.

Guided talk had been one of the easiest strategies for most teachers to grasp and implement straight away. Nevertheless, in one school guided talk was not being used consistently throughout the school and teachers were confused about what they had to do and who the target group of pupils were. The consultant came and discussed these issues with the EAL coordinator and explained that guided talk should be used with the advanced bilingual learners and that a speaking frame should be used consistently for at least half a term so that pupils used it right across the curriculum. The consultant explained these talk frames should be visible to pupils and teachers in the classrooms. This information was disseminated to other teachers by the EAL coordinator and the strategy was beginning to be used more consistently.

3.2 Use of first language

At the beginning of the pilot, the majority of senior managers commented that bilingual pupils already used their first language to a small extent within the school. However, it appeared that few schools incorporated opportunities for first language in a systematic way, largely because both the class teachers and pupils lacked confidence in using pupils' first languages.

By the end of the pilot year, approximately two thirds of schools were attempting to promote the use of first language as a tool for learning more in the classroom; however, usage varied among schools and teachers within schools. It must be noted that the pilot did not include a focus of teaching the first language to pupils (this is a remit of the MFL strand of the PNS) or to

teachers. Several monolingual teachers still did not feel confident about using pupils' first languages. Class teachers felt more confident using first languages when their bilingual TAs were present in the classroom to give them support. In a few schools, the pilot consultant had delivered separate training to the TAs to help them take the lead in introducing the use of first languages in the classroom.

For the majority of teachers, the pilot had reinforced the importance of using first language to help bilingual pupils in their understanding of difficult concepts. Consultants had provided evidence-based research to teachers to illustrate the benefits of using first languages. In those schools where first language was being used successfully, teachers noted that pupils' confidence and understanding had improved. It had also enabled the pupils to enrich their vocabulary. For example, in one school teachers asked the pupils to describe something in Punjabi, which they were able to do easily, and the words were translated into English in order to expand their vocabulary. However, some teachers were still not convinced about the value of using first languages, particularly if they considered that the children's language development was no more advanced in their mother tongue than in English. One consultant mentioned that DfES materials to support action on this issue would be welcome.

Some schools felt that the pilot had allowed them to introduce first languages in a more systematic way, as it had now been formalised and built into planning, although this was certainly not evident in all of the schools. In some schools, an audit of languages was carried out to ascertain the languages spoken by pupils. In some schools this had not been done before and alerted them to a range of issues about language use which helped their understanding of their pupils' needs. In others, the consultant or EAL coordinator was monitoring the use of first languages in lessons. In many schools, curriculum keywords in first languages were being used by teachers and support staff. These resources had often been developed by bilingual TAs.

In one school, the pilot had given them the opportunity to set up an Urdu class for pupils. The lessons were delivered by an Urdu speaking TA to high achieving bilingual learners. The head of the EMA service worked with the TA to produce resources and monitor progress. This was one of the most successful aspects of the pilot for this school.

In another school, teachers explained that they had told stories in Punjabi and had dressed up and acted them out. Previously, teachers had restricted their use of Punjabi for functional explanations; however, now the first language was being used creatively in a way that was actively encouraging the pupils to use their first language. The teachers were very enthusiastic and felt that this project had helped with these pupils' learning.

Inhibiting conditions to using first languages included:

- teachers' lack of confidence in speaking first languages
- teachers' lack of understanding of the importance of first languages
- a lack of whole school commitment to valuing and encouraging the use of first languages
- unavailable staff resources i.e. one school explained it had not been able to appoint any Somali TAs
- resistance from parents for their advanced bilingual children to speak in their first language
- having a number of first languages spoken in the classroom and the difficulties of choosing which ones to prioritise.

3.3 Talk partners

One of the most successful ways of introducing first language in the classroom was through the use of 'talk partners' or 'talk buddies'. Pupils were paired up and given planned opportunities to talk with one another in English or their first language. As a result of the pilot, several schools were using talk partners more frequently and in new ways. One EMA support teacher explained that in some of her schools, talk partners were being used in English and mathematics when the pupils were asked a question during the lessons, and not simply at the beginning and end of the lessons.

Interviewees explained that the benefits of using talk partners were:

- children were encouraged to talk in a more constructive way and keeps them 'on task'.
- more articulate responses were elicited, often from pupils who were reluctant to contribute.
- children were more confident talking one-to-one with another child in their first language and less embarrassed than if it was to the whole class.

3.4 Pre-teaching

In two schools staff considered that pre-teaching key vocabulary to EAL learners and doing some preparatory work in advance of introducing a new topic to the class was a key message they took from the pilot. One of these teachers has put together some pre-teaching packs, including a multilingual CD and bilingual story books, using the resource budget within the pilot.

3.5   Application of practice across the curriculum

3.5.1   Developing literacy

A few schools decided that the pilot focus would be on improving literacy for EAL learners in their school.

> In one school, staff decided they needed to undertake a thorough analysis of children's writing, so that they could identify the areas in which these pupils struggled. Previously, they thought they had 'analysed' the writing but, in fact, the consultant explained they had merely moderated it and then published 'the statistics'. The consultant worked closely with them, using a baseline piece of writing, in order to carry out a thorough analysis and identify how they could address specific weaknesses, to improve the quality of their writing.

> The initial RAP of a school where pupils were predominantly monolingual had stated that the school aimed to establish links with a predominantly bilingual school experienced in developing bilingual teaching strategies. Subsequently, the headteacher and her EAL coordinator visited a school in another authority that was developing literacy through drama. As a result of the visit, this strategy was being implemented in her school during the second year of the programme. It involved the use of drama and role play to develop speaking and listening skills in preparation for writing.

3.5.2   Developing mathematics

The pilot strategies had also helped several schools to enhance the mathematical learning of EAL learners. Many class teachers explained that speaking frames and rehearsing language had helped EAL learners to translate verbal presentations of mathematical problems into mathematical operations and vice versa. In a few schools they had chosen to focus primarily on improving mathematics for EAL learners: staff were looking closely at their planning, and were scrutinising the language used in mathematics and ways of incorporating speaking frames into the lessons.

3.5.3   Other areas of the curriculum

In other schools, staff commented that as the pilot year progressed, the teaching strategies were being integrated into other areas of the curriculum such as science, history, geography and PE. Teachers were planning more speaking and listening activities into these subjects and making better use of visual resources (including the use of ICT and software e.g. Clicker software) across the whole curriculum.

4 Promoting conditions for learning

In the phase one interviews, staff outlined some of the activities that were planned to promote the conditions of learning (i.e. improving the ethos and environment and building on what pupils know and understand as a culturally inclusive classroom). At the end of the pilot year, it was evident that in over half the schools, the pilot had helped to promote the conditions for learning for EAL learners and that the majority of the planned activities had taken place. Benefits had been noted in terms of a greater understanding and valuing of different languages and cultures.

4.1 Scope of the activities relating to conditions for learning

In the pilot, conditions for learning were promoted more extensively in those authorities where there was less of a tradition for providing for EAL learners. In one local authority, the consultant explained that she had focused on improving the conditions for learning at the beginning of the pilot because it was something that could be accomplished relatively easily and she felt that teachers would accept it. One headteacher in this authority found the whole school audit of the environment and resources very useful and appreciated the advice on how to improve these areas. However, a couple of headteachers in this authority had not seen the benefits of focusing so closely on conditions for learning. One headteacher commented:

> *Raising standards is not about putting up signs in different languages – that doesn't make any difference. We found this out last year. What makes a difference is good quality teaching and learning and really focusing on the speaking and listening input.*

The activities in the schools participating in the evaluation included:

- using dual language displays (e.g. displaying key vocabulary; signs and instructions; languages spoken)
- using visual resources (e.g. whiteboards, 3D objects)
- using photography (in one school, photography had been used to build a storyboard to bring the story to life for pupils)
- creating better opportunities for representing minority ethnic cultures and allowing the curriculum to be more culturally inclusive (e.g. celebrating a language of the month; promoting Black History Month)
- the consultant working with a race equality coordinator to review the school's existing policy on race equality.

It was apparent that the pilot had only begun to build upon all the other work schools were doing to create an inclusive curriculum. Thus, it seems as though improving the conditions for learning for EAL learners was an important

aspect of the pilot which teachers welcomed, largely because it had improved the culture and 'ethos' of several schools. However, some interviewees felt that to make a real impact on EAL learners' learning, consultants needed to move beyond the conditions for learning and concentrate on the learning and teaching strategies of the pilot.

4.2   Development of material resources

In the majority of schools, staff commented that the strategies implemented as a result of the pilot were mostly 'budget light'. Several schools explained that they exploited resources that were already available and made increasing use of some resources (such as dual-language materials) that had previously been under-used. In some schools, the pilot had given the opportunity to purchase new materials such as dual-language books, pre-teaching materials and books on speaking frames.

In a number of schools, class teachers and TAs had created labels and cards showing key vocabulary in both English and other home languages. These were clearly visible both in and outside the classroom in a number of schools. However, in one LA, staff in the case study schools were very disappointed that the help from the LA in translating particular vocabulary which the consultant had promised them, never materialised. They felt it had wasted their teachers' time creating the signs in English. In addition, in another authority an EAL coordinator mentioned that access to a translation service would be useful to schools. One headteacher suggested that she would have found it extremely helpful to have a PDM outlining the available resources to use when teaching EAL learners.

5 Restructuring of the support for bilingual pupils in schools

In approximately two thirds of schools in the evaluation sample, changes in staff deployment had been made as a result of the pilot. That his happened illustrates the importance of the involvement of senior leaders who can take such strategic decisions.

5.1. Deployment of TAs

Staff praised the fact that the pilot had enabled schools to skill up and recognise the potential of working with their TAs in the classroom. This was particularly pertinent in some schools which had seen a significant cut in their EMA budget and, subsequently, a cut in the number of EMA staff.

There was evidence that TAs who attended training were subsequently deployed differently, as a result of their increased confidence and knowledge of new strategies. The most significant change was that TAs were now working alongside teachers in the classroom with a target group of pupils, on a particular task. Thus, they were less likely to be withdrawing EAL learners from the classroom; this fitted in with the agenda of inclusive classrooms. TAs were being allocated more responsibility for assisting EAL learners. Some of the specific tasks they undertook were:

- supporting guided reading
- speaking in first languages (guided talk), in all areas of the curriculum
- analysing the language used in National Curriculum test papers to identify areas which had caused EAL learners difficulties in the past.

In one school, the headteacher had decided to redeploy the bilingual TAs across the whole school, rather than focusing their work in key stage 1, as he realised their expertise should be spread more widely.

In a few authorities, senior staff, and one of the consultants interviewed in phase two, explained that the pilot had focused the TAs' time on EAL learners, and they were working less with pupils with special educational needs. This consultant was planning to monitor whether this would continue after the pilot year. A few senior staff also felt that the pilot had enabled TAs to distinguish between the learning needs and language needs of EAL learners.

5.2 Deployment of EMA advisory and teaching staff

In the few case study schools which had support from EMA advisory staff, teachers commented that the EMA advisory staff had also been working more closely with the teachers on planning and in the classroom. As one teacher

explained, 'We now see the EMA support worker as a teacher inside the class, not outside. We plan together and use her expertise to plan what we want to focus on'. In another school the headteacher commented that the pilot had prompted them to be more proactive with the EMA service, in terms of asking for support. The consultants and EMA advisory staff had also helped schools to place their EMA teachers more appropriately according to need; often an audit of need had been factored into the RAP.

In one LA, the EMA teacher in two of the case study schools explained that she had been working more closely with newly arrived pupils, as the teachers and TAs were giving more support to the advanced bilingual learners in the classroom. Thus, to some extent the whole aim of the pilot to enhance the skills of ordinary class teachers to meet the needs of EAL learners had led to positive consequences for the way other staff were being deployed.

However, in a couple of LAs, EMA advisory staff felt that their expertise had been overlooked by the pilot. One EMA teacher was disappointed that she had been excluded from most of the pilot training and working with the consultant. The consultant had run a few training sessions for the EMA advisory staff, but she felt there should have been more collaborative working between herself and the consultant: 'it would be more powerful if I had been going to this training, so we'd be giving the same advice'.

In another LA, the staff in one school were disappointed that the pilot was not drawing on the expertise of their EMA advisory staff to help with the assessment and tracking of pupils, particularly as there had been issues with the consultants.

5.3 No change in the deployment of staff

In approximately a third of the schools, staff reported that there had been no changes in the way TAs had been deployed. In most schools this was because TAs had already been working closely with the teacher in the classroom. In a few schools where the pilot had been less successful, TAs had not attended training to gain new skills first hand (e.g. guided talk; use of speaking frames), and, therefore, continued to be deployed in the same way.

6 Development of partnerships beyond the classroom

In phase one interviews, staff outlined that the two practical activities planned to develop partnerships beyond the classroom were:

- to give staff the skills needed to liaise with members of the community
- to involve minority ethnic parents more widely in school life

From the phase two interviews, it was evident that the majority of schools had tried to develop these planned activities. In the majority of schools, these partnerships were between schools and parents/carers. However a few schools had forged links with local organisations.

6.1 Links with parents/carers

Several schools were pleased with the links they had made with parents and carers during the pilot year, though often the strategies only involved small numbers of parents of EAL learners. Nevertheless, progress was significant given the known difficulties of involving parents of EAL learners in their children's education. Staff commented that activities had worked particularly well when bilingual teachers or TAs supported these partnerships and were available to speak in the first languages when necessary.

In some schools, these activities evolved as a direct result of the pilot but, in other cases, teachers explained that the pilot had given a greater status to some of the work they were already doing with parents. Thus, some activities were not distinctly part of the pilot but, rather, given greater status or significance in the light of pilot activity. For example, one school had established links with a school in Pakistan and staff had the opportunity to visit this school and make contacts with the community it served in Pakistan. Staff spoke positively of the way in which the experience of the visit helped them to understand their pupils' backgrounds and put their achievement at school and their language needs in context.

Nearly half of the schools said that Parent Family Learning Groups existed within their schools. In some schools the profile of groups established prior to the pilot had been raised; in others, the pilot had initiated the formation of these parent groups. The primary purpose of these Parent Family Learning Groups was to increase the involvement of parents in their children's education by giving information about the pilot and teaching strategies that were being used, raising their awareness of the importance of using the first language and providing practical ideas of how they could help their children to learn. One practical idea was helping parents to recognise English coins which would also allow them to help their children to count and handle money.

In one LA, the pilot consultant worked with the pilot schools to develop Parent Strategy Groups and made partnerships beyond the classroom a key priority. In one of these schools, an informal network of a dozen parents met once a term to discuss how they could contribute positively to their child's education. Success of this group was attributed to the fact that the parents took ownership of the group and identified areas in which they wanted to further their knowledge.

The following are examples of some of the other successful activities to develop partnerships beyond the classroom that had been set up as a direct result of involvement in the pilot:

- In a few schools, more parents had been encouraged to hear pupils read. In one nursery, staff had invited parents in to read stories to the children in English and their first languages at the end of the day. The popularity of the sessions had encouraged staff to expand the activity throughout the rest of the school.

- Numeracy and literacy workshops were organised for pupils and parents. In one school, the pupils in each class did a presentation on a particular aspect of mathematics which the parents watched. Afterwards, the mathematics consultant, aided by a Somalian interpreter, talked to the parents about how they could help their child in mathematics. This helped to build up parents' confidence and on account of its success the schools were planning to hold subsequent workshops with literacy and science coordinators.

- In another school, an existing project was dovetailed into the pilot as it was thought to help meet the aims of developing partnerships beyond the classroom. In this school, parents and children came into school on a Saturday and parents were encouraged to read stories in their first language or in English. The EAL coordinator felt the experience had empowered the parents and explained: 'it was really personal and they [parents] enjoyed sharing with other adults and children'. They were hoping to build on this success and planned to hold similar workshops for other parents.

- In one LA, the pilot had enabled schools to review the performance data for pupils who had taken periods of extended leave in order to determine whether such leave had a negative impact on attainment. A headteacher in one of the NFER case study schools explained that he felt the parent sessions that the consultant ran, where parents were able to discuss the importance of attendance and their child's education, had certainly helped to reduce the number of extended leave days.

- A new and easier induction process for newly arrived pupils and their parents was introduced in one school. This new induction form was developed in one school and shared with other schools in the cluster formed after the pilot.

- In one school, a curriculum newsletter on speaking and listening was sent out to parents to explain the importance of these activities and what their child was learning in class. It described the different strategies, such as group work, guided talk and speaking frames, in user-friendly language. It also outlined ideas of when they could use first languages at home – e.g. when they are getting ready in the morning, coming home from school and discussing homework – and presented this visually using a spider diagram.

Several schools explained that they felt they still had a long way to go to build up partnerships with parents. However, they felt that the pilot had allowed them to focus on the activity and were determined to maintain the initiatives. In a couple of schools, staff admitted that it had been a struggle to build up these partnerships. For example, in one school, staff had tried to organise parent focus groups to ascertain parents' thoughts on the use of first languages at home and in school, but no-one attended. They had brought in bilingual staff to run these sessions to help with communication but it had not helped.

6.2　Links with other organisations

One of the pilot's aim was to give staff the skills needed to liaise with members of the community. One school was using a link with the Pakistani Welfare Association to explain to the wider community the aims of the National Curriculum. In another school, a mutually beneficial link had been established with a local Arabic speaking group who used the school premises during the evenings. This group was allowed to use one of the school's computers during their meetings and in return they assisted the school in setting up the computer to produce signs in Arabic for use around the school.

7 Sharing good practice

This section reports on the opportunities for sharing good practice that have been developed during the first year of the pilot through:

- established networks of pilot schools
- dissemination of good practice.

7.1 Staff networking

It appeared from the interviews with school staff that networking amongst pilot schools had occurred in approximately half of the case study LAs during the pilot year. In one LA, the consultant had set up termly meetings for EAL coordinators and other teachers in the borough. Staff from two of the case study schools had attended these meetings and found them useful as a way of sharing innovative practice and resources. One school had produced creative cards to encourage speaking and listening (rather than just a worksheet) and this had inspired other teachers to do the same. However, in another LA, the pilot coordinator had attended a network meeting with other pilot schools but it had not been well facilitated and she said that she had not benefited from attending.

In other LAs, the consultant had brought together teachers from pilot schools on one-off occasions. For example, a consultant had taught all the literacy coordinators in the borough about specific teaching strategies for EAL learners. Elsewhere, the consultant arranged for the EAL coordinator and assessment coordinator in one school to visit colleagues in another school to see how curricular/layered targets were working successfully, to help them implement them in their school.

One headteacher took the initiative to set up links with a non-pilot school, having heard the deputy headteacher speak at a conference. The headteacher felt they could learn a great deal about the way their colleagues were developing speaking and listening through drama and role play which was impacting positively on writing. The headteacher was encouraged by the pilot consultant to visit this school and had implemented some of the successful strategies into her school during the second year.

Evidence suggested that networking was not a particularly important aspect during the pilot year, mainly because schools used the limited time available to develop particular strategies in their own schools. During the second year, the networks were continuing in the LAs. In one particular LA, the pilot messages were being shared between a cluster of schools which had developed from an Education Action Zone. (see Section 11.2).

7.2 Dissemination

At the beginning of the year, in the majority of schools, plans for dissemination of positive outcomes relating to the pilot had not yet been made. Senior staff listed various possible means of dissemination including headteachers' meetings, network meetings with associate schools, conferences and teaching and learning websites run by the local authority. At the end of the pilot, the main methods of dissemination for schools had been through networking (headteacher or EAL coordinator meetings, see Section 7.1). Schools were also enthusiastic about sharing good practice via the leading teachers of EAL who have been established within the PNS. Within the case study schools, a number of leading teachers had been identified. In one school alone, three leading teachers for EAL had been identified and staff from other schools were able to observe these practitioners. In another school, the headteacher felt that because the local authority was working with the school, they realised how skilled the school's EAL coordinator really was.

School staff in one school mentioned the benefits of taking part in a conference with other pilot schools in their LA at the end of the year. The headteacher of this school commented, 'it was interesting to hear the variety of work from the schools and it did demonstrate how flexible the pilot was'.

Staff interviews suggested that dissemination activities were not high on the schools' agendas, largely due to the limited time available. However, a few teachers recognised the importance of sharing good practice from their pilot activities and welcomed the opportunity for further work with other schools. In a phase two interview, a consultant spoke of her plans to disseminate the pilot's messages and key strategies the schools had implemented, to both her PNS team and the EMA heads in her authority.

8 Monitoring and evaluating progress during the pilot

This section discusses how schools monitored the implementation of EAL teaching strategies and the progress made by pupils during the first year of the pilot. The structures in place to monitor progression were discussed in the earlier unpublished interim reports (Taggart *et al.*, 2005; White *et al.*, 2005). The initial visits to schools highlighted concerns about isolating positive outcomes that could be attributable to the pilot, given existing priorities and initiatives for school improvement. The reports noted that few initial RAPs included SMART targets to facilitate monitoring and evaluation. During the first year, schools and LAs used mainly qualitative methods to monitor progress although analysis of the 2005 national tests was planned. This section updates the findings in these earlier reports in relation to:

- monitoring the inclusion of EAL strategies in planning documentation
- observing the use of EAL strategies in lessons
- undertaking baseline assessments on the attainment of EAL learners
- assessing language development
- target setting
- monitoring and tracking the progress of EAL learners.

This section also reports on how schools evaluated their progress during the first year through:

- evaluation of RAPs
- end of year assessments.

8.1 Monitoring the implementation of teaching strategies to support EAL learners

The monitoring activities within schools involved a combination of monitoring planning documentation and observation of the use of EAL strategies in lessons.

8.1.1 The inclusion of EAL strategies in planning documentation

In four LAs, teachers explained that the consultant had worked closely with the school on improving planning sheets to record the provision for EAL learners. In these LAs, the section for planning for EAL learners was no longer regarded a 'bolt-on' but was seen as an integral section of the form. In particular, teachers were utilising a planning key to identify from a range of

suggested EAL strategies the ones they intended to use with pupils in the lesson. This acted as a check for the teacher, and for the members of the leadership team who were monitoring lesson planning, that there was not an over-reliance on particular strategies. One of the EAL consultants commented that this comparatively small modification to the planning sheets had contributed significantly to one school's progress during the initial year of the pilot.

The majority of EAL coordinators and headteachers commented that they were monitoring the inclusion of EAL strategies in planning. The planning key, and the knowledge that it was being monitored, had certainly encouraged class teachers to think about the strategies they were going to use in lessons:

> *It is more in my mind that I have to apply certain strategies and activities on a regular basis. It's more methodical and embedded in what I do.*

> *I'm definitely making more of an effort that I was before to make sure that I am using a wider range of strategies within the classes.*

However, another class teacher was more sceptical about the value of this measure, describing it as a '*paper based exercise*'. Clearly any monitoring of planning would need to be backed up by observation of the use of EAL strategies in the lesson, as this headteacher explained:

> *We made sure that the language structures were implemented into planning, carried out and observed on the head and deputy observation sheets. Staff knew this was there and we were feeding back* [to teachers] *on it as well.*

8.1.2 Observing the use of EAL strategies in lessons

Several headteachers and EAL coordinators highlighted how their observations of provision for EAL learners in lessons had developed over the course of the year. The emphasis had shifted from being purely supportive in the initial stages to monitoring what strategies were being implemented. Lesson observations had become more complex as new strategies such as guided talk and curricular/layered targets had been introduced. One deputy headteacher noted that the grading for EAL in lesson observations had improved as the year progressed.

The senior managers in one school had received training from their consultant on observing provision for EAL in lessons but had not been impressed by the session and queried whether the consultant had been adequately trained in this area. However in another authority, staff in a second school reported that the lesson observations by their consultant had been professionally conducted and very supportive for the teachers being observed.

Other LA staff also conducted lesson observations in the first year. These included the school improvement officers and the EMA managers. In one school, they regarded their school improvement officer as a '*critical friend*' during the pilot.

8.2 Monitoring the progress of bilingual pupils during the pilot

Several schools reported that their consultant(s) were involved in helping them to monitor the progress of bilingual pupils. Some schools had undertaken specific assessments as part of the pilot or were tracking the progress of specific bilingual pupils as they progress through key stage 2.

8.2.1 Baseline assessment of EAL learners

Several schools reported that specific baseline assessments of pupils' writing and language development had been conducted at the start of pilot. In one authority, the consultant had conducted a whole-school writing analysis and then reported back to each year group on the common errors in written English that were being made by EAL learners. One headteacher identified this as a major piece of research that had proved to be a very valuable planning tool for teachers. However, the consultant has not continued in the programme and a follow-up analysis to identify any improvement that may have resulted from the pilot had not been conducted. One headteacher felt that it was up to staff in the schools to pick up this analysis. Similar baseline analyses were reported in schools in other LAs, however, the timing of the phase 2 interviews was such that schools had not had the opportunity to engage in follow-up analyses. In other schools, staff reported that assessment of language development and writing were routinely carried out throughout the year and no special provision had been made for an assessment at the start of the pilot.

We note that the error analysis work reported above is similar to the work of Cameron and Besser (2004). Schools in two authorities were making use of her work (see Section 9.1.1), although there was no evidence, at the time of the case study interviews, that these initiatives had been publicised more widely among participating authorities. (Note: Lynne Cameron's work was subsequently disseminated to EAL managers, EAL consultants and literacy consultants)

8.2.2 Assessment of language development and language targets

Although the pilot/programme promoted the DfES policy of assessing language development using the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority extended scale (QCA, 2000), in six schools, interviewees referred to other scales that were continuing to be used to assess language development. A few

teachers commented that the PDM training relating to the assessment of language development was confusing. One reason given for this was the fact that there was a range of scales against which to assess pupils and teachers were unsure of their relative strengths, weaknesses and purposes.

Staff in one school described how the training delivered by the consultant in their LA had discussed an alternative scale, which was not the recommended QCA extended scale and was different from the system that the school had been using. After the training, senior management discussed the implications of changing the way they assessed language development and decided that their existing method was simpler and more relevant to their children compared to either the QCA extended scale or the alternative scale discussed in the PDM.

Staff in four authorities reported that they had set language targets for EAL learners. In one school with predominantly EAL learners, the EAL coordinator commented that he had discussed language targets with his consultant. The school then produced generic literacy plans which were differentiated for the whole school to establish targets. At the time of the visit, staff had not measured whether setting language targets had had an effect on language development. The school was planning to do the monitoring and evaluation in the second half of the 2005/6 academic year. In another predominantly monolingual school, the headteacher reported that they were using their only bilingual teaching assistant to support specific children with language targets. Elsewhere, setting language targets remained an area for development.

8.2.3 Layered curricular targets

At the start of the pilot, schools in several LAs had attended training organised by the authority on the analysis of attainment data, typically optional National Curriculum tests, and the identification of under-achieving groups. However, several interviewees noted that the PDM training on identifying target groups and target setting had not taken place until the second term. One EAL coordinator felt that this training should have been at the start of the PDM programme but understood that it was postponed because the relevant training for the consultants had been arranged for the spring term. The Regional Director for the programme, who was interviewed at the end of phase two of the research, confirmed that the sequencing of the PDMs was going to be changed to bring forward the training on curricular targets.

Generally staff in the case study schools felt that by the end of the first year they had improved at identifying individual pupils who should be in the group targeted for specific support. However, there was considerable variation across the case study schools in the implementation of whole-school and layered targets. In several schools, setting these targets had become a focus for the second year of the programme, with EAL coordinators reporting that their consultant was going to be working with them to establish these.

Although staff in schools where curricular/layered targets had been introduced were broadly positive about their impact, teachers' comments on the strategy ranged from a guarded 'interesting' to an enthusiastic 'really useful'.

For one numeracy coordinator, the value of the layered targets was in helping to ensure that children had grasped the basics. In his view, the Numeracy Strategy 'darted around too much' and in mathematics, children were being taught too many different things in any given period. Layered targets gave him the justification for returning to what he considered to be a more beneficial system where teachers focused on one aspect for a couple of weeks so that it could become secure.

Feedback from one of the EAL consultants, who was interviewed during phase two of the research, suggested that schools had needed ongoing support to set and fully utilise curricular/layered targets. Schools in this authority had also negotiated support from their subject consultants in the initial stages of implementing these targets. Evidence from the case study visits in this authority also suggested that embedding this practice had taken time and perseverance by staff, which underlined the importance of implementing the relevant staff training at an early stage of the pilot. One headteacher reported that it had taken a year for his school to understand curricular/layered targets; partly, this was due to the large size of the school and the challenge of ensuring consistency across all staff. Another headteacher noted that, initially, her school had not used these effectively. The turning point came when they started to implement assessment for learning material and found that the two initiatives linked together particularly well (the school had not made the link between curricular/layered targets and assessment for learning through the pilot). The Regional Director confirmed that although the link with assessment for learning was clear in the design for the pilot, in practice, it had become 'loose' and less explicit. This was being addressed through the revised order of delivering the PDMs.

In another authority, a headteacher noted that the implementation of curricular/layered targets had been problematic. In his opinion, the consultant and local programme managers had been unable to adapt their particular view of how these targets should operate to fit in with the teaching and learning opportunity he had identified. The NFER's unpublished interim report of August 2005 raised concerns about the limited previous experience that some of the consultants may have had in this area and the evidence from the present phase of the research suggests that in some cases these concerns may have been justified.

Target setting appears to have been more straightforward in schools that had been involved in the Intensifying Support Programme (ISP) programme and in one former ISP school, the model suggested in the EAL pilot was being applied with evident flexibility. The assessment coordinator reported that they

had adapted some of the whole-school targets suggested by the pilot. At year group level, instead of multi-layered targets according to ability, they had implemented a single progressive target that changed weekly, as they felt this would be more likely to retain pupils' interest.

In another school that was involved concurrently in the EAL pilot and ISP, the input of the literacy, numeracy and IT consultants and their link inspector into the target setting process had proved beneficial. The link inspector was also involved on a regular basis with the progress of the initiatives, although the headteacher felt that her involvement was primarily in connection with the ISP programme and doubted whether the inspector's input would have been as great if the school had just been involved in the EAL pilot. A class teacher, governor and the headteacher from the school described how assessment for learning and target setting were working well together in the context of the EAL pilot:

According to the headteacher, assessment and tracking had signalled to staff that some of their pupils were making excellent progress and was encouraging them to question why all their pupils were not making similar progress. It raised expectations amongst staff about what their EAL learners could achieve with targeted support. These raised expectations were also starting to be reflected in raised expectation amongst EAL learners as individual targets were achieved. Pupils could also assess their progress using the success criteria that had been developed in class.

The governor had noted the positive effects on pupils' confidence when they had achieved their targets.

For the class teacher, tracking and assessment of pupils' progress towards targets was informing her use of the EAL strategies discussed during the PDMs and extending her repertoire of strategies.

The earlier unpublished interim report (Taggart *et al.*, 2005) noted that the model of support offered by the EAL pilot had been used in other Primary National Strategy initiatives. Phase two of the research confirmed that familiarity with the structures of the ISP had been a distinct advantage for schools joining the EAL pilot.

8.2.4 Monitoring and tracking of pupils

Interviewees in several schools were very positive about how their involvement in the pilot had encouraged them to review aspects of their record keeping to provide class teachers with better information about EAL learners and their progress. As reported previously (Taggart *et al.*, 2005), staff initially concentrated on improving their awareness of the languages and dialects spoken by pupils. In the follow-up interviews it was evident that the emphasis

had changed and schools had moved on to look at other aspects of record keeping. A numeracy coordinator noted that the pilot had contributed to improved record keeping of pupils' progress in mathematics, which was benefiting all pupils throughout the school. In another school that left the pilot during the first year (because the school felt that they were already well-advanced in teaching EAL learners and were not deriving any benefits from continuing), the headteacher reported that the pilot had 'at least kick-started the whole school into thinking about the records they were keeping'.

Whilst the pilot had prompted many schools to improve their tracking procedures so that information on attainment was in an accessible format, in some schools good intentions were frustrated owing to problems with proprietary electronic tracking systems. Several schools had encountered problems adding ethnicity or language development as fields in their software systems. Similar problems were described by schools in three authorities. Interviewees in these schools commented that their systems were not delivering the information that senior management and class teachers required to monitor progress by ethnicity. During the first year of the EAL pilot, paper-based analysis or basic spreadsheets had been used instead. One assessment coordinator remarked that 'this has hindered my work as it had to be done manually'. Problems were still unresolved at the end of the year and staff were looking at alternative computer-based systems. One headteacher commented that the tracking issue had simply not been addressed by the pilot team in his authority.

Two schools had not previously implemented an electronic tracking system. One of these schools had acquired a system but was in the process of setting it up when the follow-up interview was conducted. A member of the EAL management team commented that in regard to their EAL learners, they 'didn't really have the whole picture yet'. In another school, the introduction of electronic tracking had been identified as an initial objective for the pilot but, at the end of the first year, they still did not have a system in place and were disappointed that involvement in pilot had not helped them to implement this.

Several schools commented that, in conjunction with their pilot consultant, they were tracking the progress of specific EAL learners through key stage 2. (At the outset of the pilot, managers from five authorities said that they had planned to track in this way.)

8.3   Evaluating progress

8.3.1   Evaluation of the RAPs
Phase two of the evaluation highlighted the value of a cohesive pilot leadership team to reflecting on progress made and identifying areas for

further development. Generally, where targets had either not been met or only partially met, the particular measure was carried forward to the next plan. When schools evaluated their initial RAPs, staff realised that these had been written without adequate success criteria against which progress could be judged. In subsequent RAPs, success criteria were more evident and schools noted that they had become more rigorous in monitoring and evaluating RAP items. One headteacher commented that their school improvement officer had given them guidance on how the school could be more rigorous in monitoring the impact of the measures. In another LA, the consultant had conducted interviews with pupils to provide more information for the evaluation of the 'soft' items such as pupil confidence. As noted in Section 2.4 the later RAPs, in contrast to the initial documents, set out who was accountable for the implementation of the measures and set a time frame for meeting the various objectives.

Headteachers in a few schools mentioned that in addition to the management team and the EAL consultant, other personnel involved in the evaluation process included governors and headteachers from other schools. In one authority all the headteachers in the case study schools commented that their school improvement officers had not been involved in the writing and evaluation of the RAPs but were liaising with the consultant about the progress of the pilot.

8.3.2 End of year evaluations

Several schools reported that they had conducted a self-evaluation exercise at the end of the first year to assess their progress in meeting the needs of EAL learners. One headteacher felt that re-visiting the diagnostic process at the end of the first year had been useful, but a reasonable interval was required between assessments to make the commitment of time and personnel in the processes worthwhile. Generally schools noted that they had moved forward during the course of the year. These assessments had highlighted remaining weaknesses and helped schools to determine their focus for the second year of programme. One headteacher mentioned that the EMA and PNS managers from the authority were present at this meeting.

9   Outcomes

This section reports the evidence relating to the impact of the pilot on the attainment of advanced bilingual learners and qualitative outcomes for staff and pupils

9.1   The impact of the pilot on the attainment of bilingual learners

For the majority of interviewees, monitoring and assessment during the first year had not yielded any conclusive information about the impact of the pilot on the attainment of EAL children. Staff cited a number of reasons why, in their view, this result was broadly as they had expected at the outset of the initiative.

- One year of intervention and tracking of pupils was insufficient.
- Other initiatives were also contributing to raising standards.
- Other social and cultural issues, including extended leave, were major negative influences on the attainment of EAL learners.
- Schools had been cautious about 'experimenting' in year 6.

Other factors had also encouraged them to be cautious in the interpretation of their data, including:

- the high mobility rate of pupils between key stages 1 and 2
- the variability of pupil cohorts
- a small cohort of EAL learners.

Two schools commented that their National Curriculum tests results in writing had fallen significantly in 2005. Staff in one school queried whether greater emphasis on speaking and listening had been at the expense of time spent focusing on writing during the year leading up to the tests.

In about a fifth of schools, however, staff were more confident that they were seeing an improvement in attainment levels that may have resulted from the EAL pilot. This group included schools in which the pupils were predominantly monolingual and schools in which they were predominantly bilingual. The evidence was emerging in two ways.

9.1.1   Evidence from ongoing monitoring in schools

In one school, where there was a comparison group of monolingual pupils, the deputy head had analysed the numbers of pupils improving by at least two

national curriculum sub levels during the year. Across the school she had found that the percentage of EAL learners (excluding newly arrived pupils) progressing by two sub levels was comparable with the percentage of monolingual pupils making similar progress, and for the EAL learners, this represented an improvement on the previous year's analysis.

The assessment coordinator in another school felt that their tracking data were identifying some improvement in data handling, reading and writing by their EAL learners, although the improvements at this stage were minimal. Significant improvements in writing by year 6 pupils were also noted by an advanced skills teacher in a third school. However, the major factor thought to be responsible for this improvement was a drama programme developed with the help of an independent consultant. This linked to research on writing by EAL learners (Cameron and Besser, 2004) and utilised drama as a means of exploring sentence structures.

9.1.2 Evidence from analysis of National Curriculum tests results

As part of the evaluation commissioned by DfES, NFER's statisticians are conducting a separate analysis of key stage 2 results across all schools that joined the original pilot in 2004. This section summarises the data reported by interviewees in the case study schools.

The unpublished interim report on interviews with consultants and programme managers noted that all the pilot authorities were intending to analyse performance data for pupils that had been involved in the pilot (White *et al.*, 2005). Interviewees also commented that their consultants were helping them to analyse National Curriculum tests, optional National Curriculum tests and other monitoring data. Possibly owing to the timing of the case study visits, comparatively little relevant data were available or had been analysed in schools.

In two schools, analysis of the performance of their advanced bilingual learners at key stage 2 last year had found that a higher percentage of them had achieved at level 4 in 2005 than in the previous year. This was attributed to improved tracking, teaching and putting learning into context for EAL learners. Two interviewees in other schools also considered that 'unpicking' the language structures of National Curriculum tests papers had contributed to improved results at key stage 2 by their advanced bilingual pupils. One headteacher also commented that he had been very pleased with the percentage of EAL learners who had achieved level 5 in writing in 2005.

9.1.3 Variation in the impact of the pilot on different groups of EAL learners

In this section, the impact of the pilot on newly arrived pupils and variations between different ethnic groups are discussed. Much of the evidence is qualitative, although some statistical evidence was reported in the case study schools. Also, many interviewees reiterated the comments noted in our earlier report (Taggart *et al.*, 2005) that the pilot was advocating good teaching practice generally, which was thought to be benefiting monolingual as well as bilingual pupils.

9.1.4 Impact of the pilot on EAL learners from different ethnic backgrounds

For the reasons identified in Section 9.1, interviewees were cautious about commenting on any variation in outcome for pupils from different ethnic backgrounds. In a number of schools the rapidly changing nature of their ethnic populations also made some year on year comparisons unreliable. Those who did comment presented a mixed picture:

- In one school, the percentage of pupils of Indian and African heritage obtaining level 4 in the English test at key stage 2 had risen in 2005 in comparison with the results obtained in 2004, whereas the equivalent results for pupils of Bangladeshi and Pakistani heritage had fallen.

- In two schools in the same authority, staff commented that progress was most marked amongst Somali pupils, but Pakistani pupils were still not making the progress they would have liked.

- The deputy headteacher in another authority also felt that they still needed to do more to raise the attainment of their Pakistani pupils.

- Another school noted that monitoring had shown that their Urdu speakers were doing well and the plateau group of Bengali boys had started to make better progress. However, a cohort of pupils would need to be tracked between years 3 and 6 to confirm this improvement.

In a later RAP, one school had looked into the reasons for under-achievement by children of African origin. In addition to the issue of language, they identified a number of contributory factors. The EAL coordinator felt that no single project could resolve the issue of under-achievement in certain groups. Interviewees in other schools also noted that under-achievement amongst some groups of pupils was not simply an issue of language. One school had hoped that the pilot would help them to progress their plateau learners, who tended to be British-born and from the nationally under-achieving groups. The school felt that socio-economic factors were relevant to understanding why some of their learners with EAL made good progress whereas the progress of others tended to plateau at a particular level, with further progress being harder to secure. However they felt that the pilot had not considered these aspects and this was a contributory factor in their decision to leave after the first year.

9.1.5 Impact of the pilot on newly arrived pupils

As discussed in Section 2.2, two schools joined the pilot each with approximately 25 per cent of pupils with EAL, of whom comparatively few were advanced bilingual learners. The headteachers in both these schools were very positive about the benefits the school had obtained from the pilot. For one headteacher, the pilot was advocating good teaching practice generally and that was benefiting all his pupils.

In the other school the headteacher found that much of the content, although directed at advanced bilingual learners, was relevant to her pupils, particularly in terms of the pedagogy, as the school had previously assumed that helping children to gain nominal fluency would be sufficient for them to cope academically. The year 6 EAL learners, who had been in the country for periods ranging up to about two years, had been tracked closely and made very good progress in 2005. The headteacher commented that the current system of reporting school results at key stage 2 needed to celebrate the achievement of these pupils for whom a level 3 in literacy may represent an excellent achievement. (Similar comments were made by other headteachers who considered that the National Curriculum tests results generally failed to take account of the value added for EAL learners who left the school before year 6.)

Further evidence that the pilot might also be having an impact on pupils who were not advanced bilingual learners came from a school with predominantly EAL learners, where the headteacher noted a marked improvement in attainment at level 4 in 2005 by a group of pupils who were classified, for reporting purposes, as 'recently arrived', compared to the results of this group going back over several years.

There were pupils in the three schools cited above who, although not advanced bilingual learners, were also not 'new' arrivals without any English, but who fell somewhere in between and should be identified 'recently arrived' or 'emergent speakers'. For this group, there was evidence that the pedagogy and strategies in EAL pilot were of relevance. This indicates that the programme is likely to benefit a wider range of schools, include some that do not have a high percentage of advanced bilingual learners.

Interviewees in two schools with fairly heterogeneous populations of EAL and monolingual pupils commented that the pilot was having a greater impact on EAL learners who were not advanced bilingual learners. However, on closer analysis this did not necessarily indicate that the EAL strategies advocated in the pilot were having a more beneficial impact on these pupils, or that staff in the pilot were overlooking the needs of their advanced bilingual learners. In one of these schools, a TA observed that pupils who had been in the school for several years had 'got into a rut in which not much was expected of them' and therefore the EAL strategies were not having the immediate impact that had been observed with newer entrants to the school.

In the other school, the literacy coordinator, who described the improved progress of newly arrived pupils as 'astonishing', also described a new induction and initial withdrawal strategy for new arrivals that had been implemented during their first year in the pilot. Their EAL consultant had brought this strategy to their notice as it was operating successfully in another local school. A second contributory factor to this difference was that their new arrivals were generally from an ethnic background different from that of the advanced bilingual learners. In a school where no changes to induction procedures had been made, the deputy headteacher considered that the pilot was having less of an impact on their newly arrived pupils, owing to the comprehensive induction and nurture process that was already in place prior to the pilot.

Staff in a predominantly monolingual school that was absorbing new arrivals from many different ethnic and linguistic backgrounds felt that the local authority should supply a basic language pack for situations when new pupils were admitted to schools with no members of staff able to communicate in the child's mother tongue.

9.2   Qualitative outcomes for pupils and teachers

Although hard statistical evidence about the impact of the pilot on attainment levels was lacking, the sense that the first year had been a positive experience for the majority of staff was discernible. Comments such as, 'Before the pilot you wouldn't have known this was an EAL school' or 'Teachers are now articulating EAL issues' indicate that significant changes had taken place in some schools. In a minority of schools, however, evidence of an unsuccessful first year was equally apparent and remarks such as, 'When you talk to staff in this school they will struggle to recognise that this pilot was happening' underline the importance of getting the implementation right (see Section 2). The following sections consider those outcomes that, although less readily quantifiable, are equally important in terms of assessing the value of this pilot.

9.2.1 Pupil Outcomes
Increased confidence

Several teachers and TAs explained that they felt their EAL learners were more confident about speaking in the classroom and in assembly as a result of the speaking and listening strategies implemented. Staff felt that actively encouraging the use of the first language had given EAL learners the confidence to speak both in English and their first languages. In one class, this activity had proved particularly successful.

Class teachers in one school told stories in Punjabi which had had a positive effect on their pupils:

When we were doing the stories, the children had rapt attention – it was like theatre. It raised their self-esteem. They'd never seen us talk amongst ourselves in Punjabi,   and I think that the humour came out more too.

Other pupil outcomes

One teacher captured the impact that the training she had received and the improved provision for EAL lessons was having on her bilingual pupils:
'You just know they are with you.'
Other pupil outcomes which a few teachers mentioned included:

- happier pupils
- more motivated pupils
- more involved with the lessons; increased use of questioning from the pupils
- calmer pupils due to planned activities such as guided talk
- raised expectations amongst EAL learners (particularly because pupils were able to observe their own achievement as they met curricular/layered targets).

9.2.2 Outcomes for teachers and support staff

In the majority of schools, the pilot had undoubtedly raised staff's awareness of the needs of EAL learners. The extent to which this had happened had been dependent on the staff's history of teaching EAL learners and the level of support they had received from the pilot. Most teachers explained that they were more aware of the learning needs and language barriers that EAL learners faced (both advanced bilingual learners and newly arrived pupils) and welcomed the practical strategies that the consultants introduced to deal with these.

The majority of teachers who were very experienced in teaching EAL learners valued the support they had received and felt it was useful to be updated on the pedagogical approaches to EAL. They appreciated that the pilot had encouraged them to use more speaking and listening activities, something which had been more difficult to do with the introduction of the Literacy hour. At the beginning of the pilot, there was some resistance from the experienced teachers, largely due to the format of the PDMs, but in the main this had been overcome. Speaking with staff in some schools, it was evident that Newly Qualified Teachers (NQTs) had largely appreciated the PDMs and consultancy support given, particularly if they had very little experience of teaching EAL learners. As one headteacher explained, 'it's given them (NQTs) the confidence to work with EAL children, to push them forward and be more challenging with them'.

Teachers' and support staff's increased confidence

One of the main aims of the pilot was to build up mainstream teachers' confidence so that they felt able to teach EAL learners. Several teachers and TAs remarked that they felt more confident in implementing particular strategies to help EAL learners. A few individuals also felt that the pilot had given them reassurance that using speaking and listening activities in place of a writing task was often a useful activity. However, very few monolingual teachers said that they felt more confident in speaking first languages, although several were trying to use key words in lessons.

Teachers' and support staff's raised expectations of pupils

In several case study schools, interviewees commented that the pilot had raised their expectations of EAL learners in their class. The pilot strategies had enabled staff to be better informed of the capabilities of EAL learners and ways of helping them achieve. One teacher commented, 'it has made me look at my practice and focus and question how much EAL children really understand'. In another school, the headteacher remarked that the key outcome of the pilot in his school had been the raised expectations amongst staff of the achievement of EAL learners.

Teachers' and support staff's increased professional development

Teachers were asked whether they thought the pilot had helped them in their own professional development. In most schools, senior managers, middle managers, teachers and support staff felt that they had learnt new strategies and techniques to help teach EAL learners and as a result they had developed their own professional skills. In schools where the EAL coordinator or other members of the leadership team had played a key role, it was felt that the pilot had helped them to develop their leadership and management skills. In two schools the pilot had provided an opportunity for teachers who had not previously held management positions to take on such a role.

A headteacher had delayed appointing an EAL coordinator until he had been fully informed about the pilot and then appointed two relatively new members of staff who had no previous leadership experience. They had risen to the challenge and this development opportunity had been one of the positive outcomes from the school's first year in the pilot. He commented that the pilot was:

> *Absolutely marvellous as a professional development tool. Whilst it worked them hard they had a tremendous amount of support from the SMT and from the consultants. So from my school's point of view it has had a positive impact. It has given them the confidence to lead meetings to talk about it. They were elevated to quite a senior position and they responded to it well.*

10 The second year: the EAL programme

The majority of the case study schools (18) were continuing in the EAL programme in the second year. Staff in these schools welcomed the fact that the pilot had become a PNS programme and felt that in the second year they were going to be able to concentrate on embedding the strategies. One headteacher described her school's journey; 'it's been a process of moving towards collaboration and sustainability'.

This section describes the more detailed plans for the second year of the programme and analyses the reasons why some schools withdrew at the end of the first year.

10.1 Schools' plans for the second year in the programme

Most schools remaining in the programme planned to consolidate the training and new strategies introduced in the previous year. Across all the schools, the commonly cited plans included:

- developing a strand from the first year of the programme (e.g. speaking and listening, learning and teaching or partnerships beyond the classroom)
- embedding practice from the previous year
- implementing curricular targets
- extending strategies into other curriculum areas, working with other consultants from the authority
- developing the sharing and dissemination of good practice between EAL schools
- employing additional bilingual support.

Some of the more specific aims mentioned included:

- linking with other current initiatives with which the school was involved (e.g. the 'Big Writing' approach to teaching writing skills (2020 Vision and Andrell Education Ltd, 2005)).
- implementing a strategy for developing writing through drama
- developing assessment for EAL learners in order to have a better understanding of which strategies were having an impact on attainment
- incorporating strategies for increasing children's understanding of how they learn (e.g. learning styles).

Several schools mentioned that their allocated consultancy time had been reduced during the second year. Generally, planning for the use of this time during the second year was more focused than it had been in the first year. The majority of headteachers prioritised the training of staff who were new to the

school and some of their allocated consultancy time had been set aside for this purpose. The consultants were delivering some whole-school training, although the planned PDMs were substantially fewer than in the previous year. Typically the planned consultancy work in schools included partnership teaching and modelling of lessons by the consultant, with a focus on developing writing. Other LA consultants were also being involved as appropriate.

Those schools where the pilot had initially been focused on specific year groups were involving additional years as the original cohort of pupils moved up the school. In one large school that had focused the initial year of the pilot on a specific year group, about one third of the staff had changed in the new academic year. The combination of high staff turnover and teachers who had not fully embedded the practice in the initial year was causing problems for sustaining practice with those children who had moved up from the focus year. Teachers felt that some strategies, such as the use of writing frames and first languages, had virtually disappeared within the school.

10.2 Schools' continuation in the programme

Six out of the 24 case study schools were not continuing with the EAL programme in the second year. Of these six schools, one school had become an associate school during the pilot year and another had virtually withdrawn during the first term. The headteacher of the associate school felt that she had made the right decision. The pilot had made her tighten up her monitoring and tracking of individual EAL learners, as she explained, 'it has regenerated what we were doing'. It had also enabled her to support other senior managers and teachers in pilot schools to improve their management skills and EAL pedagogy.

Two schools withdrew from the pilot on the recommendation of their LA, mainly because the authority considered them to have obtained their maximum benefit during the initial year and that the schools could sustain the progress they had made. In one case there was a need to make way for new schools to join the programme. Initially, one of these schools was reluctant to withdraw but as they were able to remain in touch with developments, they agreed with the authority's decision. Indeed, both these schools were staying in touch with the programme. In one school, the EAL coordinator was continuing to attend network meetings for participating schools and, in the other, the leading EAL teacher identified on the staff was planning to participate in additional training on EAL issues as part of her role.

Three schools withdrew from the pilot because they felt they would not gain any benefit from continuing for a second year. Key messages can be drawn from these schools. Lack of confidence in the input of the consultant was a factor in the withdrawal of all these schools (see Section 2.6.2). In some cases

consultants with weaker skills did not appear to have been supported adequately by their line managers, although in one case a replacement consultant did appear to receive good initial support when taking over the role. As noted in Section 2.2, one of these schools that had withdrawn from the programme had received confusing messages from their local authority about the target group of the programme. This was replicated in another of these schools where the headteacher joined the programme believing that the focus was the newly arrived pupils. Lack of progress in this direction was partly responsible for their decision to withdraw after the first year. The EAL coordinator felt that poor communication from the LA had characterised their time in the programme, 'It was assumed you knew what was going on; we did ask questions but it was so airy fairy on occasions'. It was noteworthy that this school had planned training on EAL issues and looking at supporting class teachers in their responsibility towards all their pupils once they had withdrawn from the pilot.

The issue of continuity of personnel at local level was discussed in an earlier NFER report (White *et al.*, 2005). In one authority, it was evident that the interruption caused by a change of personnel and illness affecting the EAL consultant had limited the opportunity for some case study schools to progress during the first year of the programme. One school that did make progress had an exceptional leadership team in that the headteacher essentially assumed the role of the pilot consultant. Another headteacher from a different authority felt that continuity of personnel at local level was vital; otherwise, there was a risk of mixed messages coming through to schools. In one school, progress had also been restricted owing to illness affecting the headteacher and another key member of the management team. Other members of the team, with the support of the consultant, had kept some momentum going and the school was looking forward to making greater progress in the second year.

11 Sustainability of practice in schools

This section discusses the potential for sustaining practice in schools when support from the consultant is withdrawn. Evidence is gathered from the schools' plans for the second year of the programme and, in particular, from schools that left the pilot after the first year and their strategies to sustain or develop practice.

11.1 Sustainability of practice in schools that have already left the pilot

The majority of schools that left the pilot after the first year had plans in place to ensure that EAL issues continued to be addressed in the short term. Three schools planned to maintain links with the programme (see Section 10.2). Two schools that had not made the progress they had wanted in the pilot, planned to address particular EAL issues (see Section 10.2). However, one EAL coordinator warned that, for schools withdrawing early from the pilot, there was a risk of regression when class teachers were presented with the immediate problems of newly arrived pupils, without someone to remind them about advanced bilingual learners.

11.2 Potential for the sustainability of practice in schools after consultancy support has been withdrawn

The interview data revealed limited evidence that schools were planning for the longer sustainability of practice when the consultancy support was eventually withdrawn.

The issue that would be most likely to undermine the progress made in schools is staff turnover. Already, as reported in Section 10.2, one school with a high turnover of staff last year was noticing that some strategies introduced in the first year were not being continued in the second year, despite continuing consultant support. Most schools have addressed the issue of bringing new staff 'up to speed on EAL issues' by setting aside some of their consultancy time in the second year for this purpose. This raised the question of how the capacity building would be managed when consultancy time was no longer available. One school had chosen not to delegate ongoing training to their consultant but, as the deputy head admitted, they had not found an alternative solution. The teachers who joined the school in the autumn term (2005) were, at the time of the visit, being supported by the EAL teachers and the deputy did not think that arranging external training for these staff was the way forward. She felt that internal support was preferable as this would focus on the specific context of the school and she was considering setting up a focus

group in the spring term for the staff concerned. Clearly this is one area where the leading teachers would have a valuable role to play.

In one local authority, uncertainty about the future of the pilot in the second year had prompted schools and the LA to consider how the momentum of the pilot might be sustained. A network of schools had been established which met regularly and teachers had been identified to lead three strands of research and development:

- leadership and management
- teaching and learning
- parents and the wider community.

Headteachers had accessed training from the National College for School Leadership and training had also been delivered to certain year group teachers on assessment for learning. One interviewee commented how she had been able to visit another school to find out more about the role of their inclusion mentor. Headteachers in the case study schools were very positive about the benefits of this network, the support model and the potential to continue the progress made within the EAL programme. The format was similar to that of the Primary Strategy Learning Networks (PSLN) and, indeed, in one authority pilot schools had formed a PSLN.

The EAL programme itself was encouraging certain changes within schools to maximise sustainability of practice in the longer term. For example, the inclusion of EAL strategies was more firmly embedded in the planning than it had been previously and lesson observations for EAL had been given a higher profile (see Section 8.1.2).

The pilot required schools to produce a termly RAP but, by the end of the pilot year, the value of producing a new RAP every term diminished in some schools. In many schools the EAL programme had become integral to the school development plan and there appeared to be no need for a separate RAP. It would seem sensible for the longer term sustainability of EAL practice, if the programme encouraged schools to subsume second-year RAPs into their whole school plans in order to embed EAL issues into the development planning.

12 Conclusions

As stated in the introduction, the principal aim of the pilot *Raising the Achievement of Bilingual Learners* was to increase the confidence and expertise of mainstream primary teachers in meeting the needs of advanced bilingual learners. The evaluation was designed to ascertain the degree to which this had been addressed after one year of implementation.

NFER's statisticians are conducting a separate analysis of key stage 2 results across all schools that joined the pilot in 2004, to ascertain whether the pilot has had an impact on attainment in pilot schools and, specifically, on the attainment of their advanced bilingual pupils. The following conclusions are drawn from the data presented in previous sections of this report regarding the other main foci of the evaluation.

The effects of the pilot in improving teacher confidence in meeting the needs of their bilingual pupils

Across all case study schools, which themselves represented a range of school profiles and background characteristics, the confidence of teachers and teaching assistants was reported to have been enhanced. Teachers' increase in confidence was relative to the gains in:

- insight into the general difficulties encountered by key stage 1 and 2 pupils on account of their dual language use and the reasons why these difficulties inhibited the pupils' attainment in national tests
- insight into the specific difficulties encountered by individual groups of pupils within the bilingual cohort (e.g. languages with different profiles of tenses or anomalies in vocabulary)
- understanding of the rationale behind, and scope of, 'EAL pedagogy'
- awareness of how 'EAL pedagogy' related to good teaching as promoted in other current initiatives such as Assessment for Learning
- understanding of how the discrete pilot strategies could be integrated into regular classroom routines and approaches and benefit all pupils in the class whether or not they were bilingual learners
- extension of the individual's repertoire of strategies, techniques and presentations to enact the enhanced understanding and awareness and transform theory into action in the classroom
- opportunities to observe new models and get constructive feedback from the consultants
- support organised by senior leaders, which ensured consistency within the school, allowed for discussion and the sharing of ideas and resources, and thus increased motivation and ensured innovation was sustained.

There was evidence that the pilot activities made a significant contribution to bringing about these gains. Staff in the case study schools reported that the effect of pilot activity had encouraged bilingual pupils:

- to have higher expectations of themselves
- to be more confident
- to ask more questions and 'expect to understand'
- to be more prepared to use their home language in school
- to be more 'on task' and focused.

The effects of local authority management arrangements and school improvement interventions in supporting schools to meet the needs of their bilingual learners

There was evidence that local authority management arrangements and school improvement interventions were powerful in terms of supporting the pilot within some of the case study schools. However, much of this potential was as yet unrealised. For example, some consultants relied substantially on support from the Regional Directors, rather than their LA management team. While this is unsurprising, it carries strong messages about facilitating conditions which need to be recognised at a time when the programme is being more widely applied.

Local authority management was most effective where it facilitated:

- a judicious choice of pilot schools based on sound knowledge of a school's position regarding provision for bilingual pupils and the capacity of the school to make good use of the pilot resources
- clarity both about the pilot itself and its application to schools in the authority (including the target group of pupils), and the communication of this vision to participating schools
- the appointment of a consultant who had the relevant pedagogical knowledge and expertise and the skills necessary to work not only strategically with school senior leadership teams to effect school improvement and change, but also operationally, with teacher practitioners in the classroom
- the inclusion of the necessary senior leadership within the authority to support pilot activities and to engage in collaboration in order to promote a coherent local authority approach via other current interventions and across specialist teams
- the identification of, and access to, sources of resources
- means of monitoring and evaluating the progress and outcomes of the pilot in order to support and disseminate as appropriate
- the identification of networks and provision of opportunities for the sharing of good practice.

Other Findings

The most successful interventions and practices in achieving the aims of the project

Across the case study schools, reference was made to a wide range of routine practices and specific interventions which aimed to raise the standard of achievement of bilingual pupils: some of these were related to, and/or adapted from, other interventions in which the school was engaged; some were pilot-specific; and some were already in existence in the school but took on a wider significance when linked to pilot activities.

Specific interventions and changes in policy and practice at school level were successful when they:

- were grounded in an action plan which facilitated their implementation, set accessible targets, allocated adequate resources and made the contextual arrangements for implementation and sustainability
- were applicable right across the curriculum (i.e. not just within literacy or numeracy, even if grounded in these)
- were applicable right across the school (i.e. not confined to key stage 2 or a particular cohort of pupils)
- raised the standard of achievement of all pupils (not just the target group)
- addressed identified specific difficulties that had been identified by the school
- were resource-light, serviced by resources which could be produced by teachers themselves or readily available from other sources
- were able to be assimilated into regular classroom routines and planning, and were compatible with other curriculum practices and pedagogic approaches which teachers valued
- caused reflection on, and subsequent action on, other aspects of the curriculum and school life which could support bilingual learners more effectively (e.g. contact with parents)
- took teachers out of their comfort zone but encouraged them to challenge themselves rather than to have imposed challenge
- generated immediate positive feedback from pupils within the classroom thus encouraging teachers to continue with the practice, whatever it was
- were supported by school structures (facilitated by the senior leadership team) and effected changes in staff deployment (e.g. in relation to teaching assistant support, the use of leading teachers)
- were grounded in purposeful and manageable record-keeping which informed practice.

Particular teaching approaches referred to widely (i.e. applicable across a range of contexts) which seemed to be of particular benefit to pupils, enhanced their understanding and developed language use were:

- use of curricular/layered targets to plan for language development and curriculum access
- planned opportunities for speaking and listening using 'talk partners', talk frames and role play
- prioritising of speaking and listening as a prelude to writing
- use of first language by children to learn – rather than limiting use of first language by adults for explanations.

Other **positive elements** of the pilot included:

- focusing schools' attention on the needs of bilingual pupils, reminding teachers of effective practices which they may have used previously but which had become low priority
- establishing means of analysing assessment tasks and results of assessments to identify exactly what pupils found difficult
- establishing means of monitoring the progress of bilingual pupils and setting relevant targets and, thereby, challenging expectations about what they could, or could not, achieve
- encouraging different LA providers to collaborate and present messages in a coherent and unified way in order to make a stronger impact.

Within schools, **the reception by staff and impact of the PDM programme** was most favourable when it:

- was negotiated from the outset by the senior leadership team and the consultant
- was jointly delivered by (internal) school staff and the (external) consultant
- made explicit reference to the particular profile of needs in the school at the time
- offered new ideas and approaches while reminding staff of practices in which they may have engaged in the past but which presently lay dormant
- was accessible by all staff, including teaching assistants, at the same time (so the school had 'the common experience')
- was supported by effective use of consultant time to ensure that 'the talk' of the PDM became enacted in practice (with targeting of support and input carefully planned by the senior leadership team).

Implications

Challenges to the EAL programme

The pilot became a programme before the evaluation was completed. This is justifiable given the positive reception that it received in the majority of schools. However, the evidence from the evaluation was that the programme had the greatest immediate impact when an effective consultant had support

from local authority colleagues (at an individual level to share ideas and expertise and to orchestrate the sharing of good practice) and went into a school where there was strong commitment to the programme on the part of the senior leadership team (who, again, were able to *manage* the process of implementation). Arguably, the actual materials were the least important part of the equation. Thus, there are questions over the degree to which the programme will flourish without any of the elements identified above unless its messages are incorporated into other ongoing interventions.

The findings from the research gave rise to a series of developmental questions for different agencies involved in the programme. These questions could be applied to authorities and schools which participate in the programme in the future.

Questions for local authorities

- what information is being used to identify schools that might benefit from the programme?
- how is the expertise gained by previous pilot schools being used as a resource within the authority?
- is all relevant expertise and experience in the authority, wherever located (i.e. in a non-pilot school, in a specialist service, in a community resource), being used to generate the practice which will contribute to realising the key pilot outcome of raised achievement of bilingual pupils?
- how can the programme help to foster good working relationships between EMA and PNS teams?
- are the contribution and responsibilities of all relevant senior leaders within the authority clearly delineated in the programme action plan?
- has the action plan been subject to relevant consultation without going through unnecessary bureaucratic channels?
- has the person appointed to implement the programme got the relevant experience for the tasks involved and, if not, has professional development been made available?
- is regular mentoring/coaching/line management available to support this person in what is a challenging role?
- have monitoring and evaluation plans to measure pupil progress been established at the beginning of the programme?

Questions for new schools in the EAL programme

- is the leadership team clear about the purposes of the programme and the way in which it will meet needs current in the school?
- have roles and responsibilities been clearly delineated in the light of the corpus of information about implementation in other schools?

- how can responsibilities for taking forward the programme in schools be most effectively allocated to promote individual development, capacity-building and general ownership?

- what arrangements are being made for the optimal use of staff time (e.g. systems for sharing and accessing materials; sharing ideas)?

- what informal and formal arrangements will best engage parents and carers?

- what are the implications of the programme for the linkages between the schools and their communities and how could these contribute to raising pupils' standards of achievement?

- is on-going support from the local authority available in a manner acceptable to, and helpful for, the school?

Questions for established pilot schools

- what have been the most significant outcomes of the pilot?

- have these been finalised (i.e. task completed) or do they need sustaining and embedding?

- what arrangements are in place to engage new members of staff who have not had the 'common experience' of the PDM programme?

- how are innovations in teaching practice and school leadership and management being built upon, developed and embedded in other initiatives?

- what systems are in place to assess the effects of changes made (e.g. assessment data)?

- what is the best use of expertise gained at middle management level (e.g. by the EAL. coordinator)? Should the post-holder continue in the role or should the role pass to another member of staff to develop his/her skills?

Questions for DfES (or its representatives) on initiating a programme

- what national, regional and local agencies need to be fully engaged in this initiative at the design stage?

- how can the new messages which this programme is intended to give be related to existing messages (so that there is a perspective on existing practice/policy rather than a change of track)?

- is the lead time adequate for effective planning so that the initiative is as strong as possible before it is implemented in the field?

- are the systems and mechanisms for delivery as simple as possible and do they make the maximum use of existing systems and mechanisms at national, local and school level?

- has a relevant LA team been recruited/identified and adequately trained?

- are there plans for the identification and dissemination of good practice in order to maximise the effects of this particular programme?

- how will the DfES promote the nationally produced materials/resources/information in order to engender confidence in potential users who may have other competing claims on their attention?

Messages from the EAL programme for other educational programmes/interventions

A key strength of the EAL programme was its ability to reach a broader range of pupils. While the extent of its adaptation may not have been in the original design and, ironically, may have been a factor of confusion about its exact designation, much of the programme's success in schools lay in the fact that it could, with careful planning, apply to all bilingual learners – not just the 'advanced' bilingual learners for which it was originally conceived – and to a range of settings in which they were being educated (for example, schools with high or low proportions of these pupils). Indeed, given the fact that schools persistently highlighted differences between the achievement of different ethnic groups this flexibility was critical. While the programme identified its target group as 'advanced bilingual learners', this group, despite having a common definition, is not homogeneous and different needs are represented within it.

A second key strength of the programme was its alignment with other initiatives and priorities. Its centrality within the Primary National Strategy, with focus on contribution to the inclusion agenda and delivery of the *Every Child Matters* outcomes, was significant given the past history of provision for bilingual learners.

However, there were some weaknesses which could be instructive for other educational programmes/interventions. While too long a lead time may be demotivating and reduce the momentum of implementation, too short a lead time is liable to result in inadequate preparation, too little time for the most effective appointments and the potential for confusion as to the purposes of the initiative. In this particular case, there was evidence that some authorities may have been limited in their choice of candidates for consultants' posts and/or did not have adequate time to support these candidates before they had to take up their post. In addition, there was unease about the fact that the PDM programme was not finalised and the materials were incomplete at the start of the pilot; this did not help the confidence either of the consultants (who had to prepare to deliver sessions without adequate time to absorb the messages or exploit their potentialities) or of headteachers who felt accountable to their staff to guarantee an effective programme of whole-school training. Messages about the cohort at which the programme was explicitly directed were often misunderstood along the lines of communication.

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Appendix 1: Methodology

Phase One (May 2004 – March 2005)

Phase one of the research comprised three strands:

a)   Interview with Regional Directors

In June 2004, a joint interview was conducted with the two regional directors. The purpose of this discussion was to gain an overview of the particular intentions of the pilot within schools.

b)   Phone interviews with staff in local authorities

Seven local authorities, representing one third of the pilot authorities, were invited to participate in case study work. The local authorities represented a spread in terms of geography, authority type (e.g. metropolitan, London borough), 'traditions' of EAL provision and contextual issues. It should be noted that the schools we visited were largely located in urban areas, reflecting the predominantly urban nature of the pilot authorities as a whole. All seven local authorities agreed to participate in the research.

In June and July 2004, in each of the authorities, telephone interviews were conducted with the Primary Strategy Managers, the officer responsible for ethnic minority achievement (EMA) and the consultant appointed for the pilot. The purpose of these interviews was to discuss the implementation of the pilot at local authority level as perceived by the various respondents. The interview schedules were previously piloted with staff in another authority involved in the pilot but not selected for case study work. The interviews explored the initiation phase of the pilot, including the appointment of the consultants, the selection of pilot schools and the diagnostic visits.

c)   Case study visits

Local authority personnel were invited to nominate at least three primary schools within their authority to take part in the case study phase of the research. It was hoped that the chosen schools would represent

- schools in the pilot with both high and low proportions of EAL learners
- schools in the pilot with diverse groups of EAL learners, as well as those with one predominant group
- the profile of key stage 2 attainment in pilot schools as a whole
- a cross-section of urban communities, both town and inner city
- a cross-section of typical priorities for raising attainment in pilot schools
- typical combinations of EAL expertise found in pilot schools.

In most cases, local authority officers recommended schools either because they typified the problems and remediation strategies found in the authority or because they were examples of good EAL practice. In a few cases, LEAs extended an open invitation to pilot schools to participate

All seven authorities named three primary schools and in one authority six schools were nominated. Using the criteria outlined above, 21 case study schools were chosen and all agreed to participate.

The case study visits took place across the seven local authorities in the autumn term of 2004. Interviews were conducted with 116 individuals in 21 schools (i.e. three schools in each local authority). Headteachers were asked to nominate a dedicated leadership team which would have responsibility for the outcomes of the pilot at school level: interviews were therefore conducted with team members. In most schools, the leadership team included the headteacher, the school pilot EAL/EMA coordinator, the literacy and/or numeracy coordinators and class teachers. Members of the NFER team spoke with support assistants in approximately half of the schools. Visits were made to all schools except two, where other commitments and school priorities made a visit unacceptable. In these two schools, relevant staff were interviewed by telephone.

Leadership teams were asked to formulate a Raising Achievement Plan (RAP), following a diagnostic visit from the consultant. Members of the NFER team examined the RAP prior to the case study visit in order to tailor broad interview questions to the particular context. Questions related to:

- the initiation of the pilot
- the diagnostic visit
- the design of the RAP
- the school's desired outcomes from participation
- the way in which the consultant was working with the school
- changes that had been introduced so far as a result of pilot activities.

In addition to the school visits, telephone interviews were conducted with three link inspectors in the autumn term of 2004 to gain their perspective on the implementation of the pilot in the school for which they had responsibility.

Phase Two (April 2005 – March 2006)

In phase two, a programme of interviews similar to that of phase one was undertaken. Phase two interviews focused on the perceived effects of the implementation of the pilot activities. These interviews also explored changes that happened over the course of the pilot year.

a)   Interview with Regional Director

Interviews were conducted with the one remaining Regional Director in May 2005, January 2006 and March 2006 to update the research team on the progress of the pilot at a national level.

b)   Phone interviews with staff in local authorities

Follow-up interviews were conducted with the Primary Strategy Managers, Ethnic Minority Achievement managers and the consultants appointed to the pilot in each of the seven local authorities selected for case study. Where there had been personnel changes, five new interviewees were contacted. All interviews were conducted in May 2005.

The interviews with local authority staff were individually tailored to take into consideration the findings from phase one and the team's knowledge from speaking with school staff. The purpose of the interviews was to learn about the ways in which the pilot had developed in their authority. Particular attention was given to any issues or actions that were mentioned in the phase one local authority interviews that needed to be explored further. Questions focused on developments in terms of roles and responsibilities, training needs, impact of the pilot on pupils and teachers, monitoring and evaluation strategies and plans for the roll-out of the programme.

c)   Case study visits

In phase two, case study visits took place in 13 phase one schools where, on the basis of previous visits, there was likely to have been particularly significant developments or particular problems with implementation which needed to be followed up. We also visited three new case study schools, which had been nominated by LA officers, as making particularly significant improvements as a result of pilot activity.

For the remaining seven phase one schools, we conducted telephone interviews with a key member of staff, where we judged that overall change was likely to have been no more than moderate, on the basis of the evidence we gathered previously, and where we had not had an indication to the contrary from LA interviewees. We also conducted a telephone interview with a key member of staff in one school which the LA personnel had suggested had made significant developments over the pilot year. Only one phase one school dropped out of the evaluation in phase two.

In phase two, over 70 interviews were conducted with individuals in 24 schools. When we contacted the schools, we asked if we could speak to as many staff as we spoke to in phase one, and where possible, this was achieved. The purpose of the interviews was to learn about the ways in which the pilot had developed in the schools. Particular attention was given to any issues or actions that were mentioned in the phase one school interviews and the LA interviews that needed to be explored further. Questions focused on developments in terms of: the PDM programme, consultancy support, use of the RAPs, changes in practice, impact of the pilot on pupils and teachers, monitoring and evaluation strategies and plans for the second year of the programme. In two schools, we also spoke with the consultant in this phase. Members of the NFER team examined the RAP(s) for terms three and four, prior to the case study visit in order to tailor broad interview questions to the particular context.