

# 44 DIFFERENT LANGUAGES IN 1 SCHOOL COMMUNITY



Government Policy and EAL Learners:  
Lessons from the Past and Challenges for the Future

# Lessons from The Past

Children with EAL make good progress if they are included in mainstream lessons as soon as possible ***as long as they are provided with the right level of support, expertise and resource.***

Targeted funding and a locus of expertise enabled LAs to address EAL attainment systematically.

‘Proficiency in the English language is the major factor influencing the degree of support an individual student will require, and schools will need to be able to assess this need **accurately.**’ Strand, Malmberg and Hall (2015)

# Future Challenges

**Devolved school improvement landscape**

**Lack of political focus on EAL**, perception that the attainment issue is solved.

**The lack of robust evidence** for effective pedagogies.

**Negative perception of migrants**, refugees and non UK nationals and the impact of this on the social cohesion.

**Building on the EAL proficiency scales** – a positive opportunity.

# Wider Contexts

**Academisation.**

**Curriculum and assessment changes** (new GCSE curriculum, EBacc, Progress/Attainment 8, A Level reform).

**‘Life without levels’.**

**School funding reform** - £388 m proposed for EAL

**Pupil Numbers** - In 2020, there will be an estimated **630,000** more children in schools than today. Source: DfE.

# Wider Contexts

**White Working class boys** and underperformance in certain regions – political priority.

**Teacher shortages**

**International performance** (UK performs averagely but with larger attainment gaps).

**School purpose** (solely teaching and learning? Or wider role – ‘British values’, employability, mental health?).



# National Contexts

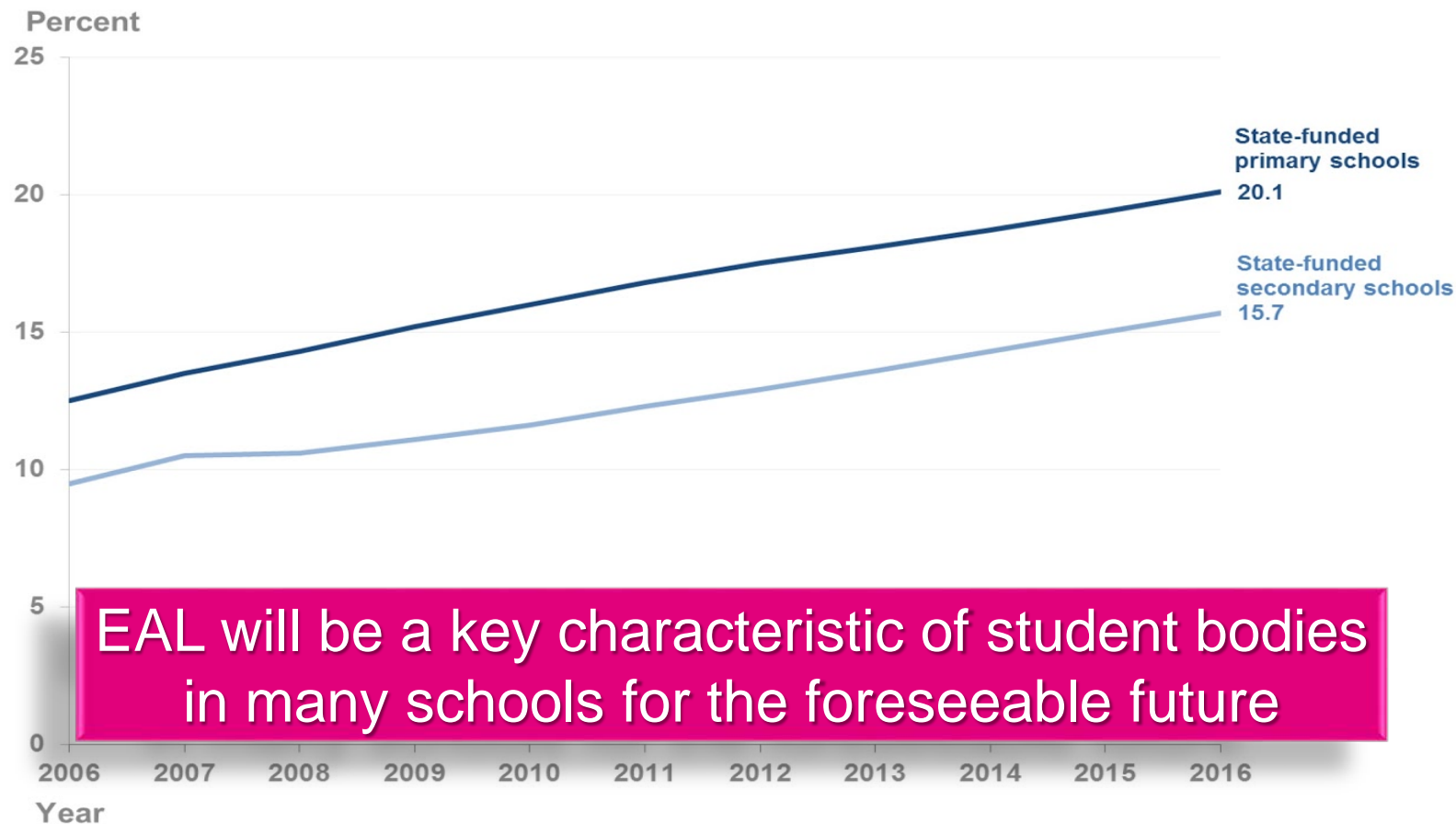
**UK press is the most aggressive in reporting on Europe's 'migrant' crisis**



**Press Coverage of the Refugee and Migrant Crisis in the EU:  
A Content Analysis of Five European Countries**

Report prepared for The United Nations High Commission for Refugees (December 2015)

**Figure F: The percentage of pupils exposed to a language other than English at home has increased**  
Pupils with English as an additional language 2010-2016, primary and secondary schools



Source: School Census

# The attainment of students with EAL

Varies widely and depends on factors associated with risk of low achievement

Many of these factors are the same for EAL pupils as their FLE peers

Some picked up by Pupil Premium

Risk factors:

1. Having a SEND
2. Being entitled to a Free School Meal (FSM)
3. Living in an economically deprived neighbourhood
4. Attending school outside London
5. Being summer born





# Added risk factors for students with EAL

Entry to England  
from abroad  
during  
a Key Stage

Changing school  
during a Key Stage  
at school

**These high-  
risk factors  
should also  
be funded**

Ethnic groups  
White other  
Black African  
Pakistani

First languages  
within at risk  
ethnic groups  
Somali  
Lingala  
Lithuanian



# EAL policy shift from 1980s onwards



**Withdrawal to inclusion in mainstream**

**Role of the EAL teacher**

**Ownership of policy and guidance**

**Locus of expertise – changed**

**Funding – not ring fenced**

**Proficiency Scales for EAL pupils**



# Expertise



Local authority teams

School-led  
improvement system

# School improvement landscape

Local Authorities

Regional Schools  
Commissioners.

Teaching Schools  
and Alliances

Diocese Faith  
Schools

Collaboratives,  
Partnerships &  
Trusts

Chains &  
Sponsored  
Academies

Specialist Leaders  
of Education

Local Leaders of  
Education

Grammar  
Schools

Future leaders &  
Teaching Leaders

Designated  
Outstanding  
Teachers

Ofsted  
Framework

# EAL policy shift from 1980s onwards



## Funding



Ring-fenced for EAL –  
Ethnic Minority  
Achievement Grant  
(EMAG)

Decided by the local  
Schools Forum.  
**‘EAL Factor’ limited to  
bilingual pupils enrolled  
for a maximum of 3  
years.**



# Policy and reality - Funding



‘3 years’ additional support from the point of entry should be sufficient for pupils with EAL.’



**‘It may take 7 or more years for EAL pupils to achieve academic parity with their monolingual peers.’**

*(NALDIC, 2002)*

# Resourcing inclusive pedagogies

Inclusive pedagogies, unless properly resourced with appropriate teacher expertise and knowledge may fail the very students they set out to support.

Leung and Creese (2010)



Be alert to behaviours  
that exclude EAL learners  
in the 'inclusive'  
mainstream classroom



# Policy and reality – attitudes and mindsets



'Exclusion  
mindset'

**'Welcome and value**  
the cultural, linguistic and  
educational experiences  
that pupils with EAL bring  
to the school.'

**'Implement school-wide  
strategies to ensure that  
EAL pupils are supported  
in accessing the  
curriculum.'**

*(Equality Act 2010)*

**Shared by all?**



# Proficiency of EAL pupils



## **EAL or not**

(No requirement to assess  
language proficiency in  
English)

Statutory reporting  
of proficiency in English  
for all EAL pupils  
aged 4-16

# Proficiency Scales for EAL pupils

‘Proficiency in the English language is the major factor influencing the degree of support an individual student will require, and schools will need to be able to assess this need **accurately**.’

Strand, Malmberg and Hall (2015)

**How well prepared is your school  
to accurately assess EAL learners?**



# Teacher Standards

5. A teacher must:  
have a clear understanding of the needs of all pupils, including those with [...] English as an additional language; [...]; and be able to use and evaluate distinctive teaching approaches to engage and support them.

# ITE Teacher Educators and EAL

‘Many teacher educators have no training or experience teaching EAL pupils.’

*Foley and Conteh, forthcoming (2017)*

**I HAD VIRTUALLY NO EXPERIENCE  
OF TEACHING EAL PUPILS.  
PARTLY BECAUSE [...] IT'S  
13 YEARS SINCE I WAS  
TEACHING IN SCHOOLS, BUT  
ALSO THE NATURE OF THE  
SCHOOLS I WAS WORKING WITH  
AT THAT TIME, THEY JUST  
DIDN'T HAVE A SIGNIFICANT  
POPULATION OF PUPILS IN  
THAT CATEGORY AT THAT POINT.**

**Respondent 1**

**SIMILAR EXPERIENCE  
FOR ME AS WELL.**

**Respondent 2**

**YEAH, AND FOR ME. SAME.**

**Respondent 3**

# The school CPD landscape

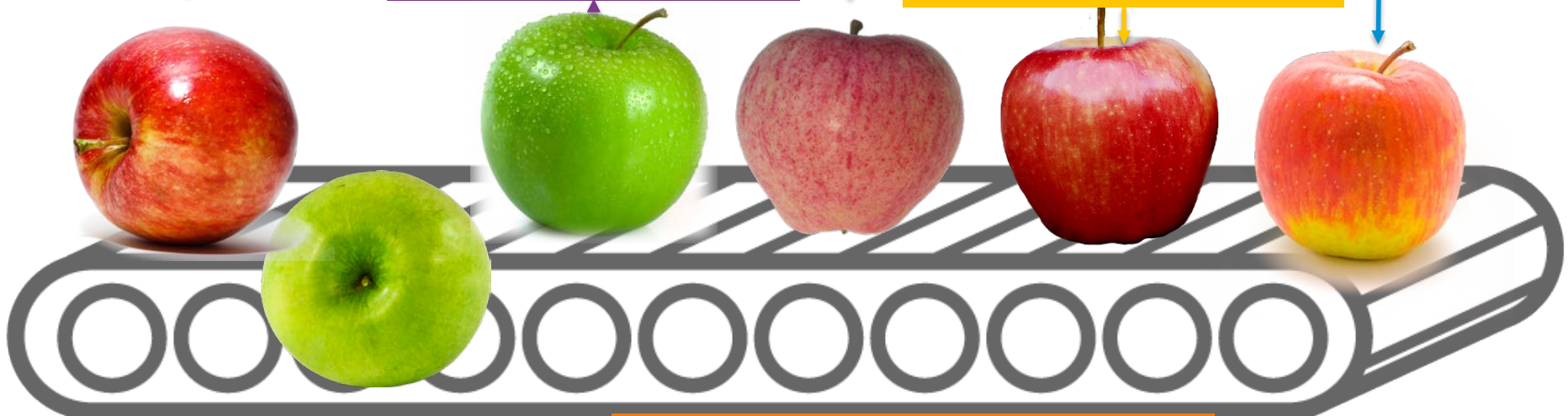
Experienced,  
long-serving,  
seen it all

Experienced,  
new to the  
school, no prior  
experience  
of EAL pupils

Newly qualified,  
no experience  
of EAL pupils  
during  
placement

Experienced,  
new to the  
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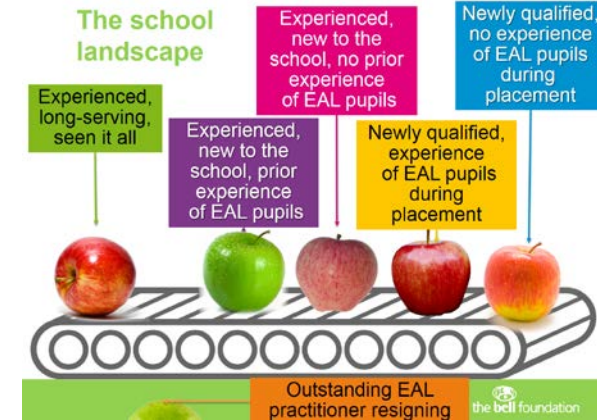


Outstanding EAL  
practitioner resigning

# CPD and EAL in your school

## Questions to think about

- How well does the CPD programme in your school address the diverse learning needs of the teaching staff regarding EAL?
- How does it support teachers in becoming (more) confident and (better) able to choose the best approach required for the needs of their classroom?
- How does it ensure that in-house expertise is not lost when key staff leave?



# Importance of evidence

## Where can you find research evidence for EAL?

The Bell Foundation website (free access)

<https://www.bell-foundation.org.uk/Work/EAL/Resources/>

EAL Nexus website (free access, useful summaries)

<https://eal.britishcouncil.org/eal-sector/key-eal-research>

NALDIC website (paid membership)

<https://naldic.org.uk/professional-learning-cpd/research-publications-and-statistics/>

EEF Toolkit

<https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/resources/teaching-learning-toolkit>



# Thank you!

<https://www.bell-foundation.org.uk/>



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