

The Ethnic Minority and Traveller Achievement Service (EMTAS)

Additional Briefing Paper

EMTAS is a newly formed team of English as an Additional Language (EAL) and literacy specialists. The team work across the county, supporting some of the most vulnerable and disadvantaged of all young people because they are either newly arrived to the country and have little or no English or they are from the Gypsy, Roma or Traveller communities and are very discriminated against and struggle to access education.

Previously, Black and Minority Ethnic children were supported by the Intercultural Curriculum Support Service, however this team was decommissioned in July 2011, when £890,000 of the EMA grant was delegated to schools. At that time schools agreed to retain centrally only £110,000 for a much reduced team with a completely different focus and intention to its work. EMTAS is this new team (7 ft equivalent) with new leadership and management and a very different approach to building capacity in schools by responding rapidly to schools' and pupils' needs, providing skilled and informative assessments and offering global and contextual advice.

In the 6 months since EMTAS started operating Warwickshire has received **187** pupils from across the globe. These young people have been placed into **47** different schools, **145** in primary and **42** secondary. Many of these schools have had little or no previous experience of EAL learners from Eastern Europe, Africa, Portugal or South East Asia. In the past schools contacted ICSS when they had a new arrival and were then given £500 regardless of the level of language need of the child. How effectively the money was used depended on the school's knowledge and confidence with EAL and its staffing capacity.

Rationale for Retaining an Internal Provider Team

An internal provider team guarantees a level of provision i.e. assessment of new arrivals, orientation for children and families and on-call advice, as an entitlement for all international new arrivals. High quality assessments, provided by skilled and experienced language development advisers, inform schools and teachers and speed up the access and integration of young learners into a complex education system.

This arrangement supports the Local Authority in its role as the champion of vulnerable children. A specialised internal team offers excellent value for money because of economies of scale for the

specialism. A retained team can also provide pre-placement work to support admissions, particularly for the most vulnerable children with, for example, ill health needs. It also supports pressure points for example with a Year 6 newly arrived pupil who will need very focused intervention work to fast track them ready for secondary education.

New Arrivals.

Since September EMTAS have, very successfully

- Carried out 142 one-to-one intensive language competency assessments on speaking and listening, reading and writing and written reports with recommendations and targets.
- Translated school documents into home languages to inform and include families.
- Supported orientation meetings with families to mediate between the school and home so that parents are aware of English educational expectations
- Delivered training, advice and guidance to schools for both cultural and linguistic reasons.

Impact

EMTAS revisited 3 schools who received new arrivals in September, to assess the impact of its work with the school.

1. The Headteacher at a primary school in Leamington said the New Arrival assessments made her more aware of the significant gaps in language development for 2 French children which prompted her to put in urgent and targeted interventions. These children are now making considerable progress.
2. The EAL coordinator at a primary school in Rugby used the report to plan in-class and withdrawal support for her Latvian new arrival, appreciating how the assessments enable her to identify the small steps needed to help the child.
3. A large secondary school has received 18 newly arrived international students since September. Its EAL coordinator particularly appreciated the thorough analysis of pupils who arrive with limited English because many secondary new arrivals learnt English as a foreign language in their countries of origin. This means they can have simple survival language which will mask their general gaps in understanding and as the academic language needed to access the secondary curriculum is very demanding the EMTAS assessment reports have helped the school to identify these gaps and plan appropriate support. She is also putting them on the staff ICT 'shared area' so all can have access to the information.

All 47 schools report they value the assessments, appreciate the 'on call' service and many request further follow-up meetings to check they are appropriately addressing the pupil needs. (Please note – developmental work of this kind is delivered on a traded basis with schools)

The Future of EMTAS

This year the service for the assessment of New Arrivals has been free to schools, but without additional funding it cannot continue, especially as additional demands from schools and from other LA services are increasing. This is mainly concerned with support for orientation work with families and the child – getting them ready for a different set of expectations in school, for example. There is no evidence to suggest the numbers of new arrivals into Warwickshire will reduce any time soon and once all the funding is in school budgets, there will be no flexibility to help a school that doesn't usually have EAL, or is a small primary school without the skills and knowledge or funding to address pupils' needs.

If Warwickshire doesn't retain the EMTAS team the impact will be

- No quality assured universal entitlement to a service that provides an equal opportunity and access to language assessment for learning
- Funding diluted and not available when/where needed
- No 'on-call' service for the most difficult cases
- No pre-placement support for families to help them complete the necessary admissions paperwork etc.
- No family support and mediation between home, school and pupils
- Vulnerable EAL pupils at risk of underachieving due to the disappearance of a professional county team.

What we have found this year is that schools prefer,

- a personal service,
- the targeted report
- access to professional advice and guidance
- support for pupil integration into the school and the curriculum
- signposting to other agencies and resources

We know the educational context is changing and the intention is that schools become independent and empowered, however there needs to be transition time for this to happen for all schools. Unless the Local Authority can continue to support the most vulnerable Ethnic Minority and Traveller pupils during this period of change, they are at risk of becoming invisible victims of educational change. Warwickshire has always championed the child and EMTAS would like to continue providing a critical service during these unpredictable times.