



Looking at English as an Additional Language

Teaching and Learning in Post-Primary Schools in 2008



PROMOTING THE QUALITY OF LEARNING

The Inspectorate wishes to thank St Mark's Community School, Tallaght, for permission to use the cover photograph.

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FOREWORD

This report presents the findings of an Inspectorate evaluation of provision for students who are learning English as an additional language (EAL) in Irish post-primary schools. The evaluation was conducted in 2008 and informed a Value-for-Money (VFM) review of EAL provision in schools that was being undertaken by the Department of Education and Skills. Many of the findings of the Inspectorate evaluation were first published in 2011 as a major section of the report arising from the Department's VFM review, *Language Support for Migrants: a Value-for-money Review of Expenditure on the Education of Migrant Students at Primary and Post-primary Level Who Do Not Speak English (or Irish) as a First Language 2001/02 – 2009/09*. This report provides further data and analysis from the evaluation.

The findings are based on evidence gathered during evaluations carried out in fifteen post-primary schools from May to December 2008. Inspectors observed teaching and learning in over one hundred classrooms and support settings. They conducted interviews with school principals, students, care teams and EAL support teams. Questionnaires were completed by almost 1000 students and over 700 parents. The Inspectorate would like to thank the schools, teachers, parents and students who contributed to this research and who shared their professional and personal views and insights.

The increased numbers of EAL students in Irish schools over the past decade has challenged our schools to adapt their practices and policies. It has also stimulated policy development at system level. The response of the Department of Education and Skills has included the allocation of additional teachers, funding of various agencies to develop curriculum, resources and materials and the provision of continuing professional development for teachers.

In the period since the Inspectorate's evaluation of EAL and the Department's VFM review were carried out, the Department of Education and Skills, along with the Office of the Minister for Integration, has published the *Intercultural Education Strategy, 2010-2015*. The strategy is about thinking, planning and doing things differently, conscious of diversity and the need to create intercultural learning environments. Resources committed for the implementation of the strategy include continued funding for EAL in primary and post-primary schools, funding for English classes for adult migrants and the provision of an information portal on the educational resources available for newcomers, entitled Accessing Intercultural Materials (AIMS). This portal is for the use of students and their parents as well as educators, researchers and policy makers. It is accessible through the websites of Department of Education and Skills (www.education.ie) and the Office for the promotion of Migrant Education (www.integration.ie).

Looking at English as an Additional Language identifies and affirms many instances of very good practice in EAL provision. A majority of the schools evaluated had developed inclusive policies and practices. EAL students demonstrated effective learning in a majority of lessons observed and some students had made very good progress. The report found a significant predominance of good practice in the area of support for EAL students, and this is consistent with the findings of whole-school evaluations in this area. While acknowledging the progress achieved to date by the system as a whole and by individual schools, the report is very clear about the challenges facing both. These include the need for schools to provide more co-ordinated, differentiated and targeted use of the teaching allocation for EAL and the need for a broader acceptance that every subject teacher is also a language teacher. At the level of the system, the report identifies a need to provide further professional-development opportunities for teachers.

This report complements *English as an Additional Language in Primary Schools*, which is published separately by the Inspectorate. Along with other reviews of EAL provision undertaken by the OECD and the ESRI, these reports form a substantial contribution to the policy-making process.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Increasing diversity in Irish society

Between 1996 and 2008, there was an unprecedented increase in immigration to Ireland. This had a profound impact on the post-primary student profile nationally, transforming it from a relatively homogeneous picture to one of considerable cultural and linguistic diversity. In the 2008-09 school year, 8% of the post-primary student cohort was born outside of Ireland and comprised children from 160 countries. Despite the decrease in the numbers of new migrants to Ireland since 2008, the number of post-primary students born outside of Ireland continues to rise as they progress within the educational system. In 2010/11, they represented more than 10% of the post-primary student cohort.

A post-primary student database is maintained by the Department of Education and Skills¹, based on annual returns of enrolment data from schools. All children born outside of Ireland are generically categorised as 'non-national' on this database. However, the Economic and Social Research Institute (ESRI) estimates that approximately 30% of these students speak English as a language of home and school, mostly the children of Irish parents returning from the UK and US². This report focuses on the remaining 70% and also on students born in Ireland (often of newcomer parents) for whom English is not the first language of the home and community. In this report, they are all referred to as 'students learning English as an additional language' (EAL students). This term acknowledges that these students already speak at least one other language and are now acquiring English in an English-speaking environment.

1.2 Educational supports for EAL students

Successive measures have been put in place by the Department to provide school-based English language support for the children of newcomers to Ireland. The Department's initial response happened in the context of the arrival in Ireland of refugees and asylum seekers, but inward migration for economic reasons became the dominant pattern over time.

The Department established the Refugee Language Support Unit (RLSU) in 1999. Among other tasks, the RLSU was asked to develop English language programmes and materials and to provide training for English language support teachers and school principals. In 2001 the RLSU became Integrate Ireland Language and Training (IILT). While IILT was given funding to deliver training and develop resources, the bulk of the Department's expenditure on language support was, and is, directed towards providing additional teaching hours.

In the year 2000, the Department published an *Information booklet for schools on asylum seekers*, giving details of additional teacher allocations to provide language support, and outlining the role of the RLSU in providing resources and training. The booklet also offered guidance with regard to the integration of newcomer students, making reference to issues such as enrolment, intercultural ethos and education, in-school support structures and curriculum. The Department provided additional teaching hours of up to two whole-time teacher equivalents (WTE³) in post-primary schools, for the delivery of English language support.

In 2007, in response to the significant continuing increase in the numbers of EAL students, the Department issued Circular 53/07, *Meeting the needs of pupils for whom English is a second*

¹ Formerly the Department of Education and Science, and hereinafter the Department

² *Adapting to diversity: Irish schools and newcomer students* (ESRI, 2009)

³ One WTE equals 22 teaching hours. These can be allocated by the school to one teacher or many.

language⁴. It raised the existing maximum number of teaching posts for English language support to six, and provided guidelines on the appropriate use of this greatly increased allocation. The circular emphasised the importance of inclusive practices both in the academic and social areas of school life, and the school's responsibility for using the additional teaching resource in the most effective way for the target students. It also made explicit reference to the development of English language proficiency, giving three broad proficiency levels, based on the English Language Proficiency Benchmarks which had been developed by IILT.

Table 1.1 English-language proficiency levels

Level 1	Level 2	Level 3
Very poor comprehension of English and very limited spoken English	Understands some English and can speak English sufficiently well for basic communication	Has competent communication skills in English

The circular also referred to the assessment kits that IILT was then devising for the initial and ongoing assessment of English language proficiency. It was stated that the additional teaching hours being funded by the Department were intended to address the language needs of students who were assessed as having a language proficiency of either level 1 or 2.

In the context of the Department of Finance budget for 2009, Circular 53/07 was superseded by Circular 15/09 *Meeting the needs of pupils learning English as an additional language (EAL)*. The circular reduced the allocation of teaching hours for EAL students, while reiterating the inclusive principles of 53/07. The circular included the following table, linking the proficiency levels given in 53/07 with the levels used in the IILT *Post-primary Assessment Kit*, which was distributed to all post-primary schools by the Department in early 2009.

Table 1.2 English-language proficiency levels used in Post-primary Assessment Kit

Levels used in post-primary assessment kit			
Level 0	Level A1	Level A2	Level B1
Absence of any English language proficiency	Can understand and use basic words and phrases in a social and school context	Can understand, read and write simple English and can speak English sufficiently well to exchange information	Can function well enough in English to be fully integrated into the mainstream classroom
Proficiency levels used prior to publication of the post-primary assessment kit			
Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	
Very poor comprehension of English and very limited spoken English	Understands some English and can speak English sufficiently well for basic communication	Has competent communication skills in English	

Circular 15/09 required schools to direct EAL support principally to students who had not achieved Level B1, as measured by the *Post-primary Assessment Kit*, in all four language skills: speaking, listening, reading, and writing.

In December 2011 there were further reforms to how EAL support posts would be allocated to schools. It was decided that, with effect from September 2012, every post-primary school would get a general allocation of support-teaching posts/hours to cater for both EAL students and students in need of learning support. Schools were to have autonomy on how to deploy the teachers in these posts between EAL support and learning support. It was announced that there would be additional support for schools with high concentrations of EAL students.

⁴ See appendices for the full texts of Circulars 53/07 and 15/09.

1.3 Resources to support provision for students with EAL

Between 1999 and 2008, the RLSU / IILT devised and made available a range of resources for use in post-primary schools. It developed English Language Proficiency Benchmarks in 2000 (revised in 2003) together with a version of the European Language Portfolio. These were framed within the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR) for languages. Among other materials, IILT developed a range of subject-based resources in 2003 and *A resource book for language support in post-primary schools* in 2007. These were available on its web site and also distributed in hard copy at in-service courses. The development of assessment kits was completed in 2008. A range of IILT-developed resources is currently available on the web site of the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA). While the above resources uniquely addressed the specific context of post-primary EAL students, they were not widely known or used at the time of the evaluation. This reflects the limited extent to which post-primary schools engaged with the EAL in-service, and its limited availability.

The NCCA published *Intercultural Education in the Post-primary School* in 2006. This document focused on intercultural education as an enabling experience for all students, and provided, among other resources, a series of checklists to assist school self-evaluation with regard to the provision of an inclusive intercultural learning environment. Copies were distributed to all schools. However, while referred to in some school policies on inclusion, this publication was not widely consulted in most of the schools evaluated for this report. Since 2008, the NCCA has developed a wide range of supports for provision for EAL students at primary and post-primary level. These are available at www.ncca.ie.

The Professional Development Service for Teachers (PDST) has developed and disseminated high-quality resources to support provision for students with EAL in post-primary schools.

The Trinity Immigration Initiative has developed a suite of resources for different subject areas in the post-primary curriculum. These are available through its English Language Support Programme at www.elsp.ie.

1.4 Continuing professional development in EAL

The Department's support services for primary and post-primary schools (now both part of PDST) began to deliver an in-service programme for the teaching of EAL during 2008/09. The aim was to support schools and teachers in bringing about the successful integration and participation of students with EAL. Courses have been offered to EAL teachers, subject teachers, schools, and school management. Uptake and attendance have been high, and participants have commented positively on the pedagogical approaches and the materials and resources provided. A focus of the EAL programme was familiarising teachers with the post-primary assessment kits. The evaluations on which this report is based were carried out prior to this in-service programme.

The Department's Teacher Professional Network mechanism has provided funding for peer professional development through the English Language Support Teachers Association (ELSTA).

The Value For Money Review of Expenditure on Language Support for Migrants was published by the Integration Unit of the Department of Education and Skills in 2011. One of the key findings was that the level of expenditure on continuing professional development (CPD) in EAL for teachers and school management was very low in the overall context of the Department's total EAL expenditure. It found 'a mismatch between the funding available for EAL teachers' salaries (over €136 million in 2008/9) and the funding available for their CPD (under €1 million in 2009)⁵, and recommended a rebalancing of expenditure in future.

⁵ *VFM review*, p.134. The figures give expenditure on primary and post-primary teachers' salaries and primary and post-primary CPD.

1.5 Structure of this report

This composite report draws its evidence from the evaluations carried out in 15 post-primary schools. Chapter two describes the methodology used in the evaluation. Chapter three describes the context of the schools evaluated and their student populations. Findings and recommendations are presented in chapters four to seven. Recommendations are of two kinds: recommendations for schools arise directly from the findings of the individual evaluations and it is within the capacity of individual schools to implement them; recommendations for the system – the Department and other agencies – cannot be implemented by individual schools and require systemic change of some kind.

Chapters are divided into subsections for ease of reference. In each subsection, a bulleted list presents the evaluation criteria used by inspectors to identify very good practice in the area under consideration. These criteria should prove helpful to schools as a tool for self-evaluation when they review their own provision and practice in the various areas covered. Chapter eight of this report summarises the main findings and recommendations of the evaluation.

CHAPTER 2

EVALUATION METHODOLOGY

2.1 Scope of the evaluation

In the late 1990s and the early 2000s, whole-school evaluations (WSE) conducted by the Inspectorate in post-primary schools looked at provision for newcomer students as an aspect of areas such as inclusion, resources and pastoral care. Inspectors looked at the teaching and learning of English as an additional language as part of the evaluation of the school's support for these students. From 2006, post-primary inspectors of English included an EAL element, where relevant, in their subject inspections and the reports arising from them.

In 2007, the Department of Education and Skills identified EAL provision as an area for more focused evaluation, and the Inspectorate began planning and preparatory work for a national evaluation of EAL provision in primary and post-primary schools. At the same time, the Department's Integration Unit commissioned *Language Support for Migrants: a Value-for-money Review of Expenditure on the Education of Migrant Students at Primary and Post-primary Level Who Do Not Speak English (or Irish) as a First Language 2001/02 – 2009/10*. A number of agencies including the Economic and Social Research Institute (ESRI) also conducted research in this area. However, the Inspectorate was in the unique position of being able to observe and evaluate the learning experiences of EAL students in the classroom and in support settings.

This report is based on an evaluation that the Inspectorate carried out in 15 post-primary schools between May and December 2008. An individual report was prepared for each school also. These school reports formed part of the evidence base for this composite report and contributed substantially to the value-for-money review. The Inspectorate has also carried out WSE with a particular focus on EAL provision in thirty primary schools. The report on the primary evaluation is published separately.

2.2 Evaluation objectives

The purposes of the evaluation were to:

- Evaluate the quality of teaching and learning of EAL students both in the EAL support classroom and the mainstream classroom
- Establish the level of provision for EAL students in post-primary schools, and the level of training and supports available to schools and to teachers of EAL students
- Evaluate the quality of whole-school planning for the inclusion of EAL students, the quality of EAL team planning, and the quality of subject planning for EAL students
- Gather the views of EAL students and their parents on their experience of educational provision and inclusion in the life of the school
- Contribute to policy making at system level in respect of EAL provision in schools

2.3 Methodology

A working group comprising both primary and post-primary inspectors developed evaluation criteria, instruments, guidelines and reporting templates for use in both primary and post-primary evaluations.

The working group researched the principles and practice of intercultural education and the teaching of EAL, with input from EAL practitioners, to inform the development of evaluation criteria. These criteria facilitated inspectors in making judgements about the provision in each quality area and they assisted in identifying the strengths of schools and the areas of schools' work where further development and improvement was required. The criteria are presented in this report at the beginning of each relevant sub-section of chapters four to seven.

A wide range of resources was consulted, including those listed in chapter one of this report. In considering the teaching and learning objectives and methods most relevant to EAL students, the working group drew on the work of Professor Jim Cummins and others, noting particularly the importance for these students of acquiring cognitive, academic language as well as language for social and interpersonal communication. While these two registers of language are by no means mutually exclusive, the needs of EAL students are different from the needs of someone who requires only basic social English. EAL students are acquiring English not simply as the language of social interaction in school but, crucially, as the language of educational access and instruction.

The teaching and learning of English in this context must therefore embrace the range of language skills that enable students to access the curriculum, to make progress within it and to take the relevant certificate examinations. While English speaking and listening skills are essential to EAL students, reading and writing skills are also of crucial importance. Because these students are acquiring English in and for this educational context, the inspectors observed the teaching and learning of EAL in both support settings and mainstream classes.

Evaluation activities in post-primary schools included an interview with a focus group of EAL students as well as interviews with school management and relevant members of staff. Questionnaires for all EAL students were prepared and distributed, along with separate questionnaires for their parents. The post-primary parent questionnaires were made available in English and 45 other languages.

The criteria used to select the fifteen schools in the sample are outlined in chapter three of this report. As well as observing teaching and learning in the selected schools, inspectors gathered data using interviews and questionnaires. The following table provides an overview of the data base for the evaluation.

Table 2.1: Data base for the evaluation

Area of enquiry	Number
Questionnaires completed	
• students	978
• parents	723
Interviews with	
• school principals	15
• EAL students	104
• care teams	15 (60 teachers approx.)
• EAL teams	15 (60 teachers approx.)
Observation of teaching and learning	
• EAL lessons	51
• Mainstream lessons	56

Questionnaires

A total of 723 parent questionnaires and 978 student questionnaires were completed as part of the evaluation. Respondents to student questionnaires included a number of students no longer receiving EAL support. The text of the questionnaires, a list of the languages in which they were available and a summary of the responses received are to be found in the appendices to this report.

Interviews

Each evaluation included an initial in-school day, during which the inspector carried out interviews with the school's senior management and the teacher responsible for co-ordinating the teaching

of EAL in the school. Interviews were conducted with the core team of EAL teachers, the school care team and focus groups of students during the main in-school phase of the evaluation.

Observation of teaching and learning

The main in-school-evaluation phase was conducted over two or three days. During this time, the inspector(s) visited classes to observe the teaching and learning of EAL, interacted with staff and students, examined students' work and reviewed relevant planning documentation.

2.4 School report

Following the evaluation visit, the inspector(s) provided oral feedback on the outcomes of the evaluation to the school's senior management, EAL teachers and members of the care team. The draft findings and recommendations of the evaluation were presented and discussed at this meeting.

Each school was subsequently issued with an individual report which presented the findings of the evaluation of EAL provision in the school and made recommendations for its further development. Each individual report has four headings:

- Provision and whole-school support for EAL
- Planning and co-ordination of EAL
- Teaching and learning of EAL students
- Support for EAL students

The management of each school was given the opportunity to respond in writing to these findings and recommendations. The reports, along with school responses, were published on the Department web site www.education.ie.

2.5 Evaluative terms used in this report

The following qualitative terms are used in the report. These derive from the quality continuum that informs all Inspectorate evaluations. The quality continuum is set out in *Looking at our School: An Aid to Self-Evaluation in Second-Level Schools*, which is available in the Inspectorate section of the Department web site www.education.ie.

Table 2.2: Qualitative terms used in this report

Qualitative term	Approximate operational level	Other terms used
Very good	Significant strengths	Very good; highly commendable; of a very high quality; highly effective; very successful; few areas for improvement
Good	Strengths outweigh weaknesses (more strengths than weaknesses)	Good; effective practice; good quality; valuable; competent; fully appropriate provision but some areas impacting on student learning require improvement
Fair	Weaknesses outweigh strengths (more weaknesses than strengths)	Scope for further development; fair; provision has evident weaknesses impacting on student learning
Weak	Significant weaknesses (uniformly weak)	Poor; unsatisfactory; insufficient; ineffective; requiring significant change, development or improvement to improve student learning; experiencing significant difficulties

The following quantitative terms are used in this report.

Table 2.3: Quantitative terms used in this report

Quantitative term	Approximate percentage of occurrence
Almost all	More than 90%
Most	75-90%
Majority	50-74%
Less than half / A significant minority	25-49%
A small number / less than a quarter	16-24%
A few	Up to 15%

CHAPTER 3

THE SCHOOLS EVALUATED AND THEIR STUDENTS

3.1 Distribution of EAL students according to school sector

There are a number of different types of post-primary school in the Irish education system: voluntary secondary schools; schools maintained by vocational education committees (VEC); and community and comprehensive schools. The distribution of EAL students among these sectors is shown in table 3.1 below.

The voluntary secondary sector has the greatest number of schools and it also has the largest number of schools with an allocation for EAL provision. EAL students comprise a higher percentage of the total student population in voluntary secondary schools than they do in VEC schools. However, the VEC sector includes a number of schools in which EAL enrolments are a high percentage of total enrolments. The community and comprehensive sector has the smallest number of schools, but has the highest percentage of schools with an EAL allocation, and the highest percentage of schools with two or more whole-time teacher equivalents (WTE) for EAL support.

Table 3.1: Distribution of EAL students and resource allocation among post-primary sectors

School sector	Total number of schools in this sector	Number of these schools with EAL allocation	Schools with EAL allocation as a percentage of total in sector	Number (and % of total) of schools with 2+ WTEs for EAL	
Voluntary secondary	389	292	75%	55	(14.1%)
VEC	251	165	65.7%	34	(13.5%)
Community and comprehensive	91	79	86.8%	18	(19.8%)
Total	731	536	73.3%	107	(14.6%)

The fifteen schools evaluated were selected on the basis that they had an allocation of at least two WTEs for EAL support, indicating that they had at least twenty-eight students who were entitled to such support. Although schools with this level of allocation are in a minority in each sector, the criterion was applied to ensure that the evaluation focused on those schools where the level of additional resources was highest. School size, location and gender profile were also considered in making the selection. The distribution of EAL students, by sector, in the schools evaluated are shown in Table 3.2.

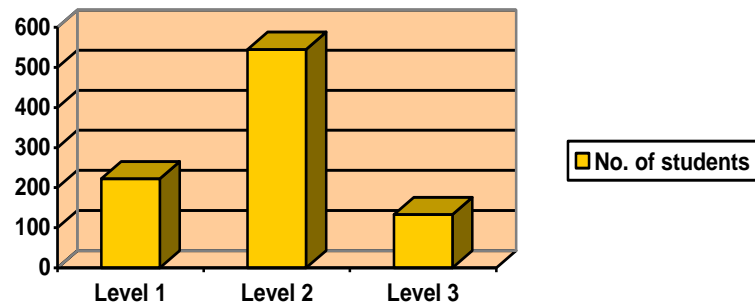
Table 3.2: Distribution of EAL students by sector among schools evaluated

School sector	Number of schools evaluated in each sector	Number of WTEs for EAL in these schools	Number of EAL students / total enrolment in these schools	EAL students as a percentage of total enrolments in these schools
Voluntary secondary	7	18	288 / 3075	9.4%
VEC	4	15	277 / 1731	16%
Community and comprehensive	4	13	238 / 3223	7.4%
Total	15	46	803 / 8029	10%

3.2 Profile of enrolments in the schools

Each school was asked to give the numbers of EAL students at each of the three levels of need described in Circular 53/07. The levels reported by the fifteen schools are shown in Figure 3.1 below.

Figure 3.1: Number of EAL students at each level of English-language proficiency, as reported by schools



The total of 900 students shown in this chart exceeds the number of students (802) for whom the fifteen schools were receiving their EAL allocation. Six schools reported that they were offering EAL support to a bigger number of students than were counted in determining their allocation. In some cases, these students had enrolled after the beginning of the school year and the school had not applied for additional support or was in the process of doing so. In other cases, students had already received two years' EAL support (the maximum normally allowed). The school had applied for continuing support on the grounds that these students had insufficient levels of English language proficiency, but no extension of support had as yet been granted.

Table 3.3 shows the number and gender of students enrolled in each school evaluated, the number of EAL students enrolled, and students with EAL as a percentage of the total enrolment, based on Department data regarding EAL allocations. There is considerable variation between schools. EAL students comprise 30.9% of students in one school and only 4.7% in another. In two schools, EAL students comprised less than 6% of the total enrolment. There were two other schools in which these students accounted for 25% or more of the total enrolment. The average percentage of EAL students enrolled in the schools evaluated was 12.2%.

Table 3.3: Enrolment profile of the schools evaluated

Sector	Enrolment and gender	EAL enrolment	% EAL enrolment
Voluntary Secondary	457m	43	9.4
Voluntary Secondary	315f	46	14.6
Voluntary Secondary	322m	33	10.2
Voluntary Secondary	235m, 246f	26m, 20f	9.6
Voluntary Secondary	271f	39	14.4
Voluntary Secondary	784f	45	5.7
Voluntary Secondary	445m	36	8
VEC	401m, 176f	61m, 42f	18
VEC	179m, 148f	20m, 12f	9.8
VEC	276m, 131f	15m, 21f	8.9
VEC	337m, 83f	83m, 22f	25
Community and Comprehensive	624m, 463f	40m, 34f	6.8
Community and Comprehensive	516m, 503f	36m, 32f	6.7
Community and Comprehensive	438m, 514f	22m, 23f	4.7
Community and Comprehensive	116m, 49f	38m, 13f	30.9

3.3 Home language of students

In questionnaire responses, parents of EAL students named more than 100 countries of origin and over ninety home languages; many parents gave two or more home languages. One of the schools evaluated had students from thirty countries of origin while another had students from seven. The number of home languages spoken by students in individual schools ranged from eight to thirty three. Sixty-nine home languages were recorded in the student questionnaires; a sizeable majority of students named one home language only. The Department's post-primary student database records a total of 160 home languages among students nationally.

3.4 Profile of students regarding gender and educational disadvantage

The schools evaluated included single-sex and co-educational schools. Figures 3.2 and 3.3 show the total number of students in each type of school evaluated and the number of EAL students in each type of school respectively. The proportion of EAL students enrolled in each type of school was in accordance with the proportion of total students in each of these school types.

Figure 3.2: total number of students in each type of school evaluated

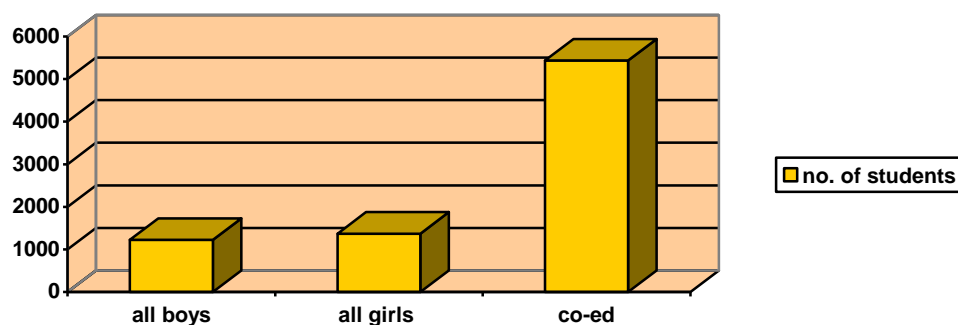
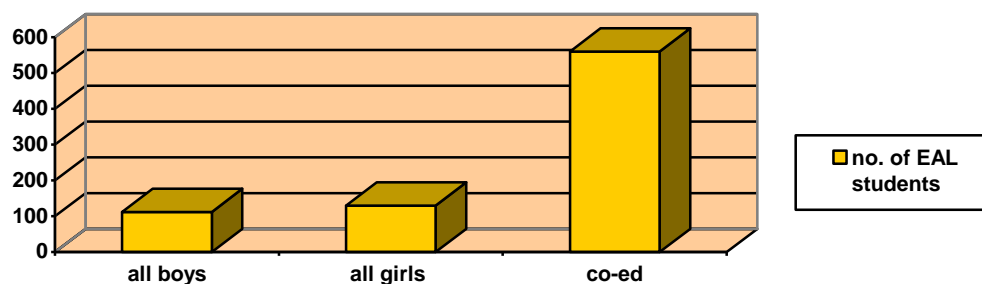
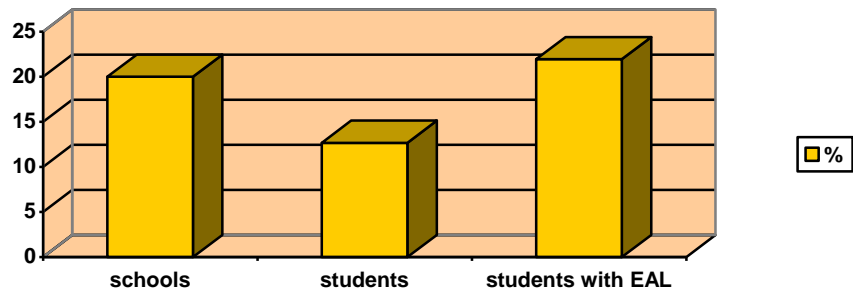


Figure 3.3: the number of EAL students in each type of school.



Delivering Equality of Opportunity in Schools (DEIS) is a Department programme aimed at alleviating the effects of educational disadvantage. Figure 3.4 shows the percentage of the schools evaluated that were participating in DEIS and the percentages of all students and EAL students, respectively, that were present in these schools. While approximately one in eight of all students in the schools evaluated were in DEIS schools, over one fifth of the EAL students in the schools evaluated were enrolled in DEIS schools.

Figure 3.4: the percentage of schools, students and EAL students in DEIS



CHAPTER 4

QUALITY OF PROVISION AND WHOLE-SCHOOL SUPPORT FOR EAL

4.1 Introduction

Managing provision for English as an additional language in post-primary schools is a relatively new challenge for boards of management, principals and members of in-school management teams. It involves recruiting and allocating suitably qualified teachers to EAL teaching posts, co-ordinating supports within schools and providing suitable accommodation and resources for teaching and learning. Part of the management task is to ensure that teachers access relevant teaching materials and continuous professional development and that parents are fully informed about the provision for their children. It also involves principals and teachers in supporting students who do not speak English and who are unfamiliar with the school community, its culture and who have to learn about the school's routines and practices.

During this evaluation, the quality of provision and whole-school support for EAL was evaluated in terms of

- the allocation of teaching hours to support EAL students
- whole-school support for EAL
- deployment of staff and timetabling
- enrolment procedures and practice
- provision and use of resources
- students' access to EAL support
- students' access to the curriculum

The evaluation criteria used by inspectors to evaluate the provision in each of these areas are shown at the beginning of each subsection. The criteria are intended to assist in the interpretation of the findings and also to highlight the elements of very good practice that should underpin provision for EAL students. Each subsection also contains a report on findings and recommendations for implementation at school level and system level respectively. Exemplars of good practice are provided in some cases.

4.2 The allocation for EAL support

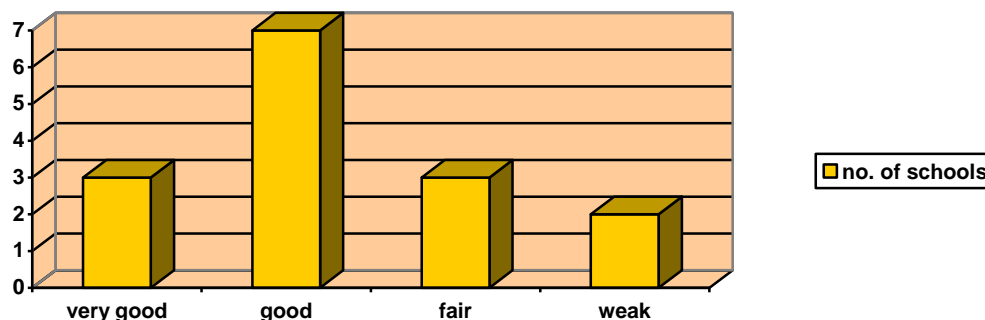
Evaluation criteria

Very good practice is found where the allocation for EAL support

- complies with the terms of the Department's circular letter under which it is given
- is used in a targeted and differentiated way to meet the needs of the diversity of EAL students in the school

Findings

Figure 4.1: Quality of allocation and whole-school support for EAL – number of schools at each quality level



In one-fifth of the schools inspected, the above criteria were fully met. Good practice was particularly noted where the full entitlement to EAL support had been claimed and was used to offer support at a range of levels and through various models. However, one-third of the schools inspected showed significant deficiencies in this area. The most serious of these was a substantial under-use (for the designated purpose) of the allocation given. In some instances, schools were conscious that their use of the allocation was not satisfactory, but cited difficulties in deploying suitable teachers and in accommodating EAL provision in an often complex timetable. Rarer instances of poor practice included a failure to provide any EAL support for eligible senior-cycle students, whose need for support is acute given the curricular and examination challenges they face.

In a minority of cases, the full entitlement had not been sought because the school was unaware that it could make application for eligible students who enrolled after the provisional allocation had been given. In some instances, the allocation initially given was lower than the previous year's allocation but was subsequently increased. This led to difficulty in deploying the revised allocation as timetables had to be altered and teachers had to be redeployed or recruited.

Department circulars 53/07 and 15/09 permit flexibility in using the EAL allocation. However a relatively narrow range of models of support was encountered (see findings at 4.3 and 4.6). The most common was the use of the allocation to create mixed-proficiency withdrawal groups from Irish as the sole means of delivering direct EAL support. Students with Level B1 proficiency in English (including those not eligible for EAL support) were frequently placed in these settings because they were not studying Irish. Students with Level 0 or A1 proficiency in English were observed to struggle in such settings. The use of part of the allocation to facilitate initial and ongoing assessment of the English proficiency of EAL students was commended but was noted in less than one-third of schools.

In none of the schools evaluated was the allocation used purely for the direct provision of EAL support in a dedicated EAL support context. However, this should not necessarily be regarded as a negative finding. The exclusive use of withdrawal of students for support and the formation of special classes may create a barrier to inclusion and limit opportunities for students with EAL to learn with and from their English-speaking peers. Over half of the schools visited used part of the allocation to create smaller base class groups that included EAL students. Where the school could demonstrate the benefit to EAL students, this use was judged to be appropriate to the aims of the allocation. It was most successful where all teachers saw themselves as having a role as teachers of language, in particular the language required in their subject areas in order for students to progress. However, in some cases smaller classes were created at the expense of a more targeted use of the allocation to support low-proficiency students. This received negative

comment, as it goes against the principle that the allocation should be directed by the school at the students who are most in need of EAL support.

Exemplar of good practice

The school used part of its EAL allocation to create four rather than three mixed-ability base classes in second year, as that year had quite a large enrolment of EAL students. These students were distributed equally across all base classes, thus promoting inclusion and creating a supportive learning environment. Both EAL and mainstream teachers supported this arrangement and reported positively on its effects.

Recommendations for the school

- Schools should ensure compliance with the terms on which EAL allocations are made.
- Schools should be able to demonstrate that the allocation is being used in a way that benefits EAL students. It should be used in a varied and flexible manner.
- The needs of students with poor English proficiency should be prioritised.

Recommendations for the system

- Application and allocation procedures for EAL support should take into account the unpredictable nature of EAL enrolment. Therefore, future Department circulars regarding allocation for EAL support should state that schools may apply for EAL support for all eligible students enrolled, irrespective of the date of enrolment.
- The use of enrolment trends as well as known numbers in determining allocation should be investigated to support school management in timely planning and effective deployment.
- Guidelines on the appropriate and targeted use of the EAL allocation should be issued to schools. The overarching criterion should be that of enabling and supporting EAL students to access the curriculum and to progress through the educational system. In practice this requires both direct provision of EAL support and other supports to enable EAL students to access and advance within the fullest curriculum possible.

4.3 Whole-school support for EAL

Evaluation criteria

Very good whole-school support for EAL provision is found where

- school management gives effective leadership
- inclusive policies and practices have been developed
- physical accommodation is conducive to the teaching and learning of EAL
- there is a commitment to building capacity for EAL through appropriate deployment
- whole-staff continuing professional development (CPD) is promoted and facilitated regarding EAL and interculturalism

Findings

About half of the schools evaluated demonstrated effective practice in this area. However, factors largely outside of the school's control have had a bearing on provision. In some cases these include limited school accommodation. Also, there is a shortage of appropriate Department-sponsored CPD both for EAL teachers and for the staff as a whole. There is an acute need for CPD, because of the very sharp rise in numbers of EAL students from a low base and the related lack of relevant experience and expertise in EAL among teachers. The need to support students in accessing and making progress in the post-primary curriculum poses a challenge for all teachers. Nonetheless, school management was praised for facilitating available CPD for EAL teachers and, in particular, for encouraging the sharing of expertise and established good practice within the school.

Recommendations for the school

- School management should ensure that each school's existing good practice and expertise in the area of EAL is shared among all teachers. This is essential in order to develop an integrated and inclusive approach.

Recommendations for the system

- Training in the area of EAL should focus on capacity building and to this end should involve key school personnel including management and permanent teachers.
- Training of teachers requires a dual approach: specialist training for EAL teachers to improve teaching and learning in the support context; and whole-staff training to facilitate subject teachers and departments to teach EAL students effectively in a mainstream context.

4.4 Deployment of staff and timetabling

Evaluation criteria

Very good practice is found where

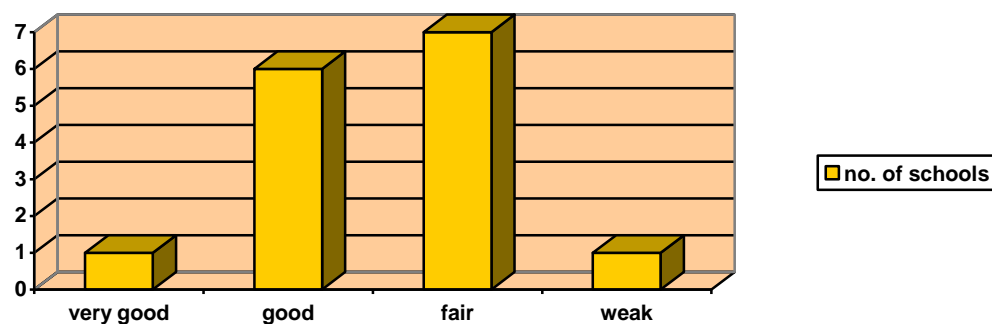
- registered teachers with an appropriate language-teaching background and/or relevant qualifications are deployed to teach EAL
- deployment facilitates continuity of provision and capacity building
- EAL is timetabled satisfactorily for all eligible students within all years and programmes
- timetabling arrangements assist the continuous and cumulative development of key language skills
- low-proficiency students in particular have a daily lesson to facilitate English language acquisition and reinforcement of language learning

Findings

At present no teaching qualification in EAL in mainstream schools has been recognised by the Teaching Council or the Department. However, teachers may have EAL teaching qualifications gained in other jurisdictions. The education departments in a number of third-level colleges offer courses in teaching English to speakers of other languages. These are recognised as qualifications for teaching only in non-mainstream English language schools, such as those recognised by Accreditation and Co-ordination of English Language Services (ACELS). Teachers who have taken courses in teaching English as a foreign language (TEFL) were involved in EAL teaching in many schools. While a number of TEFL courses are very substantial and widely recognised internationally, the focus with TEFL is on the teaching of English outside of the mainstream system in countries where English is a foreign language. By contrast, the focus in EAL provision is on the teaching of students within the mainstream system in an English-speaking environment, in order to assist their access to, and progress through, the curriculum.

Schools were commended for deploying registered teachers with an appropriate language-teaching background and/or relevant qualifications to teach EAL. Significant teaching competence in the EAL support context was observed in many, but not all, cases where EAL teachers also taught modern languages and where they had experience in TEFL. However, teachers with TEFL qualifications and experience were frequently observed to focus on communicative and social English language acquisition rather than on English in a curricular and instructional context.

Figure 4.2: Quality of deployment of staff and timetabling – number of schools at each quality level



In more than half of the schools evaluated, deployment of staff was deemed less than effective. Optimal deployment was compromised by a number of factors. Those outside the school's control include the complex deployment arrangements arising from the multi-teacher and multi-subject nature of the post-primary system, and the fact that the EAL allocation is given on a yearly concessionary basis. However, while the number of whole-time teacher equivalent (WTE)s allocated to EAL support in each school is determined by the Department, the deployment of this resource is a matter for each school. The evaluation identified deployment patterns that militated against good provision for EAL. The total allocation for EAL support to the schools evaluated was forty-six WTEs. In fact, this allocation was dispersed among over 100 teachers who were delivering direct EAL support and among many more teachers in cases where the allocation was further spread, eg. to create smaller class groups. The practice of assigning EAL lessons to teachers on the basis that they had spare capacity on their timetables was reported in a significant number of schools. It is an inappropriate basis on which to involve teachers in providing direct EAL support.

Continuity and capacity building were best served where there was a core EAL teaching team with a substantial and sustained timetable commitment to EAL. However, a significant negative finding was that many of the 'core' EAL teachers were on part-time or temporary contracts. The majority of those teaching EAL were part-time or *pro rata* contracted teachers. The percentage was considerably higher in the case of teachers who are solely or mostly involved in EAL. This pattern of deployment clearly hinders continuity of provision and capacity building.

Poor deployment was also strongly evident in the practice of assigning several EAL teachers to the one EAL group, at times to the point where the class group had a different teacher for each EAL lesson. This practice occurred to a greater or lesser degree in almost three-quarters of the schools visited, underlining the extent to which EAL was viewed as an "add-on" to teachers' other teaching commitments. EAL teachers interviewed overwhelmingly viewed this practice as detrimental to proper planning and delivery of EAL.

Two broad patterns of timetabling emerged from the evaluation. In a minority of schools, some form of partial immersion programme with separate timetable arrangements had been created. In the majority of schools however, EAL support was offered through concurrent timetabling with Irish. In some of these schools, EAL support was also timetabled against other subjects including modern languages and religious education. Very few instances of mainstream in-class support through team teaching were observed, although Department circulars 53/07 and 15/09 advocate this form of support. While the logistics of team teaching are complex in the post-primary context, it should be seen as an area for further development and innovation.

The practice of timetabling EAL support every day assists low-proficiency students and facilitates regular reinforcement of language learning, and where it was observed by inspectors it was

commended. However, in two-thirds of the schools visited, students reported that they did not have an EAL lesson every day. Good practice was noted in a small number of schools where the EAL co-ordinator worked with senior management on timetabling arrangements for EAL.

Recommendations for the school

- School management should seek to deploy teachers of modern languages or teachers with EAL qualifications and experience to deliver EAL. A distinction should be made between TEFL and EAL when considering qualifications and experience.
- EAL hours should not be allocated to teachers without due regard to their language-teaching expertise.
- A concentrated delivery of direct EAL support through a core group of teachers promotes continuity and capacity building. Deployment should be organised to this end.
- Permanent whole-time teachers should have a significant involvement in the delivery of EAL support.
- The practice whereby EAL groups have more than one teacher should be avoided unless it can be justified as adding to the quality of EAL support to students.
- Deployment of teachers to provide a measure of in-class support rather than purely withdrawal support would assist in the successful mainstreaming of EAL support.
- EAL students should have an EAL lesson every day, at least initially.
- The deployment of teachers and the timetabling of EAL should be planned in tandem so that optimal use can be made of the allocation given to provide regular and consistent support to EAL students.

Recommendations for the system

- It is necessary to establish a postgraduate qualification in EAL teaching for mainstream post-primary schools, open to registered and registrable teachers, in order to develop expertise in the teaching of EAL and to build capacity within the system.
- Future Department circulars regarding EAL should advocate use of the EAL allocation to promote continuity of delivery and the development of expertise. Specifically, circulars should recommend the assigning or appointing of a suitably experienced teacher to lead the development and delivery of EAL in the school. This would be the most efficient means of mitigating the discontinuity and poor capacity building associated with current deployment patterns.
- Guidelines on the effective use of the EAL allocation should promote both in-class support and partial immersion programmes as appropriate means of meeting the needs of students with EAL.

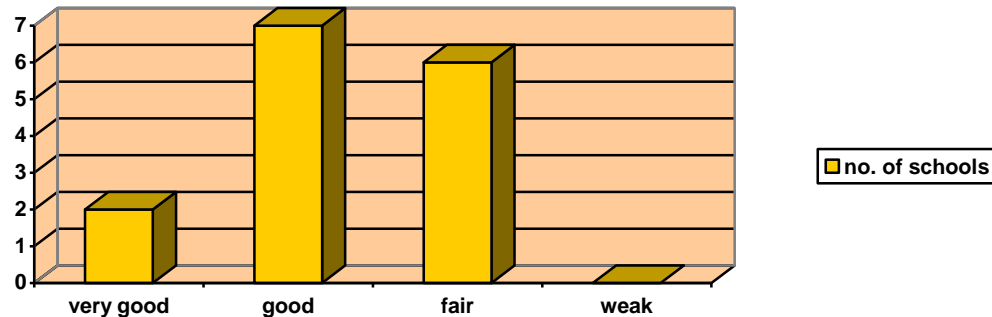
4.5 Enrolment procedures and practices

Evaluation criteria

Very good practice is found where
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• enrolment procedures for EAL students are transparent and inclusive• school personnel gather comprehensive information about EAL students' educational and language background as part of the enrolment process• formal links with feeder primary schools aid provision and placement of EAL students• the school actively assists parents of EAL students to enrol their children

Findings

Figure 4.3: Quality of enrolment procedures and practices – number of schools at each quality level



The inspectors judged practice in this area to be effective in the majority of the schools visited. Among the strengths noted were

- open and inclusive enrolment practices (although written policies were sometimes less inclusive than the school's actual practice)
- translation and interpretation arrangements to facilitate EAL students and their parents
- the involvement of a post-holder with responsibility for the care of international students in the enrolment and induction process
- good procedures for gathering and recording information about students' educational history to assist appropriate placement and support
- liaison between key personnel (including the post-holder with responsibility for the care of international students and the guidance counsellor) and feeder primary schools to assist the smooth transition of EAL students.

Schools were commended for involving bilingual teachers, senior students and parents in assisting with new enrolments where appropriate. The good practice of accessing translated documents on the Department's web site was also noted favourably, as were the efforts made by schools to communicate their own policies and practices to parents of EAL students. The parent questionnaires showed a 90% satisfaction rating with enrolment procedures. A significant minority reported that enrolment forms and other documents were available in their home languages. This figure was surprisingly high, in the light of other evidence gathered indicating that translations of documents were available in few schools and few languages. It may perhaps be accounted for by the fact that many parents gave English as one of their home languages, even where they had answered the questionnaire in another language.

Both schools and parents reported significant 'non-gathering' of information about students' educational history. However, schools attributed this to difficulties in getting this information, while almost half of the parent questionnaires reported that the school did not seek the information. The issue of inappropriate placement of EAL students, especially their placement in lower bands or streams, was of concern to inspectors in a significant minority of schools, and may be linked to inadequate information about students' attainment and ability.

Recommendations for the school

- Schools should ensure that their written enrolment policies are inclusive of EAL students and, where necessary, reword policies to accurately reflect inclusive practices.
- Schools should make full use of the translated documents available on the Department's web site.
- Post-holders with responsibility for the care of international students should have a role in the enrolment and induction process.

- Schools should actively and methodically seek information about EAL students' educational history. This is especially important where schools operate banding or streaming systems of class formation. There is a risk of inappropriate placement of EAL students because low proficiency in English may be wrongly interpreted as low educational attainment.
- Good and informed liaison with primary schools is essential, firstly to ascertain the level and duration of support received by incoming EAL students, secondly to ascertain their English language proficiency and thirdly to identify any continuing needs. All three have a bearing on the level of support that may be required in the post-primary context.

Recommendations for the system

- The range of languages used in translations of official documents on the Department's web site should be increased. A more detailed recommendation to this end is given in section 7.5 of this report.
- Since the cost of translation is considerable in terms of an individual school's budget, consideration should be given to producing generic forms and documents (including enrolment and subject choice forms, and standard codes of behaviour outlining procedures) and making these available to schools in a range of languages with definitive Irish and English versions.
- Clear procedures should be established for meeting the continuing needs of EAL children transferring from primary to post-primary schools or from other educational systems to the Irish educational system, so that the ongoing development of cognitive language proficiency can be supported.

4.6 Provision of resources

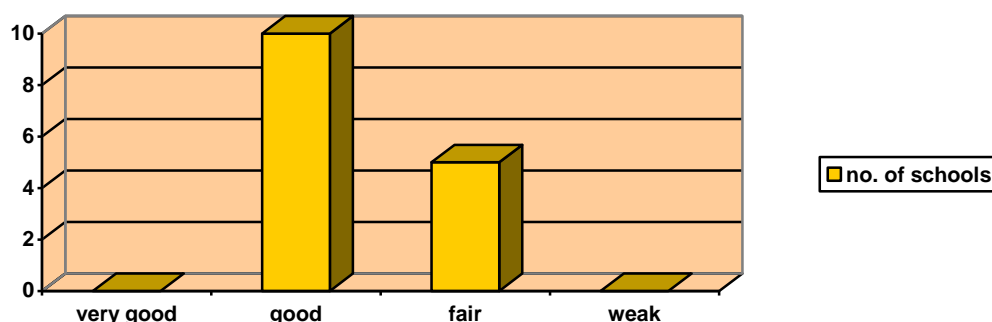
Evaluation criteria

Very good practice is found where

- a wide range of resources is available, including ICT and appropriate dictionaries
- resources are maintained, updated, accessible and methodically recorded
- EAL materials from the Department and agencies including IILT, NCCA and the Second Level Support Service (SLSS) are used and referenced appropriately
- a stock of suitable reading material is available both in English and home languages to promote reading among EAL students

Findings

Figure 4.4: Quality of provision of resources – number of schools at each quality level



Two-thirds of schools were considered effective in this area although none exemplified consistently good practice. Few instances of ICT-interactive teaching and learning were

observed, although some excellent use of ICT to support EAL students in the mainstream classroom was noted. The increasing availability of ICT in schools was noteworthy. However, while its incorporation into interactive teaching and learning practices is especially relevant to EAL, ICT use was largely in evidence only as downloaded hard copies of exercises and worksheets.

A very large discrepancy emerged between schools' sense of the use of ICT resources in EAL and the students' responses to a question about computer use. While almost 90% of schools listed ICT as one of the resources used in the provision of EAL support, just 20% of students said they used computers in EAL lessons. Agencies involved in developing methods and materials for EAL, including the NCCA, IILT, SLSS and TII already use ICT to a significant degree. Most importantly for future practice, the *Post-primary Assessment Kit*, which has both a diagnostic and formative assessment function, is available to download from both the NCCA and the SLSS web sites.

The incidence of the use of dictionaries varied considerably even within schools. Of most concern was the low level of use of bilingual dictionaries, which EAL candidates are permitted to use in most certificate examinations, as part of the reasonable accommodations provided by the State Examination Commission (SEC). The arrangement applies to EAL candidates in all examinations except English, Irish and the candidate's first language. (See SEC circular S73/11 in the schools section of the web site www.examinations.ie). However, this concession can be of little benefit where students are unaccustomed to using bilingual dictionaries.

Six of the schools visited did not have a functioning library, although some had class libraries or book boxes. A majority of students agreed that it was easy to borrow books in English, and just under a quarter said that they could borrow books in the language they used at home (again, English may have been regarded as a home language). The importance of maintaining proficiency in the home language in order to aid the acquisition of English was not widely appreciated in schools.

The majority of schools made some use of IILT resources. However, although the NCCA's *Intercultural Education in the Post-primary School* had been distributed to all schools, it appeared to be little known or consulted.

Recommendations for the school

- Schools should ensure that bilingual dictionaries are available in the same way as other textbooks through book schemes or local suppliers. Their use should be incorporated into subject planning (see section 5.4 of this report). Similarly, English learner dictionaries should be part of the EAL stock of resources, and those with good visual and curriculum-related content are to be preferred.
- Accessible, high-interest books are essential in any school library; dual language books are increasingly available and provide an excellent means of maintaining contact with the home language while extending proficiency in reading English.
- Web sites giving access to newspapers in English and a huge range of languages should also be used to this end.
- Links should be established with local libraries to enhance the supply of suitable reading material for EAL students.

Recommendations for the system

- ICT should be demonstrated and used as both the vehicle and the focus of CPD. Those involved in developing EAL materials should be encouraged and assisted to do so through electronic media. Encouraging a greater sense of the possibilities of ICT is the surest way to bring about its greater use.

- The proposed EAL guidelines should indicate to schools a range of suitable resources for EAL students and their teachers, including learner and bilingual dictionaries, accessible high-interest books and publishers, dual language books and publishers, and web sites.

4.7 Arrangements for student access to EAL support

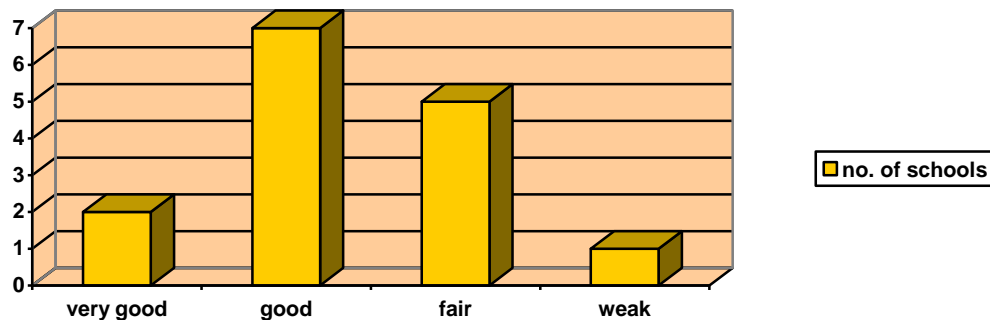
Evaluation criteria

Very good practice is found where

- timely and effective initial and ongoing assessment ensures students' access to appropriate EAL support
- arrangements for access to EAL support provide well for varying levels of need
- the provision of EAL support is flexible and varied and may include a targeted induction programme for EAL students, special classes and in-class support

Findings

Figure 4.5: Quality of arrangements for student access to EAL support – number of schools at each quality level



Initial assessment of EAL students to ascertain their English language proficiency took many forms. In the best instances observed, teachers familiar with the European Language Proficiency Benchmarks administered tests to assess competence in the four language skills. Students were then placed in support class groups appropriate to their level and were able to progress from one level of support to the next following re-testing to measure their progress. The concurrent timetabling of EAL support at different levels facilitated this good practice. However, fewer than one-third of the schools visited had EAL class groups of different proficiency levels. Where students were placed in mixed-proficiency groups, good practice was noted where teachers were aware of students' individual English language competence and differentiated materials and methods accordingly.

In one-fifth of the schools evaluated, an induction or immersion programme was in place to provide intensive EAL support for students with poor proficiency in English. Such programmes operated as a short-term alternative to immediate placement in a mainstream class, although EAL students in such programmes were generally integrated for some part of the day into mainstream class groups and lessons. Additional and post-induction support was provided through withdrawal. Schools were commended for devising such programmes as a response to the acute needs of significant numbers of EAL students, although the concern expressed by some schools that such induction programmes could affect the integration of EAL students was acknowledged as valid.

Recommendations for the school

- The *Post-primary Assessment Kit* should be used to provide initial and ongoing assessment of students' English language proficiency in order to inform decisions on appropriate placement and support.
- The support offered should reflect and respond to different levels of need using all available means.
- Induction programmes should include a gradually increasing level of participation in mainstream activities.

Recommendations for the system

- The proposed EAL guidelines should outline a variety of models of EAL provision to promote more flexible and differentiated access to support.

4.8 Arrangements for student access to the curriculum

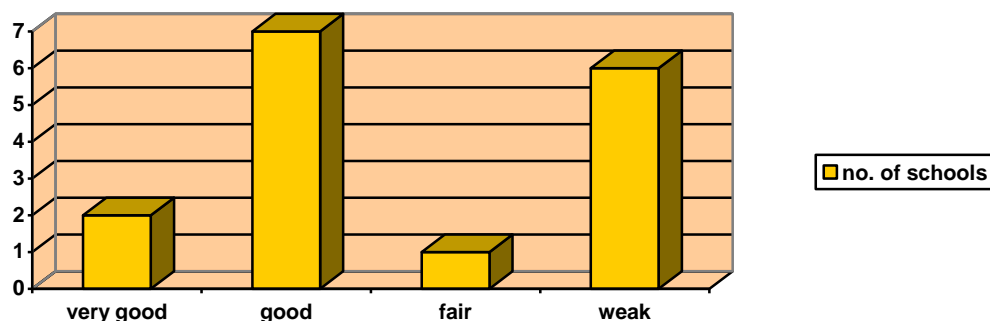
Evaluation criteria

Very good practice is found where

- the provision of EAL support does not preclude students from participation in a broad and balanced curriculum
- EAL students not taking Irish and/or modern languages are facilitated to study other subjects
- EAL students are placed in class groups according to a range of appropriate criteria including interest, general ability, prior learning, competence in English, age, and the advice of the EAL co-ordinator
- school policy promotes regular review of the class placement of all students, including EAL students
- the school actively encourages EAL students to take certificate examinations in their home languages where these are available either as curricular or non-curricular subjects

Findings

Figure 4.6: Quality of arrangements for student access to the curriculum – number of schools at each quality level



Practice in this area was considered effective in three-fifths of the schools visited. Inspectors commented favourably on the placement of EAL students in mainstream class groups offering access to the full curriculum, including modern European languages and Irish. In many schools, senior management and teachers praised the work ethic, motivation and high aspirations of EAL

students, and were eager to offer appropriate challenges as well as supports. For example, it was pointed out that 80% of the students in a junior cycle higher-level mathematics class visited were EAL students.

Asked about favourite subjects and difficult subjects, EAL students reported a wide variety in both categories, from which no firm conclusions can be drawn. However, a significant number referred to difficulties with English as a subject.

Where the guidance service offered specific information and advice on subject choices and their implications to EAL students and their parents, this was highly commended. Another instance of good practice was noted where the guidance service investigated the educational system from which most of the school's EAL students had come, and could therefore assist EAL students and their parents in making informed and appropriate subject choices. In these instances, the guidance service could also provide very useful information to teachers.

For the vast majority of EAL students in the schools evaluated, access to regular timetabled EAL support was predicated on their not taking Irish. Thus the frequency and distribution of EAL lessons in the majority of schools evaluated depended largely on the arrangements made for Irish and on the availability of EAL teachers at those times. This pattern of timetabling of EAL support has obvious implications for EAL students wishing to study Irish, or requiring Irish to enter their chosen third-level course. In third-level colleges in Ireland, twenty-three courses require higher-level Irish, and 240 require Irish at ordinary level (2010 figures from the Central Applications Office). In particular, all primary teaching courses require higher-level Irish. A recommendation for post-primary schools in this regard is given at the end of this section. There may also be a need, however, for the Department and relevant institutions to address this emergent issue in a policy context at some point in the future.

Some schools themselves raised the issue of senior-cycle EAL students who had neither Irish nor a modern European language, having entered the Irish educational system after first year, and whose home language was not among the curricular or non-curricular languages offered in the state examinations. Often these students had only five Leaving Certificate subjects, and were felt to be at a disadvantage with regard to third-level entry. A small number of schools offered alternative subjects to EAL students in the senior cycle, and this was commended. Content and language integrated learning (CLIL) as a language teaching method is not widely applied in the EAL context. This approach links the learning of subject-specific content and the learning of language and a wider awareness of it would perhaps help to extend the curricular options open to EAL students.

The non-curricular language option is available to students from the EU only, and at present sixteen EU languages are included. The examination is based on the final written paper in the first foreign language in the International Baccalaureate. While most schools reported that they informed students of the option and assisted with applications, and that the rate of uptake was good, the relevant SEC data show relatively low uptake in many of the schools evaluated. Nationally, the uptake of the non-curricular language option has been low but has increased significantly in the case of many eastern European languages between 2008 and 2010 (see appendices).

The finding that gave rise to most concern on the part of inspectors was the tendency in a minority of schools to place EAL students in a lower ability band or stream without sufficient evidence of their actual ability. Where this occurred, EAL students did not have access to the full range of subjects or to subjects at higher level. As indicated above, it was also of concern that EAL students not taking Irish and not in need of daily EAL support were offered no alternative subject and were expected to study independently, often "at the back of the class".

Exemplar of good practice

Concessionary hours, including part of the EAL allocation, were used to offer senior-cycle EAL students an additional subject, which was approached with a view to providing meaningful language learning as well as subject-specific knowledge and skills, following the principles of content and language integrated learning (CLIL).

Recommendations for the school

- Full integration into the mainstream classroom is the goal of EAL provision. The class placement of EAL students should support this goal and every effort should be made to ensure their access to a broad and balanced curriculum with an appropriate level of challenge. Non-verbal diagnostic tests should be used to ensure that low proficiency in English is not equated with low ability generally. An annotated list of approved tests is available on the Department web site.
- Schools should use all means available, including, where appropriate, concessionary hours, to offer EAL students a full complement of subjects, especially in the senior cycle.
- Schools should inform eligible students of the non-curricular languages provision, and encourage and facilitate them to avail of it.
- Schools should endeavour to interest EAL students in the study of Irish, should be assiduous in ensuring that they understand the implications of not studying Irish and should facilitate EAL students who wish to take up or continue the study of Irish.

Recommendations for the system

- Guidelines regarding allocation for and provision of EAL support should advocate, where appropriate, the use of concessionary hours to offer senior-cycle EAL students a full complement of subjects.

CHAPTER 5

QUALITY OF PLANNING AND CO-ORDINATION FOR EAL

5.1 Whole-school policies

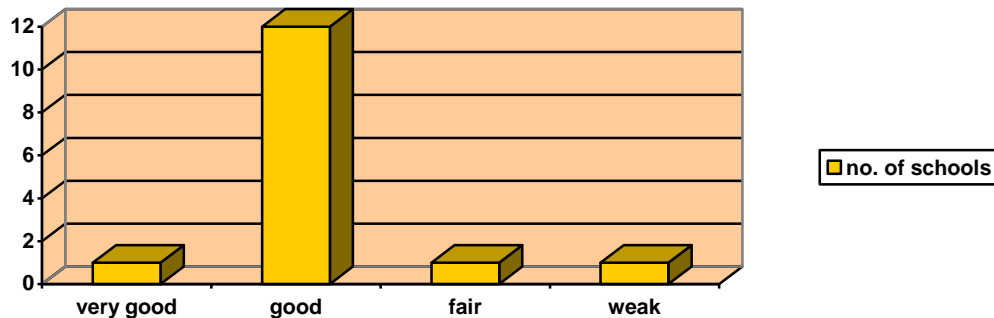
Evaluation criteria

Very good practice is found where

- the admissions policy is open and inclusive
- whole-school planning incorporates measures to address diversity and EAL-specific issues in relevant policies
- a whole-school EAL policy has been developed and ratified

Findings

Figure 5.1: Quality of whole-school policies – number of schools at each quality level



Most schools evaluated were found to have good practice in this area. A significant minority of schools already had specific policies on inclusion or international students or EAL, and such policies were being developed in most other schools. Typically, policies committed schools to welcoming diversity, ensuring equality of opportunity for all students and protecting students from bullying and racist behaviour. Schools were commended for including such commitments in their school plan.

However, it was consistently found that policies, whether written or unwritten, did not support EAL students' use of home languages in school. School personnel were largely unaware of the value of the home language in supporting the acquisition of new learning and additional languages. This area is discussed more fully in the next section of the report. The term TEFL was widely and inappropriately used in school documents to denote English language support classes and teachers.

Recommendations for the school

- The school policy on EAL students should include references to the role of subject departments in supporting EAL students and should support the properly-managed use of home languages.
- The school policy on EAL should also commit the school to activities and initiatives supporting inclusion and interculturalism, and should state the role of those within the school's care structures in meeting the specific needs of EAL students.
- The NCCA's *Intercultural Education in the Post-primary School* should be consulted to inform this process.

- The term TEFL should be replaced by EAL in all school documents.

Recommendations for the system

- The Department should replace the term 'non-national' with 'EAL' in its databases and in all communications to schools relating to English language support. This is important in order to prevent confusion between figures relating to students born outside of Ireland and figures relating to those receiving or seeking EAL support.
- Guidelines issued to schools should highlight resources such as the NCCA's *Intercultural Education in the Post-primary School* and recommend its use in informing school policy

5.2 Planning structures

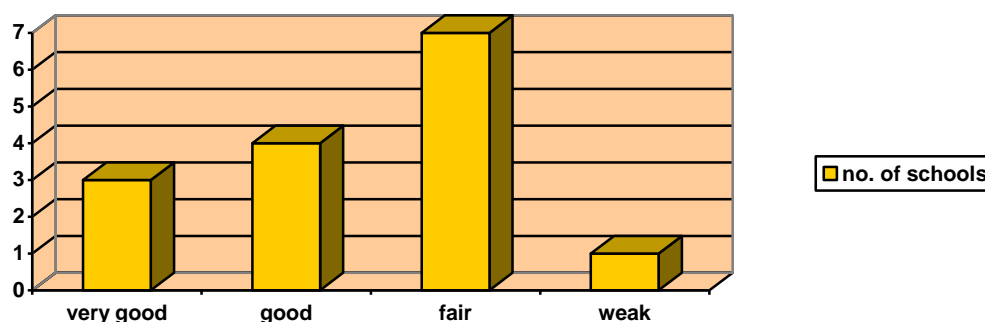
Evaluation criteria

Very good practice is found where

- school management facilitates and encourages planning for EAL provision
- EAL is co-ordinated effectively to support proper provision
- co-ordination of EAL actively facilitates the sharing of resources and good practice
- there are agreed appointment procedures for the post of EAL co-ordinator
- EAL teaching team meetings are held regularly and are appropriately documented
- EAL planning involves other school personnel as appropriate (e.g. senior management, guidance counsellor, care team, school-completion-project staff)

Findings

Figure 5.2: Quality of planning structures—
number of schools at each quality level



Fewer than half of the schools evaluated were found to have good practice in this area. In the majority of schools, practice was not so much poor as undeveloped or *ad hoc*. The temporary and short-term nature of allocation and deployment has hindered the establishment of effective planning and co-ordination structures. However, very good practice was noted particularly in schools with longer histories of EAL enrolment and those where subject planning was well established. Instances of good practice included the allocation of dedicated time to the EAL co-ordinator for planning; the inclusion of EAL team planning in the schedule of subject planning sessions; and the participation of senior management and the school's guidance and care services in EAL meetings.

Recommendations for the school

- Designating a teacher to provide effective curriculum leadership in EAL at school level can have a very beneficial effect on the delivery of co-ordinated and well-planned EAL

support. Schools where there is more than one WTE for EAL support should consider designating a teacher as a co-ordinator for this purpose.

- Good subject planning practices should be extended to planning for EAL, and should include regular, scheduled meetings with records of decisions made, and effective communication structures encompassing senior management, subject departments, and the school's guidance, care and learning-support services.

Recommendations for the system

- The measures recommended in section 4.2 of this report to promote stability and continuity in delivering EAL support should be targeted also at effective co-ordination.

5.3 EAL team planning

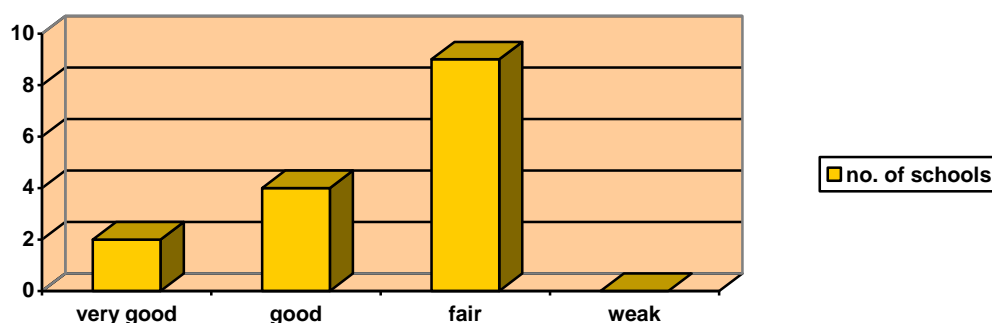
Evaluation criteria

Very good practice is found where

- planning for EAL is collaborative and encompasses aims, learning outcomes, clearly defined plans of work, assessment practices, and EAL-specific resources
- plans clearly identify the knowledge, skills and learning outcomes that EAL students should acquire on a staged basis
- planning identifies a range of effective methods in teaching and learning, including the use of ICT
- there is clear evidence of planning to meet the needs of individual EAL students
- the EAL teaching team engages in action planning to tackle perceived weaknesses in students' competences
- planning takes cognisance of students with educational needs additional to their English-language needs
- EAL plans are reviewed regularly and seek to identify current and future EAL requirements
- textbooks and teaching materials used are appropriate to achieving EAL learning outcomes, specifically with regard to the learning of the language of instruction

Findings

Figure 5.3: Quality of team planning—
number of schools at each quality level



Not surprisingly, findings in this area corresponded closely to those in section 5.2 of this report but there was a greater incidence of identifiably poor practice. Three-fifths of schools were found to have more weaknesses than strengths in this area. The good planning encountered included targeted learning outcomes expressed in terms of what students are able to do – ‘can do’ statements. Plans organised on a staged basis and linked to identified levels of proficiency were commended, but were encountered only in a small minority of schools.

Good practice was encountered in a number of schools where the EAL team had devised a report sheet for use by subject departments to identify areas of difficulty for individual EAL students. This practice is commended, not least because it asks subject teachers to pinpoint specific problems, underpinning the importance of their role in supporting EAL students in their class. Report sheets seen during the evaluation were also used to record areas where EAL students showed language competence in the mainstream classroom, and this is also very useful.

Many of the EAL teachers involved in the evaluation commented on the difficulty of planning and teaching a course without a syllabus or guidelines. Publications designed to assist with planning an EAL programme, including IILT's *A resource book for language support in post-primary schools*, were not widely known or used. In some instances, planning was based on popular textbooks used largely in the TEFL context. Most plans reflected an insufficient emphasis on the language of instruction, both in the materials and the approaches selected.

Planning by individual EAL teachers was also evaluated. Findings in this area were generally positive, and inspectors commended the commitment displayed by EAL teachers and the extensive preparation undertaken for lessons. However, individual planning generally benefited from strong team planning, although instances of good individual planning in schools without effective team planning structures were encountered and acknowledged.

Good practice was noted where teachers planned classwork based on real-life materials and situations that provided a meaningful context for language learning. Areas for development were consistent with those identified under team planning: a need for planning based on achieving well-defined levels of proficiency; and a greater use of materials and methods that will assist students to access the curriculum and make progress.

Exemplar of good practice

A very good EAL department plan has been developed, outlining programmes of work for all EAL support classes. The intensive EAL course offered focuses on the attainment of communicative English in the context of the school and draws on school documents like the Code of Behaviour, and notices like the canteen menu, as resources for teaching and learning. The withdrawal support programme outlined in the department plan draws on the IILT curriculum framework and focuses on learning outcomes related to the acquisition of the language of instruction. There is a commendable emphasis on helping students meet the language demands posed by a range of subjects on the school curriculum.

Recommendations for the school

- When engaging in EAL planning, schools should focus on the development of an EAL plan using the English Language Proficiency Benchmarks as the staged learning outcomes.
- The EAL plan should have a clear focus on the language of instruction and should seek to develop all four language skills: speaking, listening, reading and writing. The teaching and learning materials and methods included in the plan should develop these skills in the context of the curriculum.
- Schools' EAL plans should identify the *Post-Primary Assessment Kit* as the key means of formative assessment.
- To assist communication between subject departments and the EAL teaching team, the EAL plan should include a form of report sheet. Suitable templates are to be found in *A resource book for language support in post-primary schools* (pages 26-28).

Recommendations for the system

- EAL planning resources already in existence (for example the IILT resource book and the NCCA's *Intercultural Education in the Post-primary School*) should be made available on the SLSS web site.
- The proposed guidelines should encompass advice on planning the EAL programme, as a way of ensuring that existing resources and the *Post-Primary Assessment Kit* in particular, are used as productively as possible.

5.4 Planning for EAL students in other subject areas

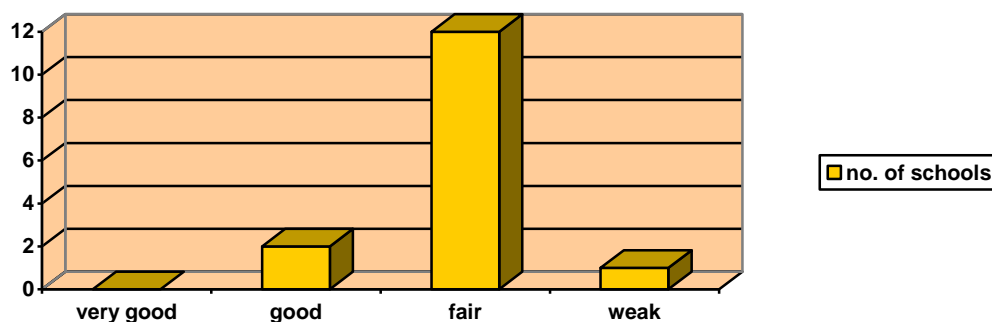
Evaluation criteria

Very good practice is found where

- subject department plans take cognisance of the needs of EAL students within that subject, with regard to the teaching and learning of relevant terminology, concepts and skills
- subject planning addresses the effective preparation of EAL students for state examinations, including the use of bilingual dictionaries so that students can benefit from the reasonable accommodation provisions of the State Examination Commission (SEC)

Findings

Figure 5.4: Quality of planning for EAL in subject areas – number of schools at each quality level



In the evaluations carried out, this area produced the largest number of negative findings, with practice deemed to have more weaknesses than strengths in almost all schools. Despite this, instances of good practice were observed and highly commended in the case of individual subject departments and individual teachers in some schools.

By contrast, in the most negative cases questions about an EAL focus in subject planning elicited the view that this was not the remit of the subject teacher. In other instances, there was little awareness of the specific difficulties EAL students were likely to encounter, or of the possibility that effective planning could contribute to overcoming these difficulties. Planning for the use of bilingual dictionaries was rarely seen, and many teachers were unaware that their use was permitted in certificate examinations. However, it should be said that many subject teachers accepted that planning with the needs of EAL students in mind was necessary, and they welcomed advice and information. Indeed, in a number of instances senior management and subject teachers saw such planning as benefiting all students, especially with regard to the explicit teaching of key terminology and appropriate writing structures.

Exemplar of good practice

Very good support for EAL students was noted in subject department schemes where a “literacy focus” column, subject-specific opportunities to affirm diverse cultures, and specific planning for active methodologies and for a variety of resources were included. Also, lists of subject keywords in English alongside their equivalents in some of the home languages of EAL students were designed to enable EAL students to build their subject learning on the foundation of their home language literacy, and this is commended.

Recommendations for the school

- The school’s EAL policies and practices should make plain the importance of an EAL focus in all subject department planning. All subject department planning should incorporate specific measures, such as those described above, to support the learning of EAL students.
- Close liaison between experienced EAL teachers and subject co-ordinators should become part of subject planning practice as a means of sharing effective teaching and learning methods for EAL students.
- Planning for the effective use of bilingual dictionaries should be incorporated into all relevant subject department plans.

Recommendations for the system

- The development of good practice in the teaching and learning of EAL students cannot be confined only to EAL support lessons in the post-primary context. The most cost-effective way of raising awareness and improving practice in all subject areas is to develop EAL expertise among a critical number of teachers who can be consulted by subject departments, by those involved in school development planning and by school management.

CHAPTER 6

QUALITY OF TEACHING AND LEARNING OF EAL

6.1 Teaching and learning processes in the EAL support classroom

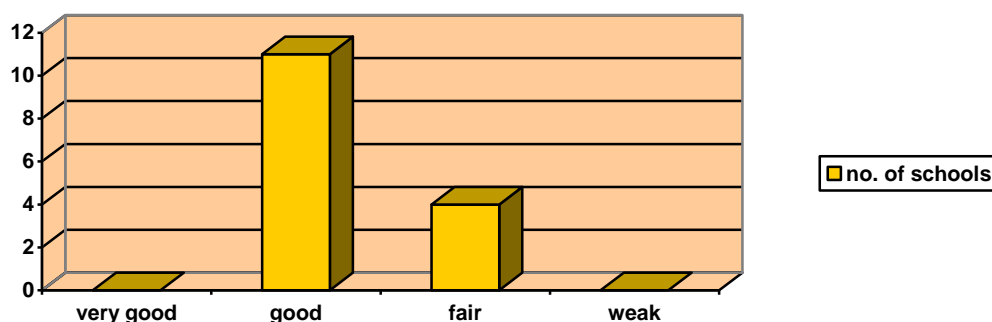
Evaluation criteria

Very good practice is found where

- the lesson is well-structured and a thematic and contextual approach reinforces students' language acquisition
- the teacher models good and appropriate language use, communicates instructions and information clearly, moderates speaking pace and uses repetition judiciously
- the teacher mediates meaning effectively through non-verbal cues, gestures, clear 'line of sight' and the use of visual resources
- the teacher explicitly teaches the language of instruction, including both general and specific academic vocabulary
- appropriate dictionary use is taught and practised
- the teacher uses differentiated teaching methods to meet the language acquisition needs of students
- good independent and active learning opportunities are provided
- particular attention is paid to the oral and written extension of students' vocabulary and of their repertoire of syntactical structures

Findings

Figure 6.1: Quality of teaching methods in EAL support setting – number of schools at each quality level



Fifty-one EAL lessons were observed during the course of the evaluation. Teaching methods in the EAL support classroom were considered effective in most of the lessons observed, although practice of a consistently high quality was not identified in any school. This difference is not unexpected, given the findings that planning structures and team planning for EAL were less than effective in a majority of schools. In these circumstances, the sharing of good practice and the development of expertise are less likely.

Many instances of very good practice were observed. These included the use of material focusing on the development of the language of instruction; good modelling of language use by the teacher; and the use of writing frames and templates rather than only cloze exercises, thus encouraging extended writing. EAL teachers were commended for clear articulation, moderate pace of speech, the easy use of repetition to assist students' learning, and the sparing use of elided or colloquial speech especially with EAL beginners. EAL teachers, especially those with a

background in modern languages, frequently applied effective strategies to avoid translation. These included attention to gesture, tone of voice, visual clues and language context. In these instances, a focus was maintained on English as the target language, and all students' efforts to communicate in English were warmly affirmed.

Good practice in developing and reinforcing key vocabulary included the explicit teaching of school and subject-specific vocabulary. In some instances, students were compiling simple lists of key words with translations, so that they built up their own dictionaries and were reminded by their EAL teacher to add to them both in EAL and mainstream lessons. Where students were working towards Level A1 proficiency, good vocabulary work was noted where the meaning of words was communicated and then the words were placed in a school or subject context.

Strategies aimed at extending both spoken and written language production were especially commended. For example, where students at Level A1 (breakthrough stage) volunteered a one-word response, teachers placed the word in a full statement and the student then repeated this. Cloze exercises provide a good means of learning and reinforcing vocabulary, but the use of writing frames was seen as particularly useful in encouraging EAL students to write complete sentences and paragraphs.

However, insufficient attention to the development of all four language skills in the methods observed was frequently noted. Listening and speaking were generally more to the fore than reading and writing, indicating a dominance of the communicative approach more appropriate to the TEFL context. Even with the greater level of attention given to spoken language, a need for better practice in eliciting more extended speech was noted.

Exemplars of good practice

A

In the support context, pair and group work was used to develop speaking and listening skills, and to practise certain language constructions. For example, the "pair then share" sequence allowed students to discuss a topic in pairs and then provided a good opportunity to practise indirect speech when reporting to the whole group.

B

New vocabulary was given a subject-specific context where possible. The word "smooth" was explained using concrete examples in the classroom, and then given a specific application to cake-making in Home Economics and sanding wood in Materials Technology. The use of gesture and real objects assisted effective communication.

Recommendations for the school

- EAL planning structures and practices should facilitate the sharing of good practice and the development of expertise within the EAL teaching team.
- Teaching methods should focus on the development of all four language skills, with particular attention to extended spoken and written language.

6.2 Teaching and learning processes in the mainstream classroom with EAL students

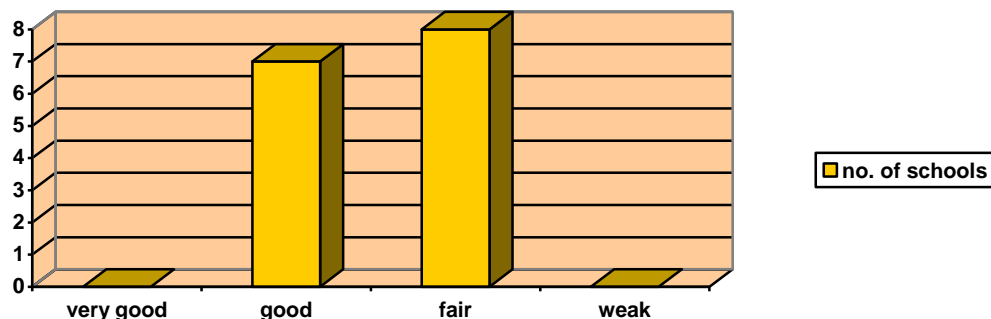
Evaluation criteria

Very good practice is found where

- the lesson has clear aims and learning outcomes and these are clearly communicated to students at the outset
- the teacher models good and appropriate language use, communicates instructions and information clearly, moderates speaking pace and uses repetition judiciously
- the teacher mediates meaning effectively through non-verbal cues, gestures, clear 'line of sight' and the use of visual resources
- the teacher explicitly teaches the language of instruction, including both general and specific academic vocabulary
- appropriate dictionary use is taught and practised
- the teacher uses differentiated teaching methods to meet the language acquisition needs of students
- good independent and active learning opportunities are provided
- students use the home language in mainstream lessons to facilitate peer tutoring as appropriate

Findings

Figure 6.2: Quality of teaching methods in mainstream context – number of schools at each quality level



Fifty-six mainstream lessons were observed during the course of the evaluation. Observation focused on the appropriateness and effectiveness of the teaching methods used with regard to the EAL students in each class group. Good practice was noted where teachers spoke clearly and at moderate pace, and where they readily used gesture, expression and visual aids to communicate meaning. Subject-specific vocabulary was explicitly taught in many lessons, and the reinforcement of key words through visual display and repetition was noted with approval. Where the teacher stated the learning outcomes at the beginning of the lesson, it was often used as an opportunity to explicitly teach key words and write them on the board. This is a good and helpful practice for all students.

Where active learning methods were used, they were observed to assist EAL students to engage with the lesson topic and to grasp key concepts. The importance of visual resources and visual reinforcement was well understood by many teachers. The setting of concrete tasks that provided a real context for new concepts and vocabulary was noted and commended as an approach that

engaged all students. The use of ICT as a teaching tool was encountered more in the mainstream than the support context, and some very effective practice was observed.

While the organised use of home languages by students in the context of peer tutoring was observed only in a small minority of lessons, it was seen to be successful in allowing students to make clear links with prior learning and to grasp new concepts. The use of students' home languages should be avoided as much as possible in the EAL support classroom, where the focus of learning is on acquiring, using and practising English. However, in mainstream classes the EAL student must focus on the understanding of concepts and the acquisition of subject-specific knowledge in areas where previous learning has taken place in the home language. For this reason, where a number of students share a home language, their purposeful use of a common home language to facilitate peer tutoring is beneficial and should be encouraged and supported. Through this approach, understanding of underlying concepts is enhanced and the specific English vocabulary can be taught within a cognitive context. Teachers can ensure that this approach is complemented and completed by the teaching and learning of the relevant vocabulary in English.

Although instances of very good practice were noted, the teaching methods used in over half of the lessons observed were considered less than effective in meeting the needs of EAL students. While this is an undesirably high proportion, it is important to point out that some simple adjustments in teaching style would greatly benefit EAL students, and that teachers were generally very receptive to the inspectors' suggestions in this area, and saw them as very manageable. The most basic of these relate to the pace and clarity of teachers' speech, greater attention to non-verbal cues and visual reinforcement, and more widespread use of active and task-based learning methods.

It must, however, be noted that a minority of teachers were resistant to the notion of differentiated approaches to support EAL students. This tended to be linked to negative attitudes to the presence of EAL students in their class groups. In other instances, teachers were simply unaware of the reciprocal benefits of peer tutoring, and spoke about EAL students being 'held back' by assisting their less able or less proficient co-linguists.⁶ This attitude shows very little understanding of the extent to which, in peer tutoring, the 'tutor students' benefit from the opportunity to explain and thus reinforce their own knowledge. Greater variety in pedagogical methods and greater use of co-operative learning approaches including peer tutoring would enrich the learning experience of all students, and lessen the dominance of teacher-directed whole-class instruction.

Very little use of bilingual dictionaries was observed, and in many cases mainstream teachers were unaware of the reasonable accommodations made for EAL students in certificate examinations.

There is a striking consonance between these negative findings and those regarding subject planning presented in section 5.4 of this report. Where teachers are willing to introduce new or differentiated practices in order to support the learning of EAL students in the mainstream classroom, any lack of knowledge or awareness can be addressed with relative ease. However, where attitudinal change is necessary, the school's board of management and senior management team have a key leadership role to play in ensuring that their school functions as an inclusive learning community. In practical terms, this means creating an environment where teachers understand and accept that their teaching and learning methods must address the needs of all students in their class groups.

⁶ Those who have a language in common, and specifically EAL students with a common home language.

Exemplars of good practice

A

The manner in which a Metalwork teacher had adapted the use of ICT to support the learning of EAL students was an example of very good practice. Students engaged in exercises arising from 'dropdown' menus connected to more extensive written texts. These texts were then stored in students' electronic folders. As well as this, students had their own subject-specific folder on the school network in which they could store their work.

B

Practical investigative work was also observed. In a science lesson, students investigated the rate of spread of a virus, using test tubes of liquid which were shared with a number of contacts and then tested for "infection". Students were required to write up the process and their findings, and the practical nature of the task, along with the template given, enabled them to prepare a clear report. This was a very effective strategy involving the development of a range of skills, including report writing, and was of great benefit to all students, including EAL students.

Recommendations for the school

- The practice observed indicates the need to raise awareness among mainstream teachers of practical and simple steps they can take to assist their EAL students. It also indicates the need for subject departments to identify, share and put into practice teaching methods and approaches that address the learning needs of EAL students.
- At a practical level, school management should facilitate EAL teachers to fulfil their role as disseminators of good practice by ensuring that they have input to staff meetings and CPD days.
- A consistent and school-wide approach to the teaching of key words is also necessary. Particular attention should be paid to the explicit teaching of words and concepts that are common to many subjects. For example, the instructions 'state', 'describe', 'outline' and 'explain' occur frequently on examination papers. It would be of great assistance to all students, including EAL students, if definitions and simple writing frames appropriate to these words were agreed on a school-wide basis, so that regular and consistent reinforcement of essential reading and writing skills could take place.
- Following from the recommendations in section 5.4, teachers are encouraged to incorporate into classroom practice the appropriate use of bilingual dictionaries, so that students become accustomed to them as a useful tool and can benefit from the reasonable accommodations provided by the SEC.
- Peer tutoring, including, where appropriate, purposeful use of the students' home language, should be facilitated and encouraged in the mainstream classroom.

Recommendations for the system

- The training already recommended for school management and the whole teaching staff should support the implementation of the effective practices indicated above.

6.3 Classroom management and atmosphere with a focus on EAL students

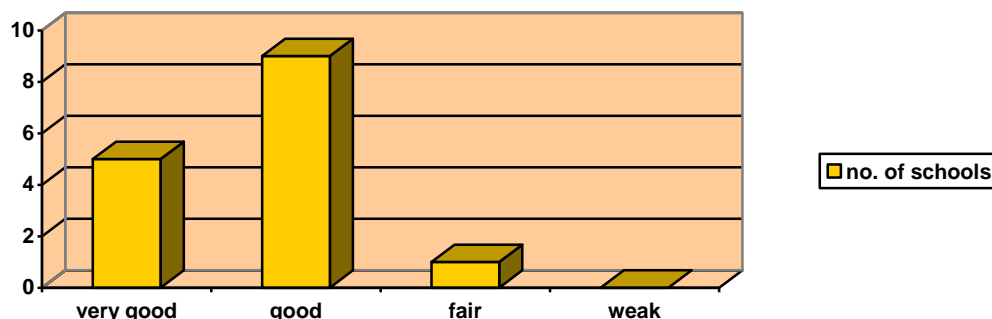
Evaluation criteria

Very good practice is found where

- classroom management is conducive to participative learning, including peer-tutoring
- classroom arrangement and organisation are inclusive and promote integration of EAL and non-EAL students
- respectful interpersonal relations are established and maintained
- students' confidence is built by the approaches taken and their progress in English is affirmed
- the classroom environment is attractive and stimulating and students' work is displayed
- aspects of EAL students' language and culture are affirmed and celebrated where appropriate.

Findings

Figure 6.3: Quality of classroom management for EAL students – number of schools at each quality level



Practice in this area was good or very good in almost all schools. In the support classroom, good management was evident where students were seated so that they could easily interact with each other and engage in role play and other tasks in pairs or small groups. The policy observed in some EAL support classrooms of separating students who share a home language emphasised English as the target language of the EAL support classroom, in line with the rationale given in section 6.2. In a number of schools, EAL classrooms had been developed as visually stimulating and language-rich learning environments, and this contributed to a supportive classroom atmosphere in which the needs of EAL students were recognised and addressed.

In the mainstream classroom, good management was seen where seating arrangements were flexible and facilitated work in integrated groups as well as peer tutoring among co-linguists where appropriate. Simple but very effective supports for EAL students were noted in some classrooms, usually specialist rooms, where equipment and resources were labelled in English, and where labelled photographs or drawings were displayed to reinforce key vocabulary for EAL students. In a very few instances, an unsupportive atmosphere was noted, in which EAL students were identified through what they were unable to do, and the level of integration was low.

Recommendations for the school

- Practical steps should be taken to enhance the learning environment, with particular attention to language-rich displays and to seating arrangements that allow for interaction between students.
- Schools should ensure that EAL students are not identified primarily in terms of deficits. EAL students should be described as knowing their home languages and learning English as an additional language, rather than as not speaking English.

6.4 Learning of EAL students

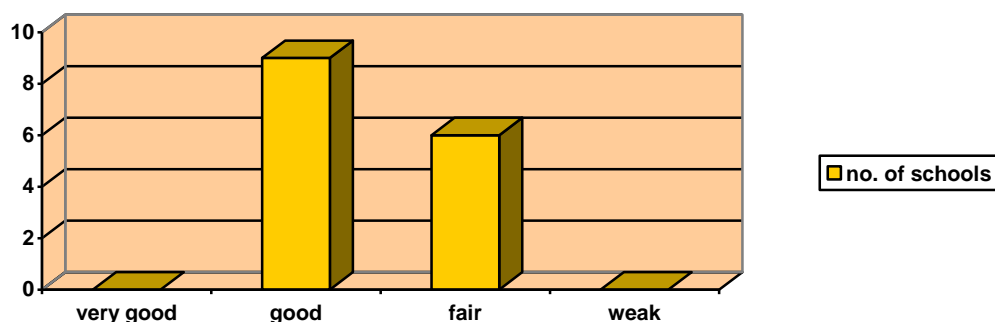
Evaluation criteria

Very good practice is found where

- EAL students are making measurable progress in English language acquisition
- EAL students are challenged, motivated and fully engaged by all classroom activities
- EAL students are active in their own learning, in their questioning and in their responses to questions
- students are well organised and purposeful in their work
- EAL students demonstrate clear knowledge and understanding of topics under study and can apply their learning where relevant and appropriate
- students' written and oral work indicates a high standard of learning

Findings

Figure 6.4: Quality of learning of EAL students – number of schools at each quality level



Student learning was considered to be effective in a majority of the lessons observed in both the mainstream and support contexts. EAL students were seen to maintain a high level of interest in their work and to engage readily with new material in environments where their growing competence was acknowledged and they therefore had a sense of progress and achievement. Inspectors noted with approval the extent to which many students displayed a good level of oral competence and a willingness to speak and to extend their spoken production. Good practice was noted where students were well organised in their learning, for example in the diligent use of vocabulary notebooks.

In addition to an ability to respond to questions and to frame questions themselves, students also gave evidence of learning through their ability to complete language-learning tasks, both oral and written. Good learning outcomes were especially in evidence where students at Level A1 were able to produce complete and accurate spoken and written sentences. In a number of instances, very able students had made remarkable progress and had achieved sufficient competence in

English to excel in a range of subjects. Where the English Language Proficiency Benchmarks were used, they provided not only a means of measuring students' progress, but also of identifying learning materials and activities that address the English language needs of post-primary EAL students.

Inspectors noted less satisfactory learning outcomes in a significant minority of schools. In these cases, a common finding was that progress was evident in some classes but not others, and that not all students were challenged, motivated or engaged. Having reviewed students' written work in these cases, inspectors commented that it indicated inadequate practice in contextualising new vocabulary, and that there was scope for more extended writing tasks, rather than cloze tasks, to help students to acquire competence in a range of important genres, including report writing. The need for a greater emphasis on oral and written work that focuses on acquiring the language of the curriculum was indicated in a significant number of evaluations, and this applied both to the support and the mainstream context.

Exemplar of good practice

There was very good evidence of learning among all students in the class, including EAL students. The work of the teachers in this regard is highly commended, given the fact that many students had low levels of English on entry to the school. In most lessons, EAL students were challenged and rose to this challenge in their work. Students' copies, in particular, demonstrated clear progression in learning. Where constructive written feedback was given, it was clear that EAL students learned from their previous mistakes.

Recommendations for the school

- Teachers should ensure that classroom interactions require increasingly extended spoken production from all EAL students across the spectrum of proficiency from Level 0 to B1 and beyond.
- Meaningful and contextualised writing tasks of an increasingly extended nature should be set for EAL students in the support and mainstream classroom.
- Constructive oral and written feedback should be offered regularly to EAL students, with a view to bringing about incremental and targeted improvement.

6.5 Assessment of EAL students' work and progress

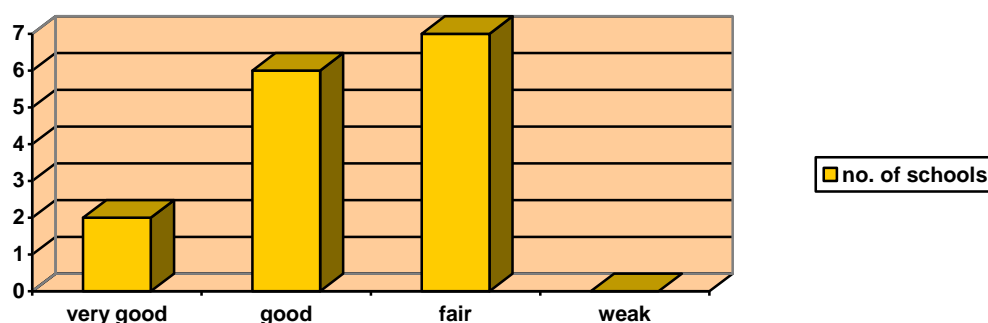
Evaluation criteria

Very good practice is found where

- The English Language Proficiency Benchmarks are applied effectively to measure students' progress
- assessment outcomes are used to inform appropriate progression to and within mainstream
- assessment of students' progress in the four language skills of listening, speaking, reading and writing is carried out systematically
- in-class assessment is differentiated to meet the language learning needs of EAL students
- homework assigned to EAL students is appropriate and is used to build linguistic competence and to affirm progress
- assessment is carefully used to identify additional learning needs of EAL students

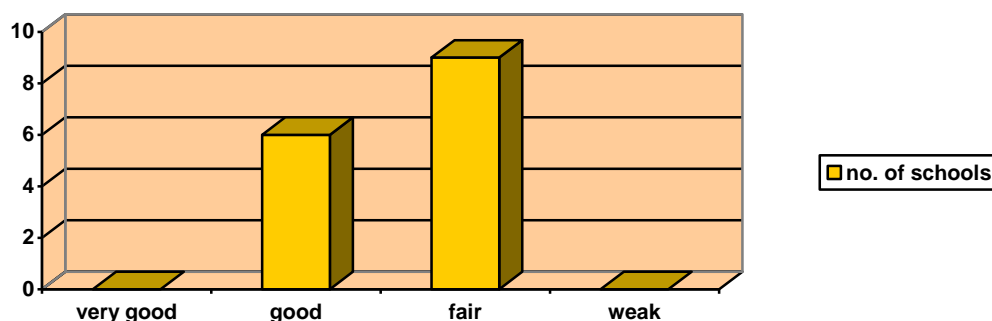
Findings

Figure 6.5: Quality of assessment in EAL in support setting – number of schools at each quality level



The assessment of EAL students' progress in the support context was managed effectively in just over half of the schools evaluated. A systematic approach to the assessment of students' progress was noted in a number of these schools. This involved re-testing in some cases, or the monitoring of students' levels of success when faced with increasingly challenging tasks. However, use of the English Language Proficiency Benchmarks as an objective measure of progress was limited. While many EAL teachers reported that students had made excellent progress, it was with reference most often to the students' growing spoken fluency as an indicator of proficiency, and less attention was given to measurable progress in the acquisition of reading and writing skills.

Figure 6.6: Quality of assessment in EAL in mainstream setting – number of schools at each quality level



In the mainstream context, only two-fifths of schools had effective assessment procedures for EAL students in mainstream subjects. In many schools, there was little differentiation of assessment methods, and a lack of feedback to EAL students to affirm their progress and to indicate constructively areas for development.

Recommendations for the school

- Schools should avail of the *Post-primary Assessment Kit* and related in-service training, in order to promote more systematic assessment practices in the EAL support context.
- School should put systems in place for the monitoring of EAL students' progress in all areas of the curriculum and the identification of difficulties, in order to provide a basis for more targeted support.

Recommendations for the system

- Continuing support to schools and teachers on the appropriate use of the *Post-primary Assessment Kit* is advisable, and should focus on the use of this resource for ongoing formative assessment of EAL students' progress, and as a means of informing teachers of areas requiring targeted support.

6.6 Record-keeping and reporting practices with regard to EAL students

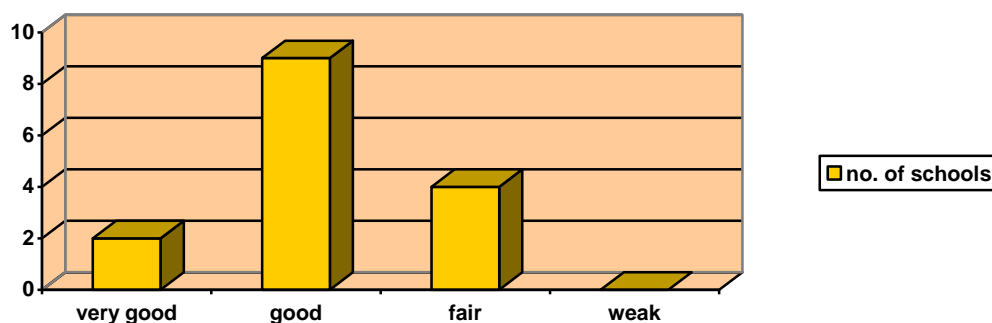
Evaluation criteria

Very good practice is found where

- students are provided with clear information about their performance and progress in EAL
- all assessment and examination results are recorded and are easily accessible to teachers, parents and, as appropriate, to other professionals
- a reporting mechanism has been established between subject teachers and EAL teachers, to enable the provision of targeted support to EAL students

Findings

Figure 6.7: Quality of record keeping and reporting with regard to EAL students – number of schools at each quality level



Systems of record-keeping and reporting were effective in a majority of schools, with very good practice noted in a small number of schools. Strengths in this area included the maintenance of individual English language portfolios showing the student's progress in measurable terms, and the inclusion of EAL as a reporting area on the formal school progress report. The EAL team in some schools had developed an in-house report sheet where mainstream teachers recorded EAL students' initial areas of difficulty, progress observed, and any new issues arising. The report sheets were kept in folders that all teaching staff could access, and were used effectively to give targeted support to EAL students in both the mainstream and EAL classroom.

6.7 Attainment of EAL students

Findings

Attainment of EAL students as measured in in-school assessments such as Christmas and summer examinations was not a focus of the EAL evaluation. Wide variations in the examinations set and the criteria applied in different schools would make it difficult to draw definitive conclusions about the attainment of EAL students as a discrete grouping within the school system. However, some information was gathered from the records of attainment that schools

maintained and from discussions with school management and teachers. In considering the observations below, readers should bear in mind that factors affecting attainment are not easily amenable to measurement, and that factors including motivation and previous educational experience apply to all students.

The picture that emerged was a form of triptych: a small number of EAL students were attaining remarkably high grades; a larger number were succeeding but some at a level below their potential; and a significant number were not successful. While the factors contributing to this pattern were seen to be varied and very complex, there is evidence that three factors may be particularly relevant. With regard to the highly successful students, teachers noted that a very high level of prior learning and motivation was evident, and this factor was often mentioned with regard to Mathematics and modern languages. In the case of students who appeared to be capable but were underachieving, teachers cited continuing difficulty with the reading and writing skills required, especially where students were encountering progressively more challenging concepts and more sophisticated language. The third factor, and the one most often mentioned in discussing students who were attaining very low grades, related to poor attitudes to school, often reflected in poor attendance and non-completion of work. Teachers suggested that a history of disrupted education might be a significant element of these students' profiles.

No definitive comment on the attainment levels of EAL students in the state examinations can be made, because EAL candidates are not identified as such and their outcomes cannot therefore be disaggregated from the global figures. However, some observations can be made on the achievement of students who apply to use bilingual dictionaries under the reasonable accommodations offered by the State Examinations Commission. The arrangement applies to EAL candidates in all examinations except English, Irish and the candidate's first language. 2,877 candidates were granted this accommodation in 2009, and 3,435 in 2010. The number of eligible candidates who do not apply to use bilingual dictionaries is unknown. Using the 'dictionary candidate' outcomes as an approximate indication of the performance of EAL candidates, some observations with regard to achievement can be attempted. These are outlined below. They pertain to the 2009 examinations, as these are the most recent for which complete data are available.

The outstandingly positive findings relate to the performance of 'dictionary candidates' in the curricular modern languages in the Junior and Leaving Certificate. The percentage of these candidates achieving A-grades on higher level papers in these languages is considerably higher than the percentage for all candidates. Less predictable areas of high achievement were also noted, for example Junior Certificate Art, where 'dictionary candidates' attain a significantly greater number of A-grades in comparison with the total number of candidates. During the evaluation, art teachers commented on the high levels of skill of many EAL students, but were concerned that the greater language demands of Leaving Certificate Art would cause them to struggle. Performance of 'dictionary candidates' in Leaving Certificate Art perhaps bears out this concern, as it is less good than the performance of the cohort as a whole.

The outstandingly negative finding is the very high numbers of dictionary candidates achieving E, F or NG. These grades are generally referred to as 'fails'. Among candidates who sat ordinary level Leaving Certificate Mathematics, just over 10% received these grades. However, among 'dictionary candidates', the figure exceeded 22%. This pattern of disproportionately low achievement among 'dictionary candidates' was noted consistently in all examinations except modern languages and was more striking in the Leaving Certificate than the Junior Certificate results.

Recommendations for the school

- Schools should carry out a focused analysis of the attainment of EAL students in both in-school and state examinations, in order to identify attainment trends and respond to them if necessary.

Recommendations for the system

- Consideration should be given to gathering data on the precise numbers of EAL candidates in certificate examinations and on their levels of attainment so as to facilitate analysis of national trends.

CHAPTER 7

SUPPORT FOR EAL STUDENTS

7.1 Inclusive policies and practices

Evaluation criteria

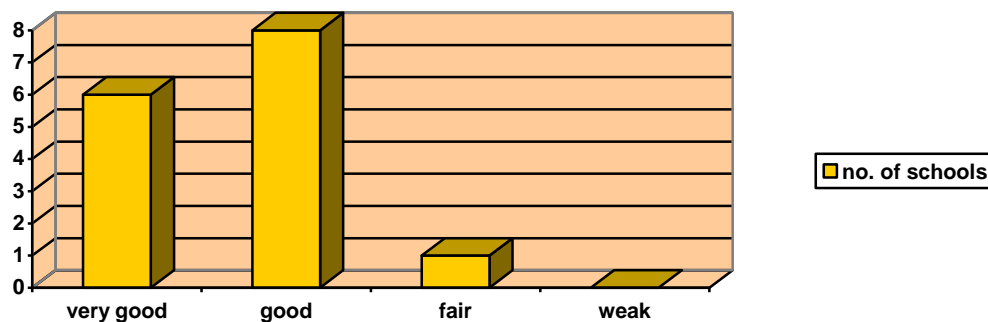
Very good practice is found where

- the school ethos and characteristic spirit promote the inclusion of EAL students
- the physical school environment reflects respect for diversity
- the school supports activities that celebrate diversity and affirm students' cultural backgrounds
- EAL students are actively encouraged to participate in the students' council and in co-curricular and extra-curricular activities

Findings

The findings with regard to support for EAL students under this heading and all headings in this chapter are among the most positive in the report. This is also the only chapter in the report in which the findings under all headings show a significant predominance of good practice. This is very much in line with findings in whole-school evaluations, which consistently report a high level of care and support for students in post-primary schools.

Figure 7.1: Quality of inclusive policies and practices – number of schools at each quality level



Almost all schools were found to have good or very good inclusive policies and practices in place. Among the inclusive practices noted were intercultural days celebrating the rich variety of cultures, including Irish culture. Such events involved aspects of culture including dance, food, customs and rituals, and language. In a number of schools, specific projects celebrating interculturalism were undertaken, including the creation of murals and displays. The students who were interviewed commented very positively on their experience of such initiatives. Over three-quarters of the parents who responded to the questionnaire felt that the school valued their culture and language.

EAL students were members of the students' council in a majority of the schools evaluated. In a number of schools, EAL students had been appointed as prefects and, in some, as head and deputy-head student. However, schools expressed some concern with regard to a low level of participation by EAL students in activities outside of school or outside of normal school time. While some EAL students were very involved in sports and in clubs, many were reported not to participate. 40% of respondents to the student questionnaire reported non-participation, a percentage perhaps not significantly higher than for non-EAL students. In some instances, paid

work outside of school was cited as the cause both by students and teachers interviewed. Rarely, a mismatch was noted between teachers' perception of EAL students' levels of participation, and their actual levels of participation, which were in fact found to be high and of a good quality.

Exemplar of good practice

Practices promoting inclusion and celebrating diversity are well established and highly visible in the school. The assembly area contains colourful school-produced posters on the homelands of EAL students and photographs reflecting a diverse and inclusive student body, and the various languages of the student body are used in a "welcome collage" in the school foyer. An impressive mural in the assembly area was created by students in collaboration with an African artist to explore the theme of human rights in an international context. An international week, called the Intercultural and Anti-racism Week, took place this year, and international days have been held in the last two years. Such events provide opportunities for students to inform each other about aspects of their culture including food, language, music and dance. The international days also involve the participation of parents in the preparation of stalls and exhibits which showcased the range of countries and nationalities represented in the school, including Ireland and the Irish.

Recommendations for the school

- Where schools are concerned about low levels of participation by EAL students in co- and extra-curricular activities, the evidence should be clear, and the causes should be investigated sensitively and addressed where practicable.

7.2 Care structures supporting EAL students

Evaluation criteria

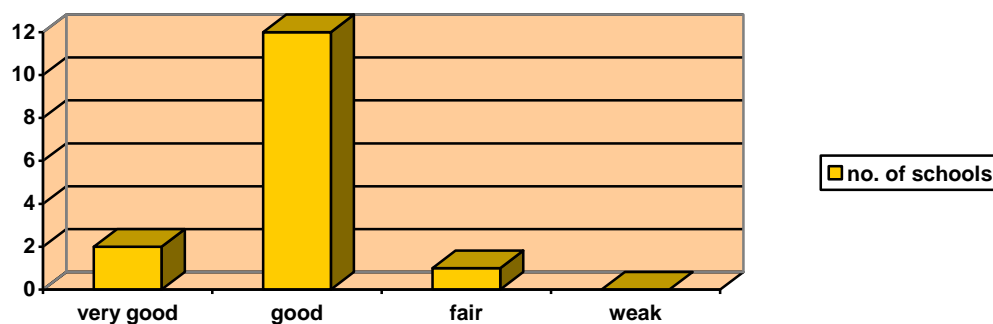
Very good practice is found where

- care policies, structures and practices have been developed to support EAL students
- programmes in the school to support students are effectively used to support EAL students
- effective induction systems are in place to assist EAL students' orientation
- effective buddy and/or mentoring systems are in place to support EAL students

Findings

Findings here mirror very closely those in the previous section of this chapter, although somewhat fewer instances of very good practice were noted. However, responses from EAL students and their parents when asked if students felt safe and well looked after in school were overwhelmingly positive, at around 90%. Particular strengths noted included a focus on the wellbeing of EAL students on the part of the school's care team, and systems enabling personnel with particular responsibilities for the welfare of EAL students to communicate with the care team where necessary.

Figure 7.2: Quality of care structures supporting EAL students – number of schools at each quality level



Excellent practice was noted in some schools where the care team included a home-school-community-liaison co-ordinator or school completion co-ordinator, who ensured that EAL students at risk, and their families, received as much support as possible. In some instances, the level of care offered was found to be very good, but recommendations were made with regard to improving structures and systems in the interests of sustainability of support.

In responding to the questionnaires, over 80% of students said they felt well cared for when they first arrived in the school, and more than 90% of parents felt that the school had worked hard to ensure their children were made welcome. In many schools, buddy systems were in place, sometimes involving the pairing of older and younger EAL students, and sometimes of EAL and non-EAL students.

Recommendations for the school

- Parents and students conveyed a very positive picture of this aspect of provision. In self-evaluating their practice in this area, schools should pay particular attention not only to the individual contributions of the personnel in place but also to the systems and structures that enable effective communication and liaison.

7.3 Learning support for EAL students

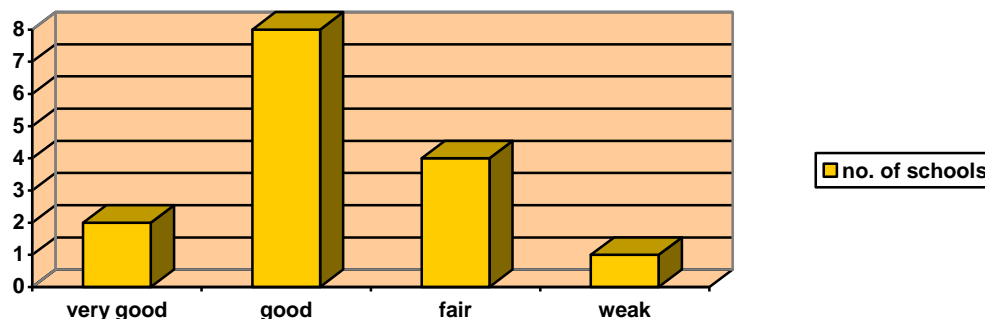
Evaluation criteria

Very good practice is found where

- EAL students experiencing ongoing learning difficulties are referred to the special-educational-needs department for assessment and additional support
- liaison between learning support and resource teachers and EAL teachers delivers appropriate support to EAL students with additional learning needs

Findings

Figure 7.3: Quality of learning support for EAL students—number of schools at each quality level



While good or very good practice was noted in the majority of schools, some weaknesses were evident in one third of the schools evaluated. Where this area was strong, the relevant teachers made a clear distinction between low English-language proficiency and general learning difficulties. EAL students who were experiencing particular difficulty in acquiring English were identified for assessment and subsequent support from the school's special-educational-needs (SEN) department. Collaborative work between learning-support and language-support teachers led to the development of individual plans to assist these students, and these plans were shared with mainstream teachers so that they could provide appropriately differentiated learning activities.

Poor practice often involved the conflating of EAL and SEN support, to the point where EAL students with no assessed need other than in English language proficiency were placed in a support class with non-EAL students who had sometimes severe literacy deficits. Such practice curtails the opportunities for EAL students to encounter models of good proficiency and an appropriate level of challenge and stimulus. In some instances, EAL students who had been noted as 'slow learners' by the EAL teacher were not referred to the learning-support teacher. Where this occurred, there tended to be poor liaison between SEN and EAL teachers.

Exemplar of good practice

The close links between EAL and special educational needs support providers in the school have fostered awareness that the small number of EAL students who experience little success in improving their English language competence over a substantial period of time may have learning as well as language difficulties. The school has accessed non-verbal educational testing for these students through the National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS).

Recommendations for the school

- Schools should differentiate between EAL provision and literacy-support provision, so that support is appropriately targeted.
- Appropriate diagnostic tests should be used to distinguish between low English language proficiency and possible learning difficulties in the case of EAL students.
- Schools should develop systems and structures to maintain good links between SEN support and EAL support personnel. These structures should be used to plan support for individual students both in the support and mainstream contexts.

7.4 Guidance service and EAL students

Evaluation criteria

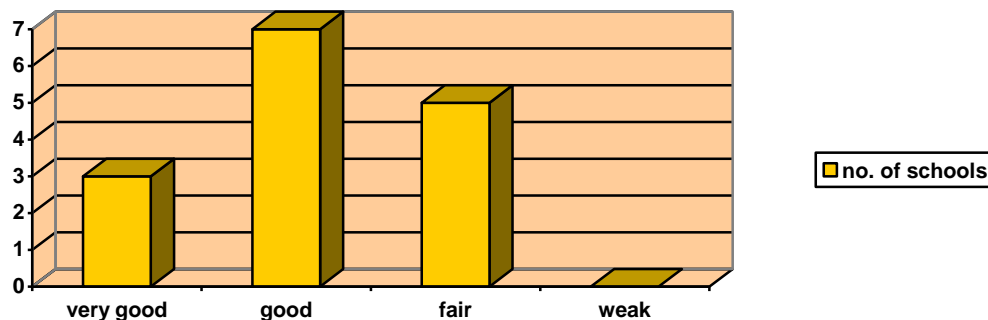
Very good practice is found where

- the school's guidance policy offers specific support to EAL students in educational, personal and vocational guidance
- progression of EAL students is tracked and informs planning to meet the needs of current EAL students

Findings

Good or very good practice was found in two-thirds of schools evaluated. However, given the importance for EAL students of all aspects of guidance, deficits in this area are a particular cause for concern.

Figure 7.4: Quality of guidance services for EAL students – number of schools at each quality level



In schools where practice was significantly strong, guidance counsellors tailored the delivery of all aspects of guidance and counselling to the specific requirements of EAL students. With regard to educational guidance, students were given relevant advice on choices of subject and level, and the non-curricular-language option where applicable. High-quality vocational guidance was noted where guidance counsellors were familiar with the requirements and progression routes to further and higher education for EAL students, and invited past students, including EAL students, to share their experiences and offer advice to current students. A very high level of personal counselling was in evidence in these schools, often involving strong links with external agencies that could offer expert support to EAL students with personal and family difficulties.

Poor planning, inadequate attention to the specific guidance and counselling needs of EAL students, and poor communication both internally and externally were noted where the guidance service was not delivering effective support to EAL students. In these instances, a whole-school guidance plan had not been developed, and there was insufficient knowledge of issues regarding educational or vocational progression that pertained to EAL students. Little or no tracking of EAL students, or indeed of students generally, was evident in these cases.

Exemplar of good practice

The school's guidance counselling service offers concrete, responsive support to all students including EAL students. The guidance counsellor is familiar with the requirements and progression routes to further and higher education for EAL students and briefs them accordingly. To support the parents of EAL students in understanding the Irish educational progression system, the guidance counsellor provides them with a one-page visual organiser. Through a model career fair run annually, the school invites past students, including EAL students, to return to the school and to provide advice to current students in the process of identifying their life goals and career plans. Great success has been achieved in enabling students, including EAL students, to progress toward further education. The progression of all students is tracked and informs planning to meet the needs of current EAL students.

Recommendations for the school

- A whole-school guidance plan should be in place and should make specific commitments to addressing the needs of EAL students.
- Progression of all students, including EAL students, should be tracked, and the data used appropriately to inform and guide the progression paths of current students.

7.5 Contact with and involvement of parents

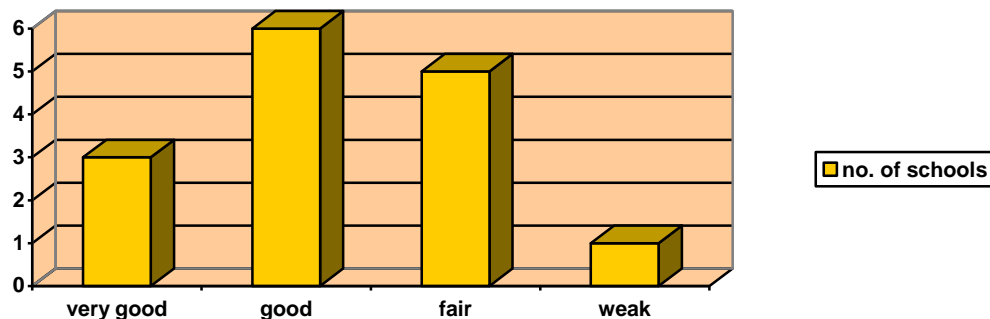
Evaluation criteria

Very good practice is found where

- appropriate steps are taken to communicate with parents of EAL students at parent-teacher meetings and through school reports
- the school actively encourages the full participation of parents of EAL students in school bodies and activities
- parents of EAL students participate in the parents association and/or organised school activities
- the school has good links with external agencies that support immigrant families, with a view to promoting involvement of parents of EAL students in their children's education

Findings

Figure 7.5: Quality of contact with and involvement of parents and external agencies – number of schools at each quality level



Good or very good practice was noted in a majority of schools. Inspectors felt that schools where practice was commended had been proactive in involving parents and had shown great willingness to overcome communication difficulties. Excellent practice in forging links with

external agencies was noted in many of these schools. However, even where strengths were noted, real difficulties in communicating with parents were reported, especially where confidential matters or serious breaches of behaviour had to be discussed. A distinction should be made therefore between schools that have not been active in encouraging parental involvement and proactive schools that have encountered intractable difficulties. An important contextual point to note is that the level of parental involvement, for example participation in the activities of the parents association, has consistently been reported to be low in many schools and is a recurring theme in whole-school evaluations.

Despite these difficulties, the parent questionnaires reflect a positive experience of contact between school and home. A very large majority of respondents said that parents of all languages and cultures were welcomed at parent teacher meetings, and found reports on their children's progress clear and easy to follow. However, a significant minority felt that difficulties with language hindered their participation in school activities.

Recommendations for the school

- In the light of the indicators of good practice given above, school communities, including boards of management and parents associations, should review their present practices with regard to encouraging the participation of parents in school life, and consider any further steps that they should take to achieve this end.

Recommendations for the system

- The Office of the Minister for Integration, in conjunction with the Department of Education and Skills, has collated an online repository of relevant material on the education system, using the acronym AIM (Accessing Intercultural Materials). Documents are currently available in six languages (German, Latvian, Lithuanian, Polish, Russian, Spanish) with English and Irish translations, on the Department's web site. Romanian, French and Portuguese feature significantly among the languages known to migrant families, especially, in the case of French and Portuguese, those coming from outside Europe. They were given as among the home languages in a significant minority of parent and student questionnaire responses. These languages should be added to the suite of translations already in place as a cost-effective means of providing information to parents of EAL students and aiding communication between them and schools.
- A large number of agencies is involved in providing support to newcomer parents and their families. More effective linking between these agencies especially at local level would provide a more cost-effective and streamlined level of support.

CHAPTER 8

MAIN FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

8.1 Main findings

The preceding four chapters give the detailed findings in the four key areas considered in the evaluation of post-primary EAL provision. The main findings in these four areas are summarised below.

8.1.1 Provision and whole-school support for EAL

- The EAL allocation was most commonly used to create mixed-proficiency groups that were withdrawn from mainstream Irish lessons. More differentiated and targeted use of the allocation was noted in a minority of schools.
- Continuity and capacity building were best served where a core EAL teaching team had a substantial and sustained timetable commitment to EAL. However, the method of deploying staff to EAL support was good in fewer than half the schools evaluated.
- The majority of schools evaluated had good enrolment procedures; parent questionnaires recorded a 90% satisfaction rating with them.
- While a broad and balanced curriculum was available to EAL students in a majority of schools, there was evidence that EAL students were sometimes automatically placed in bands or streams that followed a more limited curriculum.

8.1.2 Planning and co-ordination of EAL

- Whole-school policies were supportive of EAL students, but generally did not recognise the importance for EAL students of continued use of their home languages.
- Very varied levels of planning and co-ordination were noted, with very well-developed systems in schools with more experience of EAL and more undeveloped or *ad hoc* arrangements in others.
- EAL plans that were organised on a staged basis and linked to identified levels of proficiency were found in only a small number of schools.
- The focus on EAL students in subject planning was the area where practice was weakest in almost all of the schools evaluated.

8.1.3 Teaching and learning of EAL

- Teaching methods were effective in most of the EAL support lessons observed, although practice of a consistently high standard was not identified in any school.
- Listening and speaking skills received more attention than reading and writing skills in EAL support lessons: however, a lack of extended speech from students was frequently noted.
- Good practice included modelling of good language use, explicit teaching of subject-specific vocabulary, active and co-operative approaches, and the use of non-verbal cues to communicate meaning. However, the teaching methods in more than half of the mainstream lessons observed did not satisfactorily meet the needs of EAL students.
- Most teachers were very receptive to any suggestions on approaches they might take; a minority were resistant to differentiating their teaching style in order to support EAL students.
- Bilingual dictionaries were not commonly used and many mainstream teachers were unaware of the reasonable accommodations made for EAL students in certificate examinations.
- EAL students demonstrated effective learning in a majority of lessons observed and some students had made very good progress. However, limited practice in writing and in contextualising new vocabulary was also noted.

- A minority of schools had effective assessment procedures for EAL students in mainstream subjects. EAL students' attainment in internal and state examinations was rarely systematically analysed.

8.1.4 Support for EAL students

- The general findings in the area of support for EAL students showed a significant predominance of good practice, and this is consistent with the findings of whole-school evaluations in this area.
- Inclusive practices affirming the diversity of cultures within schools were commended in most of the parent questionnaire responses. EAL students were members of the student council in a majority of the schools evaluated.
- Almost all parent and student respondents reported that students felt safe and were well looked after in school.
- Learning-support arrangements for EAL students were good in a majority of schools, although inadequate liaison between the EAL and learning support personnel was evident in some instances.
- While good practice in regard to guidance for EAL students was found in a majority of schools, deficits in this area are of particular concern, given the importance for EAL students of all aspects of guidance.

8.2 Discussion of findings

Department circular 53/07 greatly increased the number of teaching hours allocated to EAL and allowed for the delivery of more and better-targeted EAL support. It also allowed for the development of different models of support, including intensive EAL programmes and mainstream classroom support through team-teaching. Less directly, it facilitated the building of expertise, the creation of EAL teaching teams and the development of organisational and planning structures to support EAL delivery.

However, circular 53/07 did not lead to uniform good practice because it was in many ways a move made in isolation, preceding the availability of adequate CPD, assessment instruments and teaching materials, particularly in the post-primary sector. The value delivered through increasing the EAL allocation while these deficits remained is to some extent questionable. Nevertheless, the circular's stated aims and the practice it advocates are laudable. It contains clear statements on issues of inclusion, on the need for a whole-school approach to EAL provision and on the need to build capacity within schools to deliver EAL support. Its successor, Department circular 15/09 restates these goals. However, although both circulars refer to the intended outcomes in providing this EAL teaching resource, they are perceived in schools almost entirely in terms of the size of allocation they generate.

A number of positive developments have occurred. Most schools recognise their responsibilities with regard to EAL learners although they may lack specific expertise. There are many more EAL teachers in schools. The assessment kits are in schools, and training in their use has been provided. More broadly-focused continuing professional development (CPD) has also begun, intended to develop teachers' competences in teaching EAL and to build capacity within schools. Crucially, this has also included CPD for post-primary senior management as leaders in the inclusion and support of EAL learners. A greater culture of planning exists in schools, including planning to address additional educational needs. Materials and resources to support EAL learners are more plentiful and available.

However, each advance has brought further challenges which must be met if sustainable long-term EAL policy and practices are to be developed. These are summarised below.

- Schools require greater guidance in building their capacity to meet the needs of EAL learners.

- The *Post-primary Assessment Kit* provides a means of formative assessment of English language proficiency across the four language skills. However, no planned programme or curricular framework to support the acquisition of these skills has been developed.
- The increased number of EAL teachers in schools does not reduce the responsibility of class and subject teachers with regard to EAL students.
- No agreed mechanism exists for the transfer of assessment information between schools, and in particular between primary and post-primary schools.
- Ongoing CPD is essential if schools and classrooms are to support EAL learners fully. However, if CPD can only be delivered during school time, its impact on class contact time and on substitution costs is unsustainably severe. CPD delivered within these constraints cannot but be unsatisfactory.
- There is a need for co-ordinated and collaborative planning and dissemination of good practice within schools to support EAL learners. However, if the time required for this compromises class contact time, it is counter-productive.

At the time that the evaluations on which this report is based were taking place, the Inspectorate was also evaluating provision for EAL in primary schools. The findings of the composite report on EAL provision in primary schools are generally more positive than those at post-primary. A number of factors contribute to this: the more receptive language-learning age of primary pupils; the fact that primary teachers are trained to teach language; the fact that primary pupils have one class teacher, rather than many subject teachers; deployment and timetabling constraints in post-primary schools; and the demands made on post-primary teachers and students by high-stakes examinations. Despite these differences, however, some common issues have emerged.

There is a need, in schools at both levels, to enhance the leadership role of management in EAL provision, with a view to ensuring more effective deployment of staff, flexible but targeted use of the additional teaching resource and the building of the school's capacity in this area. There is a common need to improve the co-ordination of EAL, EAL programme planning, and planning for EAL learners in mainstream settings. There is scope to extend the range of teaching and learning methods to support English language acquisition with a focus on cognitive language development. Learners of EAL in both primary and post-primary schools would benefit if there were a greater awareness among teachers that they are all teachers of language and have a key role in developing the language competence of all learners, including EAL learners.

8.3 Main recommendations for post-primary schools

The Inspectorate's evaluation of EAL provision has generated a number of key recommendations, both for schools and for the system as a whole. Those which are directed towards post-primary schools have been given in detail in the relevant sections of chapters 4 to 7 and are summarised below. Recommendations for the system are given in the final section of this chapter.

8.3.1 Provision and whole-school support for EAL

- The EAL allocation should be used in a flexible but targeted way that prioritises students in most need of support.
- Permanent whole-time teachers with language-teaching expertise should have a significant involvement in planning and delivering EAL support.
- Schools should actively and methodically seek information about EAL students' educational history as part of the enrolment process.
- The use of ICT should be maximised to provide EAL resources and home-language material for EAL students.

- EAL students should have the greatest possible access to a broad and balanced curriculum, including Irish, and at a level that offers an appropriate challenge.

8.3.2 Planning and co-ordination of EAL

- All schools should develop an EAL policy with specific measures to support inclusive and intercultural practices. EAL policies should acknowledge the educational and cultural importance for EAL students of continued engagement with their home languages.
- Good subject-planning practices should be applied to the co-ordination and planning of EAL, including a team approach, effective liaison with school management and student support teams, and the development of a comprehensive EAL plan with clear learning outcomes.
- All subject department planning should include specific measures to support the learning of EAL students.

8.3.3 Teaching and learning of EAL

- All teachers should acknowledge and endeavour to fulfil their role as teachers of language, and the role of the school's EAL teachers in fostering good practice should be facilitated by school management.
- A consistent, school-wide approach to the teaching of key words and concepts should be adopted for the benefit of all students, including EAL students. Students should have regular practice in the use of bilingual dictionaries to support their learning and to avail of the reasonable accommodation provided by the SEC.
- Teaching methods should focus on all four language skills, with particular attention to the development of extended spoken and written language.
- Active and co-operative approaches such as task-based and discovery learning should be taken wherever appropriate. Peer tutoring should be more widely used and should include students with a shared home language working together where a lack of English is hindering understanding.
- The *Post-primary Assessment Kit* should be used systematically to support initial and ongoing assessment of EAL students' English language proficiency.
- When reviewing students' attainment in both in-school and state examinations, schools should carry out a focused analysis of the attainment of EAL students, in order to identify attainment trends and respond to them if necessary.

8.3.4 Support for EAL students

- EAL provision and literacy support provision should be clearly differentiated. EAL students with special educational needs in addition to their EAL needs should be identified and assisted through the co-ordinated input of all relevant support personnel.
- The school's guidance plan and guidance structures should address the specific needs of EAL students with regard to educational, vocational and personal guidance.

8.4 Recommendations for the system

- Additional guidelines on EAL provision should be drawn up and issued to schools. Separate guidelines for primary and post-primary schools would recognise their different contexts and needs but should also support a co-ordinated approach to transition arrangements from primary to post-primary. The guidelines should identify good practice in the following areas: models of deployment and support; co-ordination and in-school liaison; planning the EAL programme; teaching and learning methodologies for both support and mainstream contexts; and initial and ongoing formative assessment. The guidelines should provide references to all existing material and resources, thus drawing together the range of available supports and avoiding duplication and excessive length.

- Future Department circulars regarding EAL should address primary and post-primary schools separately in recognition of their different contexts and the different needs of their student cohorts. Provisions of future circulars should complement the proposed EAL guidelines.
- The use of the relevant assessment kits should be required in applications for support for all EAL learners already within the system. All learners below Level B1 proficiency should be eligible for support.
- The calculation on which EAL allocations are based should be weighted towards addressing proficiency deficits and meeting the needs of learners at critical stages, such as certificate examination years. The allocation should be deployed accordingly in schools. This should enable the provision of daily support to those in greatest need, and a less intense 'maintenance' programme in other cases.
- Post-primary guidelines and circulars should approve the use of a school's EAL allocation to release suitable permanent and experienced teachers to deliver EAL support, as a means of mitigating the discontinuity and poor capacity building associated with current deployment patterns. Post-primary CPD should target teachers who have the experience and standing to disseminate good practice within the school, thus assisting subject teachers in their work with EAL students.
- Primary schools should be required to forward the following information to post-primary schools when students are transferring: a description of EAL supports provided; language proficiency levels reached; assessment data; the most recent individual pupil learning profile.
- The Department's budget for EAL is almost entirely dedicated to providing additional teaching resources. A rebalancing of available funding to ensure an ongoing CPD programme is recommended. Consideration should be given to changing current CPD arrangements in order to facilitate such a programme without compromising class contact time.
- It is recommended that schools delegate the role of EAL co-ordinator to a designated teacher. Liaison with other teachers and with the whole staff is essential as part of effective planning and delivery of support to EAL learners. Consideration should therefore be given to the formal identification of time outside of class contact hours to facilitate liaison, collaborative planning and the co-ordinated delivery of EAL supports. The terms of Department circular 25/11 on the use of additional time in post-primary schools are of relevance to this and the previous recommendation.

APPENDIX 1

An Roinn Oideachais agus Eolaíochta,
Corn a Madadh,
Baile Atha Luain,
Co. na hIarmhí.



Department of Education and Science,
Cornamaddy,
Athlone,
Co. Westmeath

Circular 0053/2007

To: The Managerial Authorities of Primary, Secondary, Community and Comprehensive Schools and to the Vocational Education Committees

Meeting the needs of pupils for whom English is a second language

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this Circular is to assist schools in providing an inclusive school environment to meet the needs of pupils for whom English is a second language and outline the resources that are available to assist schools in this task.

CREATING AN INCLUSIVE SCHOOL ENVIRONMENT

An inclusive school environment reflects values and affirms linguistic, ethnic and cultural diversity. It is important that schools have policies and procedures in place that promote and facilitate the inclusion of all children. The school's commitment to creating an inclusive school environment should be evident in the school plan, the promotion of parental involvement, the provision of equality of curriculum access, the facilitation of professional development opportunities and in whole-school and classroom practice. Pupils should also be encouraged and facilitated in maintaining a connection with their own culture and language through curricular activities and displays.

THE ROLE OF THE LANGUAGE SUPPORT TEACHER

Language support teachers are appointed to assist schools in providing additional language support teaching for pupils. In collaboration with parents and class teachers, language support teachers identify pupils requiring additional support, administer the assessment materials developed by Integrate Ireland Language and Training, devise appropriate language programmes, deliver the programmes and record and monitor pupils' progress. It is important that expertise is shared and good practice is communicated and disseminated in order to optimise the opportunities pupils have for developing their proficiency in English.

ASSESSMENT OF PUPILS' LEVELS OF LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY

In order to assist schools in assessing pupils' levels of language proficiency, the Department of Education and Science has commissioned assessment packs to assist in determining language proficiency of pupils and these will be distributed to all schools shortly. The tests of English language proficiency contained in this pack were compiled by Integrate Ireland Language and Training (IILT), which is a campus company of Trinity College, Dublin, funded by the Department of Education and Science. The tests have been designed for use at primary level. The tests are being adapted to make them more age appropriate for use in post primary schools. However, the primary tests may be used by post primary schools in the interim.

The tests of English language proficiency are based on IILT's English Language Proficiency Benchmarks (revised version, September 2003), and are structured with reference to three proficiency levels (1, 2 and 3) as set out in the table below.

Level 1	Level 2	Level 3
Very poor comprehension of English and very limited spoken English	Understands some English and can speak English sufficiently well for basic communication	Has competent communication skills in English

The English Language Proficiency Benchmarks specify what pupils should be able to achieve in English at each level and thus reflect the task-based approach to teaching and learning promoted by IILT. Tasks have been selected to reflect what pupils encounter daily in the classroom. Scoring procedures have been designed to achieve accurate results, provided the tests are administered strictly according to the instructions provided. All documentation in relation to the administration of tests must be retained by the school for audit/inspection purposes.

ALLOCATION OF ADDITIONAL TEACHER SUPPORT

The level of additional teacher support allocated to primary and post primary schools will continue to be determined by the number of enrolled pupils for whom English is a second language and the associated assessed levels of pupils' language proficiency.

It is necessary for schools to apply for the additional allocation certifying the number of such pupils enrolled on form NN1 for primary schools and form NN 07/08 for post primary schools as already notified to all schools.

The table under sets out the resources that can be accessed to cater for such pupils where the number of pupils in the school is 14 or more:-

Number of pupils	Posts	Number of pupils	Posts	Number of pupils	Posts
14 to 27	1	42 to 64	3	91 to 120	5
28 to 41	2	65 to 90	4	121 or more	6

Schools with less than 14 pupils will have their needs addressed as outlined in previous circulars. It is a matter for the school authority to deploy this teacher allocation having regard to the proficiency levels of individual pupils involved and in line with their evolving needs.

The allocation of additional language support teachers is based on allowing schools flexibility in the deployment of support. It is recommended that pupils receive additional language support teaching in the classroom or in small withdrawal groups in addition to the support they receive from the class teacher. It is intended that this revised allocation facilitates and provides for a high level of flexibility and will enable schools to successfully meet the needs of pupils who require additional language support teaching.

A defined whole-school policy in relation to the identification of pupils requiring support, assessment of pupils' levels of language proficiency, programme planning, recording and monitoring of pupils' progress and communication with parents are key features of effective language support provision. While duties and responsibilities vary in every school context, it is important that the roles of all school personnel in relation to meeting the needs of pupils for whom English is a second language are clearly defined and understood by all. It is important that expertise is shared and good practice is communicated and disseminated in order to optimise the opportunities pupils have for developing their proficiency in English.

Additional teaching hours are made available for schools catering for pupils with significant English language deficits assessed as having a language proficiency of either level 1 or 2. Should these extra resources be required for individual pupils for longer than two years, details of the assessed level of language competence and specific details of how the school has addressed the needs of these pupils in the previous two years must be outlined. Details must also be outlined of how it is proposed to optimise the opportunities of the pupils for whom an additional year is being sought.

The allocation is subject to confirmation by the school authority of actual attendance by the pupils through their inclusion in the school's certified October Returns.

Schools must retain a copy of all relevant documentation for audit purposes.

USEFUL MATERIALS AND RESOURCES

A wide range of materials and resources has been developed to assist schools in meeting the needs of pupils for whom English is a second language. The following is a list of materials that schools may find useful in responding to linguistic, cultural and ethnic diversity.

Department of Education and Science (DES) (2003) Looking at our School: An Aid to Self-Evaluation in Primary Schools, Dublin: (DES).
Development and Intercultural Education (2005) Global and Justice Perspectives in Education: A Literature Review, Dublin: Church of Ireland College.
Irish National Teachers Organisation (INTO) (2005) Intercultural Education in the Primary School, Dublin: INTO.
Irish National Teachers Organisation (INTO) (2002) INTO Intercultural Guidelines for Schools, Dublin: INTO.
National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA) (2005) Intercultural Education in the Primary School, NCCA: Dublin.
National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA) (2005) English as An Additional Language in Irish Primary Schools, NCCA: Dublin.

As part of its continuing commitment to assisting teachers in creating inclusive school environments, the Department of Education and Science is currently involved in a North-South project with the Southern Education and Library Board and Integrate Ireland Language and Training to develop a practical toolkit for primary schools. The aim of the toolkit will be to support the inclusion of pupils for whom English is a second language in primary schools through incorporating best practice and providing suggestions, concrete ideas, exemplars and materials for use by all school staff. It is proposed to distribute this toolkit to all primary schools, both North and South, in the 2007/8 school year.

AVAILABILITY OF SUPPORT

The Regional Office Service of the Department of Education and Science will assist schools in relation to implementation of this circular. Integrate Ireland Language and Training (IILT) provides training and materials to assist schools in meeting the needs of pupils for whom English is a second language. A wide range of teaching resources has been developed by IILT and is available at www.iilt.ie . IILT may be contacted directly at 126 Pembroke Street, Ballsbridge, Dublin 4; Telephone: 01 6677232/6677295; Fax: 01 6643726; E-mail: info@iilt.ie .

Johnny Bracken
Principal Officer
Primary Teachers Section
Section
May 2007

Anne Killian
Principal Officer
Post Primary Teachers

Chairpersons of Boards of Management and Principals should bring this circular to the attention of members of the Board and teachers and should retain a copy for future reference.

APPENDIX 2



DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION AND SCIENCE SCHOOLS DIVISION

**Circular
ar 0015/2009**

To: The Managerial Authorities of Primary, Secondary, Community and Comprehensive Schools and to the Vocational Education Committees

Meeting the needs of pupils learning English as an Additional Language (EAL)

1. Introduction

Arising from the decisions made in Budget 2009 new arrangements are being put in place for the allocation of EAL support posts to schools. These new arrangements replace the current allocation arrangements that are set out in Circular 53/07 which is hereby rescinded.

The resources allocated to schools to meet the needs of pupils learning English as an Additional Language (EAL) are additional to the other supports and funding provided for schools. All pupils including migrant pupils (irrespective of their English language proficiency) are counted for the regular pupil teacher ratios in schools.

The budget measures will mean that the level of EAL support will generally be reduced to a maximum of two teachers per school, as was the case before 2007. However, there will be some alleviation for the position of those schools where there is a significant concentration of pupils learning English as an additional language as a proportion of the overall enrolment.

The new arrangements are outlined in Section 6.

2. Creating an inclusive school environment

An inclusive school environment reflects values and affirms linguistic, ethnic and cultural diversity. It is important that schools have policies and procedures in place that promote and facilitate the inclusion of all children. The school's commitment to creating an inclusive school environment should be evident in the school plan, the promotion of parental involvement, the provision of equality of curriculum access, the facilitation of professional development opportunities and in whole-school and classroom practice. Pupils should also be encouraged and facilitated to maintain a connection with their own culture and language through curricular activities and displays.

3. The role of the EAL support teacher

EAL support teachers are appointed to assist schools in providing **additional** EAL support teaching for pupils. The EAL pupil remains the responsibility of the mainstream class teacher at primary level and the subject specialist teachers at post primary level who will work closely with the EAL support teachers. In collaboration with parents and mainstream class teachers, EAL support teachers identify pupils requiring additional language support, assess pupils' proficiency in English using the assessment materials, devise appropriate language programmes, deliver the programmes and record and monitor pupils' progress.

They share their expertise with mainstream class teachers and assist in developing and disseminating good practice to support the development of students' English language proficiency.

4. Deployment of EAL support teachers within schools

It is a matter for the school authority to deploy this teacher allocation having regard to the proficiency levels of individual pupils involved and in line with their evolving needs.

The allocation of EAL support teachers is based on allowing schools flexibility in the deployment of support. It is recommended that pupils receive additional EAL support teaching in the classroom or in timetabled EAL lessons for small groups in addition to the support they receive from the class teachers.

Clear and effective arrangements for the identification of pupils requiring support, the assessment of pupils' levels of language proficiency, programme planning, the recording and monitoring of pupils' progress and communication with parents are key features of effective EAL support provision. All of these features should be delineated in the school's policy on EAL support. While duties and responsibilities vary in every school context, it is important that the roles of all school personnel in relation to meeting the needs of pupils learning English as a second language are clearly defined and understood by all. School policy and practice should promote the sharing of expertise and good practice, and encourages communication amongst staff in order to optimise the opportunities pupils have for developing their proficiency in English.

5. Primary and Post-Primary Assessment Kit

The Primary and Post-Primary Assessment Kits are a useful tool for schools to determine the initial language proficiency of each pupil and to evaluate how well pupils are progressing with their language skills in English. The tests will help to establish a pupil's

level of English on arrival in school, monitor progress over time in language support and identify the point at which a pupil no longer requires additional language support. Primary and Post- Primary EAL teachers are receiving training in the use of these kits during the current academic year, 08/09.

At this stage, it is not proposed to oblige schools to base all their applications for EAL support on the assessments carried out using the language assessment kit. However, schools will be asked to use the assessment kit if they are seeking EAL support for pupils for an additional year beyond the 2 year period.

The table below outlines the levels of proficiency that were used when assessing pupils' language ability prior to the publication of the Primary/Post-Primary Assessment kits. The table also includes the nearest equivalent levels for those schools using the Primary/Post-Primary Assessment Kits.

N.B. Pupils with very little English may be initially assessed as at Level 0 (see Primary Assessment Kit, p.16 and Post-Primary Assessment Kit, p.12). Level A1 in the Assessment Kit should be their first learning target.

Proficiency levels used prior to publication of Primary and Post-Primary Assessment Kits			
Level 1		Level 2	
Very poor comprehension of English and very limited spoken English		Understands some English and can speak English sufficiently well for basic communication	
		Level 3	
		Has competent communication skills in English	
Nearest equivalent levels using Primary and Post-Primary Assessment Kits			
Level 0	Level A1	Level A2	Level B1
Absence of any English language proficiency	Can understand and use basic words and phrases in a social and school context	Can understand, read and write simple English and can speak English sufficiently well to exchange information	Can function well enough in English to be fully integrated into the mainstream classroom

The English Language Proficiency Levels specify what pupils should be able to achieve in English at each level and thus reflect the task-based approach to teaching and learning. Tasks have been selected to reflect what pupils encounter daily in the classroom. Scoring procedures have been designed to achieve accurate results, provided the tests are administered strictly according to the instructions provided.

EAL support resources are made available for schools catering for pupils with significant English language deficits assessed as having a language proficiency of either Level 1(0 or A1) or Level 2 (A2) based on the allocation thresholds outlined below.

All documentation in relation to the administration of tests must be retained by the school for audit/inspection purposes.

6. Allocation of resources for EAL support:

6.1. Schools with fewer than 14 pupils requiring EAL support

Grant aid is allocated at primary level to facilitate the Board of Management in funding the provision of part-time EAL support whilst at post primary level EAL support is allocated on the basis of part-time teaching hours.

6.2. New arrangements for allocation of full-time EAL support posts (See Appendix for outline of examples of support)

The table below sets out the full-time resources that can be accessed to provide EAL support for pupils in the first two years:

No. of posts	No. of pupils that require EAL support
1 post	14 to 30 pupils
2 posts	31 to 90 pupils

6.3. Alleviation measures for schools with substantial number of pupils requiring EAL support

This will involve up to 2 additional EAL support posts being allocated on the following basis:

No. of posts	No. of pupils that require EAL support
3 posts	91 to 120 pupils
4 posts	121 and over

Pupils for the 3rd and subsequent EAL support posts to be counted on the following basis:

- one for one basis where pupil has less than 1 year of EAL support
- two for one basis if a pupil has between 1 and 2 years EAL support (i.e., a weighting system will be applied so that every 2 of these pupils that have already had EAL support for between 1 and 2 years will be counted as 1 pupil for the purposes of meeting the allocation thresholds for EAL support posts).

Potential additional posts by appeal

- Primary schools where at least 25% of their total enrolment is made up of pupils that require EAL support (pupils with less than B1 (Level 3) proficiency) can lodge an appeal to the Primary Staffing Appeals Board for a review of their proposed allocation for 2009/10 under the above rules. The following amendment will be made to the existing criteria for making appeals to the Staffing Appeals Board –
 - Where the Appeal Board is satisfied that having considered the circumstances outlined by the school and having regard to the high number of pupils requiring EAL support additional post(s) may be approved to support the educational needs of such pupils
- Post-Primary or VEC schools where a significant number of the total enrolment is made up of EAL pupils with less than B1 (Level 3) proficiency can lodge an appeal for a review of their proposed allocation.

- Post-Primary or VEC schools where a significant number of EAL pupils with less than B1 (Level 3) proficiency are in third year or in the senior cycle can lodge an appeal for a review of their proposed allocation.

Post-Primary and VEC schools can lodge an appeal to the Independent Appeals Board at Post-Primary level.

7. Important points to note when counting pupil numbers

- In determining all allocations for EAL support those pupils that have had the least amount of EAL support must be counted first.
- Schools must use 1 September 2009 as the reference date for determining how many years EAL support has already been given to pupils.
- Schools must take into account any EAL support provided to pupils in previous school(s) attended
- Pupils for 3rd and subsequent EAL support posts are counted on a one for one basis if they have had less than 1 year of EAL support and a two for one basis if they have between 1 and 2 years EAL support.
- If the Department is satisfied that EAL support is required for an additional year beyond the 2 year period (see 8 below) then such pupils will be counted on a three for one basis for the purposes of meeting the allocation thresholds for all part-time and full-time EAL support posts.
- Allocations of EAL support posts will be given on a provisional basis pending confirmation of actual enrolment on 30 September. In exceptional circumstances, if a significant number of students requiring EAL support are enrolled after 30 September, then the school may apply for additional resources.

8. Applications for EAL support for pupils beyond the 2 year period

All applications for EAL support for pupils for an additional year beyond the 2 year period will be dealt with on the following basis:

- The application in respect of such pupils must include details of how the school has addressed the language needs of these pupils in the previous 2 years.
- The application in respect of such pupils must outline how it is proposed to optimise the opportunities of the pupils for whom an additional year is being sought.
- Each pupil for whom EAL support is sought beyond the 2 year period must have an assessment carried out using the Primary or Post Primary Assessment Kit. The assessment must have been carried out within 3 months of the date of submission of the application for EAL support to the Department and must show that the pupil has not attained Level B1 proficiency. The actual assessments do not need to be submitted to the Department but retained in the school and kept available for inspection.
- If the Department is satisfied that EAL support is required for an additional year beyond the 2 year period then such pupils will be counted on a **3 for 1** basis for the purposes of

meeting allocation thresholds for all part-time and full-time EAL support posts (i.e., a weighting system will be applied so that every 3 of these pupils that have already had EAL support for 2 years or more will only count as 1 pupil for the purposes of meeting the allocation thresholds for all part-time and full-time EAL support posts).

9. General

There is an option of additional language support through Irish for pupils in schools that provide instruction through the medium of Irish provided those pupils first language is neither English nor Irish. This option is only available for pupils who otherwise qualify under the terms of this circular and will not be provided for pupils whose first language is English.

10. Application forms

The same form should be used at primary level to apply for grant aid and for EAL support posts.

Please click here [EALP1.doc](#) to download Primary Application Form EAL/P1 and here [Form NN09.10.doc](#) for Post Primary Application form NN 09/10.

Please note that queries regarding the Circular may be E-Mailed to

Primary Schools - <mailto:PrimaryAllocations@education.gov.ie> and

Post-primary Schools – <mailto:Allocations@education.gov.ie>

Hubert Loftus
Principal Officer
Primary Teacher Allocations
Allocations

Anne Killian
Principal Officer
Post Primary Teacher

March, 2009

Appendix

The following sample cases help illustrate the new allocation arrangements for fulltime posts:

Sample cases	Current position	Position for 2009/10 using above allocation method set out in this circular and below
School with 121 pupils that have had less than 1 year of language support	6 posts	Total 4 posts* calculated as follows 2 posts automatically for first 90 pupils 3 rd post for next 30 pupils (91-120 counted 1 for 1) 4 th post – 121 pupils
School with 121 pupils that have had between 1 and 2 years language support	6 posts	Total 3 posts* calculated as follows 2 posts automatically for first 90 pupils 3 rd post for remaining 31 pupils counted as 15.5 on 2 for 1 basis
School with between 14 to 30 pupils that have had less than 2 years of language support	1 or 2 posts	1 post*
School with between 31 to 90 pupils that have had less than 2 years of language support	2 to 4 posts	2 posts*
School with 120 pupils (40 of whom have had less than 1 year of language support and the other 80 pupils have had language support for between 1 & 2 years	5 posts	3 posts* calculated as follows: 2 posts automatically for first 90 pupils (the 40 pupils that have had less than 1 year EAL support must be counted first) 3 rd post for remaining 30 pupils counted as 15 pupils on 2 for 1 basis

*** Potential additional posts by appeal set out in Section 6.3 of Circular and below.**

Primary schools where at least 25% of their total enrolment is made up of pupils that require EAL support (pupils with less than B1 (Level 3) proficiency) can lodge an appeal to the Primary Staffing Appeals Board for a review of their proposed allocation for 2009/10 under the above rules. The following amendment will be made to the existing criteria for making appeals to the Staffing Appeals Board –

- *Where the Appeal Board is satisfied that having considered the circumstances outlined by the school and having regard to the high number of pupils requiring EAL support additional post(s) may be approved to support the educational needs of such pupils*

Post-primary or VEC schools, where a significant number of their total enrolment is made up of EAL pupils with less than B1 (Level 3) proficiency can lodge an appeal for a review of their proposed allocation.

Post-primary or VEC schools where a significant number of EAL pupils with less than B1 (Level 3) proficiency are in third year or in the senior cycle can lodge an appeal for a review of their proposed allocation.

Post-Primary and VEC schools can lodge an appeal to the Independent Appeals Board at Post-Primary level.

APPENDIX 3

Summary of responses to students' questionnaire		% strongly agree	% agree	% disagree	% strongly disagree	% no response
1	I enjoy being at this school	32.8	58.1	6.2	2.9	1.7
2	I enjoy going to my EAL lessons	34.7	51.7	10.3	3.3	19.6
3	We speak English a lot in EAL lessons	48.4	44.4	4.8	2.4	19.2
4	We write English a lot in EAL lessons	42.6	48	7.6	1.8	19.1
5	We read English a lot in EAL lessons	38.8	51.8	7.5	1.9	19.3
6	We listen to English a lot in EAL lessons	36.9	49.5	10.8	2.8	19.8
7	I can easily borrow books in English from the school library	21.9	41.4	24.6	12.1	9.5
8	I can borrow books in the language I use at home from the school library	6.1	17.3	40.8	35.8	8
9	The school sends information home about my work in school	31.8	48.6	15.8	3.8	3.8
10	Teachers tell me often that I am getting better at using English	37	45.2	12.9	4.9	5.5
11	Teachers are good at telling me how I can improve my English even more	35.9	46.6	12.9	4.6	3.5
12	In EAL lessons we often study words connected to my other subjects	31.6	47.5	15.9	5.1	19.6
13	I do music and sports and other activities during and after school	32.1	31.2	23.5	13.2	3
14	I felt well cared for when I first arrived in the school	34	50.2	10.9	4.9	4.1
15	I know a teacher I can talk to if I am having problems in school	43.5	40.1	11.3	5.1	1.7
16	I know the teacher who will teach me EAL every day	44.9	38.7	10.4	6	18.1
17	I know where my EAL class will be every day	52.4	34.6	9	4	18.1
18	My work in EAL is corrected regularly	35.8	51.3	9.8	3.2	19.4
19	I go to Irish lessons in school	13.3	8.3	21.2	57.2	6
20	I am interested in studying Irish	9.1	10.8	27.3	52.8	5.5
21	Subject teachers explain things clearly for me in class	35.8	50.7	10.5	3	3.6
22	There is a place where I can display my EAL work	20.4	43.6	27.6	8.3	21.5
23	Pictures and photos are often used to explain ideas in my subject lessons	19.4	47.2	24.7	8.7	6.1
24	We often use computers in EAL lessons	6.9	16.2	35.8	41.1	21.2
25	We often use dictionaries in EAL lessons	20.5	40.9	25.4	13.3	20.7
26	I get on well with other students in this school	46.5	45.7	5.4	2.4	3.5
27	I feel safe and well looked after in this school	35.4	52.2	8.1	4.3	2.8

APPENDIX 4

Summary of responses to parents' questionnaire

	%strongly agree	% agree	% disagree	%strongly disagree
1 The forms and the information about how to enrol my child were very clear	44.8	50.6	3.3	1.3
2 I could get school documents in my own language to enrol my child	10.7	20.6	43.7	25
3 The school was helpful in telling me what I needed to do to enrol my child	44.2	48.5	6.3	1
4 Other school documents are easy to understand	31.9	56	9.5	2.6
5 The school can give me other school documents in my own language	9	22.1	45.3	23.6
6 Reports on my child's work in school are easy to understand	37.2	52.2	9.2	1.4
7 The school gives reports in my own language about my child's work in school	7.1	11.8	51.2	29.9
8 Parents with different languages and cultures are made to feel welcome at parent-teacher meetings	37.2	47.3	12.5	3
9 The language difference stops me from taking part in the life of the school	18.7	24.9	33.1	23.2
10 The school has given lots of help to my child in learning the English language	52.1	38.6	7.4	2
11 There is good contact between the school and the home	37.7	51.5	9.4	1.4
12 I often get information about how my child is doing in learning the English language	23.9	38	33.6	4.6
13 I often get information about how my child is doing in other school subjects	26.6	41.2	28.3	3.9
14 I am involved in the school's parents' association	6.7	16.5	54.6	22.3
15 I am involved in other areas of school life	7.5	17.9	55.2	19.4
16 The school has shown that it values my culture and language	28.2	48.1	18.9	4.9
17 My child can practise speaking in our own language during the school day	15.3	33.3	32.3	19.1
18 I know who to talk to in the school if my child is not happy in the school	39.5	46.1	10.1	4.3
19 I know my child's English language support (EAL) teacher	19.2	26.2	43	11.6
20 I want my child to take part in Irish language lessons	15.4	23.3	37.2	24
21 The school has asked for details about my child's time in school before coming to Ireland	20.5	33.8	31.3	14.5
22 My child feels part of the school community	40.2	49.9	8.8	1.1
23 My child feels safe and well looked after in the school	40.9	51.4	5.7	2
24 My child is well cared for in the school	41.9	51.8	5.9	0.4
25 The school worked hard to make sure that my child was made welcome when he/she first arrived	46.4	45.6	7	1
26 My child takes part in sports, music and/or other activities during and after school	34.9	40.6	19.3	5.2
27 My child has friends in school	51.5	43.4	3.7	1.4
28 My child has friends in school from Ireland	44.6	46.2	6.6	2.6
29 I go to courses for adults/parents in my child's school	8.5	11.2	53.5	26.8
30 I feel good about my child's school life in Ireland	50.9	43.4	4.2	1.6

APPENDIX 5

The languages into which questionnaires for parents were translated

1. Afrikaans
2. Albanian
3. Arabic
4. Bengali
5. Bosnian
6. Bulgarian
7. Chinese
8. Croatian
9. Czech
10. Dutch
11. Estonian
12. Filipino (Tagalog)
13. French
14. Ga
15. Georgian
16. German
17. Greek
18. Hindi
19. Hungarian
20. Igbo
21. Italian
22. Korean
23. Kurdish
24. Latvian
25. Lithuanian
26. Macedonian
27. Malay
28. Malayalam
29. Marathi
30. Ndebele (Zimbabwe)
31. Polish
32. Portuguese (Brazil)
33. Portuguese (Portugal)
34. Romanian
35. Russian
36. Sindhi
37. Slovak
38. Spanish
39. Tamil
40. Turkish
41. Urdu
42. Urhobo
43. Xhosa
44. Yoruba
45. Zulu

APPENDIX 6

Numbers of candidates taking non-curricular languages in the Leaving Certificate

Language	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
Polish	8	20	53	171	328	451
Lithuanian	n/a	45	61	131	176	207
Romanian	n/a	n/a	25	67	92	121
Latvian	n/a	16	32	50	48	96
Portuguese	17	22	27	29	55	49
Dutch	25	22	16	28	31	29
Slovakian	n/a	1	6	17	15	34
Swedish	11	6	7	10	16	x
Estonian	0	6	4	8	x	x
Hungarian	n/a	3	3	8	19	19
Bulgarian	n/a	n/a	5	6	12	11
Modern Greek	3	5	4	5	x	x
Czech	2	2	4	5	x	15
Finnish	1	0	3	4	x	x
Danish	1	2	4	2	x	x
Slovenian	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	x	x
Total	68	150	254	541	817	1032 (- 'others')

n/a indicates that the language was not offered at this date. In 2004, only Danish and Portuguese were offered on a non-curricular basis.

In 2009, Slovenian was added to the above list.

**The 2009 total includes 87 'sits' in the languages with very small uptake.

Russian is a curricular language and was not taught in any of the schools visited. However, 14 candidates in these schools sat Russian as an additional subject studied outside the timetable.

Uptake of the non-curricular language option in the schools visited 2008 figures from State Examinations Commission

Polish	14	School A	1
Lithuanian	17	School B	1
Romanian	7	School C	0
Latvian	11	School D	7
Portuguese	6	School E	1
Dutch	1	School F	5
Slovakian	0	School G	5
Swedish	0	School H	6
Estonian	0	School I	0
Hungarian	1	School J	1
Bulgarian	0	School K	7
Modern Greek	0	School L	6
Czech	0	School M	9
Finnish	0	School N	1
Danish	0	School O	7
Total	57	Total	57

