**INTERVIEW**

**Attendees**

Interviewer NF

Headteacher B HT B

Teacher B

NF Here we go. There we go. Just for the recording, for the transcriber, can you just say your name and what your role is at School B?

HT B Absolutely. I'm Headteacher B and I'm head teacher at School B

Teacher B Teacher B, the early years lead and EAL lead.

NF Lovely. Thanks very much. So, hope you got the questions through as well. And so, we'll work through them, but we don't have to kind of stick on you with that. It's a conversation really where I'm finding out about what schools in Hampshire currently do. And then towards sort of second half of the conversation, we talk about what this project is that I'm working on with EMTAS, and whether you might want to be involved, but there's no commitment that has to be made today. I'll get back to people later. So don't worry. If you don't want to commit to anything today, that's absolutely fine. This is just kind of finding out. And the interviews so far have been just really interesting 'cause I've been talking with schools throughout the county in different areas, which is really, really helpful. So just to get to know you, can you just tell me about the children at School B and range of languages and backgrounds that you've got?

HT B Absolutely. So, our EAL numbers have actually increased quite significantly over the last few years. And we've now got 41 children who have English as an additional language. And one of those has British sign language as her first language. So, both the parents are deaf. Of those 41, we've got 20 different languages spoken. So quite a range across the school, which I think for us, we find it hard to...we'd like to pair up children where we can, but obviously we've only 20 languages out of 40 children. We've got quite a few sorts of Nepalese and a few Polish. You've got the groups, but then there's one of some of the other ones, which is quite a challenge. Many of those children do speak fluent English as well or have very, very high proficiency levels in English. One, for example, who speaks Portuguese has just moved here from Brazil and she had no English at all. So, we really do have that wide range of children that you wouldn't necessarily know had English as an additional language, and others who have absolutely no English. And that's been a learning curve for staff, I think, to be able to best support the children in that way.

NF So you were saying, HT B, over two years. Has that been quite a sudden rise then, for you, in numbers?

HT B I've been here five years now and I would say it's been more of a gradual over that five years, but the last two years, it's been definitely more (inaudible 02:55).

NF Quite hard, which is interesting, isn't it? Because of the political landscape in the country. Now everyone assumes that our EAL numbers aren't rising, but I'm finding similar to you in many schools, it's still very much the case. And so, you're saying there are groups of say Nepali speakers and Polish speakers.

HT B So we've got three Polish. I think we've got four Nepali and we've got three Chinese. One of those Chinese/Cantonese and then many of the others. It's sort of just the odd one or two. I'm just looking down the list. So, for example, we've got two Punjabi speakers, but they're siblings. So, it varies. It doesn't say...within our demographic, traditionally our area has been quite heavily Nepalese-based. So, when I started with Nepalese and Polish that we had and that seems to have...whilst the rest has increased, the Nepalese community, coming to us, has decreased almost.

Teacher B But even the Nepalese children that we had prior to the two years, their English was at a good level. We're finding that the Nepalese children coming in now don't have that proficiency in English as they used to before that.

NF That's interesting. Do you know what the reason for that might be? It's just to do with the parent’s proficiency.

Teacher B Only reason to one of the children, but I wouldn't know the overall reason. So, one of our children was because they were finding that parents wanted them to learn English as well as Nepalese, but they were teaching both of them, at the same time, and then they couldn't pick up both at the same time, then they're struggling with both languages, but that was just for one child. But I'd assume that's probably runs across (inaudible 04:40).

NF Interesting, isn't it? How it's hugely variable. And we talk about children with EAL as if they're one thing, and of course they're many, many, many things. Aren't they? Completely heterogeneous. So, 40 or 41 children as a percentage of your school role is around...I don't know. I've got it down somewhere myself. So, I'm naughty to ask you. I'm definitely good on a spreadsheet then, which is now hiding behind three other documents on my screen.

HT B No, that's fine. And I've normally got it to hand, and I haven't. 22%.

NF 22%. So, you are looking towards a quarter.

So, looking at this next question about school development or school improvement planning, whatever you call it, do you specifically target with specific kind of objectives to your children with EAL or are their needs met within more broad kind of school development planning?

HT B At the moment, they're met within more broad school development planning. And that's partly to do with the situation that we've been in with Ofsted. So, we were an RI school. We are now a good school again after we (inaudible 05:48).

NF That's fantastic.

HT B But at that point we had to do lots of development around the phonics. So, phonics was a big push for us, but within that, we were looking at some of the documents that EMTAS had published. We had one that we sort of pulled apart and used around children with EAL picking up the phonics. So, whilst they say it's been broader, it has been specific to that phonics learning within the school development plan there, but everything else has been outside of that. What I have done this year though, because of the increase, I've spoken to governors at quite some length in my one-to-ones with the chair of governors and in full governing body meetings. And we are looking to report on that more within governing body meetings, so they know how many children and the languages that are here, and some of the challenges that we're facing as well. So, we have sort of had those serious conversations as to whether or not part of that school development plan is around (inaudible 06:48) the journey that we're on.

NF But you've had a kind of bigger agenda. I can see that then in terms of that move to good from our (inaudible 06:57). Well done. That's just great. I know how hard that is. I've worked with lots of schools who've been on that journey and it's a tough one, isn't it? It's brilliant to be out.

HT B And it encompasses so much, but equally we are now in a position where we feel we can really get down to the...not that we haven't been doing it, but really now focus on that nitty-gritty...

NF On those details.

HT B That's (inaudible 07:17) earliest moderation. That's when we really (inaudible 07:20) stuff. It's always been there, but I think at different years we've focused on it a lot more. And as I said, I think it's new to all of us because of that increase, it's been gradual and the change in the level of proficiency for the children within EAL. It hasn't really been on the agenda because it's more manageable previously. Whereas now it's bringing more challenges.

NF On new arrivals. Great. So, in terms of how you support children in the school currently, are there particular ways in which they're supported or are they just supported through kind of quality first teaching?

Teacher B Well, it's really that quality first teaching. So doing all that pre-learning, visual time. So, all of these things we would have anyway in place, but we're having a few EAL children who cannot access the learning. It's just making sure that they're kind of at the front of the class or you talk to them pre-hand and you are doing that one-to-one kind of session with them, going through the questioning with them, seeing if they've understood, which we would do anyway with our teaching. But just with EAL children would just particularly kind of look at them. We would adapt the teaching and kind of the resources so that it's accessible for them, making sure that they've got the wide directives as well. But things that they would probably find a little bit easier, changing the vocab around when we're explaining things, using vocab that they know. So, some of them with limited vocab, we'll just make sure that when we're explaining we're using their vocab. Those who are proficient in English, they're able to access your general curriculum.

We use emotion cards for the children who can't talk about their feelings. So, we if don't understand what they're trying to say to us. We are using the iPad.

HT B So, we just had Google translate and loaded onto all of the iPads across the school. And children also... So, for the little girl who came, Portuguese, was able to have conversations with her friends then through the iPads as well. So, we're training children how to use that. Hasn't come about as challenges 'cause it's not always accurate.

NF No.

HT B So at one point she was telling me something quite… with some safeguarding situations, but all the translation kept coming through was like I had two left feet. And… “No, you don’t”, that's not what you're trying to tell me. But equally it's given her that ability to have that basic conversation with us and with her friends as well. And through that we are really seeing the development for her, but it's not something we rely on for many of them. It's just if we really kind of cannot work out what they're trying to say to us, it's that we've got that option there on all of the iPads as well.

NF So that's using it as a spoken application rather than reading, writing. That sounds super useful.

HT B It has been really helpful, and staff have said how it's almost taken that frustration away. You can tell that this child needs to tell us something. You can tell it's really important to this child, but we just cannot work out what they're trying to say. So just to be able to pick that up and just say to them, can you tell me in your home language? Or can you tell me Urdu? Or whatever it might be. And then they sort of look at you and go, you are letting me speak? Yes, absolutely. And then they speak into it, and it's been really good.

NF That's brilliant.

HT B The other thing we've also done is we have a speech and language teacher of LSA here. And she runs some Language Links groups. And we've sort of done a Language Links group for those children with EAL and those who are English speaking because we found there was a marked difference in the results that we've had come out of that. And that's really helped some of those children to really develop that vocabulary in the language needed.

NF So Language Links is a specific intervention, is it? I don't know of that one.

HT B Yeah. And within that they'll have Identiplay, which we find with some of the younger EAL children that they're able to pick up a little bit of the vocab, being able to talk about learning from that play.

NF That sounds great. Lots going on then. Now the next question says, what are your current successes and challenges? In some ways, I think we've kind of covered that in a lot of what you've just been talking about. Is there anything else you wanted to add about either things that you've done that you know are working well or things that you are finding more difficult?

HT B We are very quick to identify those children, who we think, is it SEND, is it EAL? And we will make those referrals to EMTAS. But we'll probably come onto the challenge. I think we probably could refer more to EMTAS, but we never know. We don't want to overload you either and we'll try and do things in school as well. So, it's finding that balance for us. I think is something that we need to get better at. But equally we will then make sure that those children are monitored, the recommendations for EMTAS put in place, and we will always try and support the parents as much as we can as well. So, it is not unheard of that we're outside with an iPad to the parents as well, trying to explain something to them. So, I think we've really tried to build that inclusive….

NF That's great.

Teacher B And then just extra phone calls, we do. When we send out letters, then we will print hard copies and we will show them the letter. We'll ask them if they've understood, explain that to them, because I think that's probably the number one thing that parents find (inaudible 12:36) is getting those, less, understanding those letters and also being able to support their children. So, we do find (inaudible 12:43) we don't know how to teach them this but giving them those little recessions to take home and to do them.

NF That sounds great. I think access for parents, certainly with other schools I've worked with there, is really difficult, 'cause we also can't assume that the parents are literate in their home language. So, we might go to the trouble of translating, but actually it's not helpful for them. So, the fact that you're kind of establishing those spoken relationships with them sounds super helpful. That's great. Wonderful.

HT B With the family with BSL as well, we will pay for a translator to come in. So, we have an induction evening at the beginning of Year R, and we also have a curriculum evening where everybody's in the hall and we are speaking at the front. So, we reserve the seats at the front for the mum and dad. Translators sat next to us.

NF So if she can speak...

HT B Probably notice both of us speak quite fast. We're told to slow down by the translator.

NF Interpreter.

HT B But we will always adapt to that. And then we have had conversations with the family where...would you require a translator at parent evening? For example, which they've declined because they feel that we built that relationship up enough for them to be able to say to us, can you repeat that? 'Cause mum, I think her hearing's better than dad. So, she then signs to dad. And equally when it's things like the Christmas performances, they both want to come and grandparents as well. We print the scripts for them.

NF Oh, brilliant.

HT B So they can be following the script, and we reserve the seats at the front so they can then lip read as well. So, we want to make the adaptations. We're more than happy to make those adaptations and we really want to, because we like to think that we're an inclusive school, and that reaches out to the parents as well.

NF Wonderful. It's really interesting talking with you 'cause you are the first school I've come across where BSL has been identified as one of the EAL, as it were. And it's great that it's got that platform now, isn't it? That it's actually identified as an additional language, as it were, or a first language for your child, as it were. So great.

HT B Absolutely. I actually teach all the children in assembly, some simple signs as well. So, they're able to then communicate. (Child’s name) that we've got, she is...probably shouldn't use names, but she is able to speak. So, she just uses it to communicate at home with parents who use BSL, but it was so lovely. I took them happy Christmas at Christmas time and I saw one of the children go out and sign to her parents happy Christmas in sign.

NF Lovely.

HT B And mum double took, and it was just so lovely 'cause she was just so taken aback by the fact that this little girl had gone out and actually signed happy Christmas to her. So that's another thing.

NF That's lovely. Great. So, we've touched on EMTAS a bit and they wanted me to ask you these questions that we've got about, where you've accessed their support, what have you used and is there anything that you use of theirs that's kind of become school practice rather than EMTAS dependent, as it were? That's about three questions in one there. So just talk to me about how you've used EMTAS.

HT B So we've accessed the training. So, it wasn't a service that we did really access historically too much. So recently we've had EMTAS T4 come in to do...

Teacher B EMTAS T4?

HT B Yeah, EMTAS T4 come in to do the EAL training with staff, just to try and sort of promote what they can, the service that they can provide. We will use the levels of proficiency to identify the scales from that. So that's (inaudible 16:15).

NF Is that Bell Foundation you're using?

HT B We use the one that...

NF The ABCD. Sort of new arrivals through to fluency.

HT B Absolutely. And we've got a spreadsheet of that and then we kind of record on there. So that's kind of become our practice to just keep a record of that. On our MIS system, we can actually put that on to sit on as well. So that's a sort of next step for us. But being able to understand that and use that has really helped teachers to really unpick where those children are at. And that came out of the training from EMTAS T4 as well, which is really good.

NF That's great. Bell Foundation's great, isn't it? Because it focuses on what the children can do rather than when we're looking at a national curriculum age expected, that's kind of looking at what they can't do, isn't it?

HT B Can’t do… Yeah.

NF It's a much better starting point. That's great. And so, staff have used those. And does that require kind of additional training or have you just kind of got used to using them over time? 'Cause they're...

HT B No, we've just got used to using them. Teacher B, you went round and…?

Teacher B Yeah, I've gone round. I've kind of talked to everyone about it and everyone kind of used it. If there's any changes, they'll come and find me. They'll tell me, can you make those changes? They'll ask me if I can put forward request for referral.

NF Great.

Teacher B So I think we've just got a routine that everyone knows how to (inaudible 17:36).

NF Great.

HT B And then obviously we will refer in and have the translators come into school and work with the children. We have… EMTAS T4came in and it didn't quite meet threshold for a translator to come in, but she came in and did the SEND assessment. So, we've had sort of the different levels of that support as well. And more widely we use their traveller advisory service as well.

NF Do you have traveller families as well?

HT B We've got two traveller families at the moment. And we've had (name) from EMTAS coming in to work with them on a one-to-one basis every half term. He was in this morning actually, just to do some support for those children. And we've just had a conversation about ten minutes, before I came on meeting with you, with the Year 3 teacher from the junior school and that transition support will be in place. One of them is moving up to Year 3. So, he'll do that as well. So, I think we've really increased how much we use them to ask, but equally, I'm sure there's more that we are not tapping into.

NF It sounds like a lot. I think schools go with what they need at the time, don't they? That's the kind of beauty of their offer. I don't know how much schools are aware that there isn't an EMTAS in every county or not. I don’t know if you knew that. So, we are very lucky to have them.

HT B Absolutely.

NF They're great. It's interesting that you've got traveller children with the project, with this project, but it is focused mostly around EAL, but we are including schools that have traveller children as well. So, I was talking to School L this morning, in fact, who have 10% traveller. So, it's interesting that you have both.

HT B Absolutely. I'd say it's two children and they're the same family. They're cousins. Actually, saying that, we have got another one coming into reception in September who we don't believe is related to the family that we have. Although it's the same surname, (name), but it's not...

NF That's a different (name). Absolutely.

HT B But so I think our numbers will probably stay low in that regard. Absolutely.

NF But again, a group with very specific, as it were, particular needs culturally as well as kind of language related, isn't it? So interesting. Really interesting. So moving towards talking about the project. So the work that I've been doing over the last five, six years has been largely getting to know an approach that colleagues in the US of mine have developed, which is not an intervention, not a bolt-on. It's just a way of working in a more oracy-rich way really with children. And we've found that this makes a positive difference to children with...well, to all children, but to children with the EAL in particular. And so one of the things we're interested to know is what schools in Hampshire already are doing in terms of oracy education, because it's had quite a big plug, hasn't it? With Voice 21 and the All-Party Parliamentary Group report and so on.

HT B Not a lot at the moment, in all fairness. I was actually on some training a couple of weeks ago where we were talking about sort of how we can develop the oracy across the school. We have just started a new project called OPAL Play, which is talking about sort of that language understanding outside of break times as well, that development play, which I think there's (inaudible 21:11) link there, but actually not too much in all honesty.

NF Did you say OPAL Play? Was that...?

HT B OPAL, outside play and learning. OPAL.

NF That sounds nice.

HT B Which is something I think will help with that. Not formally, but it's on our radar (inaudible 21:30).

NF So the way in which we're seeing it developing is basically, I've worked on and off with EMTAS for years, even though I've been an academic since, God, 2000 now. I was a school teacher for 17 years and then I came out. And I've been a teacher educator for longer than I've been a teacher now. And I've just worked on and off with them and we just kind of have a shared understanding, or a shared relationship, in which what we're doing now is thinking, let's try and marry up. What I've found from my research with what they already do with their STEAM materials. In what we think will be basically a suite of materials for schools to use. It won't be like, this is what you have to do, and EMTAS must do this, this, and this staff meeting, whatever, 'cause we absolutely know that's a non-starter, 'cause schools can't release lots and lots of professional development meeting times as it were.

But we're hoping it'll be kind of an online tool. And we are looking to get schools to kind of work with us just trialling parts of it really between November 24 and February 25. And it might have a range of things in it. I'm information gathering at the moment, and then the thinking will go on through this summer holiday and into early autumn term, as it were. But we're thinking it will be kind of a set of, why you would have a more talk-rich approach in your classrooms, as it were, or kind of, why would you do this? How to get started, as it were. And then maybe a series of different ways of working with children at different proficiency might be one way of looking at it. We're not sure, but kind of suggestions for ways of shifting of practice so that it becomes a little bit more talk-oriented than it might currently be.

So that's kind of a general description of what we think it will look like. And we are interested to know what schools think they would want to see. Imagine a package that isn't being kind of delivered with a lot of EMTAS support. It would be introduced and then schools run with what they want to use from it, as it were. Have you got a sense of what sorts of things you might find helpful? It doesn't matter if you haven't.

HT B No, no, no. I was just thinking in terms of you saying about the professional development, our staff actually quite like where they can go and watch videos.

NF Yes.

HT B So if there were sort of the opportunity for videos to be included, because our staff are very conscientious. They like to go back and re-watch. The product scheme we bought in is all videos. We've gone down the route with some of our Maths, learning through videos, the music. There's a lot. And they tend to respond really well to that. So that's one aspect from us, I think that would work well for our staff. Equally I understand that doesn't work for everybody.

NF We certainly have some video material already between us. It's difficult 'cause teachers don't like being filmed. So we don't have loads, I'll be honest with you. But there's certainly some that would certainly be part of the offer.

HT B Fabulous.

NF And then some schools have said to me they'd love to see actual lesson plans with kind of tweaks on them. And other schools say no, they don't want to see lesson plans because they probably wouldn't fit in with their existing schemes of work, programmes of study.

HT B I wouldn't say lesson plans would be beneficial for us in the way (inaudible 25:05).

NF No.

HT B But maybe ways of sort of almost top tips of how to best support the particular subject or curriculum.

NF Or how to think a little bit differently about how something you might have gone straight to a written outcome for that you spend longer talking, and how do you plan for that talk and what's the teacher doing and what are the children doing? That kind of sort of thing. So schools where I've worked, I've worked with a group of schools in Southampton over time and then I've also observed a lot of this stuff going on in schools in the US. And schools have kind of chosen to do different things. So some schools I've worked with say, we're just going to try doing this approach of being more kind of...it's small group, it's talk-rich, it's teacher says, less children say more at its most basic. And they've said things like, we're going to try, let's say, with guided reading. If they're doing small group guided reading. I realise a lot of people do whole class guided reading. But say with small group guided reading and maybe only twice a week.

One school, like yourself was in RI and is now outstanding. But one of the key changes they made was in the group sizes they work with. So they work with four children instead of having their desks in six. It sounds like a really small change, but it made a phenomenal difference to conversations. So anyone who's doing this, it's not an expectation that people are kind of picking up a way of doing things and having to layer it into what you already do. Especially a school like yourself where you've put so much work into coming, raising that Ofsted grade. And I know that you would've thought you have all sorts of systems of your own in place. It's more about deciding to go with something in particular that you decide to do, as it were, and having a go with that.

HT B We think since the work that we're doing anyway around the School B approach and the School B way.

NF Great.

HT B Which was something that we wanted to sort of build upon from the last I've said, but also sort of how… we've got lots of approaches which are across the board anyway. But it's that more generic top layer now that we are developing. And actually that sounds like it would fit into that...

NF Might fit.

HT B - really nicely.

NF So how we're leaving it with schools at the moment is that we basically have a much clearer idea of what the commitment is. Something like attendance at an initial online meeting to introduce all the materials and then using the materials, and us kind of checking in online. And maybe in-school visits would be nice if people wanted to welcome us. 'Cause it's one thing to meet you here like this, isn't it? And it's quite another thing to come in and see you and see whatever you're doing. So it'd be something like that, but it would be...the key driver for it is that it's school manageable, as it were. So I think we'll be getting in touch with schools early in the autumn term and just saying, who would you like to sign up, basically? You can think about it. And obviously once you've got more information it'd be easier to make those decisions anyway, wouldn't it?

HT B Sounds good.

NF I've verbaled on a lot there. Did you want to ask me any other questions about anything?

HT B No, I don't think so. I don't have any questions. No. I think it sounds really positive.

Teacher B Sounds good.

HT B And we'll have a chat. But definitely something that I think I'll look into.

NF Great. Lovely. That's great. And as it happens, I'm talking to your partner junior school tomorrow as well. So both schools seem to be interested in. That might be nice as well.

HT B Please mention that we were here and then we'll start these conversations between us as well.

NF That would be good, wouldn't it?

HT B Absolutely.

NF Thank you so much for your time. I really appreciate it. And I'll be back in touch. Take care.

HT B Lovely to meet you.

NF And you, both of you. Bye-bye.

HT B Bye.

Teacher B Bye-bye.