**INFTERVIEW**

**Attendees**

Interviewer NF

Headteacher J HT J

Teacher J

NF Have some backups. There we go. Okay so just for the transcriber do you mind saying your name and what your role is at School J.

HT J Okay, I’m Headteacher J and I’m headteacher.

Teacher J I’m Teacher J, and I’m deputy head.

NF Lovely that’s brilliant, okay, and I’m NF, I’m from the University of Reading and also EMTAS. Alright. So, you were talking just now then HT J about numbers of children and numbers of languages. As a kind of rough percentage of the school do you know how many you’ve got who are EAL learners?

HT J I’ve got it on the data, not the top of my head. I can just get that up. Oh, we’ve lost you, hold on I won't be long.

NF No worries, I can still see you so it’s probably just my image has fallen off your screen.

HT J Okay. So, we are on 44 pupils which is 21% of our school.

NF Right, considerable then yeah. And you said, I think you just said it was 18 languages.

HT J 14.

NF 14 languages and is there kind of one that’s predominant or is it lots of different ones in small numbers?

HT J Portuguese and that’s, and Polish.

NF Right lovely. Okay. So, they’re kind of main ones.

HT J Yes.

NF Yeah, okay great and has that been for a while or has the make-up of the school changed over time?

HT J I suppose it has changed over time, and (town) is predominantly white British. It’s an MoD area but where we are in (town), I don’t know if you’ve seen the depravation map of Hampshire, and you get these big swathes of depravation around Southampton and Gosport. At the top of the map of Hampshire is us. (area name), and just over the roundabout is the (name) estate which you know is always talked about when anybody talks about depravation in (town). But yeah, we’ve certainly had more diverse families moving in, you know, (town) took a very small number of Ukrainian refugees and an even smaller number of Afghanistan refugees, so yeah. You know, (town) has become more diverse over the years. I’ve been here 10 years; I have noticed that difference but it’s not anything huge, so our school is predominantly white but certainly diversity is growing.

NF Right, interesting, thank you that’s really, really useful to get that kind of background for you. What’s been interesting for me is the interviews I’m doing are all over the county. So, schools have quite different kind of yeah demographics around languages and so on, so yeah, really interesting to know, thank you. So, in terms of how you tackle things around children with EAL and multilingualism; is it something that sits as a kind of separate objective within your school improvement planning or is it that you tackle it more through quality first teaching? What is kind of the ways in which you support the children?

HT J It’s definitely part of quality first teaching, it’s not something separate. But I’ll pass you over to Teacher J in a minute, she’s done more work on this than me. But we are still, teachers find it very tricky to know where to start and to know how to assess for an accurate starting point. And so, we do use EMTAS, but in September when perhaps children arrive that we haven’t expected, everyone needs EMTAS. And sometimes it can be weeks before we get an appointment and then in that time, we’re doing the best we can, and that’s not always good enough. So, we do recognise that, but we’ve used EMTAS haven’t we and their toolkit.

Teacher J Yes, we’re working a lot with EMTAS, and we’ve now got our silver award with them.

NF Oh wow, that’s wonderful.

Teacher J So we’ve done a lot of work with them, and we’ve got several children in the school that they’re working with currently. We find that we get more help from them when there is also a SENs issue alongside. So that’s obviously really useful for us, because tackling both areas of need can be really, really tricky. And we use the Bell framework or started using the Bell Assessment framework. We just find that we need more practice on that, it’s quite a big document to sort of keep up with all the other workload (Incomprehensible 5:58). But that gives them a good sort of idea where they can go. So that’s starting to help teachers. They come and see me quite a lot talking about what else we can do. I’ve done a lot of the EMTAS training on their website. So, I can signpost teachers to those, and sort of print out that training for them as well. So, they’ve got it to hand and can use it as a sort of tick list of training that I’ve tried this. We’ve had coffee mornings with EMTAS, so they came and did one for our Polish and Portuguese families. Unfortunately, it wasn’t quite a big turnout. So, I think we might have, that might have been our fault in picking those cultures, because actually those families can speak English, we find, better than some of our others and maybe we should have focussed on more of our minority groups. But a learning curve.

NF Absolutely, you don’t know till you try do you, yeah.

Teacher J We have used EMTAS an awful lot with our SEN children in getting referrals done for those children, through translators and stuff like that, for them. Where there’s been incidents in school, we can phone EMTAS, and they’ve been brilliant, they all responded very quickly. So, we phone EMTAS in advance for our family evenings so they can come in and help support our teachers in that. There’s lots of stuff.

HT J Without them we’d be absolutely stuck. They’re the only service really, we can, available to us. And it’s got so much better recently in terms of response, in terms of languages they have available, within the service to support schools. But still as a head I do run an inclusive school, but we are not where we need to be in terms of teacher confidence and knowledge around, “This is how I start with this age child who can't yet speak English.”

NF Yeah. So just kind of moving away from EMTAS then. What do you do that’s kind of school based? So, Teacher J, you’ve said you meet with staff, and you talk them through what’s available on the Moodle. Do you focus on it in staff meetings or is it something that’s kind of more ongoing you know, or more part of your monitoring policy?

Teacher J A bit of both so we do it as and when teachers need it, or when children come in. But we also do it in our staff meetings. Obviously, there’s so much else that we’ve got to work on, so it’s sort of a drip feed every now and then. But we’re doing one in the new year about how to use EMTAS, and their resources because there’s so much on there it’s just finding it. So, yeah.

NF They know that.

Teacher J Yeah. So yeah, and then we have our diversity board around the school. So, we have a whole school display where we have a map where we identify where all the children have come from, or where their families have come from. And then we have a classroom diversity board where they look a bit more in depth where the children within their classes come from.

HT J And that’s, sorry to interrupt, that’s a non negotiable for every single class, because it’s really crucial to us that every single pupil sees themselves reflected. Not just in school but in their class and have that feeling of you know of belonging. And we have a most brilliant librarian. And you know, if a child arrives from a different country, he will immediately phone up the library service, get story books, fiction, non-fiction, any resource that he can to have available to the child you know, and the family. And, I just have to look over here because, different glasses. We’ve got this is what we go by. Diversity is a fact, inclusion is a behaviour, belonging is a feeling. So, we use that, and you know. Diversity is having a seat at the table, inclusion is having a voice, belonging is having that voice heard. And we use that to try and guide our practice and approaches and pedagogy around EAL children. But we, it just never feels good enough. And we would welcome any resource, support, CPD for teachers. We need that next level of professional development to really give these children… You know, children learn English from other children, we know that don’t we? That’s the resource really. But when you’re talking about English and writing and comprehension and spelling and you know, that’s the bit, the missing bit, I think.

Teacher J So we try to… drip feed assemblies for our different religions as well, so we will do things like Diwali and all that. So, they’re drip fed through our school culture as well, so they feel like they’re being acknowledged within our school as well.

HT J We’ve just started on our school of sanctuary journey.

NF Oh lovely.

HT J Yeah. So, we’ve, you know, we carefully plan our assemblies, and we don’t have a diversity day and that’s it. We celebrate refugee week, but that diversity is part of our inclusion. So, it’s all the time, it’s woven through everything we do. And you know with our planning the text that you choose, you know, so we often use resources from RADE, do you know RADE?

NF Yes, that’s (name) yes.

HT J And we can send off planning to them and they will send it back peppered with all sorts of resources. That’s the kind of thing that’s so useful, you know. To be able to do that is really, that’s what helps teachers the most.

NF So what sort of things? So, does that mean you’ve got, you’ll send your planning in and then it’ll be a kind of a, pointers for where you might go for resources that would support delivering that planning in a way that’s supported inclusion, diversity and belonging as it were?

HT J Exactly that yeah. Exactly that.

NF Lovely.

HT J Including you know, dual language books.

NF Yeah, great.

HT J We’ve gone off on a complete tangent sorry.

NF Everything is interesting, not at all.

HT J What was the question?

NF We were just talking generally about what you do and how you know, so that’s what you were doing and then.

HT J Yeah. So, we also send out messages to families, any message that goes out goes out in every language that we have. Even if that’s Google Translate sometimes, which we know, won't be exactly accurate.

NF It’s better.

HT J But if it’s something specific, we’ll ask an EMTAS colleague to either write that for us or speak directly to the families. So, what else, oh we do so much don’t we? What else do we do?

Teacher J All our display boards in the classroom have the subject translated into the different languages. And in our best practice classrooms all the key words are translated as well. They have mats, like key words mats that are translated into each language. We’ve had our speech and language practitioner work with our EAL children to learn those key words and put them into some context for them. Sent those home with parents, sent dual language books home with parents.

HT J The one thing that we haven’t met is really fostering family links. For instance, we’ve got one Afghan refugee family, we’ve got two in (town name). And they decided in their wisdom to send the children, who are only children, to two different schools, and I know there’s pros and cons around that. But the mums are miles apart, there’s no men attached to the family, and mum doesn’t speak English, and her English isn’t getting any better. And I just, you know, you can imagine the isolation in a white British. So, we’ve got lots of work to do around that, and I think the school of sanctuary journey will help with that.

NF It’s so interesting listening to you, because you’re obviously doing so much, and you’re really invested in these children, and you wouldn’t have the silver extra award if you weren’t and you know. So, it’s interesting that you’re still saying HT J that you’re anxious that you don’t feel you do the best by the children. Is that because, are you saying that because?

HT J They try and articulate that. I’m, I think what I would like teachers to be working from is a much more robust, a series of steps, so that we’re teaching children English, in not the correct way, but maybe in the correct order. I don’t really know how to articulate what I'm saying. I think my teachers are brilliant ,and they cope really, really well and they will provide every resource that they can to enable inclusion. What am I trying to say?

NF That’s fine, we can carry on talking about the project and it might prompt some of what you want to say.

HT J Yeah, okay.

NF You might run away and say you must be joking, so that’s fine too. But let’s try it. I mean the project that I’ve been working on… The work I’ve been doing over the last five or six years now is working with a colleague in the US who’s developed a particular way of teaching, based on some sort of principles of how you teach, strategies really.

HT J That’s what I wanted to say.

NF And it seems to work. Strategies. It seems to work well with multilingual children. The important thing being it’s not an intervention, it’s not an add-on, it’s not something that your learning support assistant has to do with a small group. It’s something that should work at whole class level. That’s not to say that all the teaching is done at whole class level, one of the principles is small group teaching, but so and its very oracy based basically. So, one of the things I’m also interested in knowing is, do you have any particular initiatives going in school that are around oracy because it’s got quite a raised profile at the moment?

HT J We do Nellie in year R.

NF What’s Nellie?

HT J What does Nellie stand for? Oh god.

NF Well don’t worry, just give me the letters and I can look it up.

HT J Anyway it’s a language initiative for 5-year-olds. And that’s very oracy based, it’s just language development through pictures and stories, and then there’s something for key stage 1 called Talk Boost. Which you know, we take principles from rather than follow the programme, you know exactly. But you know, one of our contexts, is that children arrive with very poor language development, and we have a higher-than-average number of children that need that extra from the very, very beginning.

NF And you’re talking about local British children as it were?

HT J Yeah.

NF Yeah. So, there’s that alongside the EAL need, there’s a big spoken language challenge then for you.

HT J And two years ago, oracy was a priority you know. Developing our oracy skills and approaches and pedagogy and children can't do anything, they can't write it ,until they can talk it. So yeah, that’s an approach we use and at the moment developing more and more drama in the curriculum to bring into life. And that’s a really lovely way in often for EAL children. We have boxes of costumes that a brilliant seamstress who works here has made for each topic, the project that we do, so that’s, you know, we’re learning what works, what’s really successful.

NF Okay. Yeah, as a colleague who observed, you are doing loads. So that if I explain what the project is, what we think the project is. It’s basically me uniting what I’ve learned about this kind of oracy-based approach to teaching with EMTAS’s kind of existing way of doing things. And we’re hoping to create a set of resources, we’re going to call it a tool kit let’s say, an oracy tool kit that will sit on the Moodle. And it will have in it, kind of an introduction to what the principles are of this thing. It will have, in it, ways in which senior leaders might want to use it, teachers might want to use it, learning support assistants might want to use it. And then it will have a kind of sequence of folders that’s kind of oracy with new to English, or oracy with you know developing, and oracy with your more advance bilingual so things like that, and it will have a GRT element as well.

And what we’re doing at the moment is developing those materials and we’re looking for schools to trial them. So, it’s not a request that you suddenly given over lots of staff meetings to EMTAS. We know that’s a complete nonstarter for you in terms of your other things that you’ve got going on with school improvement. It’s about, there will be something like an introductory session obviously, probably online with all the schools that want to take part. Where we talk you through what it is and what’s in it and show it to you and so on. And then a period of you trialling it between, it will be November 24 to Feb 25, so it's kind of two half terms either side of Christmas, that’s just to do with where my funding for the project sits, I’m afraid, I realise it’s a weird time for schools to be doing it then, but we hope it will be kind of manageable. And there would be these kind of check ins from us as it were that we’d pre-agree with you, you know, and observations if you wanted, if you would let us in. Because it would be lovely to actually come and talk to people for real instead of being online like this all the time.

HT J What I like, if people come in and do observations, can that please come with coaching?

NF Yeah, well absolutely, so it will certainly come with conversations yes.

HT J Okay, brilliant.

NF Yeah, I mean it’s, in a way we’re trialling the materials, and asking schools to evaluate them, so we’re learning with you as it were. Yes, there’s certainly, there’s room for yes, kind of conversations and exchange as it were possibly yeah. Absolutely. We’re not completely sure how it’s going to work yet, because EMTAS and I are basically in conversation, all the time while I’m carrying on having these conversations with schools, but we will know by kind of September in much more detail what it will look like.

HT J Okay.

NF So what we’re going to do is basically be in contact with all the schools we’ve interviewed then. I’ve interviewed about 15, 16 and see, lay out for you in more detail what commitment to it means. And then take it from there in terms of what people want to do.

HT J Okay.

NF Yeah. Does that make sense for you?

HT J That makes sense and it’s something I’d welcome.

NF Right okay, great. Now we had said originally, we were going to do it with six schools. But we also thought originally we were going to do it as a kind of a hybrid model of some EMTAS and some online, but actually it makes sense to just do, that it’s all, everybody looking at these materials and then we’ll kind of do it a little bit school by school. So, we should be able to take more than six schools hopefully, depending on our own capacity. I mean the more the better really because we need the feedback, about how it works.

HT J Okay, and you know, our EAL children are spread across the school. We know we’ve got some coming into year R in September right up to year 6, so that’s quite a good sample.

NF Huge range yeah, and huge range of proficiencies I presume that as well, and languages and everything.

HT J Yeah, absolutely, you know, quite new staff to very experienced which is also you know, a factor. Yeah, so we’d be very interested, sounds really interesting.

NF Okay great, that’s fabulous. I mean for me in terms of this conversation that’s been super interesting, and I’ve got everything I need to know, is there anything else that you wanted to ask or share with me that you think we haven’t had time to talk about?

Teacher J I don’t think so.

HT J No I don’t think so, no.

NF Lovely, alright. I’ll leave it there then but thanks so much for your time, il really appreciate it and I’ll send the consent forms through to you so you can get this done after.

HT J Alright, and when will we know if we are taking part?

NF So, we will just contact everyone in early September and see who wants to. And then you would know quite quickly because obviously I understand you’ve got your own school agenda to be organising and September is actually quite late for you to be thinking about what you’re doing in November isn’t it? So, we’ll get it done as soon as possible.

HT J Right okay.

NF Not keeping anyone waiting.

HT J No, alright. Well lovely chatting.

NF And you, absolutely lovely. Lovely HT J, and thanks Teacher J as well.

Teacher J No worries.

NF Really good to meet you. Okay, alright then.

HT J Bye, bye.

Teacher J Bye.

NF Bye.