**INTERVIEW**

**Attendees**

Interviewer NF

Headteacher HT K

Teacher K

NF There we go. Sorry, I have multiple recorders because of the fear of it not working. Lovely. Okay. So, Teacher K, I've kind of met you on screen, but just to give you a little bit of background, HT K. I've worked with EMTAS for forever, for years, a long time and live in (town), although my work is at Reading. We basically are bringing together our expertise after an awful long time of knowing each other, is basically what this project is about. But we're wanting to find out first what schools want, and I need to know more about the schools anyway. So that's the purpose of the interview. So just go with the flow. I know some of the questions a bit repeats each other, the first four especially. So, we don't have to follow them religiously. Can you just for the recording, just say your name and what your role is, that helps the transcriber?

HT K So, I'm HT K I'm head of school at (School K federated partner school).

Teacher K I'm Teacher K. I am SENCO and EAL lead at School K.

NF Great. And Teacher K, HT K has explained to me about the federation of the two schools. So, are you just at School Ka now or are you working also across at School Kb?

Teacher K So I'm across both at the moment. Yeah.

NF Yeah. Okay. Great. That sounds like a great sharing of expertise. Alright. So just a bit of background for me in terms of School K pupil role in terms of multilingual pupils or any other pupils for that matter, let me know how it is, in terms of your catchment?

Teacher K Yeah. So, we have got a really diverse catchment. So currently we've got 42% of our children who have identified themselves as EAL or having different home languages. So, that's 92 out of our 217 children, and across those children, we've got 32 different languages spoken.

NF Do you have a kind of predominant one?

Teacher K Yeah. Polish is our main one and that's probably linked to the Catholic denomination of the school. And then our second biggest population is our Nepali community. So, although we are close to (town), we don't have that many military families, but we still do have quite a bit of Nepali community in this area.

HT K We have seven or eight children.

NF Right. Okay. Okay. Just to give you a bit of background for me. My PhD was Polish children in Hampshire schools because I found out by going to mass myself, suddenly the mass appeared in Polish. So, I totally get the Polish Catholic bit just so you know.

Teacher K Although I think we have seen a decline actually in our Polish population over since Brexit, I think.

HT K Yeah.

NF That's interesting.

Teacher K There's been a change, and we've got, so other than probably the four main are definitely Polish, Nepali, we've then got six Tagalog, and then we've got quite a high number of Tigatig speakers, but then other than that they're quite...

HT K Ones and twos.

Teacher K Yeah. A split across lots of different languages.

NF Yeah. Across many, many. Okay. Because you've got so many, the next couple of questions you might just want to talk to me generally about. Is it that you plan separately for your multilingual learners in school improvement planning? Or is it something that, to be honest, is just so integral it doesn't really feel that way? Just talk me through how you manage stuff really.

Teacher K Yeah. I think it's definitely the latter. I think as a school we've had two requires improvement inspections just followed by a good inspection in February this year.

NF Oh, well done. I'm so happy. That's wonderful.

Teacher K And I think just as part of that journey, we have pulled the whole curriculum apart.

HT K Well, completely apart and I think we made particular choices about it trying to reflect our community. So, opportunities in say, geography where they could see themselves in the curriculum, but then also looking at what vocabulary looked like across the curriculum. And sort of very organically we kind of almost looked at task design based on our vulnerable groups and our EAL group, actually a lot of them perform really, really well. I'd sort of say we're in quiet, well, it feels quite a unique situation where we have very few children who come into school who can't speak any English. They're quite bilingual. It's more their parents, isn't it? That kind of we struggle sometimes with their understanding more, but you need a loss...

NF And you're primary, aren't you? So, you're saying even children coming in as young as reception still have some efficiency in English?

HT K Yeah.

Teacher K Yeah. Yeah. I'll just agree that, and I think our English lead has been really proactive in thinking about the range of breadth of text that we cover through our English curriculum, and through guided reading, and what they look like; how they affect the children and a range of different cultures and faiths and that's been something we've been really consciously thinking of. So, although we haven't had a specific EAL thread going through school development, it has been woven through everything because it is such a huge proportion of our community, and we've got that very much in our minds. And I think the work that I did going through the EMTAS Award just helped to kind of bring that before at the same time that we were thinking across the curriculum.

NF Oh, the EMTAS Awards. So where are you with that one?

Teacher K So we've got bronze.

NF Wonderful. Great. Okay. So, you kind of threaded that in with other school development stuff as it were?

HT K Yeah.

Teacher K Yeah. Absolutely. And also, we've been thinking quite a lot around cultural capital as well. And just thinking about different experiences and again just trying to broaden out kind of what we offer for all of our children, in terms of those cultural capital opportunities.

NF Lovely. Lovely. It's really interesting hearing you talk 'cause one of the things I've done in the last five years is work intensively with one school in Southampton. Which like yourselves was in RI and like yourselves more recently has had much happier news. And the ways in which they talked about this kind of root and branch shift around curriculum, particularly in terms of it being a curriculum that reflects children's lived experiences, in terms of… multilingualism being part of a whole wider positive orientations to diversity conversation, really. So, sounds very shared, that experience. So, in terms of how multilingual children are supported in the school at the moment, is there anything specific that happens in terms of say, new arrivals or again, is that done more kind of class level?

Teacher K Yeah. It tends to be. So, we do have a whole school buddy system that's not EAL specific, but we do look at ensuring that all of our children are buddied with that, the younger children are buddied with the older children, and they have opportunities to come together as a class. At end of SATS week, a Year 6 has got with their Year R buddy. So, they do have opportunities like that. So, it's not a specific EAL focus, but they do have wider opportunities. And we do try to encourage children to share their first language. So, we've got a girl who currently in Year R, who is displaying situational mutism and chooses not to speak at school. However, she's developed great relationships with her peers and her teachers, and she is a Polish speaker, and she has got to the point where she's confident to play in Polish with her peers in school, which is phenomenal progress for her. So that's to be really celebrated the fact that she feels comfortable in her home language to do that, when she's not feeling comfortable yet in school to speak in other situations.

NF Wonderful. So, use of first language is often quite challenging for staff, isn't it? Is that something you've needed to work on?

Teacher K Yeah. We have thought about how we can encourage children to use first language, whether that's in writing or speaking, certainly in play out on the playground. And I think over time our staff have become more diverse, and we've been thinking about how we can reflect our wider community that we are in. And just this morning I've just been in an annual review meeting with a Nepali family. Our caretaker is a Nepali speaker, and the class teacher was sharing that this pupil hadn't been feeling very well, but the caretaker was able to go, and speak to him in first language, and she said you could just see the relief in him just suddenly, "I'm not feeling well. You understand me. I'm not having to now translate to get my message across." So, we are really lucky that we can support some of our pupils like that.

NF Yeah. Lovely. So, diversity amongst the staff really helping there. That sounds great.

HT K I think going back to what, sorry, what you were saying previously about kind of transition in, I think almost on a case-by-case basis in terms of what additional support is required. Because we've had members of staffing from EMTAS to support us with translating for parents, looking at what support we need in class for a particular child. And I think it's almost us kind of looking at and trying to split out what is a potential language barrier to something else, for example. I think it's us trying to kind of get in grips with that very quickly. That kind of, I guess has given us a bit of success from that front.

NF Wonderful. Great. So, moving on to the next one. It talks about current successes and challenges. You've listed a lot of successes there. I don't know if you wanted to talk about anything else that you do that you think is great?

Teacher K Like (name) said it. The children do achieve well.

HT K And I think when I think about why, you were saying about curriculum, but we've also put things like Little Wonderland in Key Stage 1 reception where kind of you can see learning those phonemes in English and in quite a structured way of support. But then further up the school when it comes to kind of the writing elements and the grammatical elements of language, our English leads thought quite carefully about how we promote and teach explicitly some of those things, that we know in the past have been quite tricky to understand. Especially further up your school, you go kind of, why am I using a semicolon here? There's that element of like, a lot of our children find that hard. When you might have been used to a different style of writing or different rules of writing...

NF Different script. Yeah.

HT K ...from your parents, it shows elements as well that, as you said, that root and branch approach have sort of helped us really hone in on areas that everyone finds or have found challenging. And by extension that includes some of our EAL learners. We haven't really kind of just groups EAL, SEM, disadvantage. We've sort of looked at what's best for everybody and made sure that's in place and kind of moved up. So, we've sort of tried to keep people moving with us, as we've made those changes.

NF Yeah. Lovely. Yeah. And I think absolutely that anything we do and it's the same with, we'll talk about our project a little bit later, but that's very much focused on what does the teacher do with the whole class that happens to be of value also to your multilingual children. Because we can't be looking at interventions in bolt-ons, can we? It's got to work for everybody. I think thinking in that kind of holistic way, it sounds like it really has worked well for you.

HT K Yeah. And there's some I think things that, Teacher K has been very passionate about that have worked, for example, just visual timetables in classes. That, again, knowing where we are and what that is, having multilingual signs around the school so that it gives that, again, probably subconsciously as well that I'm welcome here. We were just talking in a staff meeting this week with the Hampshire School Library Service, about being able to support children with their online library. And a lot of their books are in different languages, and we've had them in for assembly this morning. So, it's that sort of promotion pieces for everybody and particularly you can also read in your mother language. That's absolutely fine in your first language, and it really works well, and just try promote that with our parents as well.

Teacher K Yeah. EMTAS is really supportive coming in to do coffee events which have been really useful. And staff training, we've done a lot of work around using The Bell Foundation tools and just people developing their awareness of actually looking at EAL or multilingual learners more as a spectrum. And actually, where we've got children further at the school who are needing to develop more of their academic language. I think it's good for teachers to have that development in terms of their understanding of what support they need, like you said, linking back to that kind of grammar and the punctuation elements of the curriculum.

NF Absolutely. So, the sense in which I'm getting multilingualism is an asset from you, in terms of how you're viewing it, which sounds wonderful. Just before we move on to the EMTAS support, which you've alluded to, they're amazing, aren't they? The more interviews I do and the more I hear what they do I think, “Wow!” But are there any kind of particular challenges you feel you have still with children with EAL at all? Is there anything that's kind of really harder to crack?

Teacher K I think we've thought a lot over the last couple of years about how we get families to identify and acknowledge their multilingualism as an outset as something to be shared. And so, we've really thought over the last couple of years about when our new families join, about what the paperwork looks like, how we encourage families to share the languages that are spoken at home. And I think we found in the past that we've had families who are listed on our database as English as first language, English as home language, and we haven't felt that that's actually an accurate reflection of their home environment. So, I think that's been a challenge and something we've been really proactive in over the last couple of years. I don't know.

HT K I think it's building on that though. I think it's almost a fear, wasn't it? With some of them that they were going to be treated differently...

NF Yeah. That's very common.

HT K ...(inaudible 16:54). I think there's things like the coffee mornings, just knowing that they are welcome and that we are here to support them as best as we can, and knowing as much about them helps that, kind of breaks those barriers down. I think sometimes it's been in classes where, sometimes we've had disproportionately high groups of children with say, it's not just a smattering across the school. We have some classes that have got say, a large Nepali community, a larger Polish community in it, and sometimes just, does that mean there's a difference in how we approach things? That might take a lot of the time to know it's just being aware of it, and I think that creates appreciation from class teachers as well of what does that mean? And approaching things like parents' evenings, approaching things like reports in terms of, we try to make things clearer for everybody and (inaudible 17:56) in terms of writing so that there's an element of it's not lost in translation in terms of the nuance of the language.

NF Yeah. Yeah. Yeah.

Teacher K And actually we have very few racist incidents recorded. So that's a positive.

HT K And a lot of the time it tends to be specific groups, but it's never really on a Nepali community, Polish community. It's some of our children who've come from places like Ghana, Uganda where there's those incidents. But also, there's some instance where it's the opposite way round with some of our English white children who are sort of racist incident against as well. And actually, that's what I think always comes out and has always come out in Ofsted reports or the Hampshire Local Authority reports, is you go on the playground and you kind of look at everybody plays together. There's not a dividing line kind of gender-wise, or race-wise, or language-wise, maybe because we have got such a diverse cohort and community. It's almost just taken and accepted and almost taken for granted that this is normal, whereas society might not always reflect that.

NF No. No. Our schools are kind of these microcosms of what the world should be in a way, which is so nice. It's the great privilege really of working in schools, isn't it? I've always missed that. Yeah. Absolutely. Okay. Just moving into EMTAS. So, they're interested to know about the way in which their support has been accessed and how it's then got kind of used. So, talk to me about the way in which you use them and whether there have been things that you've gone on to just do yourselves as it were?

Teacher K Yeah. Definitely. I think from off the back of more training around the Bell Foundation, we've gone on to do much more tracking around that so that we have got a particular awareness. Because I think there's that kind of perception that if a child comes in who can speak English he doesn't come in brand, brand new then and they're going to be fine. I think just developing that self-awareness of (inaudible 20:16) conversational the BICS and CALP and that kind of thing, I think that's been really helpful.

HT K And we explicitly report that to governments now as well.

Teacher K Yeah.

NF In terms of children at band C and D and those sorts of things you mean on the Bell?

HT K In terms of kind of an EAL progress as a group data-wise.

NF That's great. Yeah.

HT K So that's I guess come from that really.

Teacher K Yeah. Definitely. And we have had conversations and it's something we've been thinking about, about whether to roll out kind of the EMTAS coffee morning approach, but just do it in-house more regularly. Because the feedback we've had from parents who attend is when can we come again? Whether we'll do this again?

NF Yeah. No. That's great.

Teacher K Yeah. I think maybe just opening up the doors more regularly would be something that we need to think about going forward. And also, I think it just might help to reduce that kind of fear of coming into school, that fear of what am I going to be told? I think that might just help going forward just with that communication and building those relationships.

NF Yeah. It sounds great. Sounds great. Takes time, doesn't it? All of this as well as you know from having had to have that journey from RI into good. Nothing happens overnight, does it?

Teacher K No. And I think with COVID, there was those two years when parents couldn't come into school, and it was very much closed doors, and it's taking time to build that back up again. And I think now that we've kind of come out the other side, it is now targeting maybe more specifically, and thinking about how we can broaden out our offer, and encourage a wider cross section of our community to come into school.

NF Yeah. Wonderful. The other thing they had as a question and it may be relevant was, was there anything that you've kind of had from them which you haven't continued to use? I think they're interested to know, is there anything that they have provided for the school that was less helpful, is what they're saying, I suppose?

Teacher K No. I think no.

HT K I almost feel that it's so catered to, and I think about things that we've had for particular children where it's provision of like bilingual books because a child needed that. Kind of more face-to-face meetings with a child and parent. I think flexibility is something that I would actually really commend for, is that they're very good at adapting for what is in front of them on the whole.

NF Yeah. Wonderful. Wonderful. Very kind of tailored to the school then.

Teacher K Yeah. Yeah. Absolutely. And I think there's a breadth of stuff in the website which we probably don't utilise as much as we should. In terms of what the training offer is on there and things like that. And we had the staff meet a couple of weeks ago, which was led by the Inclusion Centre, (name) from, what's she? (Inaudible 23:37).

HT K Inclusion Centre.

NF But she's from RADE, isn't she? Yeah.

Teacher K Yeah. One of the EMTAS colleagues was speaking about the persona dolls and the Year R teachers now. Like she went straight on, she's ordered one. I think it's just sometimes knowing actually how much they do offerm, because I think (inaudible 23:57) maybe know about persona dolls, but my perception was it was more targeted towards your kind of gypsy traveller families (inaudible 24:05).

NF Oh, right. No, they're everything.

Teacher K Yeah. No. I didn't appreciate that. So that's been a bit of a revelation. And just the fact they're free is just...

NF It's amazing. I don't know how where you are outside Hampshire, there isn't another EMTAS there. There's probably one in Solihull, but nationally, I don't think there's anything of this scale of them. We're very lucky.

HT K I think that's one of, it's dual-edged in the sense that I almost feel sometimes we drown in information from Hampshire. It's like the inclusion team, SCN, EMTAS. We have lots of different teams who do specific functions. And sometimes I know who do I need to go to for… And I don't know if there's anything really to tie them together or not. I'm not asking them to kind of all sit in the same room, but sometimes it's like, you go and have a look in the Moodle, and then you get there and it's like Teacher K was saying, it's so much information (inaudible 25:15).

NF There's so much there. They're aware of that. We were talking about that just last week actually. They are aware. There's just like a mountain of folders. If you go into one, it's like a TARDIS, isn't it? There is so much in there. Yes. Yeah.

HT K I would say it's double-edged because actually when you get to what you want, it's really, really good quality. And they're always willing to kind of provide or look into doing things for you, but the other side of that is, if I'm just looking quickly for something, there's a lot on...

NF Yeah. Yeah. You need to know. That brings me neatly really to the kind of purpose of our project, which is to bring together things that I know from the work I've done in the US and then bringing this kind of oracy-rich curriculum to UK schools, specifically Southampton schools actually. So not unlike your own schools. How we can marry up what EMTAS do with what I do and create something really quite kind of school friendly. I'm beginning to start to use the term bite-sized, which is probably not a good idea, but something that's kind of, “Okay, this might work, try this as it were.” And kind of at that top layer of resources that they have. But just before we get to that bit, it's very focused on what I refer to as taught rich teaching but it's very similar to the oracy education agenda that's kind of high on everybody's radar at the moment. So, I just wondered if you've got any other projects going on in school that are oracy-related?

Teacher K Oh, funny you mention that.

HT K Yeah. We've just started working with Voice 21.

NF The Voice 21. Great.

HT K So over the next three years we'll be rolling out kind of oracy through school starting in the classroom with classroom practice. So, the idea is we've got two oracy champions, our English lead who's in Year 1, and actually one of our ECTs up in Year 6. So, they're going to be our oracy champions across the school. And they've got a couple days of training and then looking to roll that out across the school to all staff, and also then children as well. So that we've got that common language to be able to discuss. And actually, I think our learning support assistants are really enthused by it and can see the power behind that. Not just in the classroom, but on the playground with their books.

NF Yeah. Yeah. Absolutely. Any opportunity for dialogue as it were. So, again, the school I've worked with has also worked intensively as a Voice 21 school. In fact, they're a case study on Voice 21's website. They're called (name). And they certainly found combining Voice 21 approach with this kind of stuff that I've brought across worked well. It's just kind of joining the dots in terms of seeing how the oracy agenda works really well particularly for EAL children really is that's worked well. So that's a great starting point. And so just kind of moving into the final question really, what we're hoping and it's frustrating for schools in these interviews 'cause EMTAS and I are working together sharing knowledge at the minute.

So, we don't have a crystal-clear idea of what this project will look like or what the materials will look like, but what we're hoping will happen is we'll create a set of materials that might be simply, they wouldn't require like lots of staff meetings. There would be materials that schools would choose to access and find what they wanted to work with that would align with their own current priorities as it were, or what seemed practical for them at the time is how we are thinking it might work. So, thinking that it'll be entirely schools. We've got this trial period between November 24 and February 25. We're thinking schools will kind of just use them and then see where it goes. I mean, I don't mean completely without us there. There'd be something like an initial introductory meeting, obviously explaining how the materials work, and what's in them as it were ,and then kind of check-in clinics, or maybe visits from us if schools wanted that. That sort of thing.

The materials would be something along the lines of explaining why an oracy approach works with EAL and then moving into how that might look in terms of your teaching. So, taking, say a lesson plan that's very written outcome-oriented, and thinking about how you might change that, so that it turns into a much more talk-based kind of outcomes. That would be at its most basic as it were. So sorry, having verballed on a little bit there. We're interested to know what schools themselves would want to see, if this was an online thing that you were accessing for yourselves as it were and making work for you. What sorts of things do you think you'd want to be finding in it? If you can even answer that, it doesn't matter if you can't.

HT K I think if it was like a planning tool, something that's easily adapted so there's a model there that is. I'm not saying necessarily formulaic approach, but someone can pick it up and actually see the rationale behind, “I've got an English lesson here. Here's a model as to how you can make this section more talk based.” So it's not just like a bullet point list of ideas that they could (inaudible 31:05).

NF No. No. This is a nice idea. This looked good in this school. No. No. It would be more like, I think something like a set of say three key questions you could ask yourself about your plan, which would help you to move away from that. They must now write about it in their books and be a little bit braver about, okay, we'll now be in triads or fours and talk about this question here, or something like that. Or it might be a mix of both, because some schools are saying, “No, I really want some lesson plans.” So, it'll probably try and be a mix of things.

HT K Thank you. I mean, I think the lesson plans have been lovely. I think it's just knowing that it is easily adaptable to what we've already got. I think to your point Teacher K, you're not going to do everything for every person. You can spend a fundamentally ton of time on something that actually is going to be of no use to me here 'cause it doesn't match my context.

NF It doesn't match. No. No. And your schemes of work. Yeah, absolutely. No. You're right. So, we're hoping it'll be ways of working that schools might choose to work with. So, where I've worked with it successfully in Southampton schools, they've chosen to work with it in a particular way such as only where they do small group guided reading. Only in maths, some schools have chosen. And not every lesson of the week 'cause that's too huge. So, it's about choosing to target one thing and developing that because we know from certainly my colleagues in the States have used it for years, it really does take time. As you know I don't have to tell you that. So that's the sort of thing.

A lot of other schools have asked can there be materials specifically for senior leaders, and then for teachers, and then for LSAs. So, we might try and do something of that as well, but we're still at designing stage.

Teacher K I think something that our support staff could access either training-wise or just thinking, we've got a high number of children who require full-time one-to-one support and therefore don't spend a huge amount of time in the classroom, unfortunately. But for those support staff who are working with them day in day out, I think something that they could relate to, and take on easily would be really beneficial to kind of support those children, particularly with their EAL as well. Rather than it just being something that the class teacher has oversight technically on.

NF Absolutely. Yeah. So that's kind of where I'm up to really. So, what I'm doing at the moment is just… I mean obviously schools know where they've done the interview today, there's no commitment to taking it further forward. But I think what we'll do is just get back in touch with schools early in the autumn term and say, this is what we think the level of commitment would look like and invite people to come on board or not, but at its most basic it's school's trialling materials and feeding back to us. So, it's not a huge shift I hope in any anybody's plans for your professional development meetings or whatever for the year. It's kind of different from that and it might sit quite nicely alongside your Voice 21 work by sound of things.

Teacher K Yeah. I was going to say, I think it would fit really well if it was offered. (Inaudible 34:42).

HT K Yeah. And that's definitely been kind of the rationale behind doing oracy, was using it as a vehicle that can be woven through the curriculum. So that other things can be used alongside or woven into it as well. So, it's not, as you said, just a series of bolt on bits.

NF No. It's not helpful.

HT K No. These are measured and thought through rationality why we're doing things, and they do seem to go kind of together nicely.

NF Yeah. Yeah. I think so. Because it sounds like you are already kind of intentionally, oracy oriented as a school anyway and intentionally thinking about what works for all my children and that's the kind of building blocks of the stuff that I've been using. So, it should work well.

HT K Good.

NF Okay. So, for today, that's all I wanted to say. Did you have anything else that you wanted to ask or say yourselves?

HT K Just I think we'd be interested definitely in moving forward with you because I think it suits our children. I think it was really beneficial for them.

NF Yeah. Lovely. Great. Thank you. That'd be great. So, I'll be, as I said, back in touch just after the summer and we'll take it from there.

Teacher K Okay.

NF Yeah. But any questions in the meantime you know where I am.

HT K Thanks (inaudible 36:03).

Teacher K Thank you.

NF Thanks so much for your time. We'll let you go now.

Teacher K It's great talking. Goodnight.

HT K No problem. You too.

NF It's lovely to meet you both. Thank you. Bye-bye.

HT K Bye.

NF Bye.