**INTERVIEW**

**Attendees**

Interviewer NF

Headteacher J HT J

Teacher J

Teacher J1

NF Although I cannot see all three of you on the screen, is that all right?

Teacher J1 Yes, Teacher J is just talking to somebody at the moment, but she will be back in a minute.

NF Ah, ok, just for the transcriber, if you can just introduce yourselves and say your role.

Teacher J Yes, I am Teacher J, I am the Deputy Head and the EAL Lead. We have also got Headteacher J who is our Headteacher, but she will be back in a second.

Teacher J1 I’m Teacher J1, I am the Year 2 Teacher and English Lead.

NF Lovely, great to see you and I am NF, and I am the interviewer. It is just the transcriber has difficulty finding out who we are, if I do not say these things. When I visited, we had a lovely morning with you. I remember we saw a number of things; one was the lovely identity pictures you had outside your classrooms, we saw your allyship things… We spoke with Teacher J1 about a range of things that you had trialled in terms of the elements of the toolkits that you had chosen to engage with, as it were. And we talked a lot about…what was it you loved? Not the sentence stems…the other one.

Teacher J1 The Substitution tables

NF The substitution table, there we go. Are there any updates, since then, in terms of ways in which you have developed use of the toolkit at all?

Teacher J I think at the moment, it is just sort of embedding. Making the substitution tables a daily, weekly learning journey. Part of our learning journeys. Staff are becoming a lot more confident in using it. And have been trialling using AI alongside them, as well, to help, you know, speed up, because one of our…. issue was around the speed. It is quite a lot of work to build them up. We have been playing around with AI and how that can, just speed up parts of it, and then we can tweak what we need to make them individualised. The teachers seem more confident using them. The children seem more confident in using them. We are still building. We are still early days, and it is not completely embedded.

Teacher J1 No, and with the younger ones, it is taking a little bit more time just to teach them how to use them properly, but they will get there.

Teacher J1 Yes, they will.

NF Sorry to interrupt you, I think it is worth bearing in mind just how quick the pilot was.

Both Yes, definitely.

NF It was just weeks for you, so it is like a toe in the water, so it is great to know that you have got that longer-term aim, and we all recognise that embedding anything takes time.

Teacher J Yes, the teachers are definitely more confident in using it, and they are being used more frequently. So that is really good.

NF Are you using them across the curriculum?

Teacher J Yes.

NF Do you notice any particular benefits for your children with EAL?

Teacher J It is definitely giving them the exposure to language that they would not have used before. Taking away that barrier of, “Okay, I am going to give you these words. We will talk through the words, what they mean, what they look like…” Especially with further down the school, pairing them up with pictures, but it is exposing them to that language, and showing them how to put it into a sentence, “How do we say this? How do we write it down? What does it look like? What context do we use it in?” Talking it through with them. So, it has definitely given them more exposure to language that they would not have naturally used before.

Teacher J1 And then obviously, promoted the independence. Once you have gone through it with them and they have understood it, they can actually achieve on their own using the substitution tables.

Teacher J That sense of achievement, sense of independence. They are doing what their peers are doing.

NF Wonderful. In some ways, it has opened up an equity-based access to the curriculum in a way. That is wonderful. Great to hear. I know you were already doing other things alongside this, and this is part of it, but it is great the way it seems to have slotted in with your own wishes for how you wanted to develop oracy, as it were. Which is what we talked about when we visited your lovely school.

Looking at question 2, from memory, you chose to control access to the toolkits. So, all your staff do not have log-ins. It is just you two [Teacher J & J1] and HDT J, as far as I understand it. And I wondered how you feel that went as a choice, because schools made different choices about this, and it has been really interesting for us.

Teacher J I think it was the right choice. It allowed us to have control over what direction we were going with the toolkit, and how we were going to support our EAL learners. But it was not overwhelming for our teachers, as well, because we were focusing it down onto one or two areas for the. And actually, rather than saying, “Right, everybody is doing substitution tables!” We said, “Right, these classes are doing substitution tables, and these classes are going to work on feedback through oracy, at the end of a lesson.” So, we gave them one focus. It was not overwhelming, they could dip their toe in, have a play around, not feel like, “Okay, I have to do this, this, this and this.”

Teacher J1 If everybody had had logins, and been given access to everything, it might have been a case of “Oh my goodness! I have got to try and fit all of this in.” And then things would not have got done properly.

Teacher J Yes, I think it gave us a nice starting point on how to use the toolkit.

NF Great, that is really interesting, and you in common, with a lot of our schools, that pursued the project right through to the end, nine of you in total, which is wonderful. There is this word ‘overwhelm’ or ‘overwhelming’ has come up, in I think in every interview. That people have felt the control was helpful ,in that respect. If you were presented with it again, do you think you would make the same decision?

Teacher J I think if we were not doing a pilot on it, and we had had all of this input from you guys, I think we would have just given it to teachers and said, “These are a really good bank of ideas, see what you can use.” I think that is probably how we would have used the toolkit. But I think actually, sitting back, and actually talking it through with you guys, I think made us make that decision that, “No, we are going to take control here.” And I think that was more positive for our teachers, and we know where we want to go next with it. We know that “We are going to go and do this bit next on the toolkit and we are going to have a trial of that and see how that goes.” Because we know how it links with what we are going to do with our English learning journeys and…

Teacher J1 (inaudible 00:07:27) project…

Teacher J Yes, through our foundations. So, I think actually looking at it this way might make us think differently when other resources become available as well, because it worked so well, doing it that way.

NF Yes, clearly. It is interesting you said that. Again, that echoes things that other schools have said, and it is kind of a mixed blessing for us. Because we quite want to just say, “This toolkit works and schools can just access it”. But a lot of schools have said, “What was helpful was that meeting in October where you introduced to it and we made clear our thoughts about how you might use it” and people found that helpful. I am not sure where that leaves us but never mind that is for us to tussle with.

Teacher J I think it might be just like anything that comes along with the toolkit, we suggest using one or two. (inaudible 00:08:26) techniques at a time, or something. Just some sort of overview, because I just think schools get given all these wonderful resources, and we want to move forward in our progression, and we think, “Oh great, this is amazing!” When actually, pairing it back, I think was more successful, and I think it is just thinking in that way, before you open it up and go, “Wow, this is amazing! Let’s do it all!”

NF Yes, there is quite a lot in there isn’t there? The question 3, I think we have sort of touched on to be honest. It says are you happy with the way in which the resources and information allows you to make the changes that you plan to make? So, you made those choices, didn’t you? Specific choices and they were specifically there to enhance your ongoing school development plan around oracy. Did it work? Did they work in tandem with your school development plan?

Teacher J Yes. It definitely worked with what we were working on. And I think it will weave in well with our school improvement plan next year, as well. This year was a focus on maths this year, but next year is going to be a lot more on English, so it will weave in very well.

NF Have you gone back in at all? I am interested to know because a lot of our schools have just, partly again because the pilot was so short, our schools have really stuck with their choices, sentence stems or whatever they have chosen to use, and have not necessarily gone back to the toolkit at all.

Teacher J We have gone back in, that we have gone back on where we are going to go with it next? Like I said, we are looking at English next year, so we want to go look at the sentence stem part of it now. We have not gone back as in “Right, what we are doing now?” We have gone back to it as of, “Where are we going next?”

NF Wonderful. So in terms of looking ahead to the next academic year, you are thinking about then as part of what you do?

Teacher J1 Yes.

Teacher J Yes, and it can support us, and it will help write our improvement plans.

NF Wonderful. The other things we are really interested in, is about the principles. And I think, from when we spoke back in, whenever I visited, it must have been March. You were very clear about the principle of school belonging, but I wondered how far you have used the principles with staff, or as part of your thinking about, how you want the toolkit to work? Wnd we are saying that just because we want to understand whether schools get very focused on the detail of the activities? Or whether they think about the overarching principles?

Teacher J I think they are really important, the principles. I think for us as a school they were well embedded anyway. So, it was not something that we particularly focused on because it was what teachers did anyway, and that was their expectation within the school. But that does not mean, I think they are really important, and I think they should be there for schools that are starting their journey, or part way through their journey of supporting their EAL learners. Because they are everything that we do here, and I think that is really, that underlying stability for those EAL learners. So, I think they are really important, I just think we have not particularly focused in on them, because it is just what we expect.

NF Yes, I can see that in terms of the whole allyship, whole school ethos that you have got around that. It does make sense. Great. The next one, I think question 5, is about do you think it is sustainable over time? And in a way, we have maybe already touched on that.

Teacher J Yes.

NF You have already said it is looking into school development.

Teacher J Yes, definitely something that we will be embedding for the long-term. And we have got a very clear curriculum across the whole school. So, teachers with the substitution tables are creating these to fit our curriculum. So, there is this bank of substitution tables that are being developed. That will be there for whoever goes into that classroom to teach that part of the curriculum. So, it is definitely something that will be sustained.

NF Great. The other thing was, part of our purpose of creating the toolkit, was not just to influence practice, but was to try and influence mindset. By the way in which people think about and respond to the needs of the EAL learners. Again, where you have already got a lot of that work going on, I wonder if there was anything specific that you have noticed has changed people’s attitudes to planning for their children with EAL?

Teacher J1 It has just given everybody a bank of ideas to start with. “Try this, see how it works” and then you can have a little look.

Teacher J I think that is definitely where our teachers struggled. That if they did get a child that had very limited English, they were very good at supporting a child that had good English, but was not Age Related Expectations, at that sort of level. But when a child arrived with almost nothing, I think that is where…

Teacher J1 It throws people.

Teacher J Yes, teachers and LSA were like “Okay, what do I do?” And the toolkit have given them this bank, or given us this back, that we can actually go, “Okay try this, try that.” It is good starting point of physical resources or oracy resources, you can use with these children, to help them along their journey.

NF Again, in common with all the other schools. It is always the bit that remains the real challenge for all of us, is what you do with your new arrivals? I think it is really hard, so what you are saying in a way is knowing there is something there to go and have a look at. Maybe help staff respond more…

Teacher J More Positively…

NF Yeah, positively and confidently. It is about confidence really isn’t it, as well.

Teacher J Yes, definitely, yes.

NF Great. Question 7, is there anything you wish had been included in the toolkit that you were unable to find?

Teacher J I think just more examples, really. We took the substitution tables and then we went to the Bell Foundation. We ended up… Ok, getting the idea from you, and then how does that work and found the Bell Foundation and there was tons of examples on there. So, I think examples where how this works in practice, or case studies or something where you can see how this works within a classroom because we definitely found that really useful, just seeing it.

NF Absolutely, it is what teachers all say. We want to see you doing it. One of the things we are doing is a report for Hampshire which will do exactly that. It will pull out case studies, and then we will be able to use those in the toolkit, we hope during the autumn term to roll it out more widely to the county. And that is exactly the sort of thing we would be wanting to put in. I am desperately trying at the moment to get a quote from a film and photo company, to allow me to come into schools, though I have to do it by mid-June, to try and take more pictures or get videos of practice as well. So, I will be back in touch once I have got a named person to do that with. But absolutely, visuals I think are really important. Other people have said they want to see photos from Hampshire schools, for example so you know it has been done in your context, even though, to be honest the Hampshire contexts are very, very different from each other aren’t they because we are a big county.

Teacher J Yes, they are.

NF The last one, we already touched on, because you talked about your school improvement plans, school development plan, and so on in terms of how you think you might use it in future, is there anything else you want to say there? Or do you think we have covered that one?

Teacher J It is just our school improvement plan for next year, looking at those sentence stems, so using that toolkit to support how we approach that with teachers and embedding what we are already doing with substitution tables.

NF Great

HDT J Our journey towards the school of sanctuary.

NF Hi HDT J, I did not know you had come in, hi!

Teacher J Oh you didn’t see her.

HDT J Hiding here, around the corner. Our journey towards school of sanctuary should help change hearts and minds, and deeper understanding around just a wider needs and context of children.

NF Are you working towards school of sanctuary or you already, have it?

Teacher J Working towards it.

HDT J Yeah

NF Remind me where you are on the EMTAS awards as well.

Teacher J We have got our silver award at the moment, and we have got gold coming up. We are putting it in June. I think it is June; the assessment is coming up.

NF I think in some ways, sorry, I know this was not in the questions, but you are an interesting school, so if you do not mind me asking a bit further. I think it was interesting that for some schools, the toolkit seemed to align in someways with the EXA, the EMTAS Excellence Award. In a way, do you feel it has just kind of sat with other things you were doing?

Teacher J The toolkit? Definitely. It has aligned with everything we do. The principles aligned with everything that we do. It dovetailed with everything that we do as a school.

NF And you were already intending going for school of sanctuary?

Teacher J Yes.

NF So it was already something. It has been such a pleasure working with you, I do not know if you wanted to add anything else that I hadn’t asked or talked about? Or are you ok?

Teacher J HDT J, is there anything you wanted to add?

HDT J No, I do not think so.

NF And you spoke very fully with me when I visited anyway. The next steps for us are, as I said, I have got to in quite a hurry, get together a report for the county and then we will be revising the toolkit. And then hopefully, as I said, rolling out to Hampshire in the autumn term and then the longer-term plan is to try and make it something wider, beyond Hampshire. We just need the funding to get it up as a website. It would be lovely to stay in touch, and track back over time, and see how you are using it.

Teacher J Of course. That would be lovely.

NF You have just used it in such great ways, and I am really grateful, so thank you so much to all of you, and thanks very much for your time as well.

Teacher J Thank you ever so much, it has been great, thank you.

NF Have a great day.

All Thank you.