**INTERVIEW**

**Attendees**

Interviewer NF

Teacher H

NF I have many backups. There we go. Great. So, we'll just stop and backtrack if Headteacher comes in. It is Headteacher. I've been misnaming him then. I've been calling him (name).

Teacher H No, don't worry.

NF No, because people get my name wrong all the time. So, I hate getting other people's names wrong. So, I'll apologise for that when I meet him in a minute. So, in terms of numbers of EAL learners, am I right in thinking you're quite small at the moment? It's quite recent?

Teacher H Well, we actually had a look, and those that have said that their home language is other than English or as well as English, we've actually got 53 children.

NF Oh.

Teacher H Out and about, I think with 367 in total at the moment.

NF Oh, okay. So quite a lot.

Teacher H Yeah, actually quite a lot. And that's at least 18 different languages. And I think we're in quite a unique pocket of the (region name). People are often quite surprised at the number of different languages that we do have.

NF No, absolutely. As it happens, I've known (region name) quite well 'cause my family home is (name). And I've done some work in a previous project some years ago with the infants. I was aware that you have numbers. And when I did that project, a lot of the children were children of parents who were working in, say, care homes and so on. Is it similar?

Teacher H Yeah. We do have similar. So, with the Filipino languages quite often. We've also got a big nursery, plant nursery here and there's a lot of Polish families involved in that as well. And then it's changed kind of over the years with our Ukrainian families coming in. We're quite diverse.

NF Definitely. And that's relatively recent that the number's that high, is it? Or is it kind of grown over time?

Teacher H It is over time, but if I look at the children, they're sort of a mixture from the year group. So, the Year 6s apart from our children that arrive from Ukraine, that are either Ukrainian or Russian speaking. Those have been here through their journey through the school. So, through four years at least.

NF Wonderful. Great. That's really, really interesting. So, in terms of multilingualism, looking at that second question, I'm interested to know if schools plan explicitly for EAL in their school improvement planning or if it's something that you kind of catch with wider kind of objectives for children.

Teacher H This is what I asked. I asked Headteacher this morning, actually, in terms of the school improvement plan. And it doesn't feature at the moment, but that's not to say that it couldn't with (inaudible 02:51). One thing I did do that will come onto with my work with EMTAS is reviewed some policies. So, the particular one that language features in is our equal policy. It's been added in there and as part of my journey we've involved governors and that sort of thing, but it's not part of the improvement plan at this stage.

NF But that doesn't mean it's not things going on as you say?

Teacher H Absolutely. It's part of my role. I'm not quite sure how I got involved, but part of my role, I think, 'cause I was working with EMTAS quite a bit with some children in my class. I sort of am the mediator, if you like, and I will let EMTAS know if there are children that we need support with, and I will be the one that will arrange PDMs with EMTAS. We had them in recently to do a whole school training. And it's part of my role to remind everybody what the expectations are, every new year in terms of what we want to see within classrooms.

NF So it's definitely sort of ongoing. So, in terms of how children with EAL are supported at the moment, is that just done with kind of quality first teaching, or do you have bilingual, l or learning support assistants specifically allocated? How does that work?

Teacher H No, it's usually down to class TAs and class teachers, as you say. Where we've had new children arrive to the school and we've buddied them up with other children in other year groups, as a support for them as well. But it tends to come down to the individual class teacher and the TAs involved in that year group.

NF And in terms of...this next one is about successes and challenges. Just have you got a sense of where you are finding you are making great ground and other places that you know are harder?

Teacher H I think it was very challenging when we had quite a number of children from Ukraine arrived, because that was different. We hadn't been under that before and we certainly use a lot of Google Translate and a lot of EMTAS time at the time, but those children are particularly successful with fabulous English. But I think one of the challenges that I would like to get to, is actually using home language as a tool for learning within school. We haven't got to that stage yet. It's certainly been used in discussion groups and as part of planning, but we don't have bilingual teachers in that way, just to support that. But it's certainly something that is on the agenda that we want to improve.

NF Do you mean in terms of spoken or do you mean in terms of using it written as well?

Teacher H Well, both really. Certainly, we encourage discussion. But in terms of planning in English writing, if children are able to plan in their home language, that sort of thing, there's not a stage that we've got to yet. We've introduced lots of different things. I put these long, little flashcards and things that we can send home to get examples of language to pre-teach children...

NF Wonderful.

Teacher H - about science topics and history that we're going to be talking about. So, we've got lots of little things that we've done as part of my EMTAS journey really, but I think getting home language involved more in school would be where we should test.

NF It's a real challenge, though, isn't it? But I think what's great is that you want to do it at all, 'cause it's all about feeling positively, isn't it? About the diverse language the children have rather than only thinking we're worried about their English, which of course you are, 'cause you're assessed by that. But it's great that you want to do that. I think half the back is wanting to do it. Do you know what I mean?

Teacher H Yeah, that's right. I think it's interesting the conversations that you have with parents too, though. Because a lot of the parents that we speak to want to speak in English at home, so their child gets enough exposure and sort of trying to put forward the idea that they're getting enough at school and actually having a secure home language is really, really, really valuable. That's a tricky one. As part of the bronze award that we did with EMTAS, and I know you'll come on that too later. Having welcoming posters with different examples of language and the children's pictures is something that I've developed a few years ago when I started that journey. The children were quite hesitant to talk about the languages they spoke at home. But now we get children bringing in books and examples of things that they've done at home in their home language to add to posters.

NF That's lovely.

Teacher H Which is really nice. And I had a really lovely moment actually last summer where a girl in Year 6 who I hadn't taught since Year 3, wrote me a card and bought me a chocolate bar. She said, I love that you love my language, which was so nice.

NF Oh, wow.

Teacher H That you've actually made a bit of an impact.

NF That's delightful. That's such a lovely thing. I think I'd want to put that on a wall somewhere.

Teacher H (Inaudible 08:02) for that child particularly sharing rhymes and stories in her home language wasn't something she was comfortable with initially. So, for that to be something that she remembers about school journey, I thought was lovely.

NF That's really powerful. Well done. So, you've got bronze award, have you?

Teacher H Yes.

NF That's fabulous. Well done.

Teacher H Here it is. So, our bronze award and I renewed it just before Christmas. So, it was probably three years ago I did that journey. So, I did lots of online training on the Moodle. It was previously part of what came under the SENCo role really, which is a big discussion, isn't it, in terms of SEN and EAL. And it was given to me to upskill myself in terms of language for new entrants. And I think at the time, the challenges I had in class… I had had a boy arrive from India actually that I needed to be able to communicate with and also some other children who speak very good English. But within their writing is where you notice they are EAL in terms of (inaudible 09:09) term is missing, that sort of thing.

And I worked with (name). I don’t know if you know (name). She's not there anymore. She was our long-term link. And went through the whole process, which was quite a lot involved in terms of adding to policy as well as my knowledge. And then when we renewed it in November, December, we actually ticked off quite a lot of the things that we can, that we do already in terms of the silver. So that's where I'd like to push that, and that's why in the last couple of months we had EMTAS come in and do a whole school staff meeting for us. So, everybody was aware about the amount of time it takes (inaudible 09:51) proficiency.

NF That was from EMTAS T1, wasn't it? I remember her telling me she was going to visit you.

Teacher H Yeah, which is fantastic. We've tried a few other things, coffee mornings with the infant school. We've sort of joined for parents to come along and have a chat with somebody from EMTAS to talk about challenges, and just making people aware of what services are there really. In terms of the phone lines available if they need to call up and get translation. So, it's been really interesting.

NF So in terms of using EMTAS support then, you kind of listed there. So, it's the coffee mornings. It's the extra award. It's the kind of services for parents and so on. And are there any things that you have had from them that they're interested to know? It's why we've got these questions, question five. They're interested to know, anything that you now do as part of school practice as opposed to using them for.

Teacher H Well, I don't know if it would be something that they did. But certainly, I've got a bit of a checklist that I run through with everybody in September in terms of reminding people that making those little flashcards are really important for the pre-learning. Or everyone having a welcoming poster in their classrooms, so we know what languages the children do speak at home. Making sure we pronounce their names correctly, checking things like clubs. Are there children with EAL that I'm missing from clubs? Are those messages getting home? Do they know about a non-uniform day? So, we make the extra effort to go out to the playground to their parents, rather than assuming that the messages are getting through. And just letting people know really that we're promoting that strong message about valuing the home language and where the support is if we need it. So, knowing we have had EMTAS come in, that's been invaluable to do assessments on children where we haven't known what their proficiency is in their own language. So that sort of influence and that's come through the award that's really helped us develop that as a team. And I keep refreshing that. And as I say, working towards the silver involves governors as well, making bodies on board that can only be positive (inaudible 12:13) belonging content.

NF Absolutely. Are you doing anything like using the Bell Foundation scales for assessment?

Teacher H Yeah. (name) did talk about that actually. And that's what we do. It tends to be sort of a bit like a form that comes out every now and again. I don't think people really knew all the details of what it was. So that's one thing when I asked the team actually, is there anything? Your last question about materials, that those sorts of quick assessments that we can do as individuals, is what they mentioned.

NF Yes. The Bell materials are useful because they are about what the child can do and needs to do next. As opposed to assessing them with national curriculum descriptors, which basically end up showing you what they can't do. So that's why they're really helpful. Yes, I'm sure we would have something in the materials around direction for… certainly for oral language assessment, as it were. There's this other question which not every school has been able to answer, where they just wanted to know, is there anything that they introduced you to that you felt doesn't work for you or you haven't continued to use?

Teacher H No, I don't think so. I think that all the support has definitely been valuable for different people over the years.

NF Good. That's basically the message I'm getting from everyone. So, moving towards the shape of the project and kind of give you a little bit more background. Basically, the research I do is I work with teachers using an approach to teaching that is essentially very closely related to kind of the whole oracy agenda that's very big in schools and in policy at the minute. At its most basic, it's about making tweaks and adaptations to practice that encourage teachers to say less and children to say more. At its most basic, it's whole class. It's not...sorry, it involves small group teaching, but the idea is what you are doing it with the whole class. It's not an intervention, it's not a bolt-on, it's not just for your children with EAL. That's kind of the way it works. And one of the things we're interested to know is if schools are already engaged in any kind of oracy type initiatives at the moment.

Teacher H No. I know of the framework that I think you're referring to, and we don't have that official framework. We don't follow that, but everything we do is very much...One thing that EMTAS T1 noticed in my class, what we were doing when we answer questions, we use (inaudible 14:57) answer, prove, explain, and we always have the sentence stems available, for their all children to up level their answers. So, I think that probably links in. And we do have that approach where ideally the teacher does get less than the children have in terms of conversation across the classroom and add onto each other and listen in that way. But we don't have an official oracy framework at this stage.

NF No, that's okay. I think what you're referring to is Voice 21. Some schools are kind of signed up to that, as it were. But no, other schools I've talked to are just doing like you've said. They're kind of focus on, I don’t know, pairs talk or talking in triads.

Teacher H Yeah, definitely.

NF And things like that, that sort of thing.

Teacher H We've done lots of them. We've very fortunate. We've had SAL projects, staff as learners’ projects, and we've all done lots of reading from Rosenstein.

NF Oh, lovely.

Teacher H And talking about minimising the clutter around the room. We've done lots of different things to help children focus. And certainly, questioning is something that all the teachers here have worked really hard on their questioning. So that the children get that same approach. And you'll hear them using the phrases “I'm just going to build on what they say.”

NF Lovely. So, in a way those kind of...what sound like small, but make a big change, differences to teachers such as children being able to say, “I'm just going to build on what you've said” and so on. That's kind of at the heart of the materials I've been kind of developing in the schools. Schools have done it very much their own way. The other way I work at is it's not I come in and say, “You need to do this.” It's that we say, “Here are some principles that I know work,” as it were. Let's look at ways in which you might make adaptations to practice that might incorporate them is basically. So, it's quite kind of holistic in terms of the change. Just why the interviews at the minute are definitely talking with head teachers and senior leaders, because it's those people that will make the decisions about whether there will be changes, as it were, rather than just doing it with individual teachers. Which I have done in the past, but it doesn't work quite so well.

So, the way in which we think it will work is there will...'cause there's kind of knowledge exchange bit at the minute. So, it's a little bit organic, but the way in which we think it will work will be, there'll be a set of online materials that schools can access. We would do a kind of an introductory session, probably online to schools, probably with a range of choice of dates, as it were. Setting it up saying, this is what they are. We'd like you to think about and select ways in which you might make shifts to practice. Some schools I've worked with have done things like, say, we're going to really focus on looking at more opportunities for children to genuinely talk in dialogue during guided reading, for example. Or a school I've seen in the States did a lovely thing, where they had a 45-minute book club once a week when they were doing other things as well, but that was the kind of core focus of children really leading discourse.

A school I've worked with in Southampton intensively for about five years now, they made two key changes. One was that they changed all their classrooms round so that nobody was sitting in a group of more than four. And they found that made a profound difference. They also changed their medium-term planning in their humanities subjects to question-led. You talked about questioning. So whereby the main learning objective is a question, and then the lesson objectives are kind of micro-questions related to that. So that's just kind of as factoring of the ways in which people have worked with it.

Teacher H And is that within EAL focus or a general oracy within school?

NF To be honest, it's a general oracy within schools, but where my interest and that of my American colleagues is specifically in how we make things better for children who are multilingual. We've measured...there's no measurement involved in this project. This is entirely talk-based, as it were. But in past projects where we've measured the outcomes, it's the children with the EAL, both sides of the Atlantic, as it were, who've made better progress, or it made more accelerated progress. Understandably, because they were learning English along the way, as it were.

Teacher H Yes, of course. (Inaudible 19:29).

NF So that's the focus.

Teacher H Well, one thing we do, we use a book talk approach. We do Hooked on Books.

NF Oh, lovely.

Teacher H So in our reading groups the children read a section of the text and we have question prompts for them, and then they talk to each other for two minutes, and then we get them to feedback what their answers are on those. We do that twice a week. And then we do a demonstration comprehension. So, we will read a section of the book. We did the Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe this morning. And then I will show them under the visualizer how I would answer a question, then I'll remove that. And then they have a go. And that's really lovely because we've got bonus words within it. And they're all very much about getting their three points. So, they answer the question, they prove it, they use their bonus word and a quote. And then we share. So, we do lots of them. And that's our English lead, who's our deputy head, (name). That sort of thing. Her push for reading within school, which is really nice as well.

NF Lovely.

Teacher H And I did mention one thing, sorry...

NF That's alright.

Teacher H - that came from the bronze award journey, was that ideally, and there are examples, 'cause I've done them myself; teachers will acknowledge anything extra for EAL on our plans, on our actual medium-term plans as well. Obviously, we do differentiate for SEN, but having specific things on there noted as well, is something that we are definitely pushing.

NF So things like thinking ahead about the language demands of the lesson and what sort of vocabulary, that sort of thing?

Teacher H Yeah, definitely. Doing some pre-teaching, having a look at the text beforehand, talking about the meaning of the words or sending the vocabulary home, that sort of thing.

NF Great. So, the way we are leaving it at the moment is that we'll be putting the materials together. We're starting well now, and they'll be, we hope, done and dusted. Well, they have to be by October and online. But before then, either at the very end of this term or the very beginning of the autumn term, I'll be in touch with all the schools I've interviewed. There's about 14 or 15 of you. To ask who might like to go forward and to explain what the commitment would be. It's not a commitment to lots of staff meetings or anything like that. We know very well schools simply don't have the capacity to do that. It's more a commitment to say, we will engage with these materials in a particular way, and we will feedback to you how it was. But basically, it's a pilot. We want to know how the materials work and if they've made changes to your practice, is basically what they're asking for. But there's no need to commit from today. I realise you'll need to go and talk to Headteacher, such as I'm looking forward to talk with him.

Teacher H Yeah, absolutely.

NF So that's...

Teacher H And so again, the materials are for particularly supporting EAL or that is just a happy coincidence?

NF So although they're with the EMTAS website and it's an EMTAS initiative with me and our interest is EAL, we see the materials, or I definitely see the materials as supportive of all children. If you start with the premise that good EAL practice is good practice for all anyway, it's a little bit like that. So yes, there're oracy-oriented ways of working that will work for your whole class. So, it's not asking a teacher to do something different for their children with EAL, 'cause that's obviously unworkable, isn't it? Obviously, they do that all the time, don't they?

Teacher H Yeah.

NF In small ways that they're differentiating their input. But this isn't saying something separate. This is saying think, let's think about your learners and ways of making a particular type of activity more accessible and more talk-rich, is the kind of phrase I use. I'm kind of not sure that necessarily gets it across, 'cause oracy is a bit bigger than just talking. It's about so many other things. But we'll make all that clear. So, there'll be something like a kind of a setting up. There'll be some materials that just say, these are the principles of this way of working. Short, bite-sized, accessible, digestible for teachers. We're not giving you loads to read. We'll give you links if you want to read more, but it'll hopefully be bite-sized.

So, these are the principles of how we would work with them. These are how you might apply them. Perhaps saying, we might have kind of...if you're a senior leader, if you're a class teacher, if you're a learning support assistant. And then a third set, which is kind of ways of working with oracy with your new to English learners, with your more advanced learners, and so on. So, the materials will look EAL oriented, but we know that they will work for everybody as well. And we'll make that clear in instructor materials as it were.

Teacher H (Inaudible 24:28) that's pretty interesting.

NF Do you have any other questions of me, about anything?

Teacher H Not really, I think. When I ask in terms of online tools, your question number seven, the children...

NF Oh, sorry. Yes. What would you find useful? Yes.

Teacher H Well, it very much is EAL focused. Teachers talked about assessment tools so we can evaluate language proficiency easily in speech, and reading, and writing. Basic instructions, flash prompt cards for general phrases in school, 'cause we find we're making our own as teachers for the needs of the children. Different sentence builders like we would use when teaching French, for instance. And I think that some of the teachers were really interested in the stages and strategies to build on the child's learning. Not realising how long it takes to be proficient when we see them chit-chattering on the playground. They haven't got to that next stage. And any translation services they talked about as well where we would have instructions or tasks or work in more than one language.

NF So instructions, you mean for children, as it were, ways of making things accessible in more than one language?

Teacher H Well, I think that was both. It was either helping the teachers be more effective with those children or instructions for in-class with the children.

NF I know EMTAS have a huge range of stuff that they use that they let schools know about in relation to translation, 'cause they did a network meeting about that earlier this term. So, in some ways I wonder if it's sort of a question of just bringing things together in one place, 'cause I know EMTAS are aware that there's so much in the Moodle.

Teacher H That's right.

NF That sometimes it can be hard to find stuff. So, I think it's about making it really, really accessible in terms of just saying...really obvious, I guess, isn't it?

Teacher H Yeah.

NF You don't have time to try and work out what is meant by things. So, it's got to really say what it does on the tin.

Teacher H This was really good actually. I've shared this learning toolkit with staff. I don’t know if you've seen that.

NF Yes, I have.

Teacher H So that's been really well received in terms of using first language as a tool for learning, but it's always good. I'm happy to spread the word and the knowledge.

NF Lovely. Is that us done then? Does that...?

Teacher H Yeah, (inaudible 27:16).

NF Thanks so much for the care you took in preparing for the interview. I really, really appreciate that.

Teacher H I'm sorry that Headteacher hasn't made it. It really was an emergency that...

NF No, it's absolutely fine.

Teacher H - happened this morning.

NF Absolutely.

Teacher H But I would suspect in terms of the oracy in that, I would probably get (name) involved as well. She's (inaudible 27:34)...

NF Wonderful.

Teacher H - for the deputy. So, it would be really interested to see what you send through.

NF Wonderful. Now the more kind of leadership team there is involved, the better things will work, because we all know that school improvement starts with leadership buy-in. So that would be wonderful.

Teacher H Brilliant. Well, very nice to meet you.

NF And you, Teacher H, really nice.

Teacher H You finished with EMTAS, your position there in the summer, are you? And then...

NF No, no, no. I'm with them until March 25, until the end. We're just working together until the end of the project. So, I'm still with University of Reading, really, but I'm describing it as seconded to them because my research grant pays for me to work with them half the week. That's till the end of the project.

Teacher H Oh, lovely. Very interesting.

NF Yeah, it is. It's lovely.

Teacher H (Inaudible 28:23). Thank you very much and nice to meet you.

NF And you. Thanks so much. Bye-bye.

Teacher H See you then. Bye-bye.

NF Bye.