**INTERVIEW**

**Attendees**

Teacher I

Interviewer - NF

Teacher I I’m on my phone because my computer won't let me into Teams, so if it’s, I might just need to plug it in to charge that’s all.

NF That’s alright, I’m sure we’ll be fine. Between us we’ll work it out yeah. Great, how have you been anyway, it’s a while since we’ve talked isn’t it?

Teacher I Yeah good yeah, busy, busy as always you know. Onwards and upwards.

NF Yeah. Lovely. Okay, so the questions are there and they’re useful for the interview, but we can talk around other stuff if you want to because obviously you know, you’ve done a lot of work over many years at School I, haven’t you?

Teacher I Yeah.

NF Kind of get things running. So, if you just say your name now and what your role is, just for the transcriber and then we’ll get going.

Teacher I So my name is (name), I’m the deputy headteacher in SENCO and I’m also the EAL lead at School I in (place name).

NF Very busy lady in other words yeah. Okay. Alright, so it’s been a while since I’ve been with School I, hasn’t it. So, talk to me about how the make up of multilingual children is in the school, like numbers and so on you’ve got now.

Teacher I So we did have a dip for the last couple of years and we were down to about five pupils at one point. So, it hasn’t been, I would say, a priority maybe so much for the last couple of years. However, this year our numbers are increasing again. We’ve got 17 pupils now out of 178 so around 10%, 9% of the school. So, it is, and it is increasing. This has been due to, we’ve had a number of Malayalam speakers join, and this has been due to sort of a social reason that we’ve had a lot of recruitment in the local nursing homes around the area and they’ve actually taken on Indian families, Malayalam speakers, so that’s why we’ve had that increase. So, the make-up of languages at the moment, we’ve got five Malayalam speakers, two Pashtu speakers, two Urdu speakers, we’ve got a Ukrainian speaker, a Portuguese speaker, a Polish speaker, a Mandarin speaker, a Nepali speaker, and we’ve also got a Greek speaker, so we’ve got a big range.

NF Yeah. You’ve almost got as many languages as you have children in other words, sort of multilingual. So that’s quite different from what, so you know, when we were first working together some years ago, must be back in 2016 or so, that’s, the languages are quite different as well are they?

Teacher I Yeah.

NF Yeah.

Teacher I Yeah, and I think it’s just again social make up of the school, and yeah, it’s just changing and is, as I say it’s on the increase again. So, it is something we’ve built back into our school plan really.

NF Great.

Teacher I Going forward.

NF Okay, so talk to me about that. So, in what ways is it figuring in your school development planning?

Teacher I Yeah. So, I would say to you it’s not been as much of a priority over the last two years. We’ve had a change in head, we’ve also had you know, we’ve had a number of things going on including Ofsted and various things. So obviously things do go off the radar, but what we’re looking to do next year is, we are looking to develop really the parental support area of our support for our EAL speakers, multilingual speakers. This is mainly in line as well; we’ve noticed that there’s a number of vulnerabilities for our multilingual speakers as well.

So, we’ve got, we’ve done a lot of work this year on creating character, that’s part of our school plan. It’s an area of our school plan and we’ve ran some character-building workshops, and we’ve noticed these have been really well attended by multilingual speaking parents. And I think that it’s been a big thing for us that we need to support them and also have had, we’ve had a number of safeguarding issues as well, that EMTAS have supported with this year. They’ve been invaluable, and I think again that area of support is crucial ensuring children are safe and that again, they’re ready to learn. So that’s part of our school plan.

Also, we’ve been introducing a lot of work around supporting parents in general and our vulnerable parents, and we’re bringing in the Hampshire Back to Basics programme next year. We want to again look how we can support our multilingual parents with this. Maybe through translation of the materials, so maybe some EMTAS support workers or something, you know. So, parents will be able to access that, and I know that, you know, from feedback the parents do want to get involved and they do want to you know access all of these things. And we’ve just had a community hub built at the school as well. So, we want to be able to use that space for our parents and to get them in more and you know, have that open relationship more really. We’ve also been developing our, as part of our school plan, we used to, we were really good at doing young interpreter scheme and all of that kind of thing. And that was really supportive of the children. And we’ve developed that really now into another, into a whole like group of children that are called our diversity ambassadors. So, these children are part of sort of the ERA group. So, the rights advocates group that Hampshire run as well, but it will be nice to get back to some of that really good, young interpreters the basic programme of things that went on. Because again I think that’s gone off the back burner a bit, due to numbers that we’ve had. And the fact that a lot of our children that we’ve had have been fluent English speakers, so it’s not really, it’s not been a priority. But I think now it is something that we need to build back into that. We’ve got the staff that have had the training, me, JW, we’ve got staff that are available, it’s just sort of building it back in now. So yeah.

NF Just to pause it there a little bit, on the parents’ thing. So, you’ve obviously, that’s a huge initiative for you in terms of the amount of work you’re doing with parents. Is there a particular reason why you chose that as the focus?

Teacher I Just our numbers of vulnerable families and a lot of our multilingual families have fallen into this. Our number of vulnerables is increasing, it’s up to about 42% of the school. And again, just the global picture with things like you know, cost of living crisis, all sorts of factors really that are out there now. Like I said, we’ve had a lot of families moving over for work, that kind of thing. Who are literally coming to us new to English, and I think it’s tough out there for families at the minute as well. And it’s hard, when you come into a school setting as well, sometimes if you’re not English it’s really hard to access for parents, sort of the basics, like how to do the, follow the reading schemes, following the new phonic schemes, things like that. It’s really hard to be able to get that. So again, I think support for parents around that is vital really. The kit for the children, you know, if the parents can help to get those basics there then the children can. And I think a lot of what we’re seeing as well is our multilingual children once they’re in, they’re making fantastic progress, but the parents need to be able to, as I say, access things like be able to read, understand little bundle phonics that kind of thing, so that they can support their children.

NF Right, yeah, that’s interesting, very interesting. So, in terms of, so obviously it’s quite a small number, so a small number within each class presumably. How are they supported? Do they, are they just kind of included as part of quality first teaching or do you have particular systems in place for them?

Teacher I Yeah. So, our children, our multilingual children are included as quality first teaching. And you know, we are very, the way we work, and we’ve always worked is we have flexible groups that are a mixed ability, and the children are part of that group, for the learning. And then we also undertake to use supervision and independent project learning, which is really good for our multilingual learners because they’re then able to access a lot of the learning practice, the skills, in ways and in terms that support them. Alongside adult scaffolding and support, and we are lucky in that we do invest in, we have got a lot of teaching assistants and special needs assistants, and you know, lots of adults in the classroom, that are available to support. What I would say to you is that again, the make up of that group has changed. So, you know, we have got some who have had a lot of support around multilingualism. We’ve got again lots of new staff that would really benefit from that training and support. And just basically we’ve had a big you know, our children are, we try to make sure that interventions are carried out in the classroom, nobody’s ever sort of separated from the classroom. We are focussing next year as part of our school plan as well on maximising the use of teaching assistants. So having a group of teaching assistants that work across a year group. So, that we can utilise the specialist where needed, and again where maybe staff have got that specialism really, they’ll be more better placed to work through with the class or with a group at a certain time.

NF Am I right in remembering that you actually had a whole kind of specialist pack for your learning support assistance around EAL didn’t you?

Teacher I Yeah, we did have that. And I think again that needs, you know, it needs revisiting, and again due to the small numbers and things that we’ve had going on, you know, that’s gone off the back burner. But actually, I think that’s really important, and we can you know, we can revisit that just like you say, like a little aide memoire resources. We’ve still got lots of resources in school, like we’ve got all our talking products and our you know, the multilingual resources and things like that, but again I just think it’s how you use that isn’t it?

NF It is yeah.

Teacher I So yeah.

NF It’s so interesting talking to you because you’ve got this kind of you know, as you said. You’ve kind of got moved away from it and then you’re having to come back to it. But from my point of view you’ve got, there’s a lot there, from memory you know, that you’d already developed in the school, yeah.

Teacher I Yeah, we’ve got loads and I think it just needs refreshing. Because again a lot of the, you know the technology and the talking products, technology goes out of date, doesn’t it?

NF Yes. It does yeah.

Teacher I Yeah, you know, we really want to look at the technology that we use and that’s part of the school plan as well, and just refresh it really. And it is about you know, a lot around, we’ve been talking a lot about, this around tailored interventions for all pupils, but for our multilingual pupils as well to make sure they’re getting that good practice for them. Alongside really tailored intervention that works to support them where there may be gaps in learning. So, I think that you know, is the biggie, to be specialised enough to be able to you know, work effectively with them. So, I think yeah.

NF Yes, it is. It’s a lot.

Teacher I It’s a lot. It’s keeping it high on the agenda you know. So yeah.

NF So, the next question talks about successes and challenges in support for multilingual learners. And you might feel because you’ve had this dip and then you’re rising again, I’m not sure if you want to answer that one at all. Have you had any thoughts?

Teacher I I think you know… As I say, I think we’ve got, we have still got a lot of staff expertise which is really good. And I think a big plus for us and we have still got all the resources and things like that. We’ve got a lot of resources available. I think it’s just, yeah, it’s just, the challenge is you know, things get in the way, don’t they?

NF Yes, they do.

Teacher I And like I say, we’ve been you know, really working on making sure that our curriculum is hot. We’ve been making, you know all of these things that you need to do for Ofsted, and making sure that everything is in place for all of our learners. And I think with this big increase in vulnerable pupils we’ve had to really sort of focus on that really, and the needs and making sure everybody is getting what they need.

NF Sure.

Teacher I So yeah.

NF I mean do you think the rise in numbers will continue? Do you think it’s kind of you know a sign of things to come for you?

Teacher I Yeah, definitely. Yeah, I definitely think there’s, because we have a lot of, we do have a lot of nursing homes in the local area. And they do recruit from overseas, so this is why I think we’re having you know, increased numbers.

NF Right, interesting.

Teacher I But it is just, I think it’s reflective of the general population. Like you say I think it’s just we are you know, increasing in numbers again.

NF Yeah, for sure. Yeah. Despite Brexit. Yeah. So, the next couple of questions are ones that EMTAS wanted me to ask at schools and because you’ve got a long history with School I, you might well be able to have some thoughts about this. So, the first one was about what EMTAS you’ve used in the past and if, which aspects if any became part of your school practice?

Teacher I Yeah. So, I’d say we did, we have always accessed the network meetings. We found them very useful, lots of hints and tips, lots of quick wins and things you can do within that. So that’s pretty good. This, over the past year we’ve accessed a lot of, we have had as I say we’ve had safeguarding support from EMTAS T7. She actually came in and supported us with the family and that was really, really, really, you know, invaluable. And also, we’ve had an Urdu speaker supporting a little boy in a family that joined us this year and again that’s been invaluable; and that was just again for talking, helping to talk to daddy about routines, rhythms, reading, lunches, school, you know school policies, things like that. And that was really, really useful to just do that initial meeting with him. And there’d been, there’d been some cultural mismatches, but again the Urdu speaker was able to work with daddy, and address that and do you know what I mean? It was just really, really useful, to have that support. So that has been invaluable this year really, I would say.

NF And then of course in the past you’ve had young interpreters which did become part of school.

Teacher I Yeah, and that is brilliant. And I would say things, you know, we really want to keep that going and keep that revitalised next year. I mean again we’ve got; we still utilise all the resources, the training packs, and things like that. The initial training packs for the new joiners and things like that and I think it’s just making that really prominent. We build… And we just, you know, there’s so many things out there, there’s part of technology as well that we want to get using next year like you know. Within Microsoft Teams and things, we’re looking at that as well. So yeah. That and again you pick up so many things as well don’t you from the network meetings when you’re out and about. I would say that is the most invaluable things.

NF That’s great.

Teacher I Quick wins that you pick up.

NF The quick wins in school, we all want quick wins I’m finding. Yes. We’ll come to that a bit later. They are also interested to know if schools find that there are any aspects of their support that they don’t continue to use or find less useful. I have to say I’ve had very few answers to this question.

Teacher I I would just say that we… you know… the training and things that they do, we’ve always found invaluable, and we would continue to use that absolutely. I can't think of anything we wouldn’t continue to use. I would just say it is really hard to get the bilingual assistants and that is what we need. Like I said the Urdu speaker that came in was absolutely fantastic, but then the little boy has now gone onto a waiting list to help support the school. Whereas for our new to English children, sometimes that could be absolutely invaluable that we can get them in quicker, supporting the staff. That would be the only thing I would say is that I know that bilingual assistants are amazing, and that is what we need more support with.

NF All of them, yeah. More of them and quicker access to them. Yeah, that’s in line with other schools yeah. Okay, so thanks for all that. It’s just really lovely to reflect on what you’re doing and what of things with EMTAS is very focussed on using talk and oracy really as a tool for multilingual learners, but also for all learners. And we’re interested to know what schools are already doing, because quite a lot of schools have latched onto oracy as part of school development anyway and I wondered if there’s anything you’ve got up and running at the minute.

Teacher I Yeah, so we’re not actually within a programme but what we are doing, you know, an affiliated programme. But we have been doing, our English lead has been doing an English monitoring enquiry, and she has been looking around oracy. And she’s been looking at ways in which we can develop oracy again, because of our increasing number of vulnerable pupils. Because of the, because of just again the social climate that we’re in, we are finding that our, and again this isn’t linked to multilingualism, but our levels of speech and language need across, in the SEN domain, is absolutely phenomenal. You know, we come across children coming and misspeaking and listening difficulties, speech and language. So again, it is a whole school focus, but obviously dovetailed with that there are lots of aspects that do support multilingual learners.

So, she’s been looking at, obviously we still do our close read, so looking at developing vocabulary, and with things like… within that monitoring plan she’s been looking at the use of drama techniques to support writing. She’s been looking at things like bespoke word maps, wall displays and planners. Again, we’re making highlight of vocabulary, subject specific vocabulary as well. Obviously linked to different foundations subjects as well that’s really, really highlighted for the children and interactive and they’re able to use. They’ve also been developing like bespoke bookmarks for each of the year groups. They’re interactive again that the children can have to hand and use. Again, not specific to multilingual pupils but again good practice that we could use for our multilingual pupils. She’s also been looking at making sure that there’s lots and lots of oracy strategies within those, the drama strategies for oracy so looking at things like hot seating, do you know what I mean.

NF Yeah, I know exactly what you mean.

Teacher I Writing strategies, she’s developed that in. She’s also been looking at for early years use of questioning as well and use of asking questions. They’ve across the school been using curiosity boxes that have objects in, and the children have been encouraged to come up and talk about the objects and develop questions around the curiosity boxes. To develop just those speaking and listening skills, turn taking, things like that, questioning. Just because we’re finding again that is across the board something that we need to develop, not just for EAL pupils or multilingual pupils but for everybody. And I think that will impact upon them going forward and it is just that language isn’t that, that rich talk of language within the projects and things like that. And really honing-in on subject specific vocabulary and developing that within you know, for our multilingual pupils, I think. Yeah, that’s what I think of that.

NF Okay. So, it’s interesting to hear you talk about your understanding of course that kind of this kind of talk related practice is going to be of benefit to all your children, particularly your children as you say who are from vulnerable families. Who have got kind of lower levels of school starting oracy anyway, yeah. So that’s, in terms of, to explain what the project is. The project is effectively me bringing to… blending with EMTAS, their kind of expertise and practical know how with some ways of teaching that I’ve observed in the US, and then brought across to the UK. With this thing I did called the Talk Rich Teaching Project. And it’s just, it’s a way of approaching a practice by making kind of small shifts in practice. In some cases of perhaps moving to more small group teaching or thinking about ways in which you might make lessons more talk oriented rather than writing oriented. And the schools that I’ve worked with already have kind of come to it in different ways, you know. Some schools have kind of, I don’t know, established a book club or they’ve established kind of “I'm only going to do it in guided reading” or whatever. They’ve kind of, you know, it’s kind of a way of working. It’s not an intervention, it’s not a bolt on, it’s kind of a way of just thinking about practice a bit differently. And what we’re going to do is build this kind of online tool kit, that schools will work with. And we’re interested to know what sorts of things schools think they might want to see in a tool kit that was going to introduce them to this. It will be called something like The Talk Which Teaching Toolkit, a guide to oracy in the classroom, and imagining kind of opening it and thinking about “Well what, what would I want to see?” If you could think of that. It’s hard.

Teacher I Yeah. I think you know; I think something definitely around subject specific vocabulary. How you can bring that to life? Or I don’t know, do you know what I mean? Make something very visual as well that’s very easy to access for staff, that’s very visual. That maybe has a number of different subject specific foundation subjects specifically in a language that’s very easy to access and you know? I don’t know whether that is explained within different… I don’t know, do you know what I mean? Something around that I think would be definitely you know, amazing really. I don’t know how you’d do that, but I think that would be… And it could also be something again, if you like you say are using it alongside a book club or alongside a… I don’t know. A close read maybe that you could click on something and open it up and it explains all about this word, I don’t know. Something like that I think would be the most useful. But again, quick, easy to access, visual, do you know what I mean?

NF Everyone says that. Quick win doesn’t require training, and obviously there’s, you know yourself, there’s a limit on how far you can be quick and also not… but yeah. No, we’re definitely getting that message loud and clear, it’s got to be kind of quite succinct. We’re thinking we’ll also maybe do it at different levels so there’ll be all the materials but there’ll be how might I use this as a senior leader? How might I use it as a teacher? How might I use it as an LSA? as well. So, that we’re thinking that we’ll probably include that, but yeah. The visual definitely people have asked for, definitely, people have talked about video as far as possible. That’s quite hard because I don’t know how, if you’ve ever tried getting teachers to be videoed or been asked to video yourself, teachers tend to say no. But I do have some videos.

Teacher I That is the thing isn’t it, and that is what people want really. Video, you know, just how to do it.

NF Visual as you said as well. So, pictures and things that show me rather than telling me in loads of words that I’ve then got to interpret. Yeah, absolutely.

Teacher I Or maybe an animation, I don’t know how easy that would be to do.

NF A what?

Teacher I An animation, like a little animation or something. I don’t know.

NF Oh animation, yes.

Teacher I An animation or a character that’s talking, I don’t know.

NF Young interpreter has some greater animations doesn’t it actually come to think of it.

Teacher I Yeah. Stories and things like that, I think they’ve always, you know, they’re always really good, aren’t they? And applicable to all learners as well so I think yeah.

NF Yeah, and it’s a very much a tool for teachers rather than children. It’s kind of explaining to teachers how to do X and Y as it were. But what you’re saying is, some sense of resources of links to resources within that could be useful.

Teacher I Yeah, it’s just really self explanatory that maybe they could use, I don’t know, there and then type of thing. I don’t know. And I still think the teachers you know, we still like a picture.

NF Yeah, visuals good, yeah. Okay, lovely. That’s, thank you for sharing all your thoughts with me. I mean what we’re doing at the moment is, we’ve been in 15 schools in the county. And it’s great because it’s completely across the county, everywhere as it were. And then in I think the idea will be that, very early September rather than bothering people with it in July, given its already July the 8th. I’ll be contacting schools again to say, you know, we spoke with you, we’ll give you more of an outline of what the project would entail. But it basically will entail piloting these materials that we come up for us and giving us feedback. A little bit more structure in that than just kind of saying have a go. But there’ll be like an introductory meeting to attend and then there’d be some kind of check ins with us, and maybe allowing us to come in and observe. Not in any judgemental way but just to sort of see what you’re doing as it were.

Teacher I Yeah.

NF So that’s the sort of outline that we’re giving people. So, we’ll check in again as I said in early September and ask schools who is interested in wanting to do it. But we were thinking of six pilot schools to start with. We may well end up with more than that, that would be fine, and we’ll just adjust how we’re doing it to kind of accommodate as many schools as want to have a go really to be honest. Because I’d rather have more than less feedback, but yeah.

Teacher I Yeah, we’re happy to you know, give it a go, we’ll trial anything you know, and I think we need to just get ours back up.

NF Yeah, it might be helpful with that mightn’t it?

Teacher I Yeah.

NF Yeah.

Teacher I I think we do need to start really you know, really focussing in on that as well. They progressed well, but they’re not you know; they’re still struggling with things like passing a phonics test and do you know what I mean? It’s still, that as an issue from our results and things like that and I think you know, the nuance aspects as to why they’re not able to do that.

NF Yeah absolutely, and that may well be a lot to do with talking and not hearing the full names enough mightn’t it.

Teacher I Absolutely and you know, I mean part way through a year or the beginning of year one, you’ve not had the early years grounding. You come into English (Incomprehensible 29:30).

NF Yeah, you don’t stand a chance.

Teacher I You’ve made massive progress, you’ve made rapid progress, rapid but you’re not going to be able to maybe get to the level of your peers, because you’ve just not had that experience before, do you know.

NF Yeah.

Teacher I You may never have been in school. So yeah, it’s that kind of thing, it’s that gap.

NF Okay great. That’s all I needed to ask and let you know about. Do you have any questions yourself?

Teacher I No, we’re willing to try anything.

NF Lovely, okay. Fabulous. Lovely. Well, it’s been lovely talking to you, and I will be back in touch early in the autumn term then when we set things up.

Teacher I Thank you, yeah.

NF Lovely, thank you very much Teacher I, lovely to see you, take care. Bye.

Teacher I Bye.

NF Bye, bye.