**INTERVIEW**

**Attendees**

Interviewer (NF)

Teacher I

NF Just let us know who you are for the transcriber.

TEACHER I I am Teacher I; I am the Deputy Headteacher and SENCO and School I. I am also the EAL Lead.

NF You are very busy lady in other words. Did you get the questions through okay?

TEACHER I Yes, I have got the questions.

NF Lovely. Last time we saw you, you were doing a lot of things. I was looking back at my notes from the visit and there was a lot going on in terms of school belonging, in terms of small group, in terms of enquiry lead, in terms of talk rich. You are working on all fronts. I just wanted to update on how things are still going, can you fill me in?

TEACHER I Yes, obviously lots of the things that you saw on the visit. We are continuing to develop. The stem sentences, that we showed you, we have developed our set of stem sentences from year R to year two in English. And also following our discussions, we have also been looking at our stem sentences for maths. After we had that, we were having that discussion as well. And really looking at how they link, and again the links with the oracy work and how we can continue to use that going forward next year and to tighten that up even further. We had our LLRP visit last week, with our lead learning partner, and we were talking about the use of them, and we will use them going forward. And we have been looking at things like, obviously, you know, we have continuous provision and IPL, and how we are going to develop that further within the classroom context. Again, looking at maybe a little problem-solving area for maths, how we could maybe use some stem sentences or key vocabulary words within that, to take that on a little bit further as well.

Just continuing to do lots of what we are doing, but really refine and hone what we have got, I think is the next steps for us. And obviously, to continue next year with all the things like the big bookmarks that you saw, developing the vocabulary, honing that vocabulary down, that we are going to put on the bookmarks, and just really looking at where we are using it within our projects, as well. It is like we were saying, ‘It is that vocabulary-specific enough? Is it accessible enough?’ And I think that is a big key for us, as well. Is looking at how accessible the vocabulary is to all of our children, EAL children, children potentially with SEND, that kind of thing. Again, lots of possibilities. Things to maybe link that with total communication, how might you use that with visuals and things like that, as well. For, not necessarily our EAL children, although it can support them, but for our SEND children. Just making it really accessible. I think they are the tweaks that we want to continue to look at going forward, but again that is a long-term thing. Short term, we are just embedding it in classrooms, making sure we have got all the sentences refined, got it up, got it running, and that everyone is using it. I think that is the short-term goals.

NF Absolutely, there is a sense in which you want to know it is working at our school level and then embed. When we chatted, your acknowledgement that this is going to take time.

TEACHER I Yes, absolutely.

NF That is where you have got those variations on what goes on in each year group.

TEACHER I I think that was something to do with the kids as well, speak to the children, do some pupil conferencing. How do they find it? Do they find it easy to use? Do you know where to find your words? Do you think it helps you? Because I think that is your main thing, is it actually useful for them.

NF Yes, is that something you are planning to do? Pupil conferences?

TEACHER I Yes, we will do that as part of our monitoring and me and Headteacher I, the Head, we have been talking, because Headteacher I does some regular pupil conferencing and Teacher I1. And they are thinking about doing some possibly around oracy and maybe asking how the children feel, because I think that is key. ‘Can you find it? Can you use it? What is it for?’ That kind of thing.

NF Yes. Do they know why they are doing it? That is interesting.

TEACHER I That is our interim and long-term steps with it, but it is something that, as I say, is in our five-year school plan, that we want to continue to develop.

NF I think for everybody, for all the schools I have spoken to so far, it is very much part of this bigger picture. And we are kind of a thread within a bigger picture. A fairly major takeaway for me from the project, which is great. Is there anything that you thought you might do, or you did that you decided not to continue? Is there anything that you have not maintained?

TEACHER I No, I would not say, not at all. I would say every aspect of it has been useful and it is really. It is really good because it permeates so many things that we are doing as well. There are so many threads that it runs through; SEND, like you have said the key subjects, Maths, English, foundation subjects. There are so many things that it is relevant to.

NF Great. Looking at the next question, I think you were a bit hybrid. Some schools absolutely controlled access and only senior leaders were looking at it and then giving it to staff, as it were, giving things they wanted staff to see. A smaller number of schools opened it out to everyone, and I think you might have been somewhere in the middle in terms of the way in which you did it.

TEACHER I Yes, kind of in the middle. Obviously, senior leadership had access and Teacher I1, our English Lead, had access initially. And then I did a staff meeting and I rolled it out to all of the teachers, so they had access, and the TAs were open to come along to that if they wanted to. It has been a bit of a hybrid I would say.

NF Yes it has.

TEACHER I It is really who it has been beneficial for, and who wanted to have access to it, and gain something from it.

NF Do you feel it has worked for you? In terms of once staff were looking on their own and taking what they wanted from it? It was still a sense of it working with your bigger school development priorities and so on.

TEACHER I Yes, absolutely. It has really worked for us and me and the head were saying it just fits. Like I have said before, it fits beautifully with what we have got going on as a school plan, and what we are trying to develop going forward. Again, some of the later questions like the concepts, there is so much within that, that is relevant to what we are doing just across the board.

NF It has been really interesting for us, this different kind of take-up. And you are the only school that has kind of done this hybrid, so interesting to have that. If you were to meet the toolkit without me, having introduced it ,or EMTAS having introduced it, do you think that might still be the way you would work with? Hard to say I guess.

TEACHER I I think yes, we would probably always open it up to teachers first, just because they are the main audience, we felt, for it.

NF Yes, they are, totally.

TEACHER I I think we would always have opened it up, but it is nice to offer it to everyone, because it is relevant to everyone.

NF It is great that you have TAs in on that as well.

TEACHER I Yes, we have got some really specialist TAs, with really good specific knowledge, especially for EAL, and I think that has been really useful for them, they have really enjoyed using it. But also, I think as well, some of our TAs again that work with SEND people, so with the language rich specific elements of it. The stem sentences, there is so much around that for everyone, really.

NF Pretty much everyone has picked up them. In terms of the resources you drew on, are you happy with the way that they allowed you to make changes that you intended making? I wonder if you had gone with some of the things you drew on first, and those have worked? Or if you have also gone back in to find other things? Interested to know if people re-visit it.

TEACHER I I think we went with like you have seen, the things that we have drew from it. We have kind of gone with that and ran, but we did say to you, there are a couple of teachers that went in and looked specifically with the agenda around a couple of specific EAL pupils, to look for specific strategies and things that they might try. But I think generally for us, it is more that big takeaway, with things like the stem sentences, and the talk rich environment, smaller groups. The talk for learning, that kind of thing, and collaboration and belonging. I think that sense of belonging, for us, is the biggest thing, for that thread to run across everything before you can even get to the other parts.

NF I guess in a way, you had taken on so much straight away. You would not want to be going back in now anyway because, as we all know, it takes time. It is interesting because with some schools, they have said they have not gone back. And therefore, have not looked for other things that might help them, but I guess that is just going to be the reality of how people tend to use a resource.

TEACHER I Yes.

NF It is like I will take what I like from this now, I will not necessarily go back. Something we need to think about.

TEACHER I I said to you before; we do a lot of magpieing. We will take bits that we like, and then we sort of tweak it, for what works to your context.

NF Make it locally relatable.

TEACHER I Make it locally relatable. And like you have said before, the time factor and things. You really do have to, in the school environment, roll with it, because it is the time element of it as well.

NF Yes, it is, so that it is not an add-on, as it were.

TEACHER I No.

NF Not yet more. You have done a lot. A lot of schools, out of our 10 schools, a lot of schools have said they kept it smaller in a way. So, as not to overwhelm staff with new things. But it seems to me that you have managed to do quite a lot and not overwhelm. Or has there been any sense of overwhelm?

TEACHER I No, not at all. I think because it sat with the priorities that we had already within the school plan. And it was realistically, Teacher I1, was looking for, she does make it stay, will talk to you, that she was looking to develop something, around that anyway and the listening element, the listening for talk. So that was already there in the school plan and really, what the toolkit did, was just provide a lovely vehicle, to be able to get the ideas to think, “Actually, this is how I will do it.” Obviously, alongside the training and development she has had as well around the oracy project, and her long-term goals, and what she is monitoring anyway. I think, because it fitted within the school priorities, within the plan, it works. I think sometimes, like you said before, when it is an add-on or it is something that someone is trying to fit in, or sometimes, it is easier to do it wider, isn’t it? Than just do it for a specific pupil or a small, small group of pupils. Again, when it is planned in, you have got planned staff meetings for it, planned opportunities for staff to look at it, planned time for people to develop stem sentences. We are lucky, because we are a small school, so all of our staff meetings for the teachers as well, we are together for that. So, we are able to then have the time to look at something, disseminate it, talk about it, ‘Does this work?’ I think sometimes, again, it sounds awful, but when it is that ‘done to’ process, ‘Here you go, roll with this.’

NF Yes, absolutely.

TEACHER I Whereas I think you have to look something as a staff, have a professional conversation around it, it is like ‘Oh! that’s good! That’ll work!’ Or ‘Oh’ …And I think that is what works for us as well. Like with the maths as well, it is linked to so many other priorities that it has just flowed, really.

NF It was interesting having the opportunity to talk to him when we came in, it was great. Question 4 is around the toolkit principles and to be honest, you have already talked a lot about them. From my point of view, the way in which you have chosen to use the toolkit kind of sees the principles and the activities together.

TEACHER I Mesh.

NF Yes.

TEACHER I Yes, definitely.

NF It is interesting, because, I wonder to what extent, staff, see the principles as the drivers as opposed to just homing in on different activities.

TEACHER I I would say probably again, that is more, I am talking from an SLT perspective, absolutely, whether or not you spoke, to I think maybe if you spoke to a TA or a teacher, that might be different view.

NF A different view, I agree, yes, I think so.

TEACHER I Maybe not teachers so much because they are involved in that discussion in the staff meetings and the prep and all of that. But I think maybe for some of the TAs, it might be a bit more, the principles might not be… But when we did that initial staff meeting, we did really talk about the principles. Again, I think some of the principles like belonging, that does feed through every single thing that we do. That is what we live and breathe as a school anyway, you know us. And that is why, and I think they would be able to talk about that, but it might not necessarily understand that that underpins parts of the toolkit and things like that.

NF Absolutely. It is an interesting one for us to think about as well I think. The fifth question (5), I think in many ways, you have covered this as well, really. Because we have talked a lot and when we visited, about this kind of do you think the things you have picked up from it have changed practice sustainably, the (inaudible 00:15:12).

TEACHER I Yes, absolutely. And I think there has been so many things with that like the stem sentences, there is so much. It is like that quick-win stuff that you can do, isn’t it? If you think about it carefully, you can get it done, it is useable, and it is quick win, it is up, it is there. There is quick takeaway stuff that is within there, to be able to do. And I think that is the key for a lot of staff, like you say, for teachers, TAs, that are on the ground. And I think maybe the concept element is more about a senior leadership decision, as to whether that aligns with your values, and what you are trying to achieve as a school.

NF Okay, that is really interesting.

TEACHER I But the quick-win stuff is brilliant, because that is the stuff that a TA would look at maybe and think, ‘Oh my God! This will work for X, let me go and …’. Off you go, you know what I mean? And I think sometimes those things, I hate to say it, are the most useful.

NF Yes, of course, we are totally realistic about that, totally. It is so interesting talking with you, because in a way, you are seeing in your own response to it, this kind of layered approach whereby senior leaders definitely have a handle around the principle level. But this acknowledgment that the teachers of course want, ‘Okay! your principles are all very well, but what am I going to do? How are we going to make that work?’ So, I think that is a really interesting reflection for us.

TEACHER I I think if you were in a big secondary school somewhere, and you just wanted to some quick-win, and you are like ‘What do I do?’, that is your you know.

NF Yes, that is helpful.

TEACHER I And you cannot always get that. Because you cannot always get access to a specialist, or somebody that you could chat that through with, and it is brilliant for that.

NF What is interesting for EMTAS colleagues, is that things like the sentence stems and substitution tables and so on, have been in their online resources for years. But there is something about the way we have put it together in the toolkit, that has made schools home in on it. And I am not sure I know why that is. Maybe the oracy focus?

TEACHER I I think the oracy, like you said. Because when we looked at its Teacher I1 was like ‘Oh yeah!’ and (name) was like ‘Oh!’ And I think this is the thing. Like I said to you, there is so much crossover at the minute, there is so much CPD and development going on, a big whole nationwide focus on oracy. That I think that has been the key and it is sort of marrying it altogether. Plus the one-stop-shop, you can go in there and look, there it is. That element of it.

NF The sixth question (6) is a slightly difficult one to ask in a way, because it is about do schools feel that working in this way with the children has in anyway changed mindset towards, say your new arrivals, or the children with more complex needs? It might be quite hard to say that to even assess that, I think.

TEACHER I We had been talking about this again a lot, as senior leaders, and we were talking about it a lot of last week within the LLRP, as well. I think it is, again, it is all about that belonging section, that concept. Me and Headteacher I, were saying this, the world is changing out there. The world is changing. Things are very, very different day-to-day now, cohort-to-cohort, year-on-year. Need increases, nuances increase, complexities increase around the cohorts that you are getting in. And it is about coaching and upskilling your staff to be able to understand that first of all. Which is why I think the things like the toolkit are so useful. But it is also about saying to people, through your values, your ethos, the way you are presenting things. Actually, this is the way it is now. This is how it is in 2025 and it is about this constantly being open to adaption. Adaption, adaption, adaption. Personalisation for the children and actually thinking problem solving. What can I do? What is that one little thing that I can do? Quick win that is going to make a massive difference. Because it is so challenging now, there are so many challenges out there, and actually, it is really difficult to keep positive, isn’t it? And there are so many things (inaudible 00:20:02) the teachers. All this stuff thrown at them day in day out, day in day out. But it is about keeping that positive mindset, that actually, ‘Let’s look at this with curiosity.’ What is the one thing that we can do to help this cohort? To help this child? to help this group? And I think this is the way we need to be going forward. Again, we were saying, it is down to basic things like tightening up your policies, tightening up things, like making sure you have got all this access. A coaching-type approach for staff as well so that they can have these professional discussions between them and not even necessarily need to come to a senior leader for that. Do you know what I mean?

NF Yes, absolutely.

TEACHER I So they are having access to current research that is out there. On all sorts of things and having that professional discourse, professional look at what is out there. Because the thing is now there is so much that they can access.

NF I know, and that is a challenge of itself. It is the what do I access?

TEACHER I What do I access? What is useful? I think this is, this is it. But what I am saying is it is about being professional, looking yourself at what you can find out and talking. And I am not saying we are not here to support, but what I am saying is that constant want to be your own researcher and look up actually what you can do to support the children. And I think this is the biggest shift that you almost need, and almost not done too. You cannot wait for SLT to tell you. We might not have the answers *per se*. We will always give it a go. But I think as well, it is hard, isn’t it? Because teachers are not supported. You have got youngers teachers coming into the profession and it is really difficult, and like… ‘Oh! And of you go!” It is thinking about, how we go forward. Like you say, what tools online we can provide. But also, how that can be disseminated to staff, how staff can utilise that themselves, to be able to get the best out of it. And support all the children because it is an ever-changing landscape.

NF It is and I have really picked up, compared to say interviews I might have done, I am guessing thinking pre-lockdown. I am not sure if that is relevant or not and really get a sense of a lot of stress from schools about the levels of additional needs they are having to deal with. Once upon a time, the new arrival and the multilingual was the problem, whereas that is not really seen as the problem anymore.

TEACHER I No.

NF That has been a real eye opener for me, talking to people, that kind of shift.

TEACHER I Yes, but that is not going to change.

NF No, it is not going to change.

TEACHER I It is not going to change, and we talk about this a lot, it is adapted, adapt, adapt.

NF Yes, absolutely.

TEACHER I What can you do? Even down to looking at your day-to-day, how you manage your classrooms now, your provision. Again, small group, this is a massive thing this small group. You know?

NF Yes, absolutely.

TEACHER I It is literally that level and it is, it is really difficult. It is a massive shift and staff still have the pressure of results, and I think this is the…

NF Absolutely, the being measured all the time does not change. It is very tough, but that is why we are so pleased that in a way, everyone has taken the toolkit on a whole-class level, rather than…. We know that the multilingual children’s needs are getting attended to, but so are everybody else’s hopefully. The last two questions are just short. Seven (7) was there anything you wished that was included that you were unable to find? And the last one is about how I might use it in the future? Which frankly we have covered, so I do not think we need to talk about that.

TEACHER I It might be nice, again, there is lots in there, but maybe for someone who is completely fresh into teaching, just a nice little hints and tips. Basics, basics, basics.

NF So almost like an ECT (Early Career Teacher) advice.

TEACHER I ECT level.

NF Yes, what a lovely idea.

TEACHER I ECT level for multilingual learners. You know like our old guides that we used to get, that sort of thing.

NF Absolutely. That is a great idea, yes.

TEACHER I Just something nice a quick, I think that would be nice to be in there. And for TAs as well, because you might get a TA come into a school that has never worked with multilingual pupils before.

NF So, for a new TA, people new to as it were.

TEACHER I Yes.

NF Lovely, I love that idea.

TEACHER I Or an agency staff member or something like that. You know what I mean?

NF Lovely, great, thank you. In terms of that future use, I just think it is plugged in, isn’t it, for your next five years and that is where you are up.

TEACHER I Yes.

NF Is there anything else you want to say?

TEACHER I No, just that it has been really good so thank you for that. Because it has been good in terms of where we have been thinking about a lot of things within the curriculum in general for us and it has really developed the oracy work as well. So, thank you for that.

NF Thank you for taking part, as always.

TEACHER I It has been really good because it is having really positive impact where the children are developing their vocabulary and language. They are really progressing. And I think it is that what impact has it had on the children. And I do think it has really helped to strengthen outcomes for the children and that personalised, what I keep banging on about, personalised practice for children and what works for them. What are you doing that works for them?

NF Yes, absolutely, great.

TEACHER I We have got two boys, as I said to you before, year two, that did not pass their phonics test last. Not that I am, whatever…. But they are on track to pass phonics test, and do you know why? Because they are just loving life, they are immersed in everything, using the language. And they were new to English last year. And that is through sense of belonging that is coming in and having peers, and talking to their peers, and like I have said to you, that is where they have come on more than the things we teach.

NF Lovely, it is about releasing that time for talk, and people feeling they are allowed to allow the children to talk, and the dividends come.

TEACHER I Yes, absolutely.

NF Yes, brilliant. That is lovely anecdote, thanks. I do not know if Teacher I1, if wants to talk to me separately at all but if she wanted to come in at another time, I could always chat with her separately. Obviously, she does not have to, but if she wanted to given that she has not been able to, get her to drop me an email.

TEACHER I Yes, I will ask her. I know she would have liked to have been here. I know she has got a student in there at the moment who is struggling a little bit, so she could not.

NF That is fine. Obviously, that takes priority over everything.

TEACHER I Come away and think today. I will let her know and sure she would love to speak to you.

NF She sounded great when we talked to her on the (inaudible 00:27:47).

TEACHER I She is amazing.

NF Sounded like she is really committed.

TEACHER I She is really into it, as well.

NF Obviously, this is the end of this project. But I will check-in with schools in 6-12 months’ time because I am dying to find out what people do next as it were. So, in that way, it is not the end, but it is always a joy to work with you, Teacher I.

TEACHER I And you.

NF I hope we will see each other before too long.

TEACHER I Yes.

NF Thanks so much.