

Support to Schools for English as an Additional Language, pre and post-tri borough changes

In RBKC it was agreed by Schools' Forum not to contribute financially to the centrally funded Learning and Development Service (LDS). This established team provided EAL fluency language assessments from the Early Years into Key Stage 4, bespoke school based projects, training, dedicated Traveller support and resources to meet the needs of children and young people in schools.

As a direct result of the Schools Forum decision the service could not be financed on full cost recovery basis, LDS provision has been discontinued through staff redundancy processes. Some schools however were clear that this service was necessary and as a result officers from this team are providing advice and guidance on a school by school commissioned basis.

Some pupils in schools who would have benefited from this support are in need of specialist intervention and some represent vulnerable underperforming ethnic groups. These pupils represent a significant targeted key group in narrowing the gap strategies. In RBKC schools it is anticipated that this shortfall will be met through school improvement support where the needs of all pupils are incorporated into monitoring and evaluation procedures, data analysis and lesson observations.

In H&F, the needs of EAL learners, including those of black minority and Gypsy Roma Traveller (GRT) heritage, were met through the centrally retained Opportunities and Achievement team, and was a part of the school improvement entitlement for all pupils in all schools. Following the bi-borough re-organisation, the dedicated GRT team was made redundant.

H&F School's Forum however agreed to top-slice the Direct Schools Grant (DSG) to retain a post for EAL activities. This top-slice is funding one sovereign EAL Adviser post which offers cross-phase consultancy/advice and support to all schools, including developing bespoke school-based projects and training, offering teaching and learning reviews of EAL provision, delivering a central training programme, developing resources in collaboration with other agencies, and offering regular networking opportunities to disseminate and keep EAL coordinators in schools updated with relevant government directives. The central training programme focuses on developing the expertise of mainstream class teachers to meet the needs of all EAL learners (beginners and advanced) as part of a universal educational entitlement and has been running for the past three years.

As in RBKC, EAL learners in H&F represent a significant targeted group in narrowing the gap strategies, which the Bi-borough school improvement services (including the EAL Adviser) will continue to monitor, evaluate and support. Where there is need, school advisers or external consultants will commission the expertise of this centrally retained service in Hammersmith and Fulham. This is a strength of the Bi-Borough protocol.

It has been planned that a high profile English as an Additional Language and Black and Minority Achievement Conference will be organised in the Spring Term to which Headteachers, Governors and indeed Councillors will be invited to attend. This will be offered on a Tri -Borough basis. It is essential that the needs, abilities and cultural heritage of these children representing their local communities are a positive feature in schools, curriculum themes and high achievement aspirations in the new local authority structures.

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