



Support for minority ethnic achievement: continuing professional development

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Introduction

1. The introduction of the Ethnic Minority Achievement Grant (EMAG) in April 1999 was evaluated in *Managing Support for the Attainment of Pupils from Minority Ethnic Groups*, published by OFSTED in October 2001.¹
2. Funding for training for both mainstream and specialist staff is one of the key features of the new grant. The report drew on a range of evidence on the impact of the new grant on training opportunities, but direct evaluation of training events was not undertaken. A survey was subsequently set up to explore the range, quality and impact of in-service training on teachers' performance and professional development. This report gives the findings of that survey.
3. The survey set out to answer these questions:
 - Has the extent and quality of professional development offered by central EMAG teams improved under the new funding regime?
 - To what extent have headteachers used devolved funding to support professional development for mainstream and specialist staff?
 - What are the features of good professional development for raising the attainment of pupils with EAL and under-attaining groups?
 - How are schools and local education authorities (LEAs) monitoring the impact of this professional development?
4. Ten LEAs, representing rural and urban contexts and differing pupil populations, were selected for the visits. The LEAs were Cambridgeshire, Dudley, Haringey, Hertfordshire, Manchester, Redbridge, Rochdale, Slough, Surrey and Wolverhampton.
5. On average the LEAs had approximately 30% minority ethnic pupils (26% English as an additional language (EAL)), but the range was from 4% to 66% (3% to 45% EAL). Virtually all the LEAs had significant numbers of refugees and asylum-seekers. The largest central team of the LEAs visited contained ten staff, the smallest two. The average team size was six. In addition to the EAL support needs of developing bilingual pupils, the following groups were identified as needing a particular focus owing to low levels of achievement: Pakistani, Bangladeshi, Black Caribbean and Turkish pupils, and Travellers, refugees and asylum-seekers more generally.
6. EMAG managers were asked to provide a range of information and data about training based on the typology of professional development activities produced by the

¹ For part of the period covered by this inspection exercise, EMAG funding also included a grant for the education of Traveller pupils and was known as EMTAG. Funding for Traveller pupils was once again separated from the main grant in April 2001. To avoid confusion, the abbreviation EMAG is used throughout the report. Professional development concerned with the support of Traveller pupils was included in the scope of this exercise.

Department for Education and Skills (DfES) (see annex). Meetings were held with service managers to discuss the material provided. The findings are given in the section on LEA provision for professional development.

7. The final section of the report provides examples of training which successfully engaged participants. Over 40 events were attended, both school- and centre-based. In addition, 20 schools were visited to assess the impact of course attendance on planning and teaching practice. Lessons were also inspected. Discussions were held with course participants, headteachers, senior managers and course providers.

8. In addition to training events, whether school- or centre-based, a small number of other activities were inspected. Carried out by EMAG managers, advisers or school co-ordinators, these included: demonstration lessons; mentoring sessions for school-based EMAG staff; advice for mainstream staff on a drop-in basis; and joint planning sessions between school and EMAG managers. The number of such activities was limited, largely because of the small number of EMAG advisory staff available for work of this kind in individual schools, although, as EMAG managers pointed out, in-class partnership teaching and the review of EMAG action plans by EMAG and school managers, constituted a valuable form of in-service activity.

Main findings

Nature and coverage of training

- The amount of training related to minority ethnic achievement changed little over the three-year period 1998–2001, but the range of training widened to embrace the broader remit of the EMAG.
- The majority of school- and centre-based courses are now short, stand-alone events. There has been a sharp decline in the number of long-term accredited courses, particularly those for specialist EAL staff. The proportion of EMAG-funded staff with appropriate qualifications is now as low as 30% in some LEAs. Several LEAs are buying in courses developed overseas that are aimed at mainstream teachers working in multilingual classrooms and these courses are also being used to train specialists. Other LEAs are developing in-depth specialist courses to be delivered through distance-learning modules.
- The number of accredited courses for bilingual assistants has also declined. Despite the generally high quality of such courses, they do not usually provide a route by which bilingual assistants can achieve qualified teacher status; nor do they affect salary levels. These factors are disincentives to attendance.
- In a few LEAs, training events were aimed jointly, and successfully, at both Traveller and EMAG support staff. Traveller education services still focus their professional development activities on the needs of Traveller pupils, but are more often set in the context of wider work on race equality.
- LEAs have tried to increase provision for mainstream staff, but this remains the group most difficult to attract. Even when middle or senior managers or subject teachers are specifically targeted, schools are more likely to send their EMAG staff on courses dealing with minority ethnic achievement. Recruitment has been more successful where mainstream and specialist staff are invited to attend training together.
- The involvement of EMAG managers in training for initiatives such as the national literacy and numeracy strategies has been highly beneficial, resulting in increased joint working with mainstream advisory teachers. In general, links between EMAG managers and LEA advisory services have improved.

Quality of provision

- The overall quality of the training seen was good, although individual sessions ranged from outstanding to poor. Some 60% of the centrally organised provision was good or very good. For school-based work the figure was 77%. Quality at individual LEA level varied from good to satisfactory.
- The professional development activities seen in the survey were consistently rated as relevant to need and reflected, in the best cases, a successful audit of needs conducted by central service managers in conjunction with schools. In the main, participants expressed high levels of satisfaction with the training.

- The monitoring of impact was judged the least satisfactory element of the training. Course providers usually requested immediate feedback at the end of sessions, but strategies for following up longer-term gains, including changes in teaching practice and outcomes for pupils, were largely absent.

LEA provision for professional development

Quantity of professional development

9. LEA service managers were asked for information about in-service provision over the three-year period (1998–2001) for a range of groups: mainstream teachers; (bilingual) classroom assistants; EMAG teachers; and others such as headteachers, governors and nursery assistants. In 40% of LEAs the amount of professional development had increased, in 30% it had remained the same and in 30% it had decreased.

10. Managers who were able to give a figure estimated that 5% of the funding from the EMAG was spent on professional development.

Participation

11. Virtually all school-based EMAG staff attended relevant training on a termly basis.

12. In general, LEAs have tried to increase provision for mainstream staff, but the numbers of such participants varied widely. Whether for reasons related to the difficulty of obtaining release from teaching duties or simply the perception that such professional development is not for them, they remained the group most difficult to attract. In one urban LEA, for example, only nine mainstream primary and secondary teachers were projected to attend a course in 2000/01, whereas in an outer London borough, the figure was almost 2000. In general, more primary than secondary mainstream teachers attend EMAG-related professional development.

Course length

13. While the range and nature of professional development activities are varied, the majority of courses are short, stand-alone events. A few are spread over several sessions. Where the time commitment is greater, release from school is usually combined with after-school attendance. In-depth specialist courses are now rare. Only one of the LEAs now runs a substantial course for EMAG specialists. This is a high-quality course that grew out of the former, nationally recognised Royal Society of Arts course. It is accredited by a higher education provider and has, until now, been a pre-condition of appointment to specialist posts in the borough. This has already proved harder to sustain under devolved funding.

14. Some LEAs are now discussing how they might develop afresh such courses, given the great difficulty of finding qualified and experienced staff for specialist posts. A group of northern LEAs has received funding from the Teacher Training Agency to establish, in conjunction with a higher education institution, a course which will include distance-learning modules.

15. Two LEAs run substantial and accredited courses for bilingual assistants, but other LEAs have discontinued such training. Whatever the quality of the training on such courses, they do not provide a route by which bilingual assistants can achieve qualified teacher status nor do they lead to salary increases. These factors are disincentives to attendance.

16. In two LEAs the increase in training for mainstream teachers has come about as a result of introducing a training package aimed at helping teachers work with bilingual learners in the mainstream. However, this material is equally being used to train EMAG specialists in the absence of any more appropriate training opportunities. Long-term specialist courses focusing on the attainment of, for example, Black Caribbean pupils or race equality issues, were not encountered.

17. The devolution of funds and the reduction in central teams has had a significant impact on professional development in many LEAs. For example, an increasing number of schools are appointing classroom assistants rather than teachers for this work and their training needs are very different. Releasing staff for training has become increasingly difficult. A number of LEAs are considering offering training during the holidays and weekends as an alternative.

Course content

18. All the LEAs had reviewed their provision to ensure that it met the requirements of the new grant. Most stressed their greater focus on achievement (supported by training on data analysis by ethnicity, interpretation of data and strategies for tackling underachievement of specific groups), on the needs of refugees and asylum-seekers and highly mobile groups, and on tackling racism and equalities issues more generally in the light of the report of the Stephen Lawrence inquiry. In particular, issues relating to Black Caribbean and Black African pupils figure more frequently in the programmes of many LEAs.

19. Many noted the increasing number of supply teachers without specialist qualifications doing EMAG-related work and attempted to differentiate their training accordingly, offering much more basic provision than they had done previously. Several have tried hard to increase the emphasis on mainstream staff, but reported difficulty in attracting such staff out of schools. Inviting pairs of mainstream and specialist staff to attend (and providing supply cover) has proved successful in some LEAs, as has the provision of more school-based training. These strategies have successfully recruited more mainstream teachers.

20. The increased range of issues covered by the grant has broadened the range of EMAG-related professional development. The corollary is that elements such as training to support the needs of pupils with EAL have decreased. On average, the percentage of training concerned with bilingual pupils has dropped from approximately 80% to just over 60% in these LEAs. Courses dealing with under-attaining groups (especially Black Caribbean pupils) now make up 20%, while a further 20% of the provision addresses race equality, the needs of refugees and asylum-seekers, family literacy, curriculum development and governor training.

21. Traveller education teams still focus most of their professional development on the specific needs of this group in the context of wider race equality work. However, in a few LEAs some professional development activities were addressed jointly to both Traveller and EMAG staff.

Range

22. Most LEAs identified a very wide range of professional development activities: centrally based training, school-based training, team-teaching, shadowing, sharing

and networking, school-based action research, exchanges, performance management and the development of guidelines. Only a few offer courses with accreditation, although some individuals were supported while seeking further professional qualifications.

Contribution to other LEA professional development

23. Virtually all EMAG teams contribute to broader LEA professional development. Many commented that the requirement for EMAG managers to be involved in some of the national training in connection with, for example, the National Literacy Strategy and National Numeracy Strategy, had been highly beneficial. This had resulted in some excellent joint working with mainstream advisory teachers. In most LEAs, EMAG trainers are also involved in newly qualified teacher and baseline-assessment training. Beyond that, the range in individual LEAs is very wide, but it includes working with those responsible for training on special educational needs (SEN), behaviour support, inclusion, race equality and citizenship, parental involvement, early years and governors.

Provision for LEA central staff

24. Most EMAG managers felt that links with other sections of the LEA advisory service had greatly improved over the last few years and a future requirement for Education Development Plans to include minority ethnic attainment as a core element was likely to consolidate these links.

25. In several LEAs, offers of training had not been taken up. Half of the teams indicated work with specific groups such as the LEA's school improvement team, the senior management board, the careers service, the SEN service, literacy consultants and educational psychologists. Several teams mentioned that they had been invited to work with the LEA on training in connection with the Commission for Racial Equality standards.

26. In some LEAs, EMAG managers are automatically included in all significant in-house LEA training. In terms of keeping up to date in their own specialist areas or broadening their experience, EMAG managers cited attendance at national conferences run by professional associations, involvement in European study award schemes and studying for further qualifications (such as an MA in applied linguistics), or national courses for aspiring headteachers.

Providers

27. Most professional development is provided by members of the central EMAG management team, supported by school-based EMAG staff when possible. Only three EMAG teams specifically mentioned using other LEA advisers on their courses, despite the generally stated desire to work more collaboratively with the mainstream. Occasionally, outside lecturers and consultants are brought in. Many managers would like to be able to deliver more customised, school-based training, but the size of the central teams makes this difficult.

28. At school level, EMAG co-ordinators provide much of the in-house training, both informally through joint teaching, planning and curriculum development, but also at staff and departmental meetings. Increasingly, school-based co-ordinators are

expected to be able to deliver high-quality training and this is being written into new job descriptions. Not all are sufficiently experienced or qualified to do so.

29. In one LEA, a beacon school has the teaching of EAL as a focus, and this has led to a range of local training and collaborative activities that have been greatly appreciated.

Monitoring outcomes

30. In most LEAs, there is provision for end-of-course evaluation and, in the best practice, customised sheets and time to complete them are built into the session so that all participants can feed back their views. However, strategies to monitor the medium- or long-term impact of professional development activities are virtually non-existent. There are no routine procedures for monitoring changes in teaching practice among those who attended courses, either by EMAG managers or senior managers in schools.

Effects of EMAG on training

31. EMAG managers identified the following major changes to training provision brought about largely by the introduction of the new grant.

32. On the positive side there was:

- greater focus on mainstream staff than in the past, especially through school-based training
- greater focus on achievement, with a clearer recognition of the needs of under-attaining groups
- greater involvement for EMAG teachers in national initiatives, such as the literacy and numeracy strategies and increased joint working with a broader range of LEA advisory teachers
- greater differentiation in training (due to the needs of newly appointed, inexperienced staff)
- greater involvement in LEA-wide training in half the LEAs as a result of inclusion of minority ethnic issues in the Education Development Plan.

33. On the negative side it emerged that:

- only one LEA had used school audits as part of its action-planning process, enabling professional development activities to be customised to need
- it was increasingly difficult to get staff (both mainstream and EMAG-funded) released for training, although where LEAs provide supply cover for course attendance this helps significantly
- few schools are using devolved funding for professional development, especially for mainstream staff, with most professional development being funded from monies held centrally
- only one LEA still provides an in-depth accredited course covering both EAL and attainment issues more broadly
- in most central teams, the majority of managers and advisory teachers have additional specialist qualifications for this field of work, but the overall percentage of EMAG-funded staff with appropriate qualifications is now as low as 30% in some LEAs.

34. Interesting developments include the planning of new specialist courses in several LEAs, and the introduction in two of an Australian course aimed at mainstream teachers working with bilingual pupils. The LEAs were using it to train both mainstream and EMAG-funded staff in the absence of anything more finely tuned to the needs of specialists.

Activities observed

Quality

35. HMI graded the activities visited on four dimensions:

- the quality of the session which included planning, organisation, presentation and accompanying documentation
- the relevance of the activities to need
- the response of the participants
- arrangements made for monitoring its impact.

36. The quality of the events was good and, although individual sessions ranged from outstanding to poor, 60% of the centre-based work was good or very good. For school-based work the figure was 77%. Quality at individual LEA level varied from very good to satisfactory, but half the LEAs attracted overall grades of good or very good.

37. Activities were consistently rated as highly relevant to need and reflected, in the best cases, a successful audit of needs conducted by central service managers in conjunction with schools.

38. Participants' response to the training was good in almost all cases, only rarely falling below satisfactory. Levels of satisfaction with what was on offer were high.

39. The monitoring of impact was judged the least satisfactory element of the training. Course providers usually requested immediate feedback at the end of sessions, but strategies for following up longer-term gains, including changes in teaching practice and pupil outcomes, were almost entirely absent.

The context and nature of activities

40. The content and nature of the activities attended were very varied. Themes included:

- the needs of isolated bilingual learners
- equal opportunities, including racism
- working with minority ethnic parents
- the induction of new staff to the work of the EMAG services
- raising the attainment of Black Caribbean pupils
- meeting the needs of Pakistani boys
- National Numeracy Strategy training and bilingual pupils
- supporting older Traveller children with low literacy skills
- planning an EAL component for the Key Stage 3 strategy
- updating EMAG staff on the foundation stage

- training and supporting bilingual learners in the mainstream
- the assessment of bilingual learners
- distinguishing between SEN and EAL.

41. Some of these events were school-based, some centre-based. Some were aimed at EMAG staff (including bilingual assistants and Traveller staff), some at mainstream staff and some at both. It was common, but frustrating for EMAG managers, that courses aimed mainly at mainstream staff attracted mostly EMAG staff.

42. Some of the professional development events were teaching sessions where the intention was for the specialist to demonstrate good practice in multilingual classrooms. Other events included planning and briefing sessions by EMAG managers with headteachers and EMAG co-ordinators. Most events were stand-alone, although several were part of long courses or school training following considerable pre-planning between an EMAG advisory teacher and school managers.

43. The range of issues covered by EMAG services in part explains why time for in-depth specialist courses is limited.

Examples of activities

Example 1: welcoming and integrating newly arrived pupils into the mainstream

This one-day conference was aimed at specialist and mainstream staff in a rural area. It successfully (and unusually) attracted a balance of the two groups. The two major providers, the Traveller Team manager and the Black and Bilingual Team manager, tackled the following themes through a combination of whole- and small-group activities which successfully engaged the interest of the participants: admissions, induction programmes, making the curriculum accessible, involving parents and raising the cultural awareness of the whole school community.

A wide range of relevant resources was well-displayed and ample opportunities given to participants to browse during coffee and lunch breaks. Individual resource packs supplemented the presenters' overheads, encompassing the theoretical context of the practical points made. The group activities were particularly successful in engendering lively discussion and promoting collaborative working – the most animated debate was sparked by a case study on school uniform and the wearing of jewellery.

Participants completed evaluation sheets at the end of the day and were asked to indicate their post-event intentions. These were to be sent to the course runners six months later with a comment on what had effect been achieved.

Example 2: meeting the needs of refugee pupils

A repeat twilight seminar was held due to an overwhelming response to an earlier session. The audience consisted of primary and secondary class teachers, EMAG and refugee support staff, headteachers, classroom assistants and school governors. An experienced speaker made reference to the hostility generated towards refugees by the media and the need for the various groups involved with refugees – teachers, social workers and lawyers – to work together. She pointed out that not all refugee children are traumatised and that school itself can be therapeutic, stressing that children have the right to learn and make friends and be treated as children rather than as refugees or asylum-seekers.

The speaker listed experiences that make children vulnerable and focused on what helps children to be resilient (belonging, problem-solving, integration of own culture and culture of exile). She showed examples of refugee children's artwork and elaborated on the nature of the help given to individual children by the association she worked for. Finally, there was a whole-group discussion on a case study of a boy from Zaire who was behind in his schooling due to the family's flight from attack and subsequent travels.

The strengths of the session were: the speaker's informed presentation, supported by good visuals; her ability to reduce tension; and the excellent documentation. The one weakness of the session was the lack of time for participants to join in and share their own experiences and explore the implications for schools more fully. Another session was planned for this.

Example 3: 'ESL in the mainstream'

This was the first of a ten-session certificated course, which was developed in Australia. Aimed at mainstream teachers, this LEA is also using it as training for newly appointed EMAG teachers who have no experience or qualifications in this area. Several EMAG managers have been trained as tutors and this is the fourth course to be run in the LEA for primary teachers (there are also courses for secondary teachers). Schools are asked to send a class teacher and one EMAG teacher to the course.

The first session was an introduction in which course outlines and procedures were shared, but it also enabled participants to share their own experiences and knowledge. In an early task, for example, teachers were asked to identify the skills and knowledge EAL learners brought to the classroom in addition to those of all children. This approach set a constructive tone, with participants identifying a wide range of positive features. The confident trainers rapidly created an atmosphere that facilitated valuable debate and discussion. The participants thought the materials were of good quality, although the Australian context, used in many of the examples and references, was, on occasion, inappropriate. The amount of material to be covered in each session made it difficult to explore the local situation fully.

44. HMI visited both primary and secondary schools where several staff had attended the 'ESL in the mainstream' course previously. In some of the schools, EMAG co-ordinators had also trained as tutors.

45. One primary headteacher believed the course had been excellent and pointed to a range of outcomes that she had noted following course attendance: more relevant displays with better use of visuals; use of first language and more culturally relevant materials; better-quality partnership teaching; and better liaison with parents. She was planning to send all her staff on the course over time. A visit to a Year 2 lesson, in which 85% of the pupils had EAL, confirmed the headteacher's view of the excellent joint teaching taking place in the school. The lesson, which was preparation for a class visit to a local museum, involved making chocolate crispies (part of their lunch pack). There were links with science, mathematics and health education. Outcomes for English were the writing of a simple instructional text at three levels of difficulty according to pupils' proficiency in English. There was good focus on oral work, supported by real objects, photographs and labels and the use of a whiteboard. Pupils were encouraged to describe, order and hypothesise. The careful questioning enabled early-stage learners to rehearse the language needed for the task and learn from the models provided by the more fluent English speakers. All pupils were thus drawn into the activity and the language associated with it, whatever their level of English. The strategies promoted by the 'ESL in the mainstream' course were much in evidence.

46. In one secondary school, 14 teachers from a range of departments had attended the course the previous year. They had enjoyed the course and were able to identify strategies that they believe they now successfully use in their lessons (greater use of visuals, frameworks for writing). In one science lesson strategies supportive of bilingual pupils were fully used. In this science lesson the teacher was revising molar masses and the periodic tables. Pupils were asked in pairs to go through a worksheet and underline anything they did not understand. The confusions identified by the girls in this way were then explained by the teacher with help from the rest of the class. A good focus on oral work throughout the lesson ensured that pupils understood the key concepts under consideration and was extremely helpful to the many EAL pupils in the class. The science teacher, who was bilingual, explained that she was now much more aware of the difficulties presented by texts and spent time in class unravelling confusions through talk. She also now recognised the specific linguistic demands of science texts (the use of the passive voice, for example), and took time to explain and model this for pupils. She used a range of strategies to support learning, many of which had come from the 'ESL in the mainstream' course, which she had greatly appreciated. Unfortunately, there had been no opportunity for this gifted young teacher to share her developing expertise with other members of the science department.

Example 4: school training day on equal opportunities

A boys' secondary school had requested training on equal opportunities from the LEA Minority Ethnic Service following incidents which had taken place in the school in recent months. Several staff had expressed concern and a deputy headteacher had set up a small group to look at this. Although a policy had been produced seven years before, equal opportunities were not felt to have a sufficiently high profile any more. The group, with the help of the LEA trainer for equalities, carried out a staff and pupil survey and committed to reviewing its school development plan in the light of the outcomes and the Race Relations (Amendment) Act.

Clear aims and objectives were set for the day and a range of whole-school and group activities developed over a period of several months, along with the collation of data from the in-house survey on attitudes (staff and pupils) to racism and sexism. The day was therefore carefully planned and delivered with a good balance of input and opportunities for discussion.

Response from the staff was good, helped by some paired tasks in which staff were asked to place the school on an equal opportunities continuum ranging from equal share/representation and participation to tolerance/non-discrimination. After some initial hesitation, a range of staff attitudes was expressed freely, some diametrically opposed. One teacher suggested that 'Asians would feel it disrespectful to use their home language in an English context', while another countered by saying she had used first languages in her class to aid comprehension and it had been most successful. The issue of 'political correctness' was given a good airing.

The in-house surveys revealed some disturbing points, indicating, for example, that sexism and racism were experienced daily by some of the boys and staff, and that there was no consistency of approach in dealing with this. These findings clearly angered some of the staff while others were not surprised by them and this gave rise to fierce debate in some of the small-group discussions that followed the presentation.

47. The training was found too challenging by some staff, but productive by others. Much thought and preparation had gone into planning the event specifically for this school. It remained to be seen if senior managers could resolve some of the tensions and create a consensus about how to move the entire school forward.

Example 5: tackling Pakistani boys' underachievement

In a school where just under 50% of the pupils were of Pakistani heritage, there was concern about the achievement of the Pakistani boys. The school had brought in an EMAG advisory teacher to investigate what was going wrong. The advisory teacher started by observing a wide range of Year 7 and 8 lessons. She noted effective strategies used by teachers to support all EAL learners and also analysed Pakistani boys' responses to reading. She produced two informative papers for the school, setting out her findings. A decision has now been taken to focus on strategies for active reading. This will be focused around materials for a course used with Year 7 pupils, combining English, history, geography and religious education, which are to be rewritten by the school. The advisory teacher had analysed one of the units, 'Who are the Romans?'. She focused in particular on the kinds of questions used in the booklet (factual, higher order and so on) and argued that a fuller range of question types was needed.

In this session, she demonstrated strategies for working on a text in a classroom situation. The participants entered willingly into the role-play (as the pupils) and responded to her questions. Then the 'pupils' were asked to work in pairs to formulate further questions about anything in the text they did not know or understand. The session went well. The range of activities was built on a detailed analysis of the problems at the school, a good atmosphere was created, there was much humour, the documentation was good and the session had a clear structure. Everyone was clear by the end of the session about what they had to do next in further developing the materials.

Example 6: National Numeracy Strategy training for bilingual and Traveller classroom assistants

EMAG-funded classroom assistants (including those who support Traveller pupils) are given at least one afternoon training session a term by advisory staff in one LEA. In this session the theme was numeracy, and although some had already done national classroom assistant numeracy training, many were new to the service and this was their first numeracy training.

The aim of the session was to help the classroom assistants understand how they could best support EAL and Traveller pupils in their mathematics development – specifically 'to provide a range of activities that promote children's mathematical understanding and language development in relation to shape and space'.

The session was planned on the model of the numeracy hour, with a mental starter session, group activities and a plenary session. All the activities were linked to the space and shape theme and when the whole group broke into smaller groups, the assistants attended an activity at reception, Key Stage 1 or Key Stage 2 level, depending on the ages of the children they usually supported. An excellent handbook written jointly by EMAG and mathematics advisory teachers, giving guidance for teachers working with minority ethnic pupils within the National Numeracy Strategy, was also given to the participants.

The session stressed the importance of supporting language development through mathematics activities. Good examples of activities requiring more than one-word answers were demonstrated, with the group taking on the role of the class. Subsequently, small groups were given other activities and asked to devise ways of introducing them in class to maximise language use. Participants joined in with great enthusiasm. A good plenary session, in which the main teaching points were summarised, rounded off the session. The main points were: ensure the children talk; provide good teacher models of language; support conceptual development through mother tongue if appropriate.

Example 7: race equality training

A centre-based course for primary EMAG staff was held to bring them up to date following the report of the inquiry into the murder of Stephen Lawrence and to consider the implications for schools. A range of activities enabled those present to consider the media's treatment of race in the local area, including the way language is often misused. The inquiry's definition of racism was also considered in

the context of the LEA's schools. This was followed by a group activity in which participants had to discuss how they would handle a range of scenarios at school. One example was how to deal with a remark like 'everyone should be treated the same' in staffroom discussion.

The object of this session was for the participants to extract some practical, working principles that would guide them in school. Suggestions that emerged in the plenary session included: the need to discuss appropriate/inappropriate word usage; the need to record racist incidents; the need to deal with incidents calmly and sensibly by asking questions and discussing issues openly; the need for guidelines to handle incidents that occur outside school; the need for staff to be aware of the cultural and religious implications of their practice; the need to talk to parents; the need to ensure that children are appropriately grouped by reviewing assessment processes regularly.

The course provider was not only well briefed but handled responses with great sensitivity, ensuring a positive outcome to the session, with staff feeling better equipped to tackle such issues in school.

Example 8: development of the EMAG role in a school for pupils with severe learning difficulties

Continuity of support was seen as essential in this school, as was the need for training to take place on an informal basis. For this reason, the EMAG teacher worked in partnership with each class teacher on a regular basis, but also reserved half an hour a day when she was available to be consulted by any member of staff. Training for staff (including special needs support assistants) was based mainly on classroom practice and joint planning sessions. This involved suggestions about the use of culturally appropriate resources in the development of pupils' literacy skills and in the resourcing of other curriculum areas. At the same time, the EMAG teacher supported the gradual raising of awareness of all teaching staff about issues relating to minority ethnic pupils and their needs. Basic guidance about second-language acquisition was offered during planning sessions.

This on-the-spot and sensitively provided training was thought by the headteacher to have been very successful and she has seen staff incorporate a range of appropriate strategies into their planning and teaching in a positive way. It helped that the EMAG teacher has worked in full partnership with staff, frequently leading a lesson to demonstrate good practice with bilingual pupils. The EMAG teacher was currently working alongside the school's literacy co-ordinator to produce a framework for literacy for pupils with severe learning difficulties. Although the headteacher believed that formal whole-staff professional development would now be feasible, she wished to continue with the model that has worked well for the school.

Example 9: school-based EMAG training on Black African and Black Caribbean achievement

A specific focus on black achievement in Years 9 and 10 was agreed by the headteacher of a school and the local EMAG service. An EMAG-funded project leader was attached to the school and facilitated work that the school already had underway. As a result of the extensive school-based professional development supported by this advisory teacher, positive developments quickly became evident. The headteacher's role has been to lend weight to the initiative and identify departments and teachers with whom the project leader could fruitfully work.

A very wide range of professional development has been undertaken over a period of 18 months: contributions to whole-school staff meetings on issues related to the achievement of black pupils; planning sessions with senior managers, heads of year, pastoral heads and tutors; liaison with the Windsor Fellowship already working with Year 11; work with the geography, drama and English departments; meetings with the governor curriculum sub-committee; reviewing the PHSE curriculum; and planning a pilot project on managing behaviour with Year 10 pupils.

In addition, mentoring and monitoring had been critical. A successful feature of the mentoring has been the recruitment of Black African and Black Caribbean mentors, including former pupils.

Expected outcomes of this project are improved GCSE grades for black pupils as well as increased motivation and self-confidence. Such school-based, intensive and customised professional

development can clearly be a force for change when supported by senior managers in the school, as is the case here.

Example 10: familiarising new staff with the needs of bilingual learners

This example featured a school-based session (one of two) for inducting ten staff new to the secondary school – including newly qualified teachers, social inclusion staff and learning mentors appointed under the Excellence in Cities initiative. The session was led by the school's EMAG staff supported by a consultant from the central team. Intended outcomes were to raise awareness of a range of aspects such as knowledge of the languages spoken by the pupils, the needs of asylum-seekers and refugees, factors affecting language acquisition and the demonstration of a range of teaching techniques. All the activities contained relevant content and, in particular, illustrated (by the way they were delivered) 'scaffolding' techniques appropriate for EAL learners. The style of the in-service provision, whereby attention was drawn after each activity to its relevance as a technique for supporting the cognitive and language development of bilingual pupils, was excellent. First-class worksheets had been prepared, and the emphasis on group, pair and individual work demonstrated the value of such strategies for pupils with EAL. The session was greatly enjoyed by the participants who said the implications for their classroom practice were very clear.

Example 11: assessing the EAL pupils who may also have special educational needs

This course, aimed at special educational needs co-ordinators, was to help in distinguishing between pupils with special educational needs and EAL. Participants were given an LEA booklet containing helpful guidance on this issue. The booklet sets out five hypotheses that need to be considered to decide whether a pupil who is learning EAL also has special educational needs. The five factors to be considered are: English language development; task demand; a language difficulty; environmental stress; physical or sensory features. If all hypotheses fail to give an adequate explanation, then there is a strong possibility that the pupil has special educational needs. Training based around the guidance consisted of a good mix of exposition and discussion. A questionnaire, in the form of true or false statements about EAL and special educational needs, gave rise to considerable discussion and revealed a number of misconceptions.

Data about the contrasting numbers of statements of special educational needs issued on behalf of EAL pupils in local schools were presented and the reasons for this discussed. Participants were then asked to consider case studies of pupils and decide whether special needs should be identified. This led to the need for more detailed information and reinforced the usefulness of the hypothesis testing strategy. The response of the participants to the training was good and the course recognised to be highly relevant to their needs.

Example 12: black communication

A stand-alone half-day conference was held to familiarise course participants with the possible range of language forms used by Black African and Black Caribbean pupils and their families and to provide background information on Creoles and dialects. A further dimension of the course was to explore the reasons for the breakdown in communication between some schools and African and Caribbean pupils and families, and to consider whether this was a contributory factor in their underachievement compared with other groups. Although open to all, the course attracted EMAG staff almost exclusively.

In this well-prepared session with excellent back-up documentation on Caribbean language and culture, the activities consisted of: whole-group, paired and small-group brainstorming on what constituted effective communication; listening to taped examples of young Black Caribbean people talking about life at school; a consideration of the dilemma faced by both pupils and teachers as to

whether to go for personal or institutional popularity; and an opportunity to translate poetry from dialect into standard English and to explore gender differences. The use of role-play between a Jamaican mother concerned about her son's progress and a head of year was very effective. For several minutes the audience was unsure if this was real or staged. The mother spoke in Creole and the head of year in standard English. As the dialogue evolved there were numerous misunderstandings. The nuances of speech and culture made the conversation a good vehicle for raising issues about communication difficulties – many of the participants admitted to identifying with the experience portrayed. The role-play incorporated much good humour and captured the attention of the audience, provoking more discussion than any of the other activities.

This was a fast-moving and informative session tackling some difficult issues head on, but in a way that enabled course participants to leave feeling that they had learnt about additional strategies to use in their local context.

Recommendations and conclusions

48. The EMAG central management teams visited as part of this inspection were judged, in the main, to be experienced, well led and valued by schools.

49. Among the strengths of the provision seen in LEAs were:

- a wide range of good-quality activities
- training that responded to the varied needs of the different client groups
- training that took account of the changed remit of the new grant, with, for example, its greater focus on achievement
- increasing amounts of school-based and school-customised professional development activities
- increased joint planning and training with mainstream inspectors and advisory teachers.

50. Good-quality professional development events were characterised by:

- clear aims and objectives and clarity about intended outcomes
- careful planning and organisation of the event
- varied teaching approaches that were largely 'hands-on' and active, providing good models for classroom work
- relevance to need (at individual, school and LEA level) as identified through careful auditing procedures
- good evaluation and monitoring procedures both short- and long-term, including follow-up in school to assess the impact on teaching practice and pupil achievement
- good supporting documentation.

51. Training events in most of the LEAs visited reflected many of these features. The weakest areas were often the auditing of need and, almost always, monitoring and evaluation. Because so much of the provision in this area consists of short, one-off events, the incentive to address these features systematically is perhaps reduced. Most courses, for example, finished with the request to participants to complete evaluation sheets and these often helped course providers to modify subsequent sessions or plan follow-up events. What was missing in all but one LEA, however, was any attempt to monitor impact over time or assess changes to teaching practice or pupil progress at school or classroom level. This was equally true of senior managers in several of the schools visited, who, for the most part, did not monitor the impact of the activities, or ensure their dissemination.

52. A further concern was the lack in all but one LEA of nationally recognised, in-depth accredited training for EAL specialists. Headteachers were finding it difficult to appoint experienced and qualified teachers to EMAG posts. Several LEAs were using, or considering using, courses developed overseas to help mainstream

teachers support bilingual pupils in their classes, with such courses serving as training for specialists too. Other LEAs were in the process of developing higher degree modules with higher education institutions to meet need. In addition to bilingual support, many LEAs and schools wanted more specialist training related to Black Caribbean achievement, and management training for senior EMAG staff more generally. Lack of training and any identified career pathway discouraged good teachers from applying for these posts.

53. The emphasis on raising achievement in the new grant was not always sufficiently explicit in LEAs' training provision. Failure to attract and provide appropriate training for mainstream staff, especially at secondary level, was also of concern.

54. The picture that emerges, therefore, is one of wide-ranging and good-quality professional development provision, but provision that does not meet one of the most urgent training needs in this area, namely for more specialists. At the same time, the difficulty of attracting mainstream staff to training events concerned with the achievement of minority ethnic pupils remains. The release of EMAG staff for training is now largely a matter for school, not EMAG, managers to decide and this is having an impact in some areas where it is increasingly difficult to ensure that school-based staff are released for regular updating.

55. In this context, the requirement for EMAG staff to work more closely with other government initiatives such as the national literacy and numeracy strategies has been a counter-balance which has been highly beneficial.

Recommendations

56. It is recommended that the DfES should:

- review the provision of specialist training for teachers of EAL, and minority ethnic achievement more broadly, with a view to ensuring that
 - high-quality training is accessible to teachers on a regional basis
 - qualifications are comparable in quality and status
 - course content is relevant and flexible enough to meet the needs of a wide range of groups such as EMAG managers, EMAG co-ordinators and teachers in schools, Traveller support staff and bilingual assistants
- continue its strategy of encouraging the participation of EMAG staff in training provision linked to national initiatives, and ensuring the permeation of minority ethnic issues in such developments by involving EMAG specialists from the start.

57. LEA EMAG teams should:

- calculate and publish the percentage of EMAG funding spent on professional development
- review the balance of course provision, ensuring that opportunities for both accredited, in-depth training as well as shorter more generalist training exist

- ensure that course evaluation is more than end-of-session feedback and takes account of longer-term gains such as changes in teaching practice and pupil outcomes.

58. Schools should:

- encourage senior managers and mainstream teachers to see that training related to minority ethnic achievement is relevant for all staff, not just those with EMAG responsibilities and support their attendance on appropriate courses
- seek to appoint appropriately qualified EMAG staff and, where this is not possible, make continuing in-service training a feature of the post
- monitor the outcomes of training and disseminate resulting good practice.

Annex: DfES typology of professional development activities

Self-appraisal against national standards or other standards of competence to identify development needs and plans

Collaboration and networking to share knowledge, skills and experience and promote work-based learning

- classroom observation, team teaching, work shadowing
- mentoring and being mentored
- participation in professional learning teams within schools
- working with advanced skills teachers to share skills and expertise
- involvement in peer networks and working between clusters of schools, for example, in Education Action Zones or Excellence in Cities areas
- working with training schools to share experience and good practice
- working with beacon or specialist schools to share experience and good practice
- leading professional development activities within schools
- other sharing and networking.

More formal exchanges, placements and study visits

- exchanges with teachers in other local schools, beacon or specialist schools, or schools in Education Action Zones or Excellence in Cities areas
- secondments into LEAs or other educational organisations
- business placements and exchanges
- international exchanges and study visits
- sabbaticals
- other exchanges, placements or study visits.

Specific training activities

- in-service training days
- short courses
- other specific training, including NOF-funded training and performance management training.

School-based research

- best-practice research scholarships
- other teacher research.

Other developmental activities

- online ICT-based learning and development
- studying for further degrees
- development using professional bursaries
- attending conferences
- attending twilight, weekend or summer schools
- other developmental activities.