



Could they do even better?

The writing of advanced bilingual learners of English at Key Stage 2: HMI survey of good practice

**Better
education
and care**

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Executive summary

1. There is growing evidence that advanced bilingual learners do not achieve their full potential in English as they move through school.¹ Analysis of the end of key stage data shows that pupils with English as their first language consistently attain higher levels in English than pupils with English as an additional language (EAL). A small number of pupils with EAL attain level 3 at the end of Key Stage 1 but fewer of these pupils reach level 5 at the end of Key Stage 2 when compared to pupils with English as their first language.
2. For this survey, Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) visited 21 primary schools in 18 different local education authorities (LEAs) in 2004. The schools were selected because they had good or improving standards of attainment in writing by minority ethnic pupils, as well as in the whole school. Evidence from many of these schools visited in this survey reflects the national picture. Fewer pupils from minority ethnic groups achieved the higher levels in writing. In some schools, when compared with learners of similar ability, minority ethnic pupils were reaching level 2B or level 2A rather than level 3 at the end of Key Stage 1. Although this pattern of underachievement was noticeable at both key stages, it was more marked at Key Stage 2. This suggests not only that some schools may underestimate the potential of able pupils with EAL, but also that more time is needed to develop their proficiency in written English. Bilingual learners may be unwittingly disadvantaged when their oral fluency masks a continuing need for literacy support.
3. This survey was instigated to complement research which identified some of the key features of language which pupils learning EAL appear to handle less confidently than their peers who have English as their first language.² Some of the interventions the research identified were seen in the schools visited, for example: exposure to good writing; explicit instruction; the development of specific strategies for EAL writers; and feedback based on assessment which took specific account of EAL. The good features described in this report made an important contribution to pupils' success.
4. Overall, in the schools visited in this survey, advanced bilingual learners reached good standards in writing. However, in a small number of the schools, advanced bilingual learners were achieving particularly well, often

¹ 'Advanced bilingual learners' are defined as pupils who have had all or most of their school education in the UK and whose oral proficiency in English is usually indistinguishable from that of pupils with English as a first language but whose writing may still show distinctive features related to their language background.

² Cameron, L. and Besser, S. *Writing in English as an Additional Language at Key Stage 2*, DfES, 2004.

attaining level 5 in English at the end of Key Stage 2. In these schools, there were inspiring examples of whole-school leadership and management, excellent teaching, effective use of data, and well focused assessment and target-setting. All the schools with particularly successful practice had experienced and qualified ethnic minority achievement (EMA) staff, and the EAL specialist was often a member of the senior leadership team.

5. These schools used data on performance effectively to identify precisely the needs of advanced bilingual learners in writing and to provide focused support to tackle them. They had high expectations and believed that advanced bilingual pupils could attain level 5 by the end of Key Stage 2. Writing activities were set in the context of pupils' experiences, with an emphasis on talk to enable bilingual pupils to rehearse their thinking before writing.
6. One of the most significant findings of the survey is the need for schools to be aware of the specific linguistic needs of bilingual learners. Together with the effective use of specialist knowledge, these are major factors in developing the writing skills of bilingual pupils at both the early and more advanced stages of language acquisition. In schools where EMA staff were deployed effectively, and their expertise was used to identify and support the particular needs of pupils for whom English was an additional language, pupils achieved well.
7. More can be done by schools to ensure that advanced bilingual learners do as well as they can in writing by the end of Key Stage 2. The report recommends that schools: make better use of the data that they hold to identify and tackle the specific needs of bilingual learners; undertake careful analyses of pupils' writing in order to identify the specific difficulties bilingual pupils encounter when writing in English and to provide appropriate teaching and support; develop closer working relationships with families and communities represented in the school to build on their pupils' cultural and linguistic experiences; determine a clear, whole-school policy to meet the specific linguistic needs of bilingual learners and commit themselves to providing relevant training, including the updating of staff on key research.

Key findings

- ❑ All the schools had a positive ethos and valued the pupils' cultural and linguistic diversity. However, only about half of them took practical steps to build on such diversity when teaching writing.
- ❑ In the schools where staff were aware of how to meet the specific linguistic needs of advanced bilingual learners, they analysed pupils' writing carefully to identify areas for development. However, only a small

number of the schools were sufficiently aware of what their advanced bilingual learners needed to learn to improve their writing.

- ❑ Expectations of bilingual pupils' achievement at the end of Key Stage 2 were too low in around two thirds of the schools.
- ❑ Only a small number of the language policies seen were sufficiently explicit about the needs of bilingual pupils at both the early and more advanced stages of language acquisition. Even in the schools with a high proportion of pupils with EAL, their language policies often failed to indicate how the specific linguistic needs of these pupils should be met.
- ❑ EMA specialist staff were used effectively in only about half of the schools. The most effective arrangements encouraged the dissemination of good practice through EMA staff working in partnership with class teachers, contributing to planning and leading training for all staff. In the other schools, EMA staff were used too often to provide general class support for basic skills or to support intervention programmes. Their specialist skills were underused as a result.
- ❑ Pupils' learning was enhanced when teachers demonstrated clearly the processes of writing, discussed language choices, introduced linguistic terms and helped pupils to understand the subtleties of language. Specialist staff made an important contribution in lessons through planning and providing additional materials to support the bilingual learners in dealing with their specific writing difficulties.
- ❑ Schools played an important role in introducing pupils to a variety of high quality texts, covering a wide range of genres and styles of writing. Bilingual pupils acknowledged the school's contribution to their learning, especially when they did not receive such support at home.
- ❑ Effective provision included a school environment which was rich in language, and teaching which drew on a wide range of experiences, including pupils' own experiences, as a basis for developing their vocabulary, talk and writing. Around two thirds of the schools visited, however, failed to give enough attention to compensating for some pupils' lack of first hand experience or providing a realistic context for writing.
- ❑ Around half the schools focused particularly effectively on speaking and listening. Teachers encouraged pupils' talk to help them develop their thinking and organise their ideas before writing. This was especially helpful for bilingual pupils because they learnt from other pupils, enlarged their vocabulary and gained further confidence to speak.
- ❑ Schools did not make enough use of the data they held to analyse the performance of different groups of learners, especially that of pupils with EAL. Targets set were insufficiently challenging for these pupils in well over two thirds of the schools visited.
- ❑ Pupils benefited from high quality marking and detailed feedback which helped them to improve specific linguistic features in their writing.

However, such detailed marking was lacking in around two thirds of the schools visited.

Recommendations

Schools need to:

- build on pupils' cultural and linguistic experiences by encouraging them to talk about writing done at home and by forging closer links with families to understand the ways they try to support their children with writing at home
- analyse closely the writing of pupils for whom English is an additional language to identify the specific difficulties they face when writing in English
- make sure that language policies and schemes of work reflect the specific linguistic needs of bilingual learners, at both the early and more advanced stages of language acquisition
- make better use of school data to identify and tackle the particular needs of bilingual learners and to set appropriately challenging targets
- clarify the role of EMA specialists and deploy them effectively to focus on the specific needs of pupils with EAL
- provide direct instruction about specific features of writing and give detailed feedback to pupils on their writing
- introduce pupils to good quality texts and a wide range of genres and styles of writing, so that pupils with EAL experience the full diversity of written texts, as recommended by the primary national strategy
- make sure that staff are fully aware of how to meet the specific linguistic needs of pupils with EAL by making available key research and relevant training.

Leadership and management

1. Creating an inclusive ethos, clear vision, a robust understanding of English as an additional language and an awareness of bilingual learners' linguistic needs were key factors in ensuring the success of bilingual pupils. In the effective schools, the leadership and management ensured focused support was provided to develop the writing skills of advanced bilingual learners. The influence of the headteacher was critical. All the schools visited had a positive ethos and valued diversity, and about half built effectively on pupils' cultural and linguistic backgrounds, as in this Year 4 literacy lesson:

In a multi-ethnic classroom, the teacher read aloud a story from Japan during a week that focused on stories from different cultures. Two Chinese boys were able to explain how rice is grown. The pupils' own knowledge and experience were used especially well to give a positive

view of cultural difference and promoted the opportunity for them to develop not only their vocabulary but also their self-esteem.

2. High expectations were important to these schools. One headteacher was clear that:

We won't be satisfied until all our able bilingual pupils are expected to reach level 5 rather than it being perceived as a significant achievement for them.

3. In the schools visited, only half of the English language policies referred to EAL, despite the fact that pupils with EAL were a significant minority (or even a majority) in most of them. One school's EAL policy said:

Children here come from a range of backgrounds and cultures. It is a priority of the school to ensure that their needs are met, their cultural values recognised and celebrated and that they achieve their full potential.

The aim of all EAL support is to enable children to have full access to the National Curriculum and to work at the level appropriate to their cognitive and conceptual development.

4. Effective language policies explained how the needs of bilingual learners would be identified early on, with specific guidance related to the needs of minority ethnic pupils. In one policy, for example, staff were reminded that all pupils should be encouraged to discuss and plan their writing in their home language, if appropriate, when working with a partner.
5. In discussions with inspectors, advanced bilingual learners were asked whether they ever wrote in their home language. One bilingual pupil responded: 'I think of ideas in my home language and then translate them into English'. Other bilingual pupils commented that they thought a lot in their home language before writing. They advised other children trying to learn English to: 'Listen carefully. Watch television. Try to make sense of it in your first language'.
6. One bilingual girl explained how her father encouraged her to store in a folder photographs and writing she had done at home. She now enjoyed looking back to read her own writing when she was younger. However, neither she nor her friends had shown teachers the writing they had done out of school.
7. In some schools, although no specific reference was made to EAL in school policies, strategies for developing pupils' independence as readers and writers supported both those with English as their mother tongue and those with EAL. Approaches such as the use of 'writing frames' and teachers' demonstrations of writing supported all pupils.

8. Overall, language policies paid insufficient attention to the needs of EAL learners and were not specific enough about appropriate approaches to their development as writers.

The work of specialist ethnic minority achievement staff

The role of the EMA coordinator and EAL specialist

9. Specialist ethnic minority achievement (EMA) staff were used effectively to support writing in around half the schools visited. They were given high status in the school and exerted a strong influence on provision for writing. They disseminated their expertise in EAL through:
 - providing training and advice to colleagues
 - working closely with teachers through joint planning and teaching ('partnership teaching')
 - monitoring the progress of bilingual pupils.
10. In the schools with particularly successful practice, the EAL specialist was in the senior management team. This was often at a cost, since the reduction of ethnic minority achievement grant (EMAG) funding meant that many schools had to find additional funding, often using the general school budget, to maintain specialist EAL teachers or support staff.
11. In the majority of the schools visited, the headteacher maintained the strategic overview of EAL provision and managed the work of the coordinator. Their work was influential in promoting good teaching and learning and raising standards. In one school, the EMA staff were part of teaching teams, attached flexibly to year group teams to provide focused support for bilingual learners. In several of the schools visited, the EMA coordinator was also the literacy coordinator. In another school, in addition to being the EMA coordinator, the bilingual EMA teacher also managed the work of teaching assistants. He was responsible for community issues and assessment for learning. He oversaw the tracking of progress of all the pupils in the school and prepared a termly report for the headteacher and governing body.
12. Nearly all the schools in the survey provided a small amount of induction support for newly arrived pupils who had little English. However, in one school, this took up the majority of the coordinator's time, preventing her from playing a more strategic role in the school.
13. The most effective deployment of EMA support staff was based on clearly identified priorities for teaching pupils with EAL. In some Key Stage 2 classes in the survey, the EMA support teachers were frequently deployed to teach the lower attaining sets in literacy and numeracy or to teach

booster classes to raise pupils' attainment in the end of key stage statutory tests. This was an inefficient use of their time and expertise in EAL.

Teaching assistants and bilingual support workers

14. Teaching assistants and bilingual support workers complemented the work of teachers by providing individual and small group support to bilingual pupils in all phases. Reductions in funding prompted some schools to employ more support staff who combined general support for teaching basic skills to pupils identified as 'low achieving' as well as bilingual pupils requiring additional learning support. But the best schools took positive steps to avoid the potential confusion this might cause by making clear the difference between providing for pupils with special educational needs (SEN) and those learning EAL.
15. Bilingual teaching assistants frequently worked in the Foundation Stage and helped pupils with EAL to settle into school routines, using their home languages as appropriate. In one school, the teaching assistant concentrated her EAL support in the nursery, reception and Key Stage 1 classes, providing intensive oral work in English to boost pupils' vocabulary and confidence to speak.
16. However, in one school where most of the pupils were bilingual, practice was less effective. All staff were regarded as EAL specialists, but the school's aspiration was not supported by an adequate level of staff expertise, training and development. Support for classes was allocated to benefit all pupils; the principle was one of giving some help to everyone. This, combined with a lack of clarity in the EMA coordinator's role, meant that the specific needs of EAL pupils received too little attention.

Teaching and learning

Specialist support for teaching and learning

17. Only a small number of schools identified clearly the specific EAL needs of advanced bilingual learners and then tackled these effectively using experienced, specialist staff with EAL expertise. Such provision enabled advanced bilingual learners to reach high standards in writing.
18. Much of the teaching seen during the survey was of high quality. Eight in ten of the schools visited used 'partnership teaching': most of the support for pupils was given within the class rather than by withdrawing pupils. In the most effective practice, the EMA teacher was fully involved in the planning and teaching of the lessons.
19. A Year 3 geography lesson based on the unit 'A village in India' illustrated effective partnership teaching and joint planning. The EMA teacher worked

in partnership with the class teacher to plan the lesson using her own daily planning sheet. This provided a good structure which set out:

- the curriculum area and the learning objective
- language to be developed
- collaborative and interactive tasks to develop oracy; and scaffolding activities for reading and writing
- additional resources
- pupil groupings
- an evaluation of the lesson, together with points for future planning.

Case study

The pupils had already seen the video 'Life in Chembakolii' and visited the website. They had compared Chembakolii with their locality and completed a grid comparing the two places in preparation for report writing.

Pupils were asked to identify, in pairs, one similarity and one difference between Chembakolii and their own area, before discussing their ideas with the whole class.

The pupils showed a good understanding of the contrasts between the two places and made progress in their learning in geography. However, the structures required by the report they were asked to write were quite complex and most pupils failed to grasp how to do this, despite the support of the teacher and the EMA teacher through using a writing frame with the whole class. Pupils simply stated two facts rather than using connectives to highlight the contrasts. For example, 'In Chembakolii the climate is very hot. In our town....the climate is cold.'

Both teachers recognised that they would need to do more work with the group on more advanced connectives such as 'although' and 'while'. The lesson was very well planned and resulted in good partnership teaching. The pupils used talk effectively, both in pairs and in the whole class, to extend their own learning in geography. Effective demonstration using a 'writing frame' for a report, checking that pupils understood, a good focus on key vocabulary and informed evaluation contributed to the success of the lesson.

20. Even where the EMA teacher was part-time, the schools found ways of involving the specialist in lesson planning, producing resources and providing pupils with good access to the curriculum. In one school, the class teachers sent their plans to the part-time EMA teacher by email. She suggested specific additional activities and developed materials to bring to the lessons.
21. In the very best practice, schools used the findings from recent research on writing at Key Stage 2, commissioned by the DfES, to inform their

practice.³ In the following case study, the class teacher and EAL teacher had identified the need for advanced bilingual pupils to use more varied and complex sentences. The lesson focused on developing descriptive and figurative language to support their writing of ghost stories later in the week. The classroom ethos was characterised by respect, good listening skills and supportive relationships which encouraged everyone to contribute.

Case study

The teacher explained the learning objectives to open the lesson:

- *to develop a richer vocabulary*
- *to use description in writing*
- *to form more complex sentences using embedded clauses.*

A word game provided a very good opportunity to extend the pupils' vocabulary and questioning skills and linked to the main part of the lesson. The pupils responded with enthusiasm. The interactive white board also helped to support vocabulary development. Using careful questions the pupils had to elicit information to help them to work out the identity of a mystery character.

In the main part of the lesson the teacher reviewed some figurative language (simile, metaphor and personification) by displaying, on the interactive whiteboard, some descriptive sentences. The pupils had to 'drop in a phrase' to improve the description:

- *The moon, (a round white ball), lit up the night sky.*
- *An eerie sound, (like a screeching owl), could be heard for miles.*

The pupils were asked to discuss their choice of vocabulary with their partner, before writing it on their mini whiteboards and holding them up for the teachers to read. The EAL teacher used the work of the advanced bilingual learners as a model of good descriptive writing. She gave the pupils explicit instructions on where to place the commas and full stops in their writing and provided good opportunities for them to talk in order to help them increase their range and use of language.

By the end of the lesson, they had written good quality descriptions, working within level 5. They were confident, motivated writers.

22. This was a good example of the type of intervention in children's writing that the research referred to as 'explicit instruction':

³ *Writing in English as an Additional Language at Key Stage 2*, Cameron, L. and Besser, S. DFES, 2004.

Punctuation is part of sentence and clause grammar, and needs explicit instruction to show pupils what full stops and commas do in written text and where they need to put them in their own writing.

The research noted that:

Pupils' individual vocabularies offer a rich resource for classroom activities, since many of the less common words known by each pupil may not be known or used by others.

23. Such focused teaching was not evident in all the schools visited. In particular, schools paid too little attention to analysing the errors made to identify the specific difficulties EAL learners might have when writing English.
24. Other successful strategies to raise the achievement of bilingual learners included using the EMA teacher in whole-school training. In one of the schools, the EMA teacher had a leading role in the school's National Literacy Strategy (NLS) training. This enabled her to discuss, with all staff, issues relating to pupils with EAL, such as the problem of focusing on isolated words in the word level part of the literacy hour when pupils with EAL needed to see and hear words in meaningful contexts. She was also responsible for in-service training for newly qualified teachers.

What the pupils said

25. Advanced bilingual learners interviewed during the visits to schools were quite clear about how teachers made a difference. Many referred to teachers having high aspirations for them and setting them challenging writing tasks. They mentioned the provision of visual prompts, the use of writing frames, time for extended writing, role play and real experiences as effective stimuli for writing and the use of planners to organise the whole text before they started writing. They also appreciated the time to share their thoughts with a partner and to organise their thinking before writing. Time for drafting and re-drafting, as well as discussing their writing with other pupils, helped them to see what they needed to improve. Demonstration by the teacher was particularly helpful for pupils in planning the structure as well as the content of their writing while excellent feedback through class discussion and individual marking helped them to understand how to improve their writing.
26. The pupils talked about what had helped them to become good writers.
 - *The teacher makes writing fun.*
 - *Acting out the story, planning with a friend and using a mind map help me do better writing.*
 - *I think it helps our writing when the teacher really explains and gives you a chance to talk about your ideas, like Mrs C is really*

good and can explain better. She does not rush you too much and we do a lot of group work and talk [with] partners.

- *The teacher shows us how to set out the work and helps us with ideas and to start the writing off.*
- *Teachers' suggestions help. For example, for different genre she gives lists of vocabulary ... that helps, sometimes drafting and redrafting helps, after the teacher has given advice.*
- *I like writing. I need a lot of thinking time because when you're writing stories you need to know characters.*

27. The advanced bilingual learners talked about other methods that helped them to organise their ideas:

- using mini white boards to try out ideas
- rough note books for notes and planning
- sitting next to someone who is better than you and will help you
- time for talking about your ideas to a partner.

In writing a poem, we had buzz groups. These are so good for ideas. We also have little yellow books, our rough books. These are great for writing your ideas. You use them when you start. It helps you to remember about things that you have talked about.

28. Pupils were also eager to talk about their experiences of reading and writing beyond school. However, few said that they had brought in written work from home to show the teachers. Many schools were unaware of pupils' experience of reading and writing outside school, missing the opportunity to forge closer links with their various communities and to understand more about the ways in which they were trying to support their children.

Strategies for teaching writing

29. All the schools visited were asked to identify specific areas of concern in the development of writing for their EAL pupils. The areas mentioned most often, in order of frequency, were:

- sentence structure
- limited vocabulary
- grammar e.g. use of tenses and subject/verb agreement; articles; prepositions
- pupils' lack of experience to provide the context for school writing
- idiomatic English and colloquialisms
- the lack of extended writing/practice
- the lack of a role model at home to support the development of more complex spoken English
- reading for understanding
- figurative language
- Standard English.

30. HMI collected examples of writing which illustrated some of the schools' concerns. A Year 4 girl with Arabic as her mother tongue presented a character description she had written based on 'The Worst Witch'. She said that she was proud of her work and pointed out that she had recently improved her use of adverbs:

- *She shouted crossly*
- *The woman roared angrily*

Her writing included an interesting use of idiom: 'jumped out of their skins'. It also contained some illuminating errors:

- *The young witches and wizards jumped out of there skins and froze. "Oh no she's going to be are form teacher", Mildred thought. Her face was long, hard and sharp.*
- *she went and done it*
- *she wrote it in the board*

Some of the features identified in this writing might be found in the writing of any pupils with English as their first language, such as the use of homophones and the over-generalisation of the regular past tense rule. However, the incorrect use of the preposition ('in' for 'on') is a typical error made by pupils with EAL.

31. A pupil with EAL identified formal vocabulary as an area of difficulty:

Formal language is difficult. All these strange words, which sound important, for example, 'tenant', 'premises', 'enquire', 'supplement'. I don't know what that means but I write it. I wrote formal letters about rubbish in a garden. I had to write to council. I needed words.

32. About half of the schools were aware of the specific features of writing that caused difficulty for pupils with EAL and a very small number were also aware of the key findings of the DfES commissioned research. The research report made some key recommendations including the need to:
- provide a wider range of genres
 - teach explicitly about formulaic phrases,
 - teach modal verbs, adverbials and prepositional phrases
 - teach EAL learners to observe how well-written stories are brought to an end.
33. Where EAL specialists had been involved in drafting policy, there was often greater clarity about successful strategies, including:
- shared writing; demonstrating writing
 - the use of interactive whiteboards
 - the use of first hand experiences as a focus for writing
 - extensive opportunities for speaking and listening before pupils were expected to write.

34. Around half the schools had a clear focus on speaking and listening, using group and pair work (and, where appropriate, drama) to promote discussion, develop ideas and help pupils to organise their thinking before writing. This often involved adapting schemes of work to provide additional time for EAL pupils to think through their ideas.
35. One school's overall strategy to develop pupils' writing was conceived with the needs of bilingual pupils in mind. The school identified forty strategies that had helped to raise standards in writing, including brain-storming, mind-mapping, story sacks, writing weeks, collections of writing as examples for pupils, a web page, e-mail and ideas to help pupils to check their writing.
36. However, the school considered its introduction of role play throughout the curriculum as the most significant of these. A marked feature was the role play corner in each class: a tropical rainforest, a boat, a garage, a police station, a travel agency or a beach. The school policy ensured that these areas were changed regularly, linked to cross-curricular themes with opportunities for writing built into the planning. For example, if pupils went to the police station, a statement would be taken. The use of structured role play where adults had been trained to join in and support the play helped to create appropriate expectations for talk and writing.
37. Mini-worlds and story boxes also helped with extended writing in Key Stage 2, as well as the effective use of information and communication technology (ICT) to motivate pupils. Two boys composing a thank you letter using a computer said:

Using a computer means we can change our work easily.
38. One school developed its scheme of work for English to include lessons on visual texts and drama to help pupils to develop their spoken and written language. A Year 6 lesson focused on developing pupils' empathy with the characters and helping them to understand the importance of inference:

Case study

The teacher began the lesson by showing the pupils, on the interactive whiteboard, an enlarged version of a page from 'Zoo' by Anthony Browne. The page showed a group of people looking at an orang-utan. She explained that they were going to create a sculpture of this picture and reminded them of similar work they had done on the story 'Rose Blanche'. The objective was for pupils to use the textual evidence to develop empathy with a character in a given situation.

The pupils chose a laminated card. After examining it carefully, pupils positioned themselves as a 'sculpture' in front of the whiteboard. Key

questions encouraged them to identify with the character that they had portrayed in the 'freeze-framed' sculpture.

The teacher led a successful discussion about the different characters, carefully encouraging pupils to distinguish between what the characters were thinking as opposed to what they were saying and focusing on the narrative's sub-text in contrast to the literal text. She drew all the pupils into successful discussion about body language and the characters' responses. Her own language provided an appropriate model for the bilingual learners.

The pupils were then organised into mixed ability groups. Characters were allocated according to the pupils' linguistic ability, with pupils whose first language was English given more complex characters. They acted as good models of spoken language for EAL pupils.

This lesson was effective in developing the pupils' understanding of the difference between the literal and abstract; between speech and thought. Good pace, appropriate challenge and a variety of tasks involved the whole class. The bilingual learners were able to explore language and experiment with the vernacular as well as Standard English. The groups were organised carefully, chosen to ensure good role models were provided and there was appropriate support for all pupils, including the advanced bilingual learners.

39. A Year 6 bilingual pupil from this class, asked to choose some writing she was proud of, chose the following about *Rose Blanche* to talk about with the inspector:

Rose ran. She ran in and out of ditches and slipped on the frozen puddles but she had to go on, she had to find out where the poor boy was going. The wind around her was howling like a wolf and the call of the children growing fainter by the minute. She had to catch up. Nothing would stop her, not the smell of petrol and old tobacco or the feeling of the frost biting her as she ran faster and faster.

40. The pupil explained that the teacher had used the drama technique of 'hot seating' to help the pupils find out about the historical facts and had showed them how to take notes. The learning objective had been for pupils to use their senses to enhance a piece of writing.
41. Three Year 4 pupils discussed their writing based on their history project. They talked enthusiastically about their work on Henry VIII and proudly showed their Tudor portraits and the research they had undertaken following a video. Their writing demonstrated a wide range of historical vocabulary: *joust, sire, tournament, banquet, portrait, throne and invade*. They explained their school's approach to mind-mapping, saying that it helped them to organise their thinking.

42. There was evidence of this approach in one of a series of lessons on the Tudors which illustrates how mind-mapping supported pupils' planning for report writing.

Case study

Following a video on the execution of Anne Boleyn, the pupils were organised into mixed ability groups to discuss what they had seen. The pupils were able to discuss well the horrors of the execution scene and explain the reason for Anne Boleyn's death.

The pupils settled quickly to the task of planning a newspaper report. In mixed ability groups, they used mind-maps to plan the report. They were confident [enough] to create a map of their joint responses to the prompts: who, when, where, what and why? Resources were appropriate and there was effective support for lower attaining pupils.

The stimulating learning environment displayed artefacts, including Tudor dress and portraits of Henry VIII. Key vocabulary was accessible around the classroom. Advanced bilingual learners used new vocabulary well in their report writing including: 'executioner', 'scene', 'cast' and 'pavane'.

Writing based on experience

43. About a third of the schools visited provided an environment rich in language, as well as well planned first-hand experiences, the use of pupils' own experience, a choice of interesting, culturally relevant topics and visitors in school. Such experiences created a firm basis for talk and writing from which bilingual pupils clearly benefited.
44. Purposeful writing was evident in many of the schools visited; for example, pupils prepared a local radio show each week which was broadcast. A visit to a wetland centre for another school provided the stimulus for the main feature story of the newspaper pupils were writing. They were motivated to write in a journalistic style about their experience. A Year 6 pupil in one school commented on a class visit:

We went on a trip to 'Britain at war'. It was great as you could hear people talking like it was real, you could experience what they had seen. It helped us to use really good descriptors.

45. Pupils said that they enjoyed writing about things that interested them and related to their own experiences. A Year 6 class learnt how to create a balanced argument in discussing the question, 'Should children have to earn their pocket money?'. One pupil wrote:

Approximately 60% of children earn pocket money. Some children earn their pocket money by helping their parents clean up. Many children don't earn their pocket money it could be because their parents are able to clean up. As always there are two sides to the argument.

Earning pocket money could teach children a lesson about responsibility, and how to spend money on things needed. The child can also save money for their future.

It could be argued, that children shouldn't earn pocket money because their parents care for them, and children work hard at school. The children might use the money irresponsibly example, buying drugs and gambling.

46. Using the stimulus of National Poetry Day, and building on the recent experience of listening to poems written by Michael Rosen, Year 4 pupils enjoyed writing a poem in a similar style, again building on their own experience:

Eat your potato

*Eat your potato
mum always says.
"Just a sec mum"
I shout.
"Eat your potato!"
"No!" I say again.
Her ears popped out
her legs started to bend
her frown got longer
and then
"EAT YOUR POTATOES!"
Mum had to feed me in the end.*

47. A Year 2 pupil explained that she had written this poem about strawberries after drawing them in an art lesson, before enjoying eating them:

*I love beautiful, succulent, ripe strawberries dribbling down my chin.
I wouldn't dare put them in the bin.
Magnificent and bright, tasty and sour, they're my favourite fruit.
Strawberries are dissolving into my mouth, bubbling on my tongue, juicy
and sweet, squiggy.
I want to eat them whenever
I go shopping in the supermarket.*

Explicit instruction

48. The most effective schools demonstrated to pupils the subtlety of language by making explicit for them the processes involved in crafting a piece of writing. They helped pupils with EAL to notice particular features and to incorporate them into their own writing.
49. A Year 6 literacy lesson showed the effectiveness of this. The teacher used an accessible text, *Double Vision* by Paul Stewart, to motivate pupils to create a dilemma in their own writing, using the text to make explicit the features needed.

Case study

The teacher read the text with emphasis and expression. Effective questioning helped pupils to recall the features of a dilemma and a well prepared checklist of them was displayed for all pupils to refer to.

The teacher had prepared a written opening of a dilemma which she used to demonstrate and make explicit the processes of writing, using it at the same time to reinforce pupils' understanding of the past tense.

Pupils talked in pairs effectively to rehearse ideas which the teacher then incorporated. Good use was made of previous texts: "Do you remember the features used in ...". Pupils' vocabulary was extended through questioning on synonyms, such as for 'looked', eliciting from the pupils the suggestions 'peered', 'scanned' and 'observed'.

All the pupils were motivated to write. They referred to the checklists to guide their writing:

- *short sentences*
- *sounds first (e.g. 'Bang!')*
- *something must happen, powerful verbs*
- *not too much description*
- *try 'suddenly', 'without warning', 'at that moment'.*

The pupils were engrossed, made very good progress and collaborated well.

At the end of the lesson the pupils were asked to assess each other's writing. They referred to the checklist to identify the features their partner had used, noted the ones they observed and read out examples from their partner's work.

The bilingual learners were helped to notice relevant features in the context of an accessible text and then had time to rehearse their ideas before being expected to write, using the support the teacher provided.

High expectations and good quality texts

50. About a third of the schools had high expectations for pupils' writing and did not accept level 4 by the end of Year 6 as the highest attainment for pupils with EAL; they believed that advanced bilingual learners could reach level 5. Teaching and learning was based on the identified needs of all pupils, but considerable attention was paid to the specific linguistic needs of bilingual learners.
51. Some advanced bilingual pupils were very articulate about their writing. They were able to identify what had made a difference and helped them to develop as writers. They also talked of previous negative experiences and recalled teachers who had not challenged them. One pupil had overheard a teacher say, 'What can you expect? English is her second language'.
52. The influence of a skilled English teacher, with high expectations for writing and a text of good quality, contributed significantly to developing bilingual pupils' writing in this Year 6 lesson. The class was reading the original, non-abridged version of *Oliver Twist*.

Case study

The objective was for pupils to understand how Dickens created particular effects by asking them to look carefully at three extracts from the novel.

The main part of the lesson focused on Fagin's den. Key words and concepts were recorded on the board: long sentences; layers of description; Dickens' devil analogy; richness; genre; echo; author and formulaic.

After the teacher had read the extract, 'Saffron Hill', effective, open questioning helped the pupils to reflect on and define a range of key concepts. They were asked to offer their own description of Saffron Hill, selecting powerful vocabulary. They suggested 'morbid', 'grey', 'gloomy', 'wretched', 'dark', 'dank', 'disturbing' and 'rusty'.

The pupils were asked to read the extract about Fagin's den on their own, before reading it aloud. The teacher reminded them of the two versions they had seen - a black and white film and the musical version - and asked them to bear in mind some of the key differences. The discussion ranged around the use of analogy, Victorian images, references to good and evil, 'The Tyger' by William Blake (which they had studied previously) and finished with a discussion of the different endings in the musical and the black and white film version. The teacher emphasised the seriousness of the themes of good and evil.

The pupils worked hard on their personal responses to the Fagin's den passage. At the end of the lesson, the teacher read out a section from a pupil's writing as a good model.

This was an excellent lesson. The teacher inspired the pupils, through open questioning and interesting and relevant information, to appreciate how a great writer achieved effects and how they might use such techniques in their writing. Above all, very high aspirations helped to give them the skills they needed to achieve well.

53. A Year 6 pupil in the class chose the following as one of her best pieces of writing:

I am writing a personal response about William Blake's 'The Tyger'. In my opinion this poem is an absolute pleasure to read, it has a beautiful rhyming pattern and when you say it, you feel like a bird just coming out of it's egg and taking it's first steps. My favourite two lines would be: "When the stars threw down their spears, and water'd heaven with their tears." I like these two lines because it creates a powerful image in your head of stars doing these things, also it sounds so magical and a bit like the thing you would hear from fortune tellers. I can image some one sitting in a fortune telling tent with a crippled old woman saying these words.

At first I found it difficult recognising the rhyming pattern but soon I realised that 'The Tyger' contains six four line stanzas, and uses pairs of rhyming couplets to create a sense of rhythm and continuity. The exception occurs in lines 3 and 4 and 23 and 24, where 'eye' is coupled with 'symmetry'. Also the majority of lines in this poem contain exactly seven syllables. I only realised this after reading it several times, so don't go thinking it was easy to spot, BECAUSE IT WASN'T!

When I realised the rhyming pattern I worked on what the poem was about. I only managed to work out what it was about because earlier in year six I had read a poem called 'The lamb' and in that poem the lamb is described as an innocent sweet animal created by God, and in this poem it is saying the tiger is a ferocious, hateful, unlovable creature, so in that last line it tells what the poem it is about, did the same man who created the tame lamb, create this boastful monster? So the poem in reality when you put it together is just that simple question.

54. Many bilingual learners said they relied on school to introduce them to a range of genres and good quality texts. Several of the pupils interviewed had limited personal reading experience and could not name many authors. Others, however, identified their favourite genre and talked enthusiastically about particular books they had enjoyed. They described

how reading at school had helped to develop their imagination, gave them ideas and broadened their vocabulary.

- *He [the teacher] talks about lots of different things.....We have learned lots of specialist vocabulary: social realism, genre, and protagonist. This has made our writing better. Our vocabulary was limited before. He has encouraged us to read and there are lots of new good books in the library since he came.*
- *I wrote this story after reading something written by a girl I really liked in a magazine. I could see the picture in my head when I read. It was about real people. I practised and it gave me ideas. Seeing pictures in my head of things happening helped....I wrote about my imaginary friend but it was a real one like the one in the story that I read in the magazine. My teacher was very happy and said it was my best writing.*

55. Pupils said that they gained ideas from stories they had read or heard:

- *I write things similar that other people are writing. You can't always think of your own ideas, you finish them. I'm lucky because I'm a free reader, I can get fat ones: Roald Dahl or poem books.*
- *Sometimes you have to think about stories from other books and change. Sometimes it's really hard to think of ideas because you have already done it in the past.*

Assessment for learning

56. High quality marking identified pupils' specific linguistic needs while feedback encouraged them to reflect on their ability as writers. Pupils said that marking helped them. They liked it to be direct and to indicate how the writing might be improved.

- *Marking helped me improve. The teacher tells you how to improve, makes comments and asks questions about your presentation and effort.*
- *I need to extend my use of complex sentences and put less speech in. I put too much speech in it. I need to write more narrative.*
- *Other things that help writing are when the teacher gives a list or tells you how to make the sentences together – I probably wouldn't have written it formally if she didn't show it. I do things and remember it if I need to do it again, and memorise it, use it over and over again, you'll get used to it.*

57. Three Year 6 bilingual learners talked confidently and articulately about how their school had developed their writing skills:

- *It's in the planning; from Year 5 we've been doing these writing workshop lessons.*

- *They [class teacher and EMA teacher] give us tasks. First we do it cold. Before the second copy, they give us planning time to help elaborate on ideas. Help to identify the introduction, conclusion and middle section.*
- *From the second copy, they write what's wrong and show what you can improve on.*
- *Ideas come from life. Scores show if we are doing good.*

58. Writing workshops in one school, which lasted most of the morning, enabled pupils to make rapid progress and resulted in very good achievement at the end of Year 6. The sessions were jointly planned and taught by the part-time EMA teacher and the class teacher. The advanced bilingual learners were supported to develop their organisational and planning skills. The lessons also focused on oral work to help the bilingual learners hear examples of the language which had been identified as areas for development: idioms, tenses, technical vocabulary and colloquialisms, such as the imprecise use of the word 'stuff'.
59. The extended writing took the form of a task which was completed, in part, for homework.

A deadline was set for the homework and it was marked in detail by the two teachers. During the extended literacy lesson, the pupils began to edit and re-draft the work which had been marked. They worked collaboratively, sharing ideas and reading their work aloud. Very good use was made of peer marking and the teachers used pupils' work effectively to illustrate improvement. The pupils were also shown work from previous years as examples of the standards of writing expected. As a result, they were motivated to write and keen to have their writing selected to be used as examples. The immediacy of the teachers' responses to their writing resulted in pupils making significant progress.

60. In a task on 'A healthy school snack shop', pupils had to explain how they would make the school shop a success. The following is an extract from a piece of writing a pupil completed at home:

I am aware of the school healthy snack shop idea and I think it is a meritorious and judicious desession. It's a excellent idea because all over Britain there are a large number of overweight and obese children but the numbers are increasing gradually which is not good news. Having a school HEALTHY! snack shop is a step to healthier lifestyles for children who will become the next generations for time to come. Scientific tests and research has proven that having healthy foods including fruit, energy bars and vegetables can help concertration and physical fitness through out a working day. This is extremely vital for tests such as sats.

Data analysis and target-setting

National data

61. An analysis of results from National Curriculum tests shows that pupils with English as a first language consistently attain higher levels in English than pupils with EAL at the end of every key stage (see Annex 2).
62. Comparison of the results of individual pupils at Key Stage 2 with their results at Key Stage 1 reveals that more pupils with English as a first language who attained level 3 at Key Stage 1 reach level 5 than pupils with EAL (73.5% compared to 68.1%). At Key Stage 1, only 13% of EAL pupils attain level 3 compared with 23.1% of pupils with English as a first language.

Schools' data analysis

63. The most effective schools were acutely aware of the potential underachievement of advanced bilingual learners. Less than a third of the schools used data well to analyse performance and set challenging targets related to pupils' specific linguistic needs. Schools that were skilled in analysing and interpreting data were quick to identify underachievement and acted to tackle the issues. They used results from data analysis, as well as reviews from teachers and support staff, to identify pupils who were achieving well and those that could do better.
64. In several of the schools visited, the underachievement of minority ethnic pupils was more significant in writing than in reading. The gap between reading and writing for pupils with EAL was greater than the gap for pupils with English as their first language. In one school in the survey, all the pupils with EAL reached level 5 in reading but only level 4 in writing. This was not the case for pupils with English as their first language (E1L), where several attained level 5 in both reading and writing.
65. In the most effective schools the analyses of the results from the optional tests, and not just the end of key stage data, influenced decisions about allocating resources. Many of the schools used a wide range of other tests to supplement the national tests, commonly including reading and spelling tests. Regular termly or half-termly tests helped to track pupils' progress. In too many of the schools, however, there was no systematic analysis of pupils' work in the optional tests: the focus was exclusively on the end of key stage tests. Some schools relied too much on subjective perceptions of difference between pupils with EAL and other pupils without analysing data carefully.

66. Guidance from the QCA supported some of the schools in monitoring pupils' acquisition of English and in assessing and identifying their further needs.⁴ One headteacher said:

All decisions about the deployment of additional support are based on the assessment of linguistic needs. Language support needs are assessed regularly. Pupils who do not make expected progress are targeted with additional support.

In the best schools, such additional support was monitored regularly to evaluate the impact of the specific provision which had been made.

67. Sometimes schools had good data but the detailed analysis was not disseminated effectively to teachers and, even in otherwise successful schools, there was sometimes a failure to distinguish between the needs of pupils with SEN and those with EAL; instead, their results and the support for both groups were being considered as part of the SEN provision. As a result, the specific linguistic needs of pupils for whom English was an additional language were overlooked.
68. In a considerable number of schools, even in this good practice survey, no systematic analysis was carried out either by ethnicity or gender. This became especially significant where the LEA failed to provide data analysed by minority ethnic group. This was particularly likely to happen in schools where the number of EAL pupils was small or, conversely, where most pupils came from just one minority ethnic group.
69. A lack of rigorous analysis in some schools visited meant that issues affecting the specific needs or progress of advanced bilingual learners (or other underachieving groups) were not identified and tackled. In one school, of the 28 pupils who had attained level 2 in writing at the end of Key Stage 1, almost half (13) did not reach level 4 at the end of Key Stage 2 in 2004. The school had not realised that all these underachieving pupils were pupils with EAL. One school noted:

The proportion of EAL pupils who did not meet their target in 2004 and failed to achieve level 4 is significantly higher than E1L pupils.

However, it had not identified a clear strategy for tackling this.

70. Many of the best schools used the assessment data to set targets either for groups or for individual pupils. In one school, regular staff meetings reviewed pupils' performance. Writing was moderated each half term and assessed against the national curriculum level descriptions. Individual targets were set for writing (and in other subjects) and pupils knew what

⁴ *A language in common: assessing English as an additional language*, QCA/00/584, QCA, 2000.

their targets were. Test results were used to identify problem areas in the curriculum and set targets for individual pupils.

71. The best target-setting derived from regular diagnostic marking and pupils were clear about how to improve their work through oral and written feedback. Where this happened, they made rapid progress in small achievable steps. Regular reviews checked to see if the targets had been met. Targets changed regularly and pupils were able to discuss the areas they were trying to improve in their writing.

Case study

The youngest children wear their targets on apple shaped pieces of card and they relate to the work they are focusing on. For example, 'I will try to write on the lines'. In Y1 individual targets are written on the leaf of a target tree. Y2 pupils have their targets in their writing books.

EAL pupils have targets which are appropriate to their needs. They may be related to features in their writing or a more general target such as: 'to use a metaphor in a piece of writing'. The class teacher always discusses the targets with the pupil, and the EAL coordinator is also involved in the discussions.

72. In a number of schools, pupils had a good understanding about strengths and weaknesses in their writing. However, some were unsure of their writing targets and some of their targets lacked challenge, such as:
- 'Use wider vocabulary'.
 - 'Write more neatly'.
 - 'I need to write more'.
 - 'I need to write more interesting stories'.

All but a small number of teachers set pupils curricular targets identified by the Primary National Strategy as a way of moving pupils from level to level. Inevitably, these were generic in nature and did not meet sufficiently the specific language needs of pupils with EAL.

Pupils' attainment on entry

73. Schools did not generally have any means of assessing pupils' levels of competence in their mother tongue on entry to school. In addition, baseline judgements on communication, language and literacy (CLL) do not take account of pupils' competence in their mother tongue. Baseline assessment in CLL relates only to pupils' progress in a language with which they are unfamiliar and does not indicate future potential. One school assessed pupils' 'fluency levels' in their first language. However, these were unreliable as indicators of later progress and the initial assessment involved considerable time and resources. This suggests there

is a danger that schools might hold reduced expectations for pupils with EAL whose starting point in English is well below the levels expected and that reliable testing of fluency in a first language would benefit pupils and staff.

Notes

1. Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) visited 21 primary schools in 18 different local education authorities (LEAs) during the summer and autumn terms 2004. A list of the schools visited is in Annex 1. The numbers on roll ranged from 172 to 437 pupils; the percentage of free school meals varied from less than 1% to 78%; the number of minority ethnic pupils ranged from 27% to 99% and pupils with a first language other than English from 14% to 97%.
2. The majority of the schools were identified with the help of the Ethnic Minority Achievement (EMA) coordinator in each LEA. Key criteria for the selection of schools were:
 - good or improving standards of attainment in writing by minority ethnic pupils as well as the whole school
 - effective EMA staff who understood the issues related to writing and the particular needs of advanced bilingual learners.
3. The visits by HMI included observation of lessons; scrutiny of a range of pupils' writing (usually Year 4 and Year 6); discussion with the pupils about their writing; discussion with the English coordinator and the EAL/EMA coordinator; discussion with the headteacher and/or members of the senior management team; review of documentation and other guidance on writing, together with analysis of data on the performance of minority ethnic pupils.
4. This report complements the Department for Education and Skills' (DfES) commissioned research on the writing of pupils with English as an additional language (EAL) at the end of the primary phase. The research referred to the complexity of developing English as an additional language. It noted that EAL development is influenced by three factors: the type and amount of exposure to English pupils receive; their level of cognitive development; and their maturity. However, the research revealed that bilingual pupils also benefit significantly from the teaching they receive. The research findings indicated a number of ways teachers might intervene in bilingual pupils' learning to support their writing development.
5. This report adds to Ofsted's previously published evidence about good practice for bilingual learners in Key Stage 4 and post-16 (HMI 1102).

Further information

A language in common: assessing English as an additional language, QCA/00/584, QCA, 2000.

More advanced learners of English as an additional language in secondary schools and colleges, (HMI 1102), Ofsted, 2003.

Writing in English as an additional language at Key stage 4 and post-16, Cameron, L., (HMI 1094), Ofsted, 2003.

Writing in English as an Additional Language at Key Stage 2, Cameron, L. and Besser, S. DfES, 2004

Managing the ethnic minority achievement grant: good practice in primary schools (HMI 2072), Ofsted, 2004.

Managing the ethnic minority achievement grant: good practice in secondary schools (HMI 2172), Ofsted, 2004.

Annex 1: the schools visited

Aboyne Lodge Primary School, Hertfordshire

Alma Park Primary School, Manchester

All Saints' Church of England (Aided) Junior School, Peterborough

Anson Primary School, Brent

Barrow Hill Junior School, Westminster

Blair Peach Primary School, Ealing

Charles Dickens Primary School, Southwark

Columbia Primary School, Tower Hamlets

Halley Primary School, Tower Hamlets

King David Junior and Infant School, Birmingham

Little Heath Primary School, Coventry

Phillimore Primary School, Sheffield

Rokesly Junior School, Haringey

St Edmund's RC Primary School, Enfield

St Luke's Church of England Primary School, Manchester

St Philip's Church of England Primary School, Bradford

Salterhebble Junior and Infant School, Calderdale

Spring Vale Primary School, Wolverhampton

Stroud Green Primary School, Haringey

Thomas Jones Community Primary School, Kensington and Chelsea

Tividale Community Primary School, Sandwell

Annex 2: national data in English 2003

The tables compare the cumulative percentage of pupils with (EAL) and without English as an additional language (E1L) reaching each level in English at Key Stages 1, 2, 3 and the grades obtained at GCSE English at Key Stage 4 in 2003.⁵

Table 1. Cumulative percentage of pupils reaching each level at Key Stage 1.

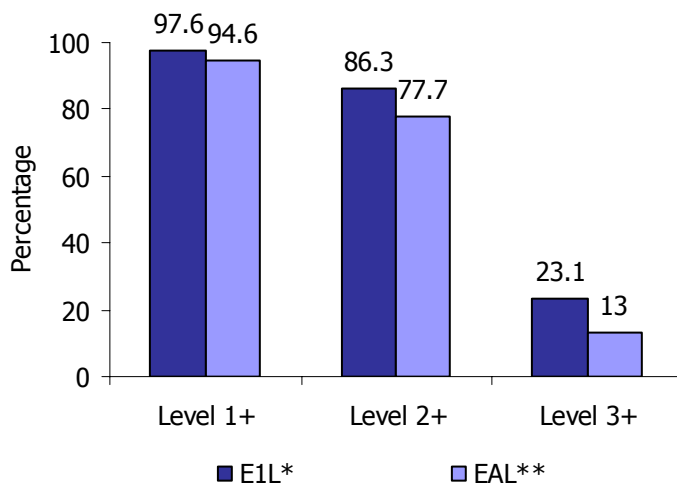
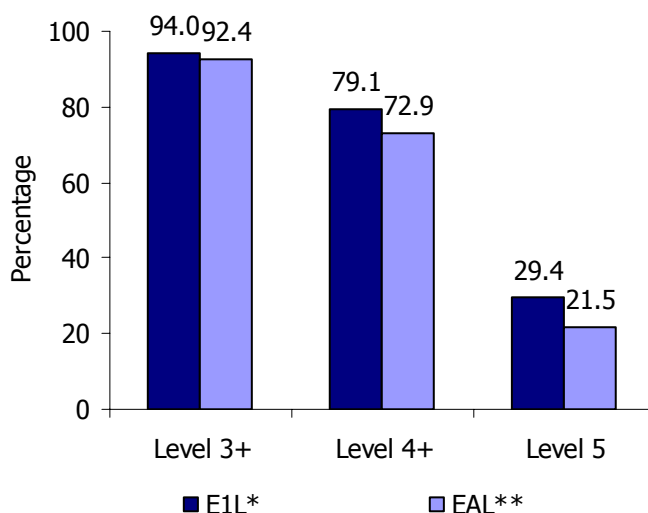


Table 2. Cumulative percentage of pupils reaching each level at Key Stage 2.



⁵ Sources: DfES 2003 National Pupil Database (NPD) DfES 2003; Pupil Level Annual School Census (PLASC)

Table 3. Cumulative percentage of pupils reaching each level at Key Stage 3.

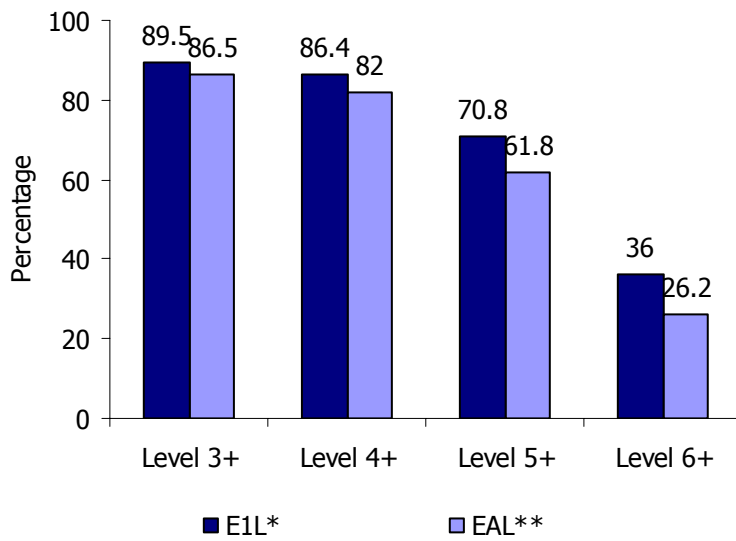


Table 4. Cumulative percentage of pupils reaching each grade in GCSE English.

