

SURVEY REPORT: ETHNIC MINORITY ACHIEVEMENT GRANT (EMAG) EFFECTIVE USE OF RESOURCES



Arolygiaeth Ei Mawrhydi Dros Addysg
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Her Majesty's Inspectorate
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1. INTRODUCTION

This report presents the findings from visits to 10 Local Education Authorities (LEAs) and a sample of schools throughout Wales carried out by Her Majesty's Inspectors for Education and Training (HMI). The visits focused on the quality of the EMAG services provided in each LEA and the quality of provision for, and standards achieved by, ethnic minority pupils in schools.

Throughout this report, EAL refers to those pupils for whom English is an additional language and EMAG refers to the Ethnic Minority Achievement Grant, which includes EAL pupils as well as other ethnic minority pupils who have English as their first language and are at risk of underachieving.

2. Background

The National Assembly for Wales provides funding to LEAs for ethnic minority achievement under GEST priority 5c, the Ethnic Minority Achievement Grant (EMAG). The objective of the EMAG is to improve equality of educational opportunity for all pupils from ethnic minority groups. The funding for 2003-2004 was £3.82m and LEAs were invited to apply for this funding. They were required to submit the following information in support of their application:

- the number of EAL pupils requiring support;
- the pupils' level of competence in English as assessed on the Assembly's 5 stage model of EAL acquisition;
- the key stage that they reached in the curriculum; and
- the total number of ethnic minority pupils within the LEA's schools

This information was used in a formula to allocate the funding to LEAs.

In addition, the Assembly provided training in the use of the 5 stage model of EAL acquisition.

3. MAIN FINDINGS

- There is no consistency between LEAs in the processes for collecting the data required to access EMAG funding.
- Very few LEAs allocate EMAG staff to schools according to a formula based on numbers of ethnic minority pupils attending schools and on their stages of acquisition of English.
- There is not enough co-operation between mainstream teachers of EAL pupils and EMAG support teachers in planning pupils' experiences.
- Most LEAs have prepared booklets that record EAL pupils' progress and attainment against the national stages in English. These are usually well maintained. Not enough attention is given to using the outcomes of assessment to diagnose pupils' needs and targets are often not defined clearly enough.
- In the main, school and LEA procedures and policies for assessing EAL pupils, when they are also suspected of having a special educational need, are not effective enough.
- Where leaders and managers are directly involved in the management and delivery of EMAG services, there is clear vision and good strategic management
- Many head teachers show a high level of commitment to meeting the needs of ethnic minority pupils and value the centrally based administration and management of EMAG services.
- The current lack of effective review procedures means that managers generally do not know the strengths and weaknesses of their staff.
- Managers do not place enough emphasis on promoting racial awareness and harmony within their areas.
- Few mainstream teachers have the training or skills to effectively meet the needs of EAL pupils.
- LEAs maintain that they do not have enough resources to extend the service to address ethnic minority achievement issues.
- Some LEAs and schools successfully supplement resources by seeking alternative funding for out of school initiatives and extra curricular work with young people that supports their formal learning.

- There is generally not enough awareness in LEAs and schools of issues of achievement for African Caribbean pupils.

4. Recommendations

In order to promote further improvement in quality and standards, LEAs and schools should ensure that:

- systems are in place so that data collected for EMAG funding is accurate and consistent;
- allocation of EMAG staff to schools is based on accurate figures and a transparent formula linked to the Assembly's stages of EAL acquisition.
- strategies are in place to extend the training of mainstream teachers in raising ethnic minority achievement;
- EMAG staff and mainstream teachers plan jointly to address the needs of ethnic minority pupils;
- clear, appropriate individual targets are set for the achievement of ethnic minority pupils;
- EMAG staff are effectively monitored;
- schools have working policies for EAL, race equality and multicultural education; and
- appropriate provision is made to meet the needs of African Caribbean pupils.

5. STANDARDS

Overall, standards seen in classes were satisfactory. This was the case both in classes where pupils had been withdrawn for specialist English instruction and in mainstream classes where there was support from an EMAG teacher or bilingual assistant. Lessons were observed in English and in other curriculum subjects.

In the classes inspected, good features in standards achieved include:

- the high levels of motivation shown by the majority of pupils, particularly when withdrawn for English lessons;
- the confidence of pupils when trying to use new vocabulary or sentence constructions; and
- steady progress in the skills of speaking, listening, reading and writing in English classes and good application of these skills to develop knowledge and understanding in other subjects of the curriculum.

Common shortcomings in standards in the classes inspected include:

- lack of sustained interest by pupils because the pace and content of the work is too slow and not suitably matched to their needs;
- pupils not achieving their potential because the work provided is not challenging enough; and
- literacy skills are not developed in parallel with pupils' oracy so that, for example, they can explain and discuss key ideas from their lessons orally but produce written work that is mostly copied and only partially understood.

There is generally not enough awareness in LEAs and schools of issues of achievement for African Caribbean pupils.

6. THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION AND TRAINING

7. Teaching

Examples of good and unsatisfactory standards were seen both in classes where pupils had been withdrawn for specialist English instruction and in mainstream classes.

Good features in the quality of teaching in the classes inspected include:

- the development of a classroom ethos in which there are high expectations of all pupils, taking account of culture or ethnicity, and in which ethnic minority pupils take part confidently, without fear of making mistakes;
- work that is well matched to the varying needs of pupils so that the work is sufficiently challenging and pupils' interest is maintained;
- good questioning by teachers that advances and assesses pupils' understanding of key vocabulary and ideas introduced, and which draws on pupils' experiences;
- good attention to pupils' use of language in class activities and written work with careful and tactful correction when necessary;
- where pupils are withdrawn for English lessons, activities that directly support and develop the work that the pupils undertake in other subjects in mainstream classes;
- good use of bilingual assistants to support the work in mainstream classes by questioning and guiding pupils as well as acting as interpreter during the lesson and translating subject vocabulary; and
- appropriate use of pupils' first language, for example on classroom displays.

Common shortcomings in the quality of teaching in the classes inspected include:

- a lack of clear objectives for the learning of ethnic minority pupils in mainstream classes;
- in mainstream classes, lessons that are not planned and structured appropriately to meet the specific needs of EAL pupils;
- in withdrawal sessions, work that is not matched closely enough to EAL pupils' progress and achievement in mainstream classes;
- not enough use of non-verbal communication such as pictures and diagrams to further pupils understanding of language used in class;
- not enough attention to ensuring key terms in mainstream lessons are fully understood by EAL pupils;
- not enough attention in mainstream classes to correcting the commonly occurring errors in EAL pupils' oral and written work; and
- not enough challenge by teachers of written work from EAL pupils that has been copied from texts and is not well understood;

Frequently, the shortcomings occur because:

- there is not enough co-operation between mainstream teachers of EAL pupils and EMAG support teachers in planning pupils' experiences; or
- class and subject teachers of EAL pupils who do not receive extra support are unclear about support strategies that can be used.

The above 2 bullet points were identified as key areas to address in order to improve the quality of teaching of EAL pupils in the Estyn report on provision for EAL pupils published in 2000¹.

8. Assessment

The initial assessment of EAL pupils on their arrival in schools is unduly variable among LEAs. In the best instances, a support teacher carries out a detailed needs assessment of oracy and literacy skills that accurately identifies the required level of support. The information gained from this assessment provides a detailed baseline against which pupils' progress can be regularly assessed. In too many cases, however, the initial assessment focus is not structured carefully enough or covers too narrow a range of language skills.

EMAG teachers generally undertake regular assessment of progress in English against the Wales national five-stage model.

After initial assessment, support teachers usually assess EAL pupils' performance in English at regular intervals. Some of the initial and subsequent assessments are linked to the levels of achievement in the statutory order of the national curriculum for English. More commonly, however, the assessments undertaken by support staff focus on achievement against the national stages and are not linked to the requirements of the national curriculum. As a result, the assessments are not as useful as they could be in helping class teachers plan work for pupils.

Most LEAs have prepared booklets that record EAL pupils' progress and attainment against the national stages in English, together with results in national curriculum assessments in core subjects and public examination outcomes for older pupils. In the best practice, these are used to identify particular successes and difficulties encountered in learning English, and to devise individual learning programmes for pupils containing clear targets for achievement. While the records of pupils' progress are usually well maintained, not enough attention is given to using the outcomes of assessment to diagnose pupils' needs and targets are often not defined clearly enough.

9. Meeting the needs of learners

Few schools run lunchtime or after school clubs specifically for ethnic minority pupils. Schools believe that it is in the best interests of these pupils to attend clubs provided

¹ Standards and Quality in Primary and Secondary Schools: Providing for pupils learning English as an additional language, Estyn, 2000

for all pupils. However, the attendance of ethnic minority pupils at these clubs is not monitored effectively.

Some schools appropriately vary the lessons from which they withdraw pupils. This ensures that pupils don't miss the same subject each week. While schools receiving peripatetic support are constrained by the times that EMAG teachers can attend, in the best practice, substantial efforts are made to ensure pupils do not consistently miss classes in one particular subject to attend withdrawal sessions.

In a few schools, EMAG staff meet regularly with parents in school, attend parents evenings and arrange to visit parents at home. In other schools, EMAG staff feel that they have insufficient time to do this because of the peripatetic nature of their role.

EMAG staff in some schools are able to provide translations and act as interpreters, other schools rely on pupils, friends and families to communicate with parents. Many schools report that they are unable to pay for all key documents to be translated into the home languages of the ethnic minority pupils that they have.

In schools with large numbers of ethnic minority pupils, there is regular, appropriate celebration and awareness of cultural diversity. This is rare in schools with very few ethnic minority pupils.

10. Induction

Some schools have packs for newly arrived pupils which outline the procedures of the school. In schools with large numbers of ethnic minority pupils, these are appropriately available in community languages. Also most schools employ a 'buddy' system where newly arrived pupils are allocated to a pupil who acts as a help and a guide for the pupil.

11. EAL and SEN

A few LEAs make appropriate provision for assessing EAL pupils when they are also suspected of having a special educational need. In one LEA, every Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENCO) has received training in EAL and EMAG staff attend pupil review meetings. In another, educational psychologists have received training from the EMAG service and service representatives attend all referral/ review meetings. In the main, however, school and LEA procedures and policies for assessing EAL pupils, when they are also suspected of having a special educational need, are not effective enough.

12. Evaluation of training

Training provided for EMAG staff is generally good but there is not enough training in data collection and in assessing the stages of language acquisition. Few mainstream teachers have the training or skills to effectively meet the needs of EAL pupils. In spite of the larger authorities offering good quality courses at a variety of different times, many staff who teach EAL pupils do not attend. Mainstream teaching staff do

not see this as a priority for their personal or professional development and therefore do not access courses.

The authorities with large EMAG services offer staff a wide range of opportunities to attend professional development through INSET and distance learning on courses run from, for example, Bristol and Manchester. Bilingual assistants are encouraged to follow a NVQ 2 level qualification. These courses require a great deal of personal commitment and the length of time taken to complete them is often a barrier to staff attainment. The lack of nationally recognised qualifications is a further demotivating factor for staff.

13. LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Where leaders and managers are directly involved in the management and delivery of EMAG services, there is clear vision and good strategic management. This is the case for heads of centrally run EMAG services and for senior managers in local authorities where there are significant numbers of EAL pupils. However, in too many authorities where there are few EAL pupils, not enough emphasis is given by senior managers to overseeing provision to meet the needs of these pupils. This is particularly the case in LEAs where services are bought in from central services administered by another authority. In these instances, managers have delegated the responsibility for provision and do not do enough to ensure that the needs of their EAL pupils are being met effectively.

Many head teachers show a high level of commitment to meeting the needs of ethnic minority pupils and are content with LEA based administration and management of EMAG services. Central management and allocation of resources works well when there is close cooperation, frequent contact, and genuine partnership working with schools. However, although they are well aware of issues within their schools and keen to address them, head teachers are not always easily able to influence the allocation of resources. On the other hand, managers of central services feel that they are not always able to influence effectively the teaching approaches used in schools.

In general, there is not enough coordination between peripatetic staff and mainstream teachers. Joint planning between EMAG and mainstream staff is not good enough. As a result, mainstream teachers are not always aware of the aims of the EMAG services.

Many issues around the inclusion of EAL pupils within the full curriculum remain unresolved. LEAs and schools have different policies on providing EAL support ranging from long term withdrawal through to in class support. In Estyn's view, short term withdrawal support and in class support uphold the principles of inclusion. Centralised services give advice and guidance but have no control over individual practice within schools. In a significant number of schools, pupils are consistently withdrawn from the same subject or subjects, for example Welsh, considered appropriate by the school. In other schools, ethnic minority pupils, particularly girls, are directed to subjects such as home economics, where the school perceives the language demands may be least, rather than their ability or personal subject choice.

The needs of the individual pupil are not always given enough priority over the need to manage resources.

Generally, there is a lack of equality of opportunity for isolated pupils. This is due in part to the need to concentrate resources in schools where there are high numbers of EM pupils. Even within a large centralised service, it is often difficult to move resources around to meet changing needs at short notice, particularly when staff feel established over time in a particular school. As the data collection from schools is still in most cases incomplete, centralised services are not as able as they should be to focus on the needs of individual pupils, both in terms of language acquisition and achievement.

There is too wide a variation across Wales in the effectiveness of performance management of EMAG staff. There are various types of staff performance monitoring systems, including reviews in some schools, monitoring by central service cluster leaders, and inclusion in central LEA systems such as Investors in People. EMAG staff who carry out monitoring do not always have enough training to feel confident in their role.

The current lack of effective review procedures means that managers generally do not know enough about the strengths and weaknesses of their staff, and are therefore unable to identify individual training and development needs. This is particularly true of authorities that buy in services and have only very limited contact with EMAG staff.

14. Policies for race equality, EAL and multicultural education

EMAG managers and headteachers generally do not place enough emphasis on promoting racial awareness and harmony within their areas. Resources are concentrated on language acquisition and not used imaginatively to promote wider ethnic minority achievement or racial awareness. Lack of adequate planning on this issue means that opportunities to promote the positive aspects of multi-culturalism are generally missed. Schools where there are large numbers of ethnic minority pupils appreciate the value added to pupils' learning by taking advantage of diversity. However, most headteachers do not capitalise on this natural resource to enhance learning and develop wider community issues.

Many local authorities are appointing a central officer with responsibility for racial harmony and awareness issues. These officers work closely with schools to advise on legislative issues. Whilst this is a positive step on the part of local authorities, in some schools, it reinforces the idea that racial awareness issues are not the responsibility of the school. Too many senior staff in schools regard these as separate issues from teaching and learning rather than integral to the achievement of all pupils.

The large majority of schools comply with legislation in having race equality policies, but in many cases policies provided by the local authority are adopted with little, if any, amendment to meet the particular circumstances of individual schools. They are rarely seen as working documents with associated action plans.

Few schools have policies for English as an additional language and multicultural education. Where these are in place, they tend to be blanket copies of policies provided by the LEA and are just treated as paper policies not as working documents.

15. EMAG funding

There is no consistency in the processes for collecting data to inform the allocation of EMAG funding. In some LEAs, the procedures for collecting data are sound and ensure accuracy. In contrast, in others, the procedures for data collection are not rigorous enough to ensure that data is valid.

For example, in the best authorities and services, information on the numbers of ethnic minority pupils in schools is carefully monitored and EMAG staff support school staff in collecting the data. In other cases, however, LEAs and head teachers do not know how many ethnic minority pupils are recorded as attending their schools. This is most frequently the case when the responsibility for EMAG services has been handed over to another provider. Here, data collection is too often treated as a paper exercise and is not related closely enough to the management of resources to support the development of pupil needs.

16. Allocation of staff to schools

The way in which LEAs allocate resources to schools is unsatisfactory. Very few LEAs allocate resources on a formula based on numbers of ethnic minority pupils attending schools and on their stages of acquisition of English. Head teachers are not always aware of the basis for allocating resources. Lack of accurate data, inconsistent monitoring and non-transparent resource allocation make it very difficult to judge the extent to which services offer value for money.

17. Resources and accommodation

The majority of schools visited do not allocate a budget to EAL but will purchase materials when recommended. Resources are generally concentrated on the teaching of English. LEAs maintain that there are not enough resources to broaden their work to encompass the underachievement of ethnic minority groups and most do not have the detailed statistical information to allow them to do this. Where data collection systems are good, they are still not refined enough to differentiate achievement within racial groupings other than by gender, hence it is difficult to monitor pupil performance. Systems for allocating resources are not yet in place to respond to individual pupil needs.

The quality of teaching materials used to support EAL teaching is satisfactory. Teaching materials are not always matched to priorities for development. They are often not age related, and are more suited to primary than secondary pupils. The lack of differentiated and subject specific materials hinder the achievement of pupils. Mainstream staff are not always aware of the sensitivity of materials and use

inappropriate approaches to topics. The encouragement of teachers to use these resources and the monitoring of usage varies widely across Wales.

LEAs and service providers maintain that they do not have enough resources to extend the service to address ethnic minority achievement issues. They have not yet begun to reallocate existing resources to free up staff to concentrate on achievement issues. Only one authority has sufficiently detailed information to target resources effectively. However, progress is being made in the collection of data that will enable LEAs and schools to develop services to support ethnic minority achievement.

Some LEAs and schools successfully address resource issues by seeking alternative funding for out of school initiatives and extra curricular work with young people that supports their formal learning. This includes positive initiatives within communities and work with parents and carers. However, generally, there is not enough imaginative use of resources to support achievement.

Schools generally make the best use of the accommodation available for EAL teaching but the quality and amount of space is often inadequate. Some schools, particularly those with large numbers of ethnic minority pupils and with open plan buildings, do not have enough space to carry out specialist support especially for new arrivals. Resource areas are often overcrowded.