



EMTAS

ETHNIC MINORITY & TRAVELLER
ACHIEVEMENT SERVICE

SPRING 2021

NEWSLETTER NO. 20

Welcome to this term's EMTAS newsletter. This is an expanded edition and we hope that you find it useful.

Teaching provision has been adapting and evolving continually over the past year and we know that huge efforts have been made to find creative ways to support the needs of all children and families.

With that in mind, this newsletter includes:

- **Tips & resources for EAL children who are learning at home**
- **The "Covid Diary" of an EAL Co-ordinator**
- **How to support parents & carers of EAL children at home**

You can also find additional guidance related to home learning for EAL and Traveller pupils in our [previous newsletter](#) from last year.

This edition also includes articles on a range of "non-Covid" topics which we hope will prove helpful, through the rest of this year and beyond:

- **Raising aspirations for Traveller children**
- **Celebrating inclusive practice at Bilingshurst Primary School**
- **NALDIC Conference 2020 & the importance of first language**

Information and resources relating to all aspects of the EMTAS team are now on the West Sussex [Tools for Schools website](#). We continue to develop this resource and further updates will be added periodically.

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UPCOMING EVENTS

Traveller Education Support Network Meeting Tue 9th March (10am - 11:30am). Will be held using Microsoft Teams and invites to be sent out shortly. Contact Clare Painting - clare.painting@westsussex.gov.uk

Recognising Racism & Celebrating Diversity training

Two-part online training course for school staff, delivered in partnership with the Community Safety & Wellbeing Team and featuring contributions from West Sussex children and young people. Select an option to book:

[Option 1](#) - Mon 15th March & Wed 24th March (both 3.30pm)

[Option 2](#) - Tue 23rd March & Tue 30th March (both 9.30am)




If you are unable to attend these dates but are interested in attending future training, please contact emat@westsussex.gov.uk

Focus on... *advice for teachers*

Top tips when planning for EAL Learners remote learning

Following on from our experiences in the last lockdown, EMTAS has compiled a list of twelve key points to consider when planning for EAL learners learning remotely:



1. Maintain **regular communication** with parents/carers and child or young person using appropriate and accessible formats, for example simple English accompanied by visuals.
2. Consider whether an **interpreter/online translation tool** is needed to ensure that parents/carers understand their role in supporting home learning and that child or young person understands what they need to do.
3. Establish how parents/carers and the pupils wish to receive communications. Is **text**  or **email**  best? Or would a **telephone call**  be more effective?
4. Do you need to provide **paper copies** of home learning tasks with simple clear instructions for parent/carer and pupil?
5. Plan **opportunities to listen** to rich and varied models of English so that EAL pupils can benefit from listening to academic English at home. For example, record a video or audio file of yourself reading a story/text to your pupils or a video giving instructions for a task.
6. **Grade your language.** Avoid complex grammar, idioms or fixed phrases. Keep language simple, especially when giving instructions.
7. Provide **clear, accessible written instructions**. Chunk them, use imperatives and numbered bullet points. Consider providing an audio or video version.
8. **Use pupils' other languages** to support learning. Encourage the blending of languages and use of mother tongue to research and discuss curriculum concepts, to map or label graphs, to create mind-maps about what they know about a topic, to problem solve or to work on projects with peers.
9. **Differentiate** teaching materials. For example, use visuals extensively to make the curriculum/ conceptual context clear and to support the introduction and consolidation of key vocabulary. Use graphic organisers to present curriculum content and for recording pupil responses.
10. Use **DARTs** (Directed Activities Related to Texts) to record responses to reading tasks.



11. **Scaffold** speaking and writing tasks using sentence starters, sentence frames, matching activities, gap filling, substitution frames and writing frames that incorporate key vocabulary lists and relevant sentence starters.

12. Provide timely **feedback** that is accessible. For example, consider recording with the comments facility in MS Word or screencast feedback to discuss content, either as a group or individually. Alternatively provide audio/video feedback or feedback via a phone call.


Top resources for EAL learners learning at home



Bell Foundation - Home learning guidance & resources

Advice for teachers, learners and parents (see page 6 for more information)

West Sussex EMTAS webinar Guidance for teachers supporting EAL learners remotely

 **West Sussex EMTAS videos for parents** Advice videos for parents on how to support EAL learners at home. Versions for primary and secondary phases, recorded in multiple languages.

British Council Learn English Kids Advice for parents, videos, games, stories, flash cards & worksheets. *(We suggest schools signpost specific activities for individual children)*

British Council Learn English Teens Advice for learning at home, tips for exams, grammar and vocabulary exercises, listening and literacy activities, games and videos. Students can also interact with other teenagers from all around the world.

World Stories A range of stories translated into 31 languages, including English.

Research - Newly arrived bilingual pupils during lockdown

Last year, the **National Institute of Economic & Social Research (NIESR)** looked at the lessons learnt from the experiences of newly arrived migrants during the first lockdown in England, Spain, Italy and Switzerland.

The research study aimed to:

- Explore challenges & understand the impact of the lockdown for newly arrived migrants.
- Investigate school responses and practices used to support newly arrived migrants.

Some successful strategies identified included:

- Parent ambassadors to connect with families
- Digital Literacy lessons for parents through phone calls or videos
- Connecting newly-arrived pupils with native speaking peers
- Use of multilingual TAs to assist communication
- Interactive projects to engage and boost morale & motivation (eg. drama, video, cooking)

You can watch a video presentation of the full research (35 mins) [here](#)



A "Covid Diary" of an EAL Coordinator



Going back to work after the Christmas break in January 2020, little did I know how different and challenging the coming months would be in terms of fulfilling my responsibilities as an EAL coordinator. Fast forward to 2021 and we are in another national lockdown with schools having to offer remote provision yet again.

No teacher was prepared for school closures in March 2020. We had to venture into the unknown territory of online

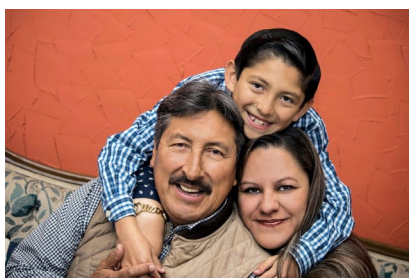
tools, Zoom videos and Google Classrooms. As each school took a different approach, depending on their resources and cohort, I quickly realised that a top priority for me would be how best to communicate with the parents of my EAL pupils (My belief was strengthened further after I watched the EMTAS webinar - [Guidance for teachers supporting EAL learners learning remotely](#)). As parents were to become key educators, it was clear that without having them on board, it would be very difficult to ensure effective learning.

Most of my EAL children were learning from home, so I called each family weekly, checking on children's well-being, clarifying any homework and ensuring they had all the necessary login details. Some families were harder to reach than others. I am lucky enough to speak Polish and a lot of my families are of Polish heritage. Yet, I still found myself leaving several voicemail messages as some parents who do not speak English avoided answering their phones. Occasionally, I had to call all contacts listed for the child or parents of other children I knew they were friends with. Communicating with other families involved enlisting the help of bilingual staff members, parents who spoke another language and translated emails (Google Translate is not perfect but works just fine to communicate simple messages). It was crucial for me to make sure ALL children and their families are coping and feel supported.



Having regular contact with our families throughout lockdown, helped me

build close relationships with them but also made me realise how easily misunderstood school messages are. It is paramount to make the content explicit and not take things for granted. To give you an example, I found that a lot of my parents did not realise they had to use the school's website to access homework. They have never been on it and didn't even know the address. It was also difficult for them to find the right information on the website and I had to talk them through it step by step whilst on the phone. With some parents, it was easier to send simplified instructions via email.



Parents were also anxious about their ability to support their children with English. A lot felt they were not fluent enough and struggled to understand the activities. When talking to them, I tried to reassure them that using first language is equally important and can indeed enhance children's understanding of ideas and contexts. I ensured that links to [EMTAS videos](#) for parents (in different languages) were on my school's website and directed parents to those. I have also created a list of EAL friendly websites with resources to support

language learning, like games and e-books, and emailed them to parents of those of my pupils who were not yet fluent and would be normally receiving some sort of language intervention at school.

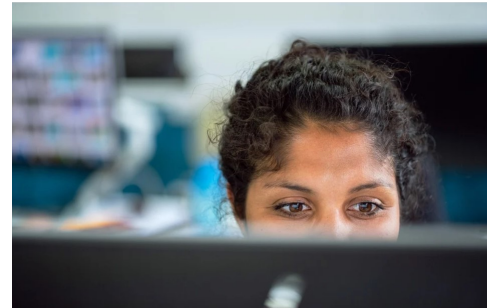
As more children started coming back in the Summer term and schools reopened fully in September, I came to realise that my team's usual EAL provision would not be possible. We were now working in bubbles and having a TA working with groups of children and in different classrooms was not going to happen. Therefore, I

had to guarantee that EAL teaching in bubbles was of the highest standard. I searched the internet for available CPD for staff and apart from another EMTAS webinar, '[How best to support EAL students returning to school](#)', I also noted [The Bell Foundation website](#) is a good source of advice and ideas for teaching children with EAL. I took time to assist teachers with their planning, particularly differentiation, and preparing resources that scaffold learning, (e.g. word mats, writing and speaking frames, substitution tables).

All of the above and time over Christmas to reflect, meant that I entered the current lockdown better prepared.

As before, I started with checking on our EAL families. I identified some with children falling into the extended 'vulnerable' category, being unable to engage with remote learning. They were offered places and are now well supported in class. Learning is being made accessible through the use of consistent formats that families are familiar with. Planning includes a lot of scaffolded materials and ensures equal value is given to speaking, listening, reading and writing activities.

The materials provided incorporate lots of modelling (e.g. texts) and teachers filming themselves giving instructions and providing links to audio recording and instructional videos. We also provide print-out versions of all activities and levelled textbooks, which are particularly useful for those new to English.



We are about to venture into the world of real-time online lessons, which would be another step into making the home learning more accessible and inclusive. The past year has allowed me to better understand the challenges our EAL families face and although successful provision has been difficult at times, it has showed me that cooperation and communication between home and school is vital if we are to ensure that EAL children make progress.

A fantastic story-telling resource

Chris North founded '**Freedom Through Fun!**' based in Chichester in November 2004, after 20 years of experience as a teacher and 13 years as a Senior Social Worker.

Chris has worked on projects with EMTAS and attends the Traveller Education Support Network Meetings. He has previously visited Traveller communities with EMTAS as part of a project to reach families during the summer holidays. With this work in mind, Chris has recorded a story based on the life of a Romany Traveller pupil.



Chris's videos can be found on his [YouTube channel](#)

Chris wants support from children to write and perform more stories that celebrate diversity and inclusion. He would especially like the opportunity to hear and perform stories from Travelling communities.

Contact Chris on his website www.chrisnorththestoryteller.com He encourages schools to consider sharing this resource with their pupils. Chris would love to hear from them.

Focus on... **supporting parents**

Involving the parents of children and young people learning through EAL in their child's learning



It is generally accepted that parental involvement is a key factor in supporting children's learning.

However, according to research from The Bell Foundation (Evans et al, 2016) parents of children and young people learning through EAL may be at a disadvantage due to a language barrier, a lack of understanding of the English education system and/or staff perceptions about parental engagement.

The **Bell Foundation** hosts lots of useful materials to share with staff and parents:

Guidance for schools

'Working with parents to support the learning of pupils who use EAL' for primary and secondary schools. This document reviews how best to work with parents. It highlights how to encourage a positive dialogue with parents and decide whether more intensive support is needed.

The Blog

'Working with parents to support the learning of EAL pupils' Highlights some of the challenges of working with parents, as well as suggestions on how to help.

Webinar

A webinar recording for staff (1 hour) entitled 'How parents can use home languages to support the home learning and school work of EAL pupils'

Guidance for parents

There are two documents. There are English versions of each document and other versions that have been translated into the 17 most commonly used first languages in UK schools (Arabic, Bengali, Bulgarian, Chinese, Gujarati, Italian, Latvian, Lithuanian, Polish, Punjabi, Romanian, Russian, Slovak, Somali, Spanish, Turkish, Urdu)

Helping children learn - Guidance for parents of EAL pupils. The guide covers how to get involved in school life as well as how to support your child's learning.

About the English education system - Guidance for parents of primary and secondary EAL pupils. The guide covers how to find a school place, the age at which children go to school, finding out about term dates as well as what to expect from school and what school might expect from parents.

Both guides can be downloaded from [here](#):

Signposting Covid-19 public health messages for EAL families

West Sussex County Council (follow link) - Coronavirus advice and key information. Translated documents are at the bottom of the page.

Crawley Borough Council - Public health leaflets and videos translated into a range of common languages in the Crawley area.

Doctors of the World - Useful website with Covid-19 guidance available in over 60 languages. Continually being reviewed and updated.

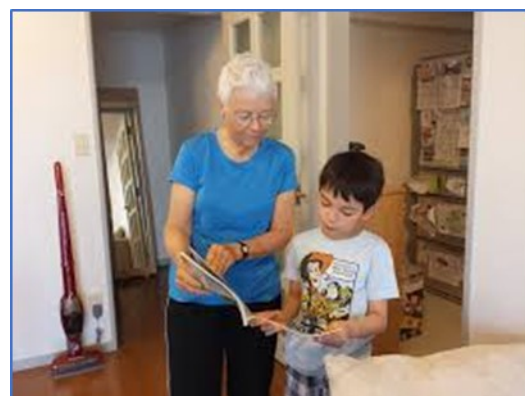
Walsall For All - Translated guidance and accessible formats. Includes separate documents on a range of topics related to Covid-19.

Tips to share with parents/ carers: How to do 'Brilliant Book Talk'

Every teacher knows that reading matters – for language development, for academic success and because it can offer such pleasure and comfort.

Of course, the focus of reading activity will vary according to the age of the child; but it is the to-and-fro of conversational turn-taking when parents/carers and children talk about a book which can provide a wealth of opportunities for learning.

The Education Endowment Foundation guidance report [*Preparing for Literacy*](#) recommends a simple recipe for reading together:



Take turns to make plans and predictions before reading	'I wonder if... what do you think?' 'You think... Oh, I thought...'
Recap to check ideas and understanding as your child is reading	'So, you think that...' 'Did you expect...to happen?' 'Why do you think that happened?'
Use encouragement and praise to keep children engaged in reading	'What brilliant ideas...let's see what happens.' 'You thought so carefully about...' 'What might happen now?'
Share prior knowledge and past experiences that link to what is being read	'Have you learnt about...at school?' 'Do you remember when we watched...and found out about...'
Tune in and listen to your child. Be curious about their interests.	'I didn't know you knew so much about...' 'I love reading stories about...with you.'

The blog reminds us that now is not the time to be too anxious about what children are reading. Reading instructions, recipes and even old baby books are all valuable. Returning to old favourites can be comforting. And let's not forget to convey a love of reading too!

You can read the blog in full [here](#)

Raising Aspirations for GRT pupils

The sad fact is that Gypsy, Roma, Traveller children are some of the least likely students to proceed onto university.

In November, the **University of Sussex** held a *Widening Participation* conference to highlight the work being done around access to university for the under-represented in Higher Education.

The conference looked at the challenges in access for those with the most significant barriers. It was highlighted that between just 3 and 4% of Gypsy, Roma, Traveller students go on to higher education, in comparison with 43% of the settled population. Sussex University have developed an *Access & Participation Plan* and are working closely with partners to encourage more Gypsy, Roma & Traveller pupils to consider attending university. You can read more about the plan [here](#).



Kings College London have also been doing a lot of work in this area and recently published a report, [The Under Representation of Gypsy, Roma, Traveller Pupils in Higher Education](#).

Kings College has worked with students to develop the [RomBelong](#) programme to engage with communities, schools, councils and charities to make education more accessible and university a place of belonging for GRT students. In partnership with the **Travellers Times**, Kings College have produced a series of six films that share the stories and experiences of Traveller students who have either attended or are going to be attending university. The videos can be viewed [here](#) and may offer a different way of starting conversations around aspirations and academic options GRT young people.

It is therefore crucial for staff to encourage and support GRT pupils and their families to have high expectations for their future outcomes. [Uni4Me](#) is a partnership of over fifty higher education organisations led by the National Education Opportunities Network (NEON). They want to ensure that all learners, whatever their backgrounds, have equal access to higher education and want to support them to achieve their potential.

Higher Education Pledge

An important initiative has been set up by the new Gypsies, Travellers, Roma, Showmen & Boaters (GTRSB) into Higher Education Network. The pledge aims to encourage universities and colleges to make a firm commitment to welcome and support Travellers entering their institution.

Colleges signing the pledge agree to:

- A **named contact** point for GTRSB students and potential students
- **Data monitoring** of GTRSB student and staff numbers
- Building a **supportive and welcoming culture** for GTRSB students
- **Outreach and engagement** to local GTRSB communities
- **Inclusion, celebration and commemoration** of GTRSB cultures & communities

You can read the full pledge [here](#).

Celebrating Inclusive Practice

We are really pleased to share the inclusive work of **Billingshurst Primary School**. Their recent work supporting newly arrived Gypsy, Roma, Traveller families to access their school has been highlighted on the [Tools for Schools website](#).



"The school have recognised the additional support to enable children from these families to thrive. This is not just through the academic curriculum. School have universally helped with uniform, school meals and communicating with outside agencies such as EMTAS to resolve issues at an early stage. This has also included engaging the wider community when welcoming large numbers of children into the school.

Further details of best practice strategies and resources used:



- Staff need a good understanding of Traveller culture.
- Communication must be clear and consistent.
- Have a designated member of staff as the contact for Traveller families.
- Get to know your Traveller families.
- Know how to respond to racist incidents.
- Have high expectations for all pupils.
- Have resources for use in school that reflect & celebrate Traveller culture."

We have seen first-hand what a positive impact this type of open and welcoming approach can have for children from Traveller families. It is fantastic to see this so publicly celebrated.

Report from the NALDIC Conference, November 2020

On 21 November 2020, NALDIC (the national subject association for EAL) held its 28th annual conference. The conference was delivered virtually and comprised three Keynote Speakers and a series of papers on classroom practice and research findings related to the conference theme - **Multilingual Britain: Successes, challenges and future directions**



The importance of first language (L1) in the learning process emerged as a common theme. Empowering children and young people to use their full linguistic repertoire to access learning was viewed in a very positive light that would lead to greater motivation on the part of learners and better progress.

Sometimes L1 is only used to communicate with the learner's family or to address the emotional needs of a child. However, it can do so much more.

You can read our full report [here](#), including summaries of the key note speakers and a selection of highlights from the various papers that were presented.

QUICK LINK: [Interactive Diversity and Inclusion Calendar 2021](#)

Free to download from Dual Frequency. This calendar is colour coded to the Equality Act 2010 & each date is a clickable button which takes you to useful info. A great resource!