

**Annual Report 2019-2020**

**The English as an Additional Language (EAL) Service**

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Throughout the report, English as an Additional Language will be referred to as EAL. Children who have EAL are those who have a language other than English as their first or community language and who need to learn English in addition for education and social inclusion.

### **Who we are:**

The Service staff is as follows:

#### Advisory teachers:

Mrs Agnieszka Polanski  
Mrs Helen Rowe (Senior Advisory Teacher)  
Mrs Clare Webster

#### Bilingual support assistants:

Mrs Barbara Hardwick  
Mrs Tara Thind

#### Administration assistant:

Mrs Nicola Hunter

## **The pupils**

Pupils with EAL supported by the Service include:

1. Beginner bilingual pupils, who are newly arrived and may never have used English. These new arrivals are orally fluent in at least one language and some are multilingual on arrival. Older children generally have well-developed literacy skills in their language of education.
2. Children from families seeking asylum, who may have had limited or interrupted education, but who may also have potential to achieve highly.
3. New arrivals at Key Stage 3 and 4, who have received full, formal education in home country, who may have learned English as a Foreign Language and already have high levels of subject knowledge and achievement.
4. UASC – Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children, who have arrived alone, often having experienced or witnessed violence and loss of family members and much disruption in education. Many of these young people may have had no schooling in their home language.
5. Children born in the UK, but who have had little exposure to English before starting school. UK born bilinguals may have some familiarity with English. Extensive exposure often begins when they enter the education system.

Solihull schools also include more advanced learners of EAL - bilingual pupils, who are orally fluent, but whose oral fluency masks the need for continued support to develop academic language proficiency. The Service provides advice when requested.

Many learners with EAL in Solihull are isolated bilingual learners; that is, a learner may be the only child in school from a particular language background. In schools with a higher number or diverse range of EAL learners, it is still possible to be an isolated bilingual learner.

This report will outline some of the activities the Service has been involved in as well as presenting the data on the pupils the Service has worked with during the academic year 2019-20. The report will differ from previous years as we were affected by Covid-19 and the ensuing lockdown. The EAL Service maintained a skeleton support service whilst members of the team were deployed elsewhere (mainly safeguarding, vulnerable children's services and the virtual school). While schools were in lockdown, no visits were made and no new referrals received.

## **What we do**

This year has been unique and many of the activities we are usually engaged with have been put on hold due to the Covid-19 lockdown. The Service has also suffered from some serious and long term sickness from staff members so all in all it has been a challenge.

However, here are some of the activities and initiatives the Service was involved with this year:

### **Initial assessments of pupils with English as an additional language**

The Service continues to provide support to schools with assessing pupils' when they are newly arrived or if the school has concern about their English language proficiency. Schools are required to refer pupils themselves and the Service will endeavour to visit the pupil and provide a report with advice/strategies within three weeks. Following the lockdown, arrangements have been put in place to enable schools to complete their own assessments in school with support from the EAL team. Staff are offering a bespoke service to schools whereby assessments can be quality assured and advice and strategies offered to each individual pupil.

### **Supporting pupils with English as an additional language**

Our protocol document (which can be viewed on our Solgrid page <https://www.solgrid.org.uk/education/support-services/english-as-an-additional-language/>) outlines priorities for support and explains how and why decisions are made. Most pupils receive advisory support which will mean that their progress is tracked and they will be re-visited; some pupils (high needs) will receive up to two terms of direct, in-class support from a member of the team. Collaboration with staff and parents/carers is vital in the process. During the current situation, advice is being offered to schools about individual children via telephone or alternative platforms where possible. Lack of access to a suitable audio/visual platform via the council has been a significant barrier for the team.

### **Assessment, support and collaboration with other agencies for pupils with English as an additional language who may also have additional needs**

Distinguishing the difference between a pupil who may be learning English as an additional language and one who may also have an additional need is problematic for schools, especially as such children may present in similar ways. Over the past year we have collaborated with Specialist Inclusion Services (including SISS) and Speech and Language Services to support a range of children, some of whom have gone on to have identified special needs. We have contributed advice to Education Health and Care Plans (EHCPs), supported schools with children with selective mutism, ASD and other complex needs. We have worked with children in a number of special schools and supported the use of alternative communication systems e.g. Makaton and liaised with parents. The Service has also become increasingly aware of the impact of anxiety on pupils learning English and we are working hard to support them in schools. We have collaborated with the Educational Psychology team who attended our Network meeting and provided training and guidance in this area.

### **Providing support to schools in promoting bilingualism and a welcoming and inclusive ethos**

The Service staff have been active in encouraging schools to promote the positives of bilingualism and to ensure that pupils and parents feel welcomed into the school environment. The Service has supported a range of activities in schools including parent/carer coffee mornings, craft afternoons and world language days.

### **EAL Network**

Each school is requested to ensure they have a member of staff dedicated to EAL or an EAL Co-ordinator. The Service runs termly network meetings and sends out a termly newsletter. The Network has provided a forum for staff to discuss current issues and concerns as well as giving updates.

### **Advisory support to staff**

We are discouraging schools from placing EAL under the general umbrella of the SENCO as it is unique and different; many schools have now appointed a designated member of staff and in some instances these are paid roles. The Service offers advisory support visits which cover all aspects of the role including financial management of the budget, assessment, support and inclusion. Schools are encouraged to devise action plans, supported by Advisory Teachers, and to identify key areas for development. Since the lockdown, the Service has offered advisory support via telephone.

### **EAL Ambassadors project**

The EAL Ambassadors programme provides a fantastic opportunity for pupils to learn the skills needed to support new EAL arrivals so that they feel safe and welcome right from the start in the Solihull community. The Service has continued to provide training in schools and via the EAL Network. The guidance for Primary schools has been reviewed and updated this year. More information can be found on Solgrid.

### **INSET training sessions, including collaboration with Central England Minority Achievement hub (CEMA) and Warwick University**

The Service continues to provide a range of training opportunities to schools including bespoke training. This year we have delivered training in schools, covering a range of topics including assessment, identification, tracking, strategies for supporting new arrivals as well as more advanced learners of English. We have also collaborated with the Early Years team providing training on induction for children in EYFS.

This year saw the fifth year of joint training with CEMA in Walsall on the role of the EAL Co-ordinator and this reached staff from a wide area of the midlands. CEMA has now ceased to operate and it is hoped that the EAL Service in Solihull may be able to continue with some of the work/training they offered in the future.

The Service was invited once again to contribute to the inclusion day for PGCE students at Warwick University to provide a workshop on supporting pupils with EAL.

This year we adapted the Teaching Assistant training to provide a shorter version, delivered to clusters of schools over a four to six week period at no cost. The aim of this is to reach a wider audience and to enable more staff to access the training. The first of these sessions took place in the spring term and was positively reviewed by those who attended.

### **Supporting schools and the Schools' Advisory Service with reading audits**

The Service has been involved in the reading audits in Primary schools which are designed to support schools with the "deep dives" which are now part of OFSTED inspections. The Service has been able to advise and inform the group about the specialised needs of pupils with English as an additional language and assisted with writing reading policies which reflect this.

### **Training for Health Visitors**

The Service has continued to deliver training to Health Visitors. This focuses on language development and in particular the importance of maintaining the first/home language in order to enable the effective development of English as an additional language.

### **Governor Training**

Training for governors is offered twice a year and enables this group to better understand the work we do. The focus of the sessions is on informing and supporting governors with challenge and questioning.

### **Collaboration with Speech and Language Services**

The Service has now forged links with the Speech and Language Service and will be working together with them in the forthcoming year to provide guidance and training. Much of this was informed by training we received from Dr Sean Pert of the RCSLT and Manchester University. The Speech and Language Service has already made adaptations to assessments of bilingual children including adopting the RCSLT advice regarding the use of interpreters as a direct result of our recommendations.

### **Solgrid**

The bulk of the Service's forms and documents are now in situ on Solgrid. Work continues to update the page and to add information for schools, parents and pupils. It can be viewed at <http://www.solgrid.org.uk/directory/english-as-an-additional-language/>.

In addition, the following activities were carried out during the lockdown of schools and led by Advisory Teacher, Agnieszka Polanski:

### **Work during the national lockdown due to COVID19 pandemic**

We acknowledge that the COVID-19 crisis has been an unprecedented period of anxiety, disruption and uncertainty for schools, EAL pupils and their families. At the EAL Service, we continued to focus on the advisory and educational provision for EAL children in Solihull by the following actions:

#### **Virtual advisory dialogues with schools (via emails, phone calls, etc.)**

The Service continued to support and provide schools with a range of information, guidance and resources for pupils with EAL. We distributed general guidance for primary and secondary schools with a responsibility for English as an additional language as well as supporting individual cases by providing suitable resources. The above was conducted virtually: through our newsletter, emails and phone calls.

#### **Supporting parents of pupils with EAL**

Home-schooling was challenging for all parents but particularly parents and carers of our EAL pupils who themselves don't speak English very well. For parents who are English learners themselves, the difficulty is greater; the challenge of both language and subject knowledge. Therefore our Service created a webpage, on our EAL Solgrid platform, dedicated especially for EAL parents. On the platform we have posted a guide for EAL parents on how to support their children at home, suggested some ways to keep academic

learning going, using their first language and also included many useful links with English learning activities that children could do, largely independently.

Additionally we have included an explanation about health and safety with regards to Covid-19 in various languages.

### **Translating (networking schools and EAL parents)**

Most members of our team speak at least two languages, therefore we are able to help with translation between some parents and schools. Languages we cover in our Service are: French, Italian, Punjabi and Polish. During the lockdown, we were helping schools communicating with individual EAL parents. We joined virtual meetings and acted as interpreters, as well as translated relevant letters and documents.

### **OUP project**

Following our long co-operation with the Oxford University Press (OUP), we were offered six months free access to their most popular online courses for all pupils under our direct supervision. Consequently, our service was able to arrange individual access codes for the following courses: English File 3rd and 4th edition, Headway 4th and 5th edition, Solutions 3rd edition, Navigate, Business Results 2nd Edition and Q Skills for Success 3rd Edition. Additionally the OUP offered free classroom presentation tools for all teachers and free e-books for all students. More than twenty schools were able to take advantage of this opportunity.

### **Supporting the Looked After Children's Education Service (LACES) team**

During the current school closure, while working from home, the EAL Service was able to support the LACES team with some of their responsibilities. We have been involved with the quality assurance of Personal Education Plans for all Looked After Children and we created written guidelines for UASC's parents/carers. This document includes two sections: Top tips for parents/carers supporting UASC at home and Learning at home (COVID-19).

### **The data**

There are three distinct data sets used in this report.

- The data set is obtained from the school census (January 2020) and compares Solihull data with that locally and nationally.
- The second set of statistics is derived from an analysis of all the pupils using EAL with whom the Service was involved in 2019-20; there are 172 of these in total. ***It does not refer to all learners using EAL within the authority.*** Some of these pupils were referred in previous years and are still on the caseload as they may have additional needs or because the school is still receiving advisory support. It also includes new referrals from this year, both those receiving direct and advisory support and those assessed by the Service as not requiring additional involvement.
- The third set of data is based entirely on the pupils who were referred to the Service in the academic year 2019-2020 and these numbered 77. Due to the lockdown only 64 of these referrals were processed and the remaining 13 were carried over to this academic year.

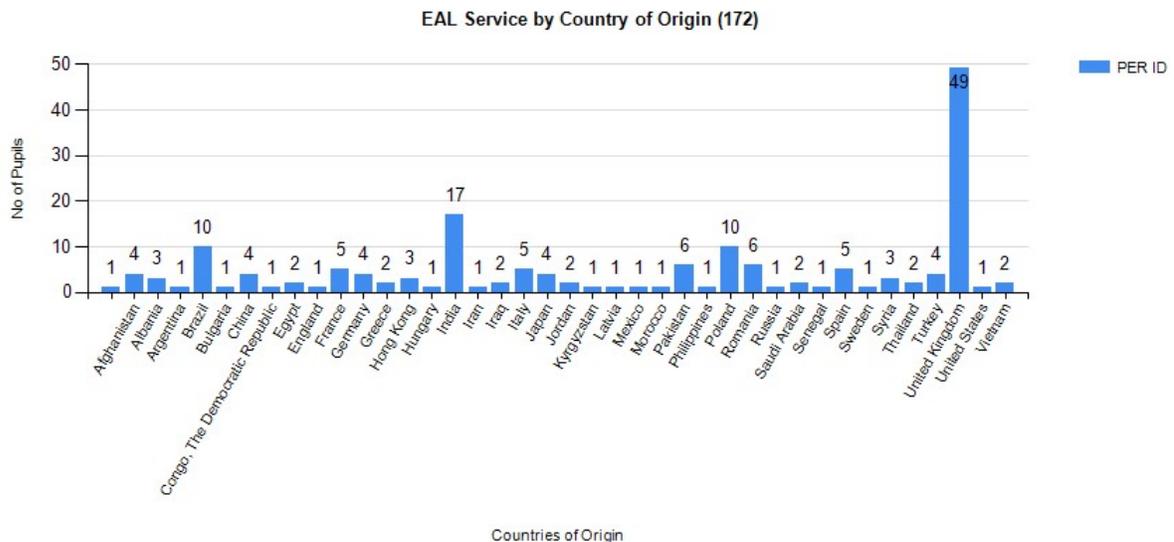
## **The Solihull context**

A pupil is recorded to have English as an additional language if she/he is exposed to a language at home that is known or believed to be other than English. This is not a measure of English language proficiency or a good proxy for recent immigration.

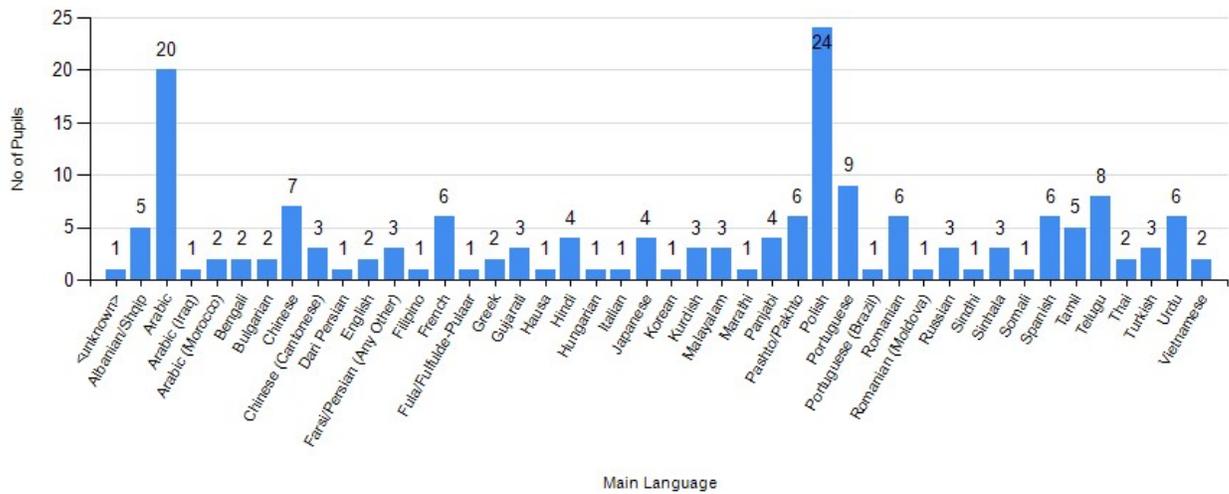
Nationally 19.5% of pupils in primary, secondary and special schools are recorded as having English as an additional language. The percentage of recorded EAL learners in Solihull is 9%. There is immense variation between schools in Solihull with some having very high percentages of pupils with English as an additional language and others having very few so in this context the 9% headline can be misleading.

The proportion of pupils with English as an additional language has increased steadily over recent years. Nationally the percentage of pupils recorded as having English as an additional language has increased in secondary schools while it remains stable in primary schools. This is reflected in the data for Solihull.

## **Range of languages and countries of origin of all children supported by the EAL Service**



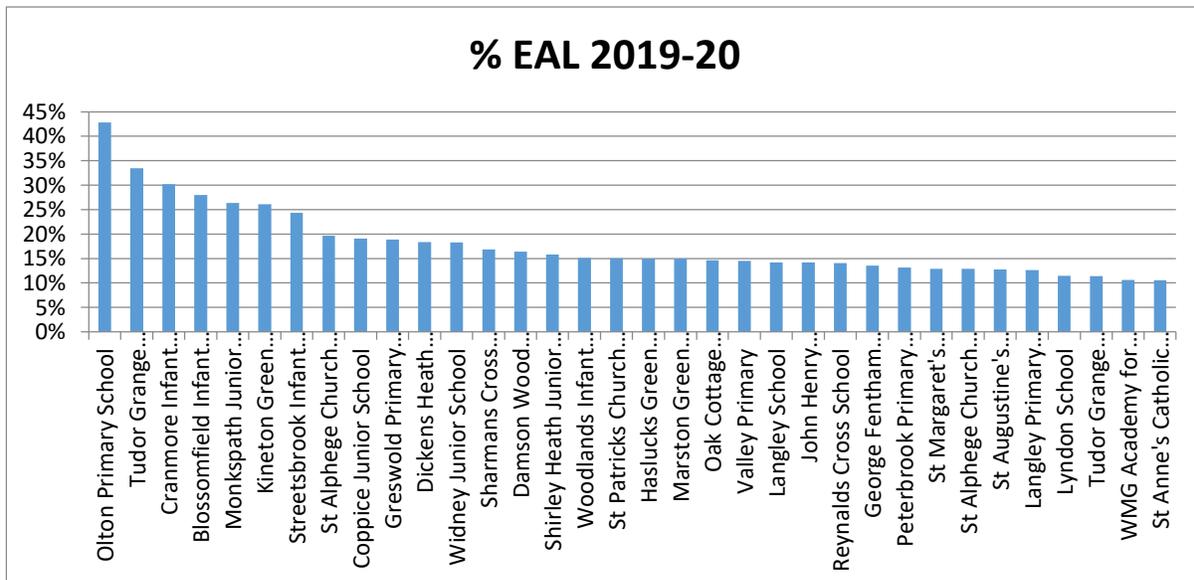
EAL Service by Main Language (172)



**Key points**

- Pupils supported by the **EAL Service originated from 38 countries and spoke 38 different languages.**
- This year we had a significant increase in the number of Portuguese speaking children originating from Brazil. The largest group of children are those who were born in the UK to bilingual families, many of these are Polish speakers. Arabic and Polish continue to be the most frequently recorded main languages.

**Schools with 10% or more identified EAL learners (e.g. those whose first language is other than English)**



The number of schools with over 10% identified EAL learners remains similar with **34 schools** in this category illustrating the general increase of children identified as learners of English as an additional language in Solihull and that they are concentrated in specific areas/schools in the borough. **This is not a reflection of demographic changes but as a result of improvements in data collection systems in schools.** The DfE has now dropped its requirement for data on English proficiency but schools had improved their identification and recording for the census. The Service continues to support schools with obtaining accurate information from parents with regards to first language and with assisting schools in interpreting information.

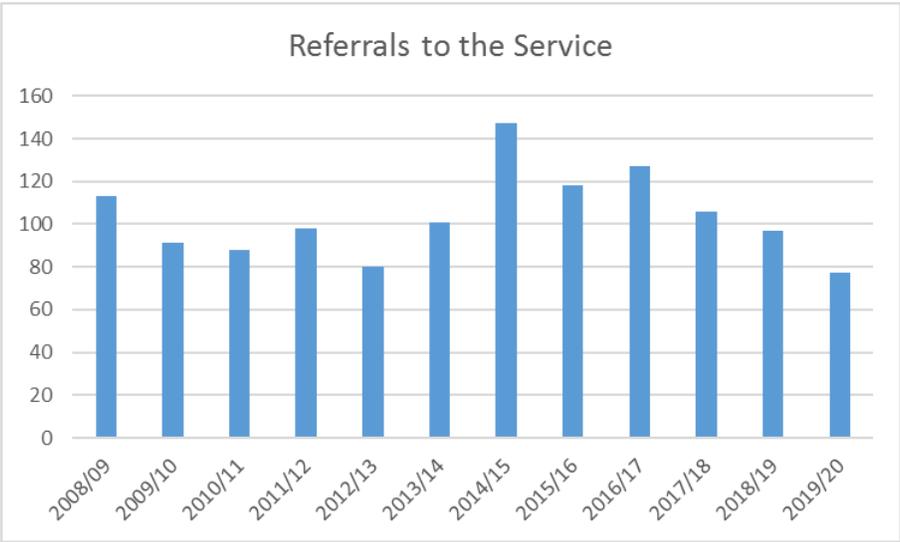
**Referrals 2019-20:**

**The impact of Covid-19**

Referrals to the Service were steady up until the outbreak of Covid-19 and subsequent closure of schools in March. As the EAL Service was not able to go into schools and the EAL Service was not deemed an essential service, referrals almost stopped during March/April/June.

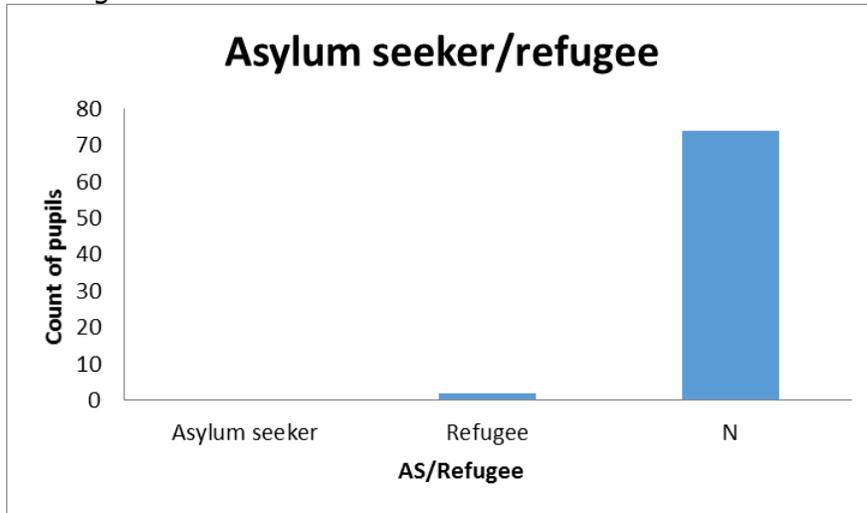
**Requests for support**

This year there were **77 requests for support**. This decrease from last year reflects the impact of Covid-19 and the lockdown. Some requests were received just before or during the lockdown period and at the end of the summer term; these referrals have been carried over to this academic year. New procedures have been put in place to enable schools and the service to assess children without a visit being necessary, thus ensuring staff and pupil safety. The data shows 64 referrals which were processed – the difference is explained by the children who have been carried over to this year.



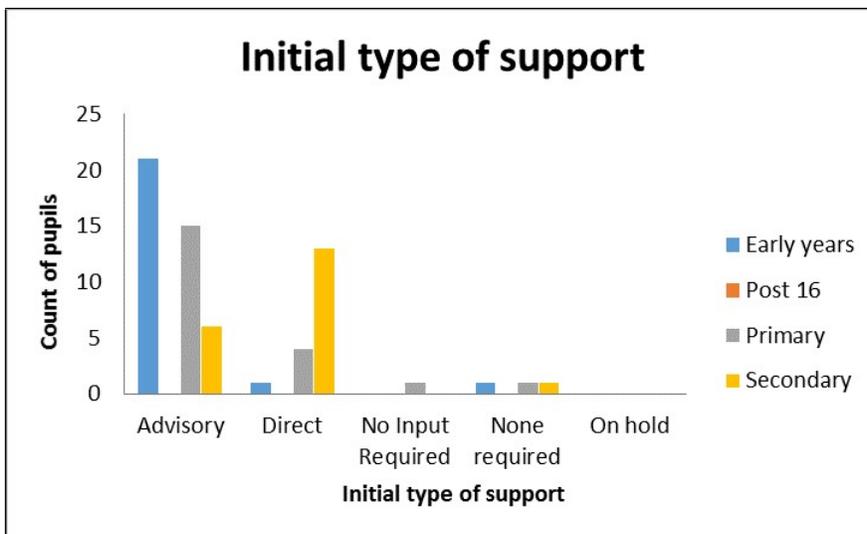
**Refugee/asylum seeker pupils**

The EAL Service continues to work with a small number of refugee and asylum seekers, mainly Unaccompanied Asylum Seeker Children (UASCs) although this year there was just one new referral. This represents a decrease from previous years. The Looked After Children’s Service (LACES) report that an increasing number of UASC pupils have been placed out of borough and therefore not referred to our Service.



There is often quite a financial disparity between children of refugee families who have come to this country independently and those who are here as UASCs and receive support as Looked After Childre through pupil premium. The local charity Entraide has provided support for many refugee families in Solihull and runs a very effective homework club for refugee and migrant children; we have continued to collaborate with them this year.

**Types of support provided**

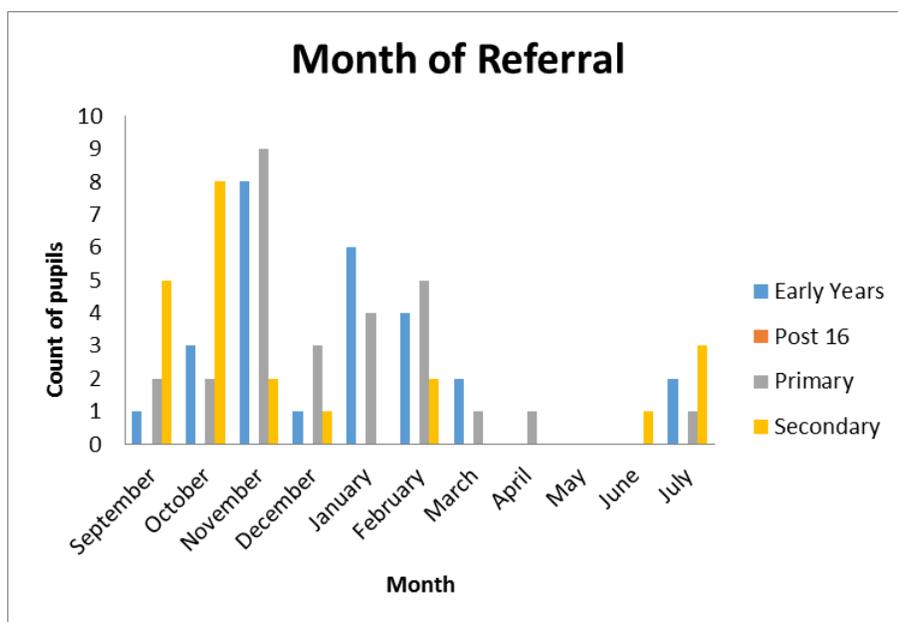


Following assessment by the EAL Service, pupils are allocated one of the following

- Direct support – usually between 1 and 4 hours a week of classroom support for up to three terms. This is usually reserved for high needs pupils e.g. UASCs, refugee children from Key Stage 1 upwards and pupils with no previous experience of schooling who arrive at Key Stage 2 upward as outlined in the protocol.
- Advisory support – regular meetings (e.g. at least half-termly) with staff and pupils.
- No input required – the school will receive a report with advice and strategies but no further involvement from the EAL Service.

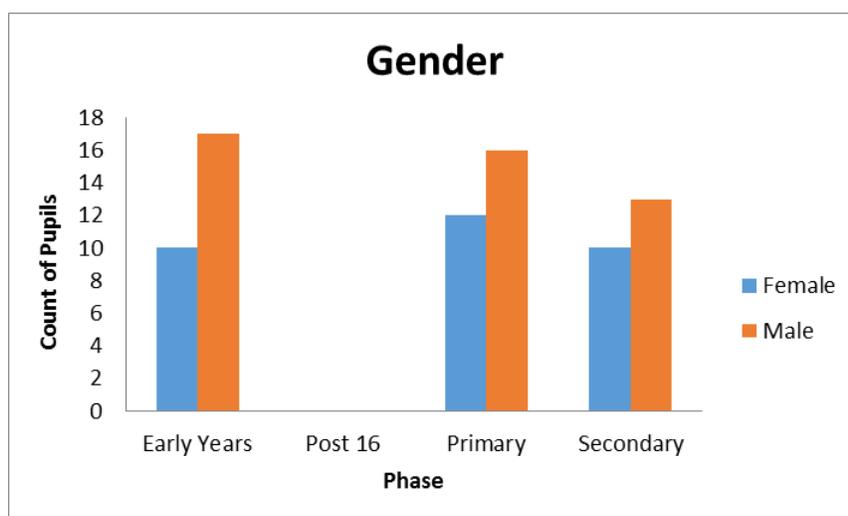
There has been a continued decrease in the proportion of pupils receiving direct support compared with previous years. The number of children receiving advisory support has increased again slightly. This reflects a conscious decision to re-focus the work of the Service on providing strategies and support for teachers and schools, rather than targeting individual pupils.

### **Requests by month and key stage**



The majority of referrals continue to be received in the autumn term. The referrals were steady until March when the school lockdown led to none being made during a period of the summer term.

## **Requests by gender**



Once again there were slightly more boys than girls referred to the Service; this is a trend seen every year.

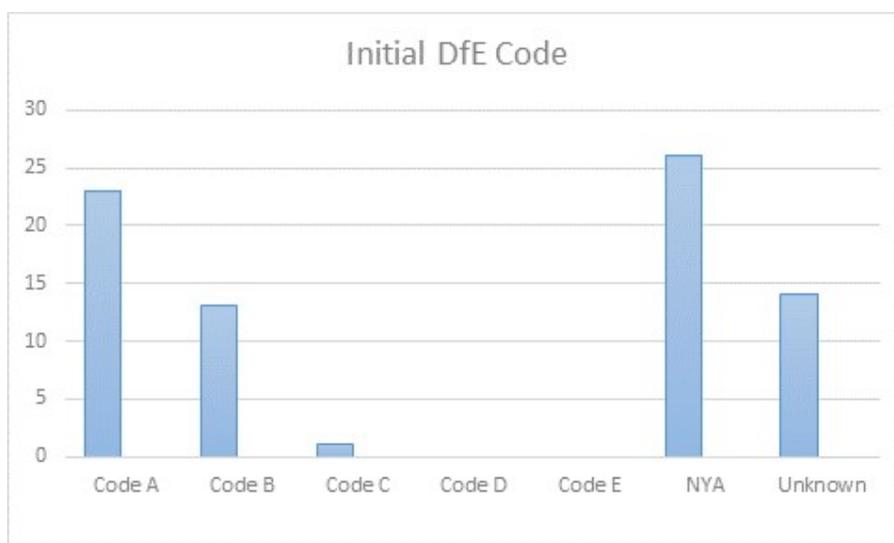
## **Pupil Progress**

### English language progress

Pupil progress is recorded and monitored using the Solihull Profile of Competence and an English language proficiency code has also been collected and submitted to the DfE as part of the January census return. This will no longer be collected by the DfE and the Service no longer collects the information from schools. However, we do encourage schools to continue to use the codes to help categorise the groups of children learning English as an additional language more easily.

- For children to achieve age related expectations, they need to make more progress than their English speaking peers.
- Pupil progress often accelerates in the higher key stages as EAL pupils catch up with their peers.
- Pupils with well-developed literacy skills in their first language will usually progress more rapidly than those who have limited or no prior literacy skills.

EAL learner	EAL level	Key
<b>New to English (Code A)</b>	Step 1	S1
	Step 2	S2
<b>Early Acquisition (Code B)</b>	Step 3	S3
	Step 4	S4
<b>Developing Competence (Code C)</b>	Step 5	S5
	Step 6	S6
<b>Competent (Code D)</b>	Step 7	S7
<b>Fluent (Code E)</b>	Step 8	S8



The codes collected by the Service this year reflect the fact that schools in general refer new arrivals, as opposed to more advanced learners of English as an additional language, for assessment. The needs of children with higher levels of English proficiency continue to be addressed through advisory visits as well as training. We also received a greater number of NYA (not yet assessed) and code unknown returns; this is a reflection of the change in DfE guidelines. As schools are no longer required to submit codes as part of the census return, many schools have stopped collecting and recording them.

#### National data

Unfortunately, due to the disruption of the Covid-19 lockdown, we do not have local and national data for Key Stages 2 and 3 this year.

In previous years EAL pupils have, in general, made greater progress than all pupils nationally, with Solihull performing well above the national average (for EAL). Early intervention means that new arrivals and pupils new to English can be seen when they are as young as three and schools can ensure that they are given the correct support and interventions. It is important to remember that using the term "EAL" as a way of identifying

a group is not especially helpful. The headline that EAL children outperform some monolingual groups is misleading. The classification of EAL can, for example, include the bilingually fluent child of a French diplomat alongside the Somali refugee who may not speak English at all, nor be literate in their own language or have had any formal education before arriving in the UK. Analysis of the groups of children is helpful in identifying particular groups that may be at risk (see EEF report, 2015 <https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/evidence-summaries/evidence-reviews/english-as-an-additional-language-eal/>).

For more information about the attainment of pupils with English as an additional language follow this link <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/english-proficiency-pupils-with-english-as-additional-language>

### Training

The Service delivered fourteen formal training events to individual schools or settings during the year. This year we focussed on delivering some faculty-centred training in secondary schools which we found to be more effective than whole school training and enabled us to forge links with individual staff and their particular curriculum needs. We were also invited to contribute to the National Association for Special Educational Needs – NASEN (DfE funded) NCFE Cache level 3 award for Special Educational Needs Co-ordinators in Early Years settings. We also contributed to the EYFS Network training, looking especially at transition and supporting children and families with English as an additional language. In addition, there were two Network meetings, governor training and collaborative sessions with the Central Ethnic Minority Hub (CEMA) based in Walsall. All our training was received very positively. We are now working at putting training materials online and delivering virtually to adapt to the changing requirements of schools due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

Helen Rowe, Senior Advisory Teacher, EAL Service.  
September 2020