

Case Study: Phonics Resources For EAL Children

Setting: Pikes lane Primary School

Project Lead: Catherine Pickup

Background information:

“Pikes lane is a very happy school where everyone is valued and children, staff, parents and governors work together to achieve the best in all aspects of school life.” (School website) Our school motto is “Together we can be the best!”

In EYFS at Pikes Lane, we have a pre-school, a nursery class and two reception classes. Pre-school and nursery children attend for 15hours per week, the reception class are full time and all our children have EAL. Within EYFS there are 15 languages spoken, such as, Urdu, Punjabi, Gujarati, Lithuanian, Portuguese and Mandarin. Though in the whole school there are 38 languages spoken. Of the 10 staff working in EYFS, 3 are bilingual, speaking Gujarati, Urdu and Memon. We have parents who help us as Language Ambassadors speaking 6 languages, Arabic, Czech, Bengali, Punjabi, Urdu and Gujarati.

Our children work in a variety of adult led and child initiated activities both indoors and outdoors. During home visits, school visits and over a staggered intake, we collate information about our children’s family background, languages spoken and health issues.



Some of Our Children

Context of the setting;

At a recent Mocksted in the early years, we were graded as “Outstanding” and are awaiting an Ofsted inspection. We are always reflecting on our practice and looking at ways to improve. Current priorities are to look at our two year old provision, summer born boys and to develop the communication champion role in early years.

For this project we chose to work with children across the nursery class differentiating activities where appropriate.

What we observed/ why we have changed something

As a self-reflecting school we are always looking for resources and ideas to aid teaching and learning. This resource provides visual and audio activities which have the potential to aid our EAL children and parents, especially with languages where we have no support in school.

What we did

After exploring some of the Mantra Lingua resources we chose to use the phonics pack. There are large mats with different topics on them for small groups, pairs or individuals to explore using the talking pen. The children were keen to have a go and requested to use the resource, regularly. It was a useful and quickly accessible tool which provided sounds and pictures which relate to phase one letter and sound activities. We particularly liked the farmyard mat where the children could listen to animal noises and play a sound recognition game. From this we then made a book, "Old Macdonald" using photographs. We were able to record the children making the animal noises onto the recordable stickers. The book was then placed in the book corner so that other children could listen to it using the talking pen. Other mats, such as, the environmental sounds mat proved interesting too.

Initially the children found identifying these sounds very difficult but as they repeated the games they became more familiar with the everyday objects and the sounds they make. The games also helped with naming vocabulary for the children with limited English. As we visited rhyme in our letters and sounds activities, the bingo cards were another useful tool. Children who were beginning to recognise rhyme found the games quite a challenge. Other children who were not able to recognise rhyming words used the cards to practise naming objects in English.

Further up the school, some of the resources have been used to aid our recent INA children. They have found the key phrases poster really useful. It instantly translates helpful phrases that are often needed when children start a new school. Along with this they have used the map of the school poster where children can use the talking pen to translate phrases to find their way around school with a description of what that area is used for.





What has worked well/ how we developed along the way

At the beginning of the project there were some teething issues mainly due to time constraints and the fact that when children first start nursery a lot of time is taken settling children and building up independence skills. But once children were used to nursery routines we could begin to use the resources.

We feel the recordable stickers are a great resource to add anywhere i.e. displays, learning journeys, or children's books. They are useful particularly for those who can understand but not read English. They can help children access areas independently.

These Mantra Lingua materials have been useful tools in developing our children's communication and language skills. All children were assessed on entry and their progress so far has been graded as outstanding.

The impact/ effect of what we did

The starting point for all our children in communication and language is well below ARE. Though the progress they make is outstanding.

Eg. Child A-

On entry-Listening and attention, 16c,
Understanding 16c
Speaking 8a

Spring- Listening and attention, 22b
Understanding 22b
Speaking 22c

*Eg. Child b- **On entry-** Listening and attention, 22c,
Understanding 16a
Speaking 16c*

Spring-Listening and attention, 30c
Understanding 22a
Speaking 22b

What we intend to do next

As a school we will continue to target communication and language. The resources have already been tried in year one and they may be utilised in other key stages such as use with INA children. We feel the use of the recordable stickers will be further developed to encourage all staff to develop book making and to utilise bilingual staff to record in different languages.(using parent language ambassadors) and the table top app.