

Southern Area Outcomes Group

School Pilot – English Support Class for Pre-ESOL Students

Background

Across the Southern Trust area and beyond it was identified that there are significant numbers of secondary school age children with either no or very little English language acquisition. Given the changing demographics our society is more diverse than ever. Scoping with a small number of schools and young people was undertaken in the Armagh and Dungannon areas as this is where the need was first highlighted. As funding is provided to schools to try to meet these needs, they currently cannot meet demand and these young people are further marginalised and isolated in our schools and communities impacting on so many aspects of daily life perpetuating inequalities. It is recognised that other schools are experiencing similar challenges across the southern area and regionally.

The problem we have found is that schools are unable to meet this need under current funding and resource demand which is getting even tighter. ESOL classes in Regional colleges (SWC or SRC) or other venues are aimed at ESOL level 1 and always for adults, however it has been identified that these young people and their parents require pre-ESOL courses and where literacy issues are present in native language then even more barriers exist.



A pilot approach was proposed to target those most in need but without building it around schools the chances for sustained engagement and progress would be reduced. This is identified as an immediate need so waiting on new funding later in the year only poses the risk of these young people's integration and inclusion being delayed due to being unable to partake in curriculum leading to a negative start to a new school term/year; which again places them in a very disadvantaged situation.

Costs

Cost of a 4-6 week intensive programme from an ESOL tutor; advice is 24hrs of support over 4-6 weeks provided in schools to small cohort can substantially improve language acquisition = £720 (£30 per hour). Given the small number/size, running two groups at a time for the pilot would provide better evaluation and measures of approach.

Participants

Two schools across the Armagh and Dungannon area of Southern Health and Social Care Trust participated in the pilot with a total of 36 young people participating.



School	Nationality	Male	Female	Total
City of Armagh High School	Roma Bulgarian	11	5	16
St Patricks College, Dungannon	Mixed Group	10	10	20

City of Armagh High School Report Card July 2023

How much did we do?



16 Students participated



1 Tutor contracted



14 sessions over 6 wks

How well did we do it?



All **14** sessions were delivered over the 6 week period.



Of the **12** pupils that attended most sessions, all improved in written and oral assessments.

Note assessments were not aligned to ESOL or City and Guilds but based on teaching content only.



There was no progress for **4** pupils who did not attend all sessions.




Pupils were split into small groups to allow better interaction as a total of 16 were too many in one session due to behaviour issues and disruption as pupils were not fully aware of what the sessions were or the benefit of them.



There were 51 absentees over the 14 sessions. Student attendance was very disappointing and certainly would have affected the overall individual marks in the test. However, the majority of students did benefit from the programme and this can be seen in the test results.

Is anyone better off?

Students were tested orally with 15 general questions:

	Written results 4 Students scored between 85% and 92% 4 Students scored between 40% and 63% 4 Students scored between 10% and 39%	Oral results 3 Students scored 100% 7 Students scored between 53% and 80% 2 Students scored between 7% and 47%
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Principal and Head Teacher have reported improved reading and writing skills

Learning from Pilot

Following completion of the pilot 6 pupils, 2 teachers and the Principal and Tutor provided feedback:

Young People  <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Young people got a lot from the small group sessions and would like to have more of these sessions.2. Barrier -there was no preparation with young people prior to commencement of the sessions – if working with a new cohort, young people should be involved in planning expectations, explanations and understanding content and outcomes.3. Young people said sessions were intensive and would have appreciated a short break.4. All 6 young people would be happy to attend ESOL classes in school or in the community.	School  <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. School felt sessions be a regular occurrence rather than a one-off event due to very positive outcomes from the pilot.2. Greater focus on small groups and one to one English language support for some pupils.3. School would support an approach either within school hours or in the community but favours more within School hours. If running in the community more background work needed to ensure attendance taking on board travel arrangements.4. A number of the pupils attend the Epic Centre during school hours for social integration support that may lend itself for further pre-Esol and Esol sessions.	Tutor  <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Tutor found difficulties with larger groups of young people due to disruption and different learning needs. Recommends smaller groups and one to one support for pupils struggling.2. Attendance was an issue due to individual pupils and families not understanding or appreciating the value and infrastructure of education and the school day. It may be useful to look at awareness raising opportunities with young people and parents/carers.
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St Patrick's College, Dungannon Report Card July 2023

How much did we do?



20 Students participated



1 Tutor contracted



16 sessions over 4 wks

How well did we do it?



All **16** sessions were delivered over the 4 week period.



Of the **20** pupils that attended sessions, all improved in reading and writing assessments.

Note: assessments were aligned to City and Guilds E1



The **20** pupils were from mixed ethnic groups made up of East Timorese, Ukrainian, Brazilian and Indian.




Pupils were split into 4 small groups to allow better interaction and were grouped by ability that enabled the tutor to differentiate learning outcomes for each group and individual pupil needs. Attendance was excellent and pupils were happy and eager to learn following preparation from School Staff.



The City & Guilds recognised board examination inspired these pupils in their speaking and listening, reading and writing. It also included single mode awards as well as a full mode certificate that combines all three. Gaining a certificate in the different levels was of real benefit during the timetabled English language/ESOL classes.

Is anyone better off? Students were tested on Entry one exam from “City & Guilds skills for life” in both reading and writing:




All students improved from baseline in oral, reading and writing. For a pass mark in Reading you need 16 out of 25 and in writing you need 20 out of 30 marks.

	<p>Reading</p> <p>78% passed their reading Exam (City & Guilds E1)</p>	<p>Writing</p> <p>33.3% passed their writing exam (City & Guilds E1)</p>
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Principal and ESOL Co-ordinator gave very positive feedback that the approach was beneficial for students and were very pleased with the results.

Learning from Pilot

Following completion of the pilot feedback from pupils, 1 teacher and the Principal and Tutor:

<p>Young People</p>  <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Enjoyed the opportunity, felt being in a group of similar ability helped. 2. Found the whiteboard for repetition words really helpful and that sessions were interactive. 3. They felt comfortable and understood why they were seeing someone new, planning and organisation of materials for students was also highlighted. 	<p>School</p>  <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Additional support was such a relief 2. Recommend it would be more beneficial to provide the pupils with a general language test at the beginning and end of of the language support classes. 3. It would be beneficial to select topics or key areas of vocabulary, therefore, pupils would gain a high level of language acquisition in one area. 4. There is a shared concern that those pupils who are older and entering KS4 with limited English do require further intervention, to help them successfully achieve GCSE qualifications and would welcome the opportunity to engage in further English initiatives. 	<p>Tutor</p>  <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Recommend City & Guilds or other recognised board examination to help inspire future pupils in their speaking and listening, reading and writing. 2. Recommend small groups grouped by ability.
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Case Study 1

J is extremely enthusiastic to learn English, she strives to challenge her learning and she is an excellent attender at EAL classes.

- J can recognise the alphabet
- She can read and respond to simple texts that provide Multiple choice answers
- She recognises the PEE writing structure; however, she does not have the vocab to write a PEE response independently- this is her next target.
- Her spoken and communication skills have developed- she understands and now needs to develop her fluency.

She achieved 24/40 in her English Literature controlled assessment- an excellent result considering her level of English.

Case Study 2

D is eager to learn, and he is always in a very good mood while being in EAL classes. During EAL classes however, it has been noted that he;

- Is unable to recall all of the Alphabet
- He can only spell CVC words
- He does not recognise the phonics of consonants, but he can recognise some vowels
- He is unable to recognise all of the 100 high frequency words
- His spoken English is a concern, he is unable to understand everyday instructions.
- He is unable to construct and write sentences independently

D would benefit from further EAL classes

Summary Recommendations

1. Preparation with young people prior to commencement of the sessions
2. Greater focus on small mixed groups English language support for some pupils grouped by ability
3. One to one English language support where required
4. Sessions preferable within School Hours
5. Look at awareness raising opportunities with young people and parents/carers about the value of learning and need for attendance
6. Use of additional resources such as whiteboard and other interactive materials
7. General language test at the beginning to capture baseline and end of of the language support classes to capture improvements.
8. Longer term input, for example 12 week sessions to run twice a school year (Oct-Dec & Feb-April)
9. Recommend City & Guilds E1 or other recognised board examination at this level to help inspire future pupils in their speaking and listening, reading and writing.

July 2023