

Supplementary written evidence submitted by the Bell Foundation

Alongside authorised and unauthorised absence, pupils who speak English as additional language (EAL), in particular those who have recently arrived and who have limited proficiency in English may be prevented from accessing the full curriculum through the use of in-school withdrawal, delays in securing a school place, and/or the use of Alternative Provision resulting in absence from school.

EAL pupils are also represented amongst other groups who have higher rates of absence including pupils with SEND, pupils from Gypsy Roma and Traveller and other ethnic backgrounds and pupils entitled to FSM or who are disadvantaged.

Key themes

- In-school **withdrawal** and the use of **Alternative Provision** and therefore **non access to the mainstream curriculum** is used to manage new arrivals who are not proficient in English, despite Department for Education policy guidance stating that integration in the mainstream is the preferred pedagogy.
- The challenge of being assigned a school place for **mid-year refugee arrivals**, including how the cycle of waiting for a place then repeats when pupils are subject to **mid-year dispersals**. This results in absence from school for this group.
- How schools can facilitate **parental engagement** when parents or caregivers have limited or no proficiency in English so that expectations regarding the school system and attendance are clear, including ensuring information is available in a suitable format or language.
- The shortcomings of developing policy and **drawing conclusions from aggregated data on EAL alone as an indicator on absence for this group of pupils**. Because of the heterogeneity of the EAL cohort (for example it includes an EAL speaking Roma pupil and a Chinese pupil who speaks EAL) breaking down absence data by EAL status alone is not particularly useful and can be misleading. To have an accurate picture, absence and attendance data needs to be analysed by EAL status, first language, ethnicity, and time of arrival in the English school system. We have attached the data on EAL status, ethnicity and attendance.
- The **reduction of expertise** in the school system for supporting pupils who speak EAL including absence. Following the removal of the ring-fenced Ethnic Minority Achievement Grant funding in 2011, Local Authority EMTAS (Ethnic Minority and Traveller Achievement Service) teams have disappeared meaning this specialist support is no longer available to schools in many areas.

Policy Recommendations

There is a vacuum of policy from the DfE on integrating EAL learners who make up 20% of the school population. This vacuum has been accompanied by a removal of systems and support previously available, leaving an expertise gap. Additionally, the need to inspect EAL provision in the Ofsted framework has been removed, there is no reference to EAL in Initial Teacher Training Framework or the Early Career Framework. This is despite a high number of learners in the school system and new arrivals from refugee communities in recent years.

The Department for Education should issue guidance to schools on:

- **Integration** into the mainstream for EAL pupils and not using **withdrawal** practices.
- The important of **assessing EAL pupils' proficiency in English**, given that this has the strongest relationship with attainment.

- **Effective communication with parents and caregivers who use EAL**, including the use of translated materials and simple English to enable understanding of school expectations and systems.

Improved data to monitor need, identify trends and follow outcomes:

- Attendance data and absence data should be routinely analysed by time of arrival in the English school system with EAL status, as a proxy for proficiency in English. First language spoken and ethnicity should also be included in the analysis.
- Although time of arrival into the school system may be a useful proxy in analysis for national trends, it will not be as reliable as English language proficiency data based on assessment (which exists in other jurisdictions). **Statutory assessment of English language proficiency should be reintroduced in England.** Formative assessment of proficiency in English is necessary for teachers to develop appropriate support strategies for pupils to enable them to access the curriculum and not be withdrawn from parts of it.
- A category on EAL status should be introduced in the **Alternative Provision Census**

Focus is needed on pupils who arrive Key Stage 4 who speak EAL including:

- A system needs to be in place that provides advance notice to Local Authorities to enable school places to be secured ahead of **dispersing refugee and asylum-seeking families.**
- The development of provision in schools and/or colleges that enables these pupils to **access a wide curriculum of GCSEs** to ensure they can continue on to higher education or professional level employment as applicable.
- The Department for Education should implement **an alternative approach to lagged funding** to ensure schools receive appropriate funding for children who arrive after the school census date.

Attendance by ethnicity and first language, September 2022 to April 2023

Source: FFT Aspire

Ethnic background	First language	Phase	% absent	Persistent absence			enrolments
				>10% sessions	>20% sessions	>50% sessions	
All	Other	pri	7.3%	24.5%	7.2%	2.0%	536057
Any other ethnic group	Other	pri	7.3%	24.5%	7.8%	2.6%	44567
Asian or Asian British - any other Asian background	Other	pri	6.7%	22.3%	6.4%	1.9%	36971
Asian or Asian British - Bangladeshi	Other	pri	8.7%	33.2%	8.2%	1.5%	30273
Asian or Asian British - Indian	Other	pri	7.2%	25.1%	7.0%	1.8%	65641
Asian or Asian British - Pakistani	Other	pri	8.3%	30.8%	8.0%	1.5%	72764
Black or Black British - African	Other	pri	5.2%	15.2%	5.1%	2.3%	51283
Black or Black British - any other Black background	Other	pri	5.7%	17.7%	5.9%	2.2%	7166
Black or Black British - Caribbean	Other	pri	7.1%	23.4%	7.7%	1.9%	1237
Chinese	Other	pri	4.1%	10.2%	2.8%	1.3%	13557
Information not yet obtained	Other	pri	8.9%	31.7%	12.8%	4.9%	5027
Mixed - any other mixed background	Other	pri	7.1%	23.8%	6.9%	2.0%	19234
Mixed - White and Asian	Other	pri	6.6%	21.3%	5.5%	1.4%	9186
Mixed - White and Black African	Other	pri	6.0%	18.8%	5.1%	1.5%	5159
Mixed - White and Black Caribbean	Other	pri	7.8%	27.7%	8.9%	2.1%	1584
Parent/pupil preferred not to say	Other	pri	7.9%	27.5%	9.0%	2.4%	4275
White - any other White background	Other	pri	7.5%	24.9%	7.7%	2.2%	131741
White - British	Other	pri	6.3%	18.6%	5.0%	1.1%	30988
White - Gypsy/Roma	Other	pri	15.8%	58.9%	29.5%	7.3%	5101
White - Irish	Other	pri	8.0%	25.8%	11.9%	5.5%	236
White - Traveller of Irish heritage	Other	pri	23.7%	64.2%	44.8%	11.9%	67
All	English	pri	6.3%	19.0%	5.2%	1.2%	1539979
Any other ethnic group	English	pri	7.5%	25.5%	8.1%	2.3%	10174
Asian or Asian British - any other Asian background	English	pri	7.2%	24.8%	6.8%	1.7%	12123
Asian or Asian British - Bangladeshi	English	pri	9.3%	36.5%	9.1%	1.6%	8906
Asian or Asian British - Indian	English	pri	6.3%	20.1%	5.1%	1.2%	26607
Asian or Asian British - Pakistani	English	pri	8.8%	33.3%	8.3%	1.4%	30996
Black or Black British - African	English	pri	4.9%	13.7%	4.7%	1.9%	43757
Black or Black British - any other Black background	English	pri	6.2%	20.1%	6.4%	2.0%	10631
Black or Black British - Caribbean	English	pri	7.8%	26.8%	8.4%	1.9%	16592

Chinese	English	pri	4.1%	10.0%	2.8%	1.2%	2639
Information not yet obtained	English	pri	7.4%	25.9%	11.1%	5.0%	19373
Mixed - any other mixed background	English	pri	7.1%	23.0%	6.6%	1.5%	37770
Mixed - White and Asian	English	pri	6.5%	20.1%	5.1%	1.1%	26315
Mixed - White and Black African	English	pri	6.6%	20.9%	6.0%	1.3%	14882
Mixed - White and Black Caribbean	English	pri	8.1%	27.4%	8.5%	1.7%	32499
Parent/pupil preferred not to say	English	pri	7.4%	24.3%	7.4%	1.9%	8269
White - any other White background	English	pri	6.7%	20.7%	6.1%	1.7%	34148
White - British	English	pri	6.1%	17.6%	4.5%	0.9%	1193120
White - Gypsy/Roma	English	pri	17.3%	63.9%	32.7%	6.6%	4595
White - Irish	English	pri	7.6%	23.5%	8.9%	2.5%	4281
White - Traveller of Irish heritage	English	pri	22.2%	72.6%	45.9%	12.8%	2302
All	All	pri	6.6%	20.4%	5.7%	1.4%	2076036
Any other ethnic group	All	pri	7.3%	24.7%	7.9%	2.5%	54741
Asian or Asian British - any other Asian background	All	pri	6.8%	22.9%	6.5%	1.8%	49094
Asian or Asian British - Bangladeshi	All	pri	8.8%	34.0%	8.4%	1.5%	39179
Asian or Asian British - Indian	All	pri	6.9%	23.7%	6.5%	1.6%	92248
Asian or Asian British - Pakistani	All	pri	8.5%	31.5%	8.1%	1.5%	103760
Black or Black British - African	All	pri	5.0%	14.5%	4.9%	2.1%	95040
Black or Black British - any other Black background	All	pri	6.0%	19.1%	6.2%	2.1%	17797
Black or Black British - Caribbean	All	pri	7.7%	26.6%	8.3%	1.9%	17829
Chinese	All	pri	4.1%	10.2%	2.8%	1.3%	16196
Information not yet obtained	All	pri	7.7%	27.1%	11.4%	5.0%	24400
Mixed - any other mixed background	All	pri	7.1%	23.3%	6.7%	1.7%	57004
Mixed - White and Asian	All	pri	6.5%	20.4%	5.2%	1.2%	35501
Mixed - White and Black African	All	pri	6.4%	20.4%	5.8%	1.4%	20041
Mixed - White and Black Caribbean	All	pri	8.1%	27.4%	8.6%	1.7%	34083
Parent/pupil preferred not to say	All	pri	7.6%	25.4%	7.9%	2.1%	12544
White - any other White background	All	pri	7.3%	24.0%	7.3%	2.1%	165889
White - British	All	pri	6.1%	17.6%	4.5%	0.9%	1224108
White - Gypsy/Roma	All	pri	16.5%	61.2%	31.0%	7.0%	9696
White - Irish	All	pri	7.6%	23.6%	9.1%	2.7%	4517
White - Traveller of Irish heritage	All	pri	22.2%	72.4%	45.8%	12.7%	2369
All	Other	sec	7.6%	23.7%	8.2%	2.5%	422954

Any other ethnic group	Other	sec	8.0%	25.4%	9.2%	3.1%	36749
Asian or Asian British - any other Asian background	Other	sec	6.1%	17.7%	5.5%	1.9%	28804
Asian or Asian British - Bangladeshi	Other	sec	8.0%	26.2%	6.7%	1.4%	22037
Asian or Asian British - Indian	Other	sec	5.7%	16.4%	4.2%	1.3%	41181
Asian or Asian British - Pakistani	Other	sec	8.6%	29.3%	8.6%	2.0%	56106
Black or Black British - African	Other	sec	5.4%	14.9%	5.1%	1.9%	44792
Black or Black British - any other Black background	Other	sec	5.9%	16.6%	5.6%	1.9%	5633
Black or Black British - Caribbean	Other	sec	8.7%	28.1%	12.6%	3.0%	1486
Chinese	Other	sec	3.4%	7.6%	2.8%	1.2%	11481
Information not yet obtained	Other	sec	9.9%	33.4%	15.4%	6.2%	6178
Mixed - any other mixed background	Other	sec	7.6%	23.8%	8.7%	2.9%	15243
Mixed - White and Asian	Other	sec	7.7%	23.9%	8.1%	2.5%	6034
Mixed - White and Black African	Other	sec	7.1%	21.4%	7.6%	2.7%	4295
Mixed - White and Black Caribbean	Other	sec	10.0%	32.0%	13.5%	4.1%	1364
Parent/pupil preferred not to say	Other	sec	8.5%	27.9%	10.1%	3.1%	5040
White - any other White background	Other	sec	8.7%	27.4%	10.3%	3.2%	115800
White - British	Other	sec	8.3%	23.5%	8.8%	2.9%	17060
White - Gypsy/Roma	Other	sec	21.2%	66.7%	41.0%	13.6%	3476
White - Irish	Other	sec	8.8%	25.7%	13.8%	4.2%	167
White - Traveller of Irish heritage	Other	sec	19.6%	57.1%	32.1%	17.9%	28
All	English	sec	9.6%	27.5%	11.8%	4.3%	1998389
Any other ethnic group	English	sec	8.0%	24.7%	9.0%	3.1%	16277
Asian or Asian British - any other Asian background	English	sec	6.4%	18.5%	5.7%	2.0%	19245
Asian or Asian British - Bangladeshi	English	sec	8.3%	28.1%	7.4%	1.8%	13105
Asian or Asian British - Indian	English	sec	5.8%	15.7%	3.9%	1.2%	37789
Asian or Asian British - Pakistani	English	sec	9.0%	31.0%	9.2%	2.1%	45541
Black or Black British - African	English	sec	5.2%	13.9%	5.1%	2.0%	55792
Black or Black British - any other Black background	English	sec	7.6%	23.4%	9.2%	3.1%	12742
Black or Black British - Caribbean	English	sec	9.6%	30.7%	12.3%	3.4%	23663
Chinese	English	sec	3.6%	8.0%	2.9%	1.3%	4803
Information not yet obtained	English	sec	13.2%	39.9%	23.5%	12.6%	25648
Mixed - any other mixed background	English	sec	9.4%	28.4%	11.7%	4.0%	44274
Mixed - White and Asian	English	sec	8.7%	25.3%	10.5%	3.5%	30702
Mixed - White and Black African	English	sec	10.1%	30.0%	13.1%	4.6%	17501

Mixed - White and Black Caribbean	English	sec	12.7%	39.1%	18.2%	6.3%	37342
Parent/pupil preferred not to say	English	sec	10.0%	29.7%	13.1%	4.7%	17471
White - any other White background	English	sec	8.1%	23.9%	8.7%	3.1%	54953
White - British	English	sec	9.8%	27.8%	12.2%	4.4%	1531299
White - Gypsy/Roma	English	sec	24.7%	70.1%	46.1%	18.5%	2947
White - Irish	English	sec	10.6%	30.4%	13.7%	5.3%	6104
White - Traveller of Irish heritage	English	sec	24.2%	65.7%	45.3%	21.7%	1191
All	All	sec	9.2%	26.8%	11.2%	4.0%	2421343
Any other ethnic group	All	sec	8.0%	25.2%	9.2%	3.1%	53026
Asian or Asian British - any other Asian background	All	sec	6.2%	18.0%	5.6%	1.9%	48049
Asian or Asian British - Bangladeshi	All	sec	8.1%	26.9%	7.0%	1.5%	35142
Asian or Asian British - Indian	All	sec	5.8%	16.1%	4.0%	1.2%	78970
Asian or Asian British - Pakistani	All	sec	8.8%	30.1%	8.9%	2.0%	101647
Black or Black British - African	All	sec	5.3%	14.3%	5.1%	2.0%	100584
Black or Black British - any other Black background	All	sec	7.1%	21.3%	8.1%	2.7%	18375
Black or Black British - Caribbean	All	sec	9.5%	30.5%	12.3%	3.4%	25149
Chinese	All	sec	3.4%	7.8%	2.8%	1.3%	16284
Information not yet obtained	All	sec	12.5%	38.6%	21.9%	11.4%	31826
Mixed - any other mixed background	All	sec	8.9%	27.2%	10.9%	3.7%	59517
Mixed - White and Asian	All	sec	8.6%	25.1%	10.1%	3.3%	36736
Mixed - White and Black African	All	sec	9.5%	28.3%	12.0%	4.2%	21796
Mixed - White and Black Caribbean	All	sec	12.6%	38.9%	18.0%	6.2%	38706
Parent/pupil preferred not to say	All	sec	9.7%	29.3%	12.5%	4.3%	22511
White - any other White background	All	sec	8.5%	26.3%	9.8%	3.2%	170753
White - British	All	sec	9.8%	27.8%	12.1%	4.4%	1548359
White - Gypsy/Roma	All	sec	22.8%	68.2%	43.3%	15.8%	6423
White - Irish	All	sec	10.6%	30.3%	13.7%	5.2%	6271
White - Traveller of Irish heritage	All	sec	24.1%	65.5%	45.0%	21.7%	1219

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