

Schools Forum – November 2023
Minority Ethnic Achievement Service (MEAS)
2022 – 2023 Financial Year

Executive Summary:

- To inform the Schools Forum on the delivery of the current Minority Ethnic Achievement Service (MEAS) offer to maintained schools
- To update schools on the recommendations made in the Autumn term 2022 School Forum report and progress made in delivering them
- To provide further recommendations to support the continued development of MEAS

Recommendation

That Schools Forum:

1. Agrees to the continued de-delegated funding from maintained primary school's delegated budget for 2024-2025 financial year
2. Notes the continued improvements and development of the service over the last year and proposals for next year

Report of Deputy Chief Executive and Director for Families and Communities

Background

1. The Minority Ethnic Achievement Service was a centrally retained service until 2012/2013, when it became a de-delegated service under Exception 1 of the Funding Reform requirements. The Schools Forum have since voted annually to agree that the service should be provided centrally. The service is managed by Entrust Education Services, Staffordshire County Council's joint venture partner.
2. The Minority Ethnic Achievement Service is available to primary and secondary academies at a cost and can be purchased on a pupil-by-pupil basis or as a combined package of Inclusion Support and other services.
3. The proposed de-delegated funding for this service, maintained primary school's delegated budget for 2024-2025 financial year would be based on the number of maintained schools in Staffordshire.

Context

4. Maintained schools are divided into two categories to determine the support they receive from MEAS.
 - EMAG (Ethnic Minority Achievement Grant) schools are identified annually based on a formula which considers the number of EAL pupils and also their country of origin. EMAG schools receive funding directly and are not entitled to support for new arrivals from MEAS. We have produced a good practice guide to support schools; [Minority Ethnic Achievement Service \(MEAS\) | Staffordshire Connects](#)
 - There are currently 30 Staffordshire schools eligible for EMAG funding.
 - Non EMAG schools can refer new arrivals to MEAS and also receive a nominal funding allowance for each pupil, this is used to fund additional resources such as dictionaries, dual language books or apps.
5. All maintained schools who do not receive the EMAG funding are able to request support for pupils causing concern, i.e., those who are not making the expected progress in learning English.
6. All referrals for the Minority Ethnic Achievement Service are sent to a central inbox MEAS@entrust-ed.co.uk. Referrals are systematically reviewed daily and allocated to a caseworker based on the language spoken by the pupil.
7. Once pupils are allocated a consultant, the consultant will arrange a visit to the school. During this visit, the pupil will be observed in class and an assessment will usually be conducted. The nature of this assessment depends on the age of the pupil and the language spoken. Where the consultant worker speaks the pupil's language a home language assessment will be conducted. During the visit there will be a conversation with an appropriate member of school staff to identify any particular issues for the pupil and where possible with the parent/carer. Following the visit, a comprehensive report is sent to the school which includes strategies and resources which can be used to support the pupil.
8. In addition to the initial visit MEAS will also attend meetings with parents, this is particularly useful where the team member speaks the home language but can also be useful in other situations. For example, many parents do not understand the benefits of the child talking their own language at home or how the English education system works. The team's experience of working with EAL pupils can help to overcome these issues.

9. Figure 1 – Referrals from Maintained Schools

Academic Year	New Arrivals Primary	New Arrivals Secondary	Pupils causing concern Primary	Pupils causing concern Secondary
2015 - 2016	161	21	28	0
2016 - 2017	80	17	36	4
2017 - 2018	47	6	29	3
2018 - 2019	26	13	20	2
2019 - 2020	32	5	16	3
2020 - 2021	15	0	24	2
2021 - 2022	54	7	17	1
2022 - 2023	52	6	11	0

41 Maintained Schools made referrals for MEAS support during the academic year 2022/23.

The table below shows the following for each district;

A = accumulative total for the period 05/09/2022 to 25/07/23 (academic year 2022/23)

B = accumulative total for the period 03/04/2023 to 25/07/23 (part of the SDA contract year 2023/24)

Year	CC	LF	ES	TW	SB	SS	NW	SM	A	B
N	1		1				1		3	0
R	3	1	1	1	3		3	3	15	3
1	1		1				1	1	4	
2	4	4	1			1	3	1	14	1
3	1		2		3			1	7	1
4	2	1	3		1			2	9	
5	2	1	3		1				7	1
6	1	2			2			1	6	
7		1							1	
8										
9										
10		3							3	
11										
Total	15	13	12	1	10	1	8	9	69	6

Figure 2 – Comparison of Academy and Maintained Schools

Primary Schools				
Academic Year	Academies		Maintained	
	Schools	%	Schools	%
2015 - 2016	73	24.4%	226	75.6%
2016 - 2017	97	32.4%	202	67.6%
2017 - 2018	122	40.8%	177	59.2%
2018 - 2019	148	49.7%	150	50.4%
2019 - 2020	177	56.2%	135	43.8%
2020 - 2021	183	58.6%	129	41.4%
2021 - 2022	195	63.3%	113	36.7%
2022 - 2023	207	65.9%	107	34.1%
Secondary Schools				
2015 - 2016	36	51.4%	34	48.6%
2016 - 2017	42	60.0%	28	40.0%
2017 - 2018	47	67.1%	23	32.9%
2018 - 2019	53	74.6%	18	25.4%
2019 - 2020	55	78.5%	15	21.5%
2020 - 2021	58	82.8%	12	17.2%
2021 - 2022	67	83.6%	13	17.2%
2022 - 2023	70	85.9%	11	14.1%

Countries of origin for arrivals into Staffordshire schools during the academic year 2022 - 2023

Country	Number
Afghanistan	3
Gambia	2
Ghana	1
Hong Kong	6
India	14
Namibia	1
Poland	4
Romania	3
Russia	1
Slovakia	1
Turkey	2
Ukraine	29
Zimbabwe	2
Total for maintained schools	69

10. Beyond the individual consultant support, schools are also supported to develop their provision for EAL learners through a range of approaches including learning walks, modelling good practice for staff and resources such as guidance for welcoming refugees.

Update from last report to School Forum

11. Working with families from Ukraine – a number of Ukrainian families arrived in Staffordshire throughout the academic year 2022 -2023 and the MEAS team supported schools as they welcomed these new arrivals. In all 29 referrals were made from maintained schools and 24 referrals from academies. Schools were provided with support and the team have worked with 53 pupils since September 2022. As a result of the support, Ukrainian children settled into schools more quickly and school staff reported an increased confidence in meeting their needs.

Some of the common challenges faced by pupils and schools were:

- a. New environment – different school systems and curriculum
- b. Learning EAL in a fully English-speaking environment – as opposed to language classes
- c. Different teaching styles - UK schools vs Ukrainian schools
- d. Culture – dress, food, behaviour norms
- e. Social expectations
- f. Preparing mid-term to receive the pupils
- g. Sorting logistics such as access arrangements/uniforms/resources/contacts
- h. Non-attendance after enrolment
- i. Potentially non-permanence of the pupils' enrolment in the school
- j. Staff being unfamiliar in supporting new arrivals

Support provided by MEAS for receiving schools;

- a. Regular contact with the schools, continuing to offer support dependant on the schools needs. For example, to provide resource and lesson plan guidance and curriculum progression.
- b. Delivery of staff sessions in how to welcome and work with newly arrived pupils, how school and pupils can support the EAL pupils. For example, supporting staff to reflect on the school's difference and diversity curriculum.
- c. Signposting both via email and during staff sessions to useful resources and websites.
- d. Visits to schools to observe, assess and advise staff on how best to support the children.
- e. Reports were written and sent in with recommendations of strategies which included, placing the newly arrived pupils with middle to high ability pupils, to include children in all activities, use visuals where possible when teaching the children as well as pre-teach vocabulary on new topics, to use visuals to communicate their social needs, use of buddy systems etc.
- f. Delivery of diversity sessions around Migration, Islam, and Christianity.

Difference and Diversity feedback:

- Very interesting content and sessions well delivered
- Children highly engaged and provoked good questioning
- Just the right amount of content for the session length

- Older children could relate to the session by recalling previous learning
- Excellent behaviour management and good quality resources

Feedback from schools:

- *'It has enabled me to put in place suitable and supportive activities for the student which they access independently'*
- *'The team have shown me ways to prepare the classroom prior to the start of the lesson as well as ways to adapt lessons'*
- *'Explained the importance of using the child's home language (note taking / writing) which has made me look at understanding the child's individual needs in a much better way'*

Impact of the MEAS service

12. Based on the service's experience of working with schools, feedback received, and the three recommendations made in the 2022 Schools Forum report, (detailed below) we have implemented some additional delivery from September 2022. These additional functions have provided schools with further support and advice on implementing the graduated response.

13. **Recommendation 1: To continue to promote and provide a MEAS telephone helpline** for 1 session per week, to help improve accessibility to the service for all schools. This will be monitored, and sessions added should there be sufficient demand.

Most enquiries come into the MEAS inbox and are dealt with on a daily basis; however, the phone line continues to receive 2 – 3 calls a week from schools seeking advice and support from an EAL specialist. Examples of the type of support/advice requested within a sample week were as follows:

- Provided strategies and resource links for 2 Ukrainian pupils due to start in school
- Provided advice on initial support for New Arrival in Reception
- Provided advice for transition and resources
- Provided advice on working with parents
- Signposted to resources

14. **Recommendation 2: To produce training for schools** around ways to promote oracy and opportunities to talk for EAL learners. This will consist of whole school, classroom, and homework strategies.

Due to the high number numbers of pupils needing support in schools, this recommendation is being followed up during Autumn term 2023. The team have produced three training sessions:

- a. Supporting EAL children
- b. Supporting the Development of Vocabulary in EAL Learners
- c. EAL and SEND

These will be recorded as webinars and uploaded to our website and marketed to schools via our newsletter.

15. Recommendation 3: Continue to provide MEAS support to pupils from Ukraine *Provide information, advice, and guidance to schools around supporting pupils from Ukraine as part of the services core offer and as required and directed by Staffordshire County Council, including providing a termly training webinar for schools.*

As detailed in paragraph 11 support was provided for schools, and the team have worked with 53 pupils since September 2022.

16. An example of MEAS delivery

Prior to the visit, through conversation with the SENCo in school, the team were aware of the main issues and concerns for staff regarding the two pupils (twin siblings) who had been referred to the service. The pupils were new to the country and had limited experience of schooling in their home country and no experience of speaking English.

The initial visit began with a brief discussion with the SENCo around the sorts of interventions/ strategies already in place and their effectiveness. The assessment process was explained and what the school could expect from the team's involvement.

An observation followed of the children in their class. During the observation, which usually lasts between 30-45 minutes, the team are observing the following;

- communication with peers and adults
- whether the children are settled and know or can follow routines with ease
- in what format they are given instructions and how they follow them
- can they access what they need within the classroom?
- are they able to make their basic needs known?
- what materials or strategies are being used to support their understanding of the curriculum?

After the observation, the children were assessed individually. Assessments focused on;

- their understanding of basic vocabulary, and spoken English
- their spoken English
- their understanding of the conventions of written text and their ability to read English script and basic comprehension
- their ability to reproduce letters, write their name and complete a simple sentence
- their phonological knowledge
- basic number knowledge

The team then met with the class teacher and talked through any findings from the assessment and observation. Advice is provided so that strategies can be put in place immediately, for example the use of visuals to support understanding, the use of desk prompts- letter and word mats. Strategies were also provided for the acquisition of vocabulary and how they could be integrated into their lessons. 'The silent period' that many EAL pupil experience was explained and why this happens and the importance of their home language continuing to be spoken at home and celebrated in school. It is also important to offer reassurance about what practice/strategies are currently working well.

The team always feedback to whoever makes the initial referral, and briefly outline what has been discussed with the class teacher and that the report will contain observations and assessment results, along with other strategies and signposting to websites and resources that will support the pupils.

Following the team's intervention, the SENCo, who made the initial referral, fed back:

"This was a really useful intervention to inform future support for the children, as well as giving the staff confidence to support the family".

The two pupils continued to make progress and access the curriculum as staff implemented the strategies and recommendations made.

17. Additional delivery

Contact was made with the 30 EMAG schools requesting data on newly arrived pupils, learning through English as an additional language in Staffordshire.

The letter explains that as an EMAG school there is no longer the need to complete a Notification of New Arrival form (NONA) and a funding form for each new arrival. EMAG schools will receive a lump sum for the year, comprising a minimum allocation of £1500. This is a "one off" payment to meet the specific needs on entry to school.

At the end of the year each school will be asked to submit information on the number of new arrivals they have received.

EMAG schools are still eligible to apply for additional funding to meet the needs of asylum seeking/refugee children and the school can access support from MEAS if they have an EAL pupil who is causing concern. This may be a new arrival or a pupil who has been in school for some time.

EMAG schools were requested to submit their action plans for analysis detailing how they were utilising their EMAG funding. To date 29 schools have returned their action plans from a possible 30 schools which is a 97% return rate. Reminders have been sent to the remaining school. The team have put together a Good Practice guide and action plan template which was sent to the schools to showcase excellent practice and provide further ideas for schools.

18. The team continue to support schools with Difference and Diversity sessions. Of the ten sessions delivered in four schools the following feedback was received:

- *Very interesting content well delivered.*
- *Children highly engaged and provoked good questioning.*
- *Just the right amount of content for session length.*
- *Older children could relate to the session by recalling previous learning.*
- *Excellent behaviour management and good quality resources*

Due to the increase demand and focus on casework, it was agreed with the Commissioner that this would be revisited during the Autumn term 2023.

19. The team produced 10 top tips for transition for schools which was included in the summer 2023 edition of the termly newsletter for schools. [Minority Ethnic Achievement Service \(MEAS\) | Staffordshire Connects](#)
20. Production of a termly newsletter for schools which includes advice, guidance and resources and relevant articles and thought pieces. [Minority Ethnic Achievement Service \(MEAS\) | Staffordshire Connects](#) We have sent copies of these to the SEND and Inclusion Hubs in order to reach a wider audience and promote the service.
21. Attendance at the SEND and Inclusion Hubs – this has enabled the team to bring MEAS to the attention of schools and other multi-agencies, e.g. Inclusion officers, schools who have not accessed MEAS historically and has led to more enquiries.

Recommendations for the financial year 2023/24 in addition to core delivery;

22. **Recommendation 1: To continue to promote and provide a MEAS telephone helpline** for 1 session per week, to help improve accessibility to the service for all schools. This will be monitored, and sessions added should there be sufficient demand.
23. **Recommendation 2: To produce training for schools.**
- (1) The Role of Governors in Supporting EAL children
 - (2) Welcoming EAL Families into the School Community – Supporting Inclusion

Decisions

The Schools Forum:

24. Agree to the continued de-delegated funding from maintained primary school's delegated budget for 2024-2025 financial year
25. Notes the continued improvements and development of the service over the last year and proposals for next year

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List of background papers:

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