Chapter 5

Some Considerations Prior to the Development and Provision of Programmes for NESB Students
Key Points

- Schools with a strong commitment to meeting the needs of their NESB students are also those which have a strong commitment to ensuring an ‘inclusive’ policy for all students.

- Appointment of at least one ESOL coordinator or teacher is a key step in providing programmes and support for NESB students. Such a person has a diverse and demanding role, including liaising with other staff in the school, liaising with parents and with support agencies outside the school, and working with and providing pastoral care for the students.

- Obtaining as much background information as possible on each student — for example, previous education, facility with their first language as well as English, family circumstances, information about country of origin and culture — is a vital prerequisite for planning programmes and providing support for NESB students. It is also necessary for establishing which general category of need (as defined by the Ministry of Education)\(^1\) each student falls into, for funding purposes.

Introduction

This chapter discusses some of the philosophical and organisational matters which help form a basis for establishing programmes and support for NESB students. In particular, the chapter discusses whether schools in the study had formal statements in their policy documents or charters specifically relating to NESB students, the role that boards of trustees had in meeting the needs of NESB students, the schools’ overall philosophy or rationale for the way in which those in or connected with the school worked and interacted, and the role of ESOL coordinators within the schools. Schools’ establishment of background information on each NESB student, including initial assessment data on their facility with English and subject attainment generally, and the need for schools to apply for discretionary ESOL resourcing for eligible NESB students are also discussed.

Statements in School Policy Documents or Charters Regarding NESB Students

In order to help establish the basis from which schools develop strategies for providing programmes and support for NESB students, principals or their deputies of the schools we visited were asked whether there was a statement on NESB students in their school policy document or charter. From the responses received, it appeared that although some schools made specific statements about NESB students — what their needs were, and what the

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\(^1\) See ‘Background to the Study’ (page 12) for a description of the categories of need in use at the time of the study.
aims were for meeting those needs — in their policy documents (see, for example, Exhibits 1, 2, and 3 below), schools often took a more ‘inclusive’ approach, choosing to make statements about meeting the needs of all students and not singling out particular groups. As well, some schools simply included NESB students under the general umbrella of ‘special needs’ within the school.

“We’ve got two or three different policies [stated in our school charter] which are relevant [to NESB students] — it’s not just one specific policy. It’s more to do with equity kinds of issues, it’s to do with being fair to our overseas students, because we’ve got such a variety of overseas students in this school. We’ve got exchange students, we have got refugees, we’ve got business migrants, we’ve got foreign fee-paying students. And what we try to do is give each of those students the same kind of opportunities. It’s giving those students an opportunity to learn English, supporting them in learning English before they move into the classroom.” [Principal, secondary school.]

“We have a special needs policy. We regard ESOL as one of the special needs that we try to cater for. Our charter refers to the need to overcome barriers to learning. [The main points contained in that document are that] we try to ensure that every child can access the curriculum in the classroom confidently and happily.” [Principal, primary school.]

“We have a statement in the charter under our local curriculum goals that states that we need to cater for individual needs, and that [ESOL] is one of the categories that is covered. And there are also another two statements under local curriculum goals — there are six goals altogether — and they relate to catering for people from different ethnic backgrounds and being sensitive to other cultures. It is very clearly stated in the document. ... We were also involved in a contract in 1993 on NESB students and as a result of this we wrote policy statements and scheme statements for the school which we are currently updating. So there is a scheme statement and that hooks into the statements in the school charter. ... The [school] policy reflects [all] the children in the school and they [the NESB students] are part of that group.” [Principal and Deputy Principal, primary school.]

“In our mission statement and the school charter and goals, the only time ESOL is specifically mentioned is really under EEO and equity: ‘To provide equity and to be sensitive to the needs and aspirations of all in a spirit of fairness’. The only other time it is referred to is really non-specifically, just saying that the school’s role is to reflect the community and its demands. This community is now very much multicultural and, specifically, there is a large contingent of Asian new immigrants. So from our mission statement and goals, that is where we take what we need for our NESB students and then put it into policy. As far as policies are concerned, there is a draft policy being done this year by the group which has been approved by the board, that is really just going through where we see the place of ESOL within the school. It is a policy on which budgeting is set as well. Budgeting cannot be
allocated until there is a policy there, the board is very clear on that. But it also allows other policy to relate to it, for instance our enrolment policy relates to our NESB students, because we were finding that a lot of our NESB students were arriving mid-year, or through the year, rather than at the beginning of the year, and the way they were handled as an enrolment needed to be different to Joe Bloggs who had come in from a neighbouring New Zealand school. ... And we have now got quite a series of strict enrolment guidelines to follow that have been developed through the year. They are not specifically for NESB students but have been developed with them in mind. But we now use these guidelines for other enrolling students as well." [Deputy principal, intermediate school.]

"Under [our] policy on ‘equity’ there is provision for NESB children. [Also] under ‘Local Goals’ in the school charter it talks about valuing each child’s mother tongue and recognising that pride and efficiency in the mother tongue is a key to success in all language development, but it doesn’t specifically mention NESB [students].” [Principal, primary school.]

The Role of Boards of Trustees in Relation to Policy on NESB Students

As well as being asked whether there was a statement in their school policy document or charter regarding NESB students, principals were also asked, ‘What role does the board of trustees take in determining policy or practice concerning NESB students?’ The role of boards of trustees clearly differs quite considerably, from quite active involvement in some schools to just a very general overseeing or ‘rubber stamping’ role in others.

“The board of trustees has got a policy subcommittee [in determining policy or practice concerning NESB students], and the policy subcommittee takes the initiative in any policy that the board sets. It’s a fairly active group and it meets regularly — at least once a month. What they have done in terms of the policies here is to delegate some of the responsibility for drawing up some of the work, and we have a board committee called the ESOL Management Committee. That committee has staff, students, and board representatives on it, and has been responsible for working on some of the policy areas [which is an ongoing process].” [Principal, secondary school.]

“They [board members] were fully involved in the rewrite of the charter. That was a year-long project which [involved full] community consultation to come up with local curriculum objectives, [and] local objectives for the community. And then what happens is that at this time of the year, September, October, November, we develop the school plan with all the different groups of people in the school who need to feed into the school plan. Then that school plan goes to the board of trustees for approval, usually in November, then it is finalised in December. And then it is put into practice in the first six weeks of the next year. This covers all areas of the school, not just ESOL. It hooks into budgeting and into the contracts that we have been running for the school. Like, next year [1996], we have got ... [a] contract
CHAPTER 5: SOME CONSIDERATIONS PRIOR TO THE DEVELOPMENT AND PROVISION OF PROGRAMMES FOR NESB STUDENTS

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Exhibit 1: A Primary School’s Policy Statement Regarding NESB Students

Non-English-Speaking Background (NESB) Students²

**Rationale**
The school will place equal importance on each child’s first language and cultural background so that children have a safe and supportive environment in which to learn.

**Purposes**
1. For children to be secure in using their first language in any school situation.
2. Through immersion in mainstream class programmes, children will develop communication skills in English.

**Guidelines**
1. We will reflect the wide variety of cultures within the school in the physical environment — labelling displays, written language displays, children’s own publications, murals, signage. A variety of approaches in classroom activities across the curriculum will be used.
2. Wherever possible, the school will endeavour to provide interpreters/translators for parents/children when necessary and appropriate — eg, the school newsletter (verbal translations weekly).
3. Class teachers will assess the needs and support the learning of children for whom English is a new language.
4. Additional programmes will be provided for phase one/two³ children (dependent on funding).
5. Staff development will be ongoing through staff meetings for all staff and in-service work for key personnel.
6. Each syndicate will share and develop a variety of resources which will be updated regularly.

² The wording in this exhibit is quoted directly from the document supplied by the school in question.
³ Phases 1 and 2 here equate to Categories 1 and 2 of the Ministry of Education’s classification system for ESOL funding application purposes (see page 12 of this report for clarification of these categories).
Exhibit 2: An Intermediate School’s Policy Statement Regarding NESB Students

**Students from Language Backgrounds Other than English**

**Purpose**
To provide those students, for whom English is not the first language, opportunities to learn English in an environment that acknowledges and cares about their culture and heritage and that fosters development of skills in social and academic communication in New Zealand.

**Guidelines**
1. The students will be given individual and small group teaching according to their needs, within the resources of the school.

2. The students will be in general classes.

3. The class teachers will take every reasonable step to integrate the learning of students from language backgrounds other than English into the class programmes, bearing in mind the specific needs of the students, and provide specific programmes to meet their needs when integration is inappropriate.

4. The school will encourage these students to continue to identify with, and take pride in, their own cultural background.

5. Parents of NESB students will be made to feel welcome and will be encouraged to contribute to and learn from the philosophy embraced by the school and to participate in working towards the shared vision for the school.

**Procedures**
1. As NESB students are enrolled at the school, those performing the enrolment will make a first conversation-based assessment of the student. Often this will be by unqualified staff, so it will be a rough indication only.

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4 The wording in this exhibit is quoted directly from the document supplied by the school in question.
### Exhibit 2: An Intermediate School’s Policy Statement Regarding NESB Students — continued

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Students from Language Backgrounds Other than English — continued</th>
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**Procedures — continued**

2. NESB students will be given a special orientation opportunity, during which they will be shown around the school by someone with the same first language, to answer questions and explain the details of school life.

3. If at all possible, the student will be placed with another student with the same language background.

4. Where the school’s resources permit, a suitably qualified bilingual Asian teacher will be employed on a part-time basis. The task of this teacher will be to meet regularly with the Asian students to discuss problems of adapting, social problems, and problems related to their first language. He/she will also conduct bilingual assessments when required.

5. The class teacher, with guidance from the teacher responsible for NESB students, will carry out an assessment programme. This will be designed to ascertain the needs of the student.

6. In consultation with the teacher responsible for NESB students, the class teacher will then refer the student for support programmes and/or design programmes specifically for that student in both English and the student’s first language.

7. Throughout the time the student is at school, there will be ongoing assessment of progress and needs, so that the programme can be adjusted accordingly.

8. The students, as groups within the school, will have their language and culture recognised as being important to the fabric of the school, and opportunities will be made for them to share their culture with the rest of the school.
## Exhibit 3: A Secondary School’s Policy Statement Regarding NESB Students

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>English Speakers of Other Languages Policy&lt;sup&gt;5&lt;/sup&gt;</th>
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### Rationale
1. NESB students have the right to equal access to all learning opportunities and school resources.

2. NESB students should be ensured a smooth transition into the mainstream of the school community in order that they reach their potential in the school in a totally supportive environment that enhances their cultural identity.

### Purposes
1. To identify the particular educational needs of NESB students, both born overseas and in New Zealand.

2. To develop appropriate study and support programmes for NESB students to ensure that they are able to participate fully in daily classroom activities.

3. To provide a smooth transition for NESB students with Pakeha, Maori, and Pacific Islands students as part of a multi-faceted, multicultural community enriched by diversity in culture and language, beliefs and attitudes.

### Guidelines
1. Undertaking culturally appropriate enrolment, assessment, placement and especially tailored course programmes for NESB students, directed to the ultimate goal of enabling them to function well in the mainstream of the school, recognising that it can take up to two years for new arrivals to have spoken fluency.

<sup>5</sup> The wording in this exhibit is quoted directly from the document supplied by the school in question.
Exhibit 3: A Secondary School’s Policy Statement Regarding NESB Students — continued

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>English Speakers of Other Languages Policy — continued</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Guidelines — continued</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>2. Organisation of across-curriculum, in-class support of NESB students throughout the school with ongoing assessment and procedures for points of change.</td>
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<td>3. Provision of alternative or parallel English classes for forms five, six, and seven.</td>
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<td>4. Appropriate learning venues are made available to NESB students (including culturally sensitive interview and orientation rooms).</td>
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<tr>
<td>5. Encouragement of cultural activities that reflect the particular needs of NESB students which enhances the involvement of their families and communities in the learning opportunities of the school.</td>
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<tr>
<td>6. Appointment of ESOL specialist staff with appropriate responsibility weighting (staffing workloads) as an integral part of the school’s teaching programme — eg, HOD ESOL, specialist support staff — as it can take up to six years for NESB students to achieve academic fluency in reading and writing.</td>
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<tr>
<td>7. Arrangements of ongoing professional development of staff to increase their knowledge about and sensitivity to the cultures and languages of all in the school.</td>
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<tr>
<td>8. Acknowledgement of the extra curricular requirements/demands that NESB students and families place on ESOL specialist staff.</td>
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[Ratified April 1993.]
planned to do with ESOL for teachers, to make sure the programmes are up to date.” [Principal, primary school.]

“The composition of the board is multicultural. The board of trustees complements and gives support to policy or procedures or initiatives taken by the principal and policy is determined in discussion with the principal.” [Principal, primary school.]

“The board approves what we [principal and staff] prepare. They could have input into it, but they don’t, because they don’t have the skills to understand what’s being talked about. So we draft the policies and take them to the board and they approve them. I’ve never known them yet make any alteration or any suggestion because [this] is an unskilled area — it’s mostly non-working people and those who are working, on the whole, [have unskilled jobs]. [Their view is] that: ‘Our biggest job is to appoint the right principal and hope that they get on and do the job correctly’. So the board gets very full reports on everything that happens [in the school] and, every now and then, I report to them [specifically] on the special needs programme [which incorporates NESB students].” [Principal, primary school.]

‘At the moment, they [the board members] are just getting the feedback from me every month on what has happened within the [professional development] contract [on assisting NESB students the school is participating in this year] and what we are gaining and they will get a full report on that at the end of this year. I’m actually going to use [that report] as my statement of further performance. It’s one of my requirements that it will be written because the school has actually put a heap of money [in] over and above what the contract allows — like, we are training six key teachers and the contract says four. The board of trustees have really been very, very generous in the additional resourcing that they have given us this year for extra relieving teachers or extra resources. And the PTA to a certain extent too — [for example], I advised them that we wanted a laminator because we were having to run off to college to laminate the new resources we were making and, ‘Wouldn’t it be nice if the PTA could buy us a laminator’, and next thing there’s the laminator! But the board of trustees are just responding to our needs at the moment because we are keeping them up to date as to what we are doing and why we are doing it. The old board at the end of last year was involved in writing [the application for getting onto the contract] so the board knew in October last year that if the school was going to get on [the contract] that it was going to be the main focus of the learning programme and teacher development this year and that I would be expecting quite a bit of money to be channelled into it. I haven’t been turned down on anything that I have asked for as part of the contract [involvement]. And we are [also] going to require more money next year because you don’t start something, then stop it.” [Principal, primary school.]

Although all boards of trustees in participating schools did not necessarily have a direct role in formal policy development regarding NESB students, they were nevertheless always kept informed about key points of policy by the principal and other staff in the school. Board members could also ultimately influence school decisions regarding different groups of
students by, for example, whether or not they approved different submissions on how school funding was spent (see further discussion on this point in the chapter ‘Balancing Different Needs within the School’ later in the report).

**Overall School Philosophy**

“We include all children in everything regardless of what their ability is. If they arrive here with no English at all and we have got a powhiri on, then they are in there doing the powhiri with everybody else.”

[Principal, primary school.]

As mentioned previously in relation to schools’ statements regarding NESB students in their school policy document or charter, NESB students are not always singled out for specific mention in such documents. Instead, schools make statements (see, for example, Exhibits 4 and 5) about their overall philosophy in terms of aiming to best meet the needs of all students in the school, of which NESB students are one group. The following quotes also illustrate schools’ philosophy of expecting that all students, given the opportunity, can and will succeed to the best of their ability.

“All our students are given every opportunity to progress — encouragement, after school tutors, support from home.” [Classroom teacher, primary school.]

“Every child is entitled to equitable education and our job is to help these [NESB] children learn English as quickly as possible to the best of their ability.” [Principal, primary school.]

“Our ESOL philosophy is to make our students independent learners by giving them the language skills to allow for academic progress that will give them entry into tertiary education.” [ESOL coordinator, secondary school.]

The comments which follow illustrate the point of view that inclusive approaches to teaching — involving a philosophy and strategies which can be successfully adapted for all students — should predominate.

“With the [reciprocal reading\(^6\)] programme [we have] in the school, if there are special needs children in there they are going to benefit, if they are NESB they will benefit. In

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\(^6\) During the same interview, the deputy principal at the school explained the reciprocal reading programme as follows: “The reciprocal reading programme is an extension of reading programme where children work [in a small group] with a group leader (initially a teacher or a teacher aide [but later one of the children in the group]). [The purpose is to give the students] the opportunity to clarify whether they understand what they are reading, and [to work on] definitions of words and understanding the content.”
Exhibit 4: A Primary School’s Policy Statement on Equity

Policy on Equity

Introduction

Equity is about fairness. [This school] has a policy on equity because it recognises that a number of our students are disadvantaged because of things that are beyond their control. These factors will include such things as a lack of money in the household, crowded living conditions at home, transience, and disabilities of different sorts. Some students are disadvantaged because English, the main language of tuition, is not their mother-tongue. Other students come from groups which are disadvantaged because of the prejudice that exists towards them in the wider community.

Equity means trying to find ways of ensuring that students who begin from a situation of disadvantage are given special help to ensure that their education does not suffer.

Purposes

1. To ensure that staff and parents have the opportunity of identifying those groups of students, staff, and parents who are disadvantaged because of gender or religious, ethnic, cultural, social, or family background.

2. To ensure that the school organisation is responsive to the needs of groups which have been identified as disadvantaged.

3. To ensure that the management of the learning process is responsive to the needs of groups which have been identified as disadvantaged.

4. To ensure that the school’s learning and teaching programmes are responsive to the needs of groups which have been identified as disadvantaged and, in fact, reflect in their content the strengths which all groups contribute to this multicultural school.

5. To ensure that learning resources are non-discriminatory and, in particular, are non-sexist and non-racist, and, where possible, reflect the diversity of cultures represented in the school.

6. To ensure that all students have equal ease of access to the school’s learning programmes and physical resources.

7 The wording in this exhibit is quoted directly from the document supplied by the school in question.
Exhibit 4: A Primary School’s Policy Statement on Equity — continued

**Policy on Equity — continued**

**Purposes — continued**

7. To ensure that ways are found of supporting learning in the homes of students who have been identified as disadvantaged and to budget for these programmes.

8. To ensure that the school’s equity programmes are monitored for their effectiveness.

9. To ensure that professional development time and resources are allocated for staff training in areas related to equity.

10. To ensure that the school’s appointments policy supports the general fostering of positive role-models for students from groups which are traditionally low status in the general community.

11. To ensure that the school demonstrates clearly that it is not prepared to tolerate the victimisation or harassment of either staff member or pupil on the basis of their sex, race, class, religion, or sexual preference.

**Guidelines**

1. Opportunity should be provided at meetings of staff and parents for groups to be identified which may be disadvantaged in some way.

2. The principal and staff will regularly review the ways in which the school’s organisation, learning management and learning programmes are successful in addressing the needs of disadvantaged groups and may come up with suggestions for the improvement of these aspects of school life.

3. The principal and staff will work together in the planning of programmes especially designed to meet the needs of pupils identified as disadvantaged.
### Exhibit 4: A Primary School’s Policy Statement on Equity — continued

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<th>Policy on Equity — continued</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Guidelines — continued</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>4. The school’s equity programmes will be costed out and budgeted for annually.</td>
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<tr>
<td>5. Equity considerations will be a factor in the planning of the staff’s professional development plan.</td>
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<td>6. Where outside agencies exist to support the school in its equity programmes, these should be liaised with and used where appropriate.</td>
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<td>7. Parents will be given the opportunity to reflect on the school’s success in addressing the learning needs of all its students.</td>
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<tr>
<td>8. The school will foster ways in which parents, particularly those identified as disadvantaged, can support their children’s learning in the home.</td>
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<tr>
<td>9. The school’s learning resources will be monitored by staff to ensure that material of a discriminatory nature is culled and that where possible resources are found which reflect positively the rich cultural mix that [exists within this school].</td>
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<tr>
<td>10. The school’s physical environment should be such that students with disabilities have ready access to all learning programmes and physical resources.</td>
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<tr>
<td>11. The school will continue to practise equity in its fostering of adult role-models for students from groups which are disadvantaged and in its refusal to tolerate the victimisation or harassment of either staff member or pupil on the basis of sex, race, class, age, religion, or sexual preference.</td>
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[Approved by Board of Trustees.]
Reading Recovery programmes, NESB children are benefiting from it — not all [of them], but some are. And one of the reasons [we have] this reciprocal reading programme here is because there is no catch-up programme for reading [at the standards 2, 3 and 4 level]. We do really well in New Zealand in [the junior school] — the ‘six-year net’ and Reading Recovery — but there are a whole lot of children who fall off the rails from six to ten years who did not get picked up by Reading Recovery. And by the time they leave the primary school they feel they are non-readers. And it is very important that we have a pick-up programme, [so that they] go on to intermediate school actually feeling confident readers. And a lot of our NESB children who arrive in the country in standards 2, 3, and 4 often will go on to intermediate school feeling garbage, because they haven’t got that basic understanding of English. So that programme hopefully will address that. It stands to reason that it will help those children significantly. But it is not just for those children, it is for [all] children in standards 3 and 4 who feel [as if they are] non-readers.” [Principal, primary school.]

“I am a science teacher, that’s my background. Over many years I am absolutely convinced that one of the most significant barriers to learning in classrooms is language-based. Therefore my view is that every teacher in the school is a language teacher, because they are using language in the interactive teaching process and as a consequence of that they are modelling language use, as well as engaging kids in language. I believe that every teacher [needs] to be convinced of that particular role and I am really committed to learning and language across the curriculum. And the ESOL expert has got a role to play in that, but so has the science teacher, the technical teacher, the home economics teacher, the art teacher, and so on. And if I could find the way of committing staff to that sort of process as one of the fundamental things that they do in their thinking of teaching and learning, it would be marvellous. So if we had the ways and the means of resourcing it at that level that would be marvellous — rather than targeted: ‘This is for ESOL development, and this is for something else [etc]’. I was really encouraged ten years ago. I thought the language and learning across the curriculum drive was going to be one of the really powerful influences across schools. And really what’s happened is that it has become dependent upon individual people and individual places. This is a bit sad. ... It is potentially really powerful. ... What we [teachers] have got to become as part of that language of learning thing is experts of learning rather than an expert in chemistry, or maths, or whatever it might be. And if we are experts of learning then in an institutional sense we are going to become much more effective. And when that distils to kids, then they get a better deal out of it.” [Principal, secondary school.]

 “[Classes in this school] run a very structured daily programme — the same structures, or a progression of those structures, are used throughout the school. The fact that we have a very routined, structured daily programme is balanced by the fact that we are, physically, in the heart of the city and are in a very good situation to [ensure that] our children have lots of language experiences, lots of experiences of outings because we’re so close to everything and can walk everywhere. So they [all students] have a lot of enrichment that way and
Exhibit 5: A Primary School’s Mission Statement in Respect of All Students

Mission Statement

To enable our children to become intellectually, emotionally and physically successful citizens in an ever changing society.

[This school], because of its special character, aims to promote in all children the following:

General Goals

**General Goal 1: Self-esteem and personal mana**

*Objectives:*
- By developing caring and nurturing attitudes;
- By providing appropriate role models in attitudes, dress and speech;
- By identifying accurately children’s strengths and needs.

**General Goal 2: Self-discipline and skills of independence**

*Objective:*
- By providing adequate coping strategies and problem-solving techniques to deal with conflict.

**General Goal 3: Recognition and acceptance of (1) own rights and responsibilities (2) others’ rights and responsibilities**

*Objective:*
- By developing and maintaining a consistent and school-wide environment in terms of security, warmth, values, tone and discipline.

**General Goal 4: The value of cultural diversity**

*Objectives:*
- By accepting the language and culture children bring to the school;
- Accepting experiences children bring to the school;
- Not presuming anything about our children.

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*The wording in this exhibit is quoted directly from the document supplied by the school in question.*
Exhibit 5: A Primary School’s Mission Statement in Respect of All Students — continued

Mission Statement — continued

Local Goals

- Provide an educational programme that caters for children of differing ethnic and religious backgrounds and which recognises the differences in the economic advantages that individual children enjoy.

- Recognise the future of Aotearoa/New Zealand as bicultural and multicultural and celebrate the diversity of cultures that make up [this school’s] community.

- Value each child’s mother-tongue, recognising that pride and efficiency in the mother-tongue is a key to success in all language development.

- Recognise the special needs and strengths of our pupils and encourage pupils to have a sense of pride in themselves, to become well-rounded, to achieve academic success, and to be tolerant of differences.

- Recognise that children develop at different rates and in different ways and from different starting points and recognise that there are different types of intelligence and sensibility.

- Assess pupils’ progress in terms of learning objectives tailored to the individual student and not in terms of standards imposed arbitrarily by outside authority.

- Acknowledge the problems that tend to handicap educational success, such as transience, poor health and poverty, and work with our community to find ways of reducing the impact of such problems on the educational performance of our pupils.

Current Local Curriculum Goals and Objectives

The Charter’s Introductory Statement: ‘... we seek to establish policies and practices, catering for individual strengths and special needs.’

To acknowledge the tangata whenua status of the Maori language and culture by:

1. establishing school-wide programmes to provide regular, structured teaching in te Reo.

2. to reflect the essential elements of tikanga Maori in our daily activities and environment.

To allow our children to experience a range of sports and leisure pursuits that reflect community interests and involvement.
that’s really important for the NESB students [too]. So [first] they have the structured classroom programme, then lots of experiences as well as excitement. It works beautifully. And throughout our school, especially for children who might come from backgrounds which make it very hard for them to conform in a behavioural way, we have very consistent school-wide behaviour management policies, and all our teachers operate in the same way, so that our behaviour management is consistent throughout the school, and that helps our students enormously as well. And it helps us [teachers] enormously [too] because problems usually remain quite small, because they’re always dealt with the same way right away by everybody. And we’ve got a very supportive principal, and that’s the other thing that I think helps us a lot.” [Classroom teacher, primary school.]

Within the framework of their overall philosophy, however, some schools also made particular reference to their NESB students and/or to the wider issue of second language learning for all students. The following passages illustrate the beliefs and objectives of two participating schools.

“All sorts of stuff ranging from expectations of family, peers, school, teachers [influence an NESB student’s ability to learn English]. We expect them to learn in a total immersion situation, and often that learning is cueless because the context is totally foreign, both in a language sense and in an ordinary speaking idiom sort of sense. So the context is all to hell as well. The barriers are enormous and yet there is no other option other than in that immersion situation. I think the environment of the school becomes one of the ways of removing those barriers. So I think that there has got to be ways and means of affirming the first language of the student within the school and of affirming the cultural context that they are a part of in the school, so that there are things for them to hook into that are their own. And I think that is probably a critical thing in an institutional sense. But in a straight out person-to-person sense, people have got to be responsive just at that human level. [The importance of a student’s first language] is common sense, quite apart from the fact that there is an extensive research body that says that second language learning is supported by first language maintenance and first language usage. I think the other part of it is the cultural thing. I’m really bothered about English language teaching to English second language learners. By that I mean [the attitude]: ‘The thrust of this English language programme is so that you can become like us’. I think that that is colonial and it is dreadful. Therefore, the cultural value and context of people has to be affirmed, both at a personal level and at an institutional level.” [Principal, secondary school.]

“The Arabic classes held here [at the school] are not just for Somalian students, [but for] any student who would like to learn Arabic. That’s the difference between the language-based ESOL programmes that we operate and those offered at other schools. For instance, the Maori language programme is not entirely just for Maori children in that class, it is also made up of [other] children who want to learn Maori. So we are actually opening up [all our
language classes] to other groups, and that shows how much we acknowledge different languages. (We also hold Hindi and Arabic classes after school and these are open to parents too.) ... What we would also like to see are language classes for particular groups funded in school time. I’ve been reading some of the Canadian research over the years, and it would seem that it is big business over there funding language classes within school time for Italian, Polish, other European languages. In Australia they do that too. But funding is always at the bottom of it. You can have teachers who are really, really dedicated but you only have so many hours in the day. There’s only so much stress level you can stand.” [AP/class teacher and special needs coordinator, primary school.]

The Role of the ESOL Coordinator in the School

The ESOL coordinator9 has a key role within the school — involving, for example, liaising between families and the school, giving support to students, teachers, and the students’ families, helping teachers with resources (finding them, making them, ensuring that teachers know about them and have access to them), and carrying out initial assessments of students and placing them in appropriate classrooms or, where necessary, in out-of-class support (‘withdrawal’) groups. As well, the role includes liaising with teacher aides, part-time ESOL teachers, and other helpers within the school, liaising with support networks outside the school, taking responsibility for ensuring that professional development for teachers of NESB students occurs, monitoring students’ progress within the classroom and keeping records of that progress, and teaching. ESOL coordinators (or their equivalent) who participated in the study outline the role that they played within their school in the passages which follow.

The first group of passages contain accounts of aspects of the role of ‘ESOL coordinator’ at seven of the primary schools which participated in the study.

“We [ie, the AP and I] ascertain who are the NESB students in the school. This is done on enrolment. This involves the parents or caregivers — whoever comes to enrol the child — in as many ways as we can. We keep records of the children moving in and out, where they are, and what their needs are. Often, this is for funding reasons. We monitor the children in their classroom situation. We set up programmes for these children within the classroom or, when we have funding [as was the case earlier this year], we employ a teacher just to work with new NESB children on different programmes. We give resource help to [classroom] teachers, help them find resources, and also arrange training for new teachers who are not familiar with dealing with

9 Sometimes the role of ESOL coordinator is seen as part of the wider role of ‘special needs coordinator’. This depends upon a particular school’s philosophy and/or the number of NESB students on their roll; clearly, schools with a large number of NESB students will have a greater need for one or more coordinator(s) whose sole or chief responsibility is NESB students, whereas schools with only few NESB students are less likely to have the same need.
The ESOL coordinator has a key role in programmes and support for NESB students. These children. We [also] monitor [the NESB students’] social interaction in the playground, make sure they are buddied up with someone of their own race. We try to encourage the parents to become involved with their children’s education as well, so that the support systems are there for the children at home as well. ... We give teachers ideas for resources. With things like topic work we need extra pictures, articles, labels, things that they can relate to within the whole topic process. Maths is included in that too, also language topics where they may not be familiar with the language. And there are games that we have made. There are quite a lot of resource areas and we have to bring to the attention of all the staff just what is available, and how you can use it. We are really responsible for letting the staff know exactly what we do have available at any one time.” [Special needs coordinator, primary school.]

“I liaise between home and school, so I’ve got a reasonable relationship with the majority of parents of our NESB children. And I liaise between teachers and home and school and pupils. I visit homes, when I can. And I organise the programme for the NESB children as extra to what they’re getting in their classroom, and I take them for extra classes.” [ESOL coordinator, primary school.]

“I work with the classroom teachers first of all to assess which particular children are going to be withdrawn for support programmes and those children come here to work with me for varied periods of time. Most of them who are withdrawn from their classrooms would come for, say, three sessions a week for about an hour a week each. So, basically, the children here are all mainstreamed but there are pockets of children who are withdrawn for various support programmes. They come to me in small groups.” [ESOL coordinator, primary school.]

“I am a team leader for the Samoan Bilingual Unit. Three-quarters of these children [40 altogether] are NESB. The unit is run with another teacher and next year we will have a third teacher. It is vertically grouped — 5–7 years and 7–11 years groups. We promote the Samoan language within the school, especially with the new draft curriculum for the Samoan language. ... I get released for a whole day, one day a week (so I only teach four days) as the team leader basically to look at the needs of our team in terms of teaching, learning, and assessing. And it also gives me a chance to go to my colleagues’ rooms [elsewhere in the school] and have a look at how they are getting on and the progress their [NESB] children are making. It also gives me a chance to talk to them [the NESB students in other classrooms] and assess whether their needs are being met as well.” [Team leader, Samoan bilingual unit, primary school.]

“My job is coordinator of all the special needs [including ESOL], so primarily I assess all children who teachers put forward as having [special] needs. I evaluate, make an assessment, and then determine how that need is best going to be met, whether it’s going to be met by setting up a peer tutor in the classroom, whether it’s doing an IEP [Individual Education Programme] with the parents of the child, by just teacher support, by giving the teacher
resources or by having the child withdrawn from the classroom to work with a teacher aide or to work with me, to refer children to other rolls, [eg] the Resource Teacher of Special Needs roll, the Resource Teacher of Reading roll — most of my day, really, is spent talking [with teachers], [and] working with children as well.” [Special needs coordinator, primary school.]

“[I have specific programmes for individual NESB students. For example], there is a Samoan child who speaks Samoan at home and is struggling to learn with his written language mainly, so I give him help with his written language. He is a priority. I work out the priorities and the time I need with each [student]. I am trying to get him confident enough to fit into the high school system next year, that’s my goal for him, and [also for him] to understand how to research topics and how to present his work.” [ESOL coordinator, primary school.]

“[As ESOL coordinator], I spend eleven-and-a-half hours here and I spend just over half that time in the classrooms with the different ones I know I have to work with and helping them with the class programmes. Writing down in my note book areas where they will need special, extra help. But almost a third of the time, it varies, I would call children here [to the ESOL room] for extra help — often they would be the newest arrivals — and we, sometimes with the help of another person, do oral communication games, and talking and [various other] things to build up their vocabulary. [For example], we use picture stories — we talk about them and [I have the student] retell the story to me. [What we do] depends on what stage they are at too, [for instance whether] they are at the stage of writing. [For those who can write], one of the things I like is picture story strips, [where] we look at pictures that are all muddled up and then [we] put them in the right order, then they tell me the story and then they write the story. They write it however they can, some just very basic sentences, and others will be very well written but they have the content a bit mixed up. So I use that [exercise] as an evaluation, starting with the telling, and then the writing, and then you get the oral and the written all in one.” [ESOL coordinator, primary school.]

The next three passages illustrate the nature of the ESOL coordinator role for those working in intermediate schools.

“I suppose primarily it is to see that there are resources for the classroom teachers to use. That those resources are at a variety of levels, particularly in the early part of the year when the problem is at its greatest and we have so many children coming in with very little English. That is when the classroom teachers need the majority of help. Last year, because we were on a [professional development] contract [on assisting NESB students], that involved a lot of work from the point of view of coordinating the [contract] facilitator’s role. She was coming into the school so I was having to organise how teachers would work with her. I had to get staff meetings up and running, to show teachers new techniques we had learnt. And this year, I have had to coordinate our two part-time ESOL teachers who come in and work in first language and in English teaching. [Also], making resources and just generally trying

The ESOL coordinator’s role is diverse and demanding.
Exhibit 6: A Job Description for an ESOL Coordinator at a Participating Secondary School

**Job Description: PR1 — English as a Second Language**

**Responsibilities**

**General**
1. To actively support the general aims of the school to develop the potential of each individual student.
2. To help formulate, implement and support general policies decided upon by the principal, deputy principal, and acting principals.
3. To carry out general administration policies as requested by the principal.
4. To participate in the wider educational and cultural life of [the school] and to contribute to extra-curricular activities.

**Specific**
1. To meet, [along] with appropriate acting principals, new NESB students, [and] their parents/guardians and sponsors.
2. To assess each NESB student on enrolment and provide a programme appropriate to the student’s needs, abilities, and stage of development.
3. To liaise closely with Learning Resource Centre staff, and with HODs as appropriate, [regarding] in-class support activities for NESB students.
4. To evaluate existing ESOL teaching and learning programmes, and develop new schemes of work with ESOL staff where required.

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*The wording in this exhibit is quoted directly from the document supplied by the school in question.*
Exhibit 6: A Job Description for an ESOL Coordinator at a Participating Secondary School — continued

Job Description: PR1 — English as a Second Language — continued

Responsibilities — continued

Specific — continued

5. To be responsible for budgeting, finance, resource and equipment management in the ESOL Department.

6. To ensure that evaluation of students’ progress in terms of assessment and reporting to parents/caregivers is carried out regularly and objectively.

Pastoral Care

1. To recognise, and be sensitive to, the likelihood of cultural shock symptoms exhibited by NESB students.

2. To support and work with form teachers, deans, school guidance, and outside services in support of NESB students’ well-being.

3. To consult with the appropriate staff as to the placement of NESB students in forms and mainstream classes.

4. To encourage NESB students to participate in the wider activities of [the school].

5. To create a warm and supportive environment for NESB students, and to monitor their out-of-school circumstances.
to keep teachers reasonably enthusiastic and energised about it because it really does become quite a tiring thing when you’ve got quite a number of NESB children in your class. And it is very easy [for teachers] to say, ‘Ooh, they can do anything [they like]’, because they’ve just had enough. That’s a major [part of my role] too. And actually making resources — it has been hugely time-consuming coordinating a group to do that.” [ESOL coordinator, intermediate school.]

“I’m mainly responsible for seeing that enrolment procedures for NESB students are followed. I’m also responsible for classroom placement. I liaise with the bilingual teacher and other class teachers when needed [as well as] reinforcing the role of the bilingual teacher and helping get contact [between that teacher and new NESB students] under way. Seeing that bilingual assessments, and reports on these assessments by [the bilingual teacher], are functioning for new students. Maintaining contact with teachers responsible for ESOL programmes — helping them select resources, providing release time if they need it, and general support.” [ESOL coordinator, intermediate school.]

“ESOL is one of my curriculum areas I am in charge of. I’m responsible for organising resources, issuing resources, staff development, some in-class support when called for. In my own class I have four Hong Kong Chinese, one Japanese, one Korean, one Tongan, one part Niuean — I work with these eight all of the time. The eight students in my class are aged 11 to 13 years. In my capacity as an ESOL teacher, [the number of students that I work with] varies. It is very difficult for me. One week I might be asked to work and demonstrate in one class and then I might not be called upon for another month. Basically, when the need arises, teachers call on me.” [ESOL teacher/senior class teacher, intermediate school.]

In the passages which follow, ESOL coordinators in secondary schools outline their role. Exhibit 6 above also gives a specific job description for an ESOL coordinator at one participating secondary school.

“I teach. I test and assess the new NESB students when they arrive, and from that we decide whether they should go into the mainstream or whether we should keep them with us [in the ESOL programme] for however long. And one of my [responsibilities] is also to decide when they’re ready to go into the mainstream classes. It’s also [working out] timetabling with the teachers within the ESOL Department, looking for resources — really just pulling the whole thing together — and doing some liaison work with other classroom teachers, because we’ve changed our programme this year, and from the beginning of term 2, we’ve had what I call the orientation programme, and it runs for at least six weeks for each student. In that [six weeks] we’re teaching them [not only] about English language but [more] particularly [about] education in New Zealand, and, in particular, language for maths, language for social studies, general studies, language for science, so we’re actually trying to prepare them for the mainstream — easing them in gently.” [ESOL coordinator/HOD ESOL Department, secondary school.]
“We do quite a lot of professional development within the ESOL Department and also within the school. I run the ‘Learning through Language’ programme and I think that’s a very important role because unless you help teachers to cope with NESB students you are really only doing an ambulance service. We [the ESOL Department] can only cope with the [NESB] students who are at the ‘bottom of the pile’ [ie, in most need]. [Therefore], other teachers have to have the [remaining NESB] students in their class and learn how to cope with them. I see that as a key part of my role, [to help teachers] to cope with students in the classroom. I go round and visit [subject] departments every now and then and just see what problems they are having and suggest things they could do when we help guide students to make the right choice about subjects right at the beginning so they are not doing unrealistic subjects.”

[ESOL coordinator, secondary school.]

“[My role as ESOL coordinator] is: to assess each NESB student on enrolment and provide a programme appropriate to their needs, abilities, and stage of development; to work closely with appropriate deans, form teachers and subject teachers, providing them with student information and in-class support; to evaluate existing ESOL teaching and learning programmes and develop new schemes of work with ESOL staff when required; to be responsible for budgeting, finance, resource and equipment management in the ESOL Department; to ensure that evaluation of students’ progress in terms of assessment and reporting to parents/caregivers is carried out regularly and objectively; to meet new NESB students, their parents/caregivers, and sponsors; to recognise and be sensitive to the emotional needs of NESB students; to encourage NESB students to participate in the wider activities of the college; to create a warm and supportive environment for NESB students; [and], to consult with the appropriate staff as to the placement of NESB students in forms and mainstream classes.”

[ESOL coordinator, secondary school.]

Participants other than the ESOL coordinators [or their equivalents] themselves also commented on the role of the ESOL coordinator, as they saw it, within their school. A representative selection of their comments follows. As can be seen, these respondents reinforce the points made by the coordinators themselves when describing their role.

“[Our ESOL coordinator] is always here and she is always someone that any of our NESB children know they can go to. They’re her prime concern and that’s good for them to know isn’t it! As well as you as the classroom teacher, they’ve got another [person] to go to. And the older students, particularly, value that. She [the ESOL coordinator] relates to them well. She looks after them, they’re sort of like her class, in a way, [even though] they’re spread throughout the school. So she has a special relationship with them, which means that if they have a problem, they know they can go to her. And if we [as teachers] have a problem, we can talk to her about it. And often her talking to the students, rather than us talking to the students, carries more weight. And she also has connections with the community, so if there’s a problem, as the person who coordinates everything, she can more easily contact...”
AN ESOL COORDINATOR REFLECTING ON HER ROLE

“I was employed originally to set up an ESOL programme, because the school had been doing it ad hoc. ... We’ve got [Asian and Pacific Islands students and] little kids who are Assyrian refugees. We’ve got twenty-nine mother languages in the school. Not all of those would be spoken widely, even in the home, but there is access to those languages.

“The fact that I’m here [makes it] different from many other New Zealand schools. I couldn’t count how many schools have students from other ethnic backgrounds and do nothing. Not only have they [in this school] put money into ESOL, but they’ve got me in a position of responsibility.

“... The fact that the [ESOL] department is central, it’s not down the far end of the school away from everybody, the fact that everybody goes in and out [of the classroom], that the kids are happy to move in and out, that money is put into resourcing the department, put into staffing, all of those things say to students that come in with a mother tongue that is not English, ‘Don’t panic, there is a system here to help you’. They know that they can come and ask at any time, and they do, lunch-time, any time of day; we have lunch-time tutoring sessions for physics, economics, English, and anything else that they need.”

the community than we can. And parents contact her [as well]. She does quite a lot of home visiting or phoning, to set up friendships. And when [new families] enrol, [the ESOL coordinator] is always there and she always takes [the students] to their classes, that kind of thing.” [Classroom teacher, primary school.]

“That person’s role is to ensure that the [NESB] children are being resourced for support from the funding that comes through for it [and] to make sure that the teachers are kept up to date as far as new learning is concerned for things that come out to do with ESOL programmes. If there is any sort of [professional development] contract or staff development programme coming up that would be suitable for the school, then the ESOL person [should be] screening them and making sure we get involved in them. ... It is [also] important that [she] keeps an eye on the tone of the school for those children, making sure that if there are teachers who are being coercive towards children, and making the place not a very comfortable place to live in, that we can support her in making sure that that changes. And what she did in the first half of this year was [she got] a woman [a teacher] to come in and take that role. [That person] went around and helped the teachers. Rather than withdrawing children, she went in and supported teachers. Some teachers were particularly upset that they were going to have a person — a teacher, rather than a teacher aide — working alongside them in the classroom. That [reaction] indicated to us that maybe there was something there that needed fixing. So those teachers got some more support in the way the programmes were running. But it also indicated to us that oral language programmes were very directive from the teachers in those classrooms. There weren’t very many of [those teachers] but that [situation] needed, and still needs, to be addressed [in some cases]. So that is the role that the ESOL coordinator has — it is multi-levelled, [but] with very limited time to do it.” [Principal, primary school.]

“Our ESOL coordinator makes very effective contact with the home when necessary to help motivate and encourage the child.”

“The coordinator first has got the job of establishing the level of need that the child is at and then actually planning and providing a programme of learning that will support that child — first of all, in the social context of the school, and [then] also the learning environment of the school. To enable the children to communicate effectively and to understand the classroom so that they can actually participate in the classroom programme, and become a contributor, in some instances the coordinator [has to] pre-teach the language which the child will come across in the classroom, so that means she has to work pretty closely with the teachers as to what their programmes are to be able to do that. She is also the one who can assess and evaluate the progress that the child is making. Our coordinator also makes very effective contact with the home when necessary to help motivate and encourage the child and to get help for that child as much as possible.” [Principal, primary school.]

“Firstly, [the ESOL coordinator] is the main resource person [for ESOL] in the school, they are identified as that. So it is very clear that if any teacher is having a problem with a child or within any ESOL programme, then she is the point of contact for either getting resources
or for contacting external personnel like [staff from the teacher advisory/support services]. Anything like that at all, [our ESOL coordinator] is the first point of contact for teachers, plus anyone wanting information from the outside, like the board or the principal. It is very much a liaison and a resource role. [She] also liaises with [our part-time ESOL helpers] because otherwise it is too easy for part-timers to drift in and out of the school and not really be a part of it.” [Deputy principal, intermediate school.]

“The role of our ESOL coordinator is multifaceted. [It is] to advise me and the board, to advise and train other staff — classroom teachers throughout the school, to provide targeted programmes to individual [students] and groups of students, and adults. [It is] to be responsible for a group of staff who work under that [ESOL] umbrella [and it is] to provide a support framework for students who are in mainstream classes. ... [She also] does the same as every other manager within the school: she prepares her annual budget, she justifies it under the expenditure categories, then fires it in the pool [to be considered along with everyone else’s budget application]. And that’s how she is resourced. And then if there is resourcing required over and above that, then she makes a special application. She puts a staffing bid in to me as well [but] I don’t ask her to get involved with details about that, [as] that is something that I do in terms of my overall staffing package.” [Principal, secondary school.]

Obtaining Background Information on and Assessing the Initial Learning Needs of NESB Students

The first step in establishing the initial learning needs of NESB students with a view to making decisions about suitable programmes and support is to gather background information on each child — that is, their country of origin, their date of birth, the circumstances involved in the child’s family coming to New Zealand (e.g., whether the family has refugee status), amount of prior schooling, the language[s] most commonly used in the home, and some information about family circumstances. If necessary, the background information is gathered with the help of an interpreter. Much of the initial background information is gathered as part of the process of enrolling the new student in the school. Exhibit 7 outlines one participating primary school’s formal acknowledgement of the need for sensitive, culturally appropriate enrolment procedures. Schools in the study commented on how the enrolment process had been greatly facilitated and improved by the use of bilingual enrolment forms which are now available [see Exhibit 8 for an example of such a form]. Parental/caregiver or family involvement is usually an integral part of the enrolment process and sometimes of the initial assessment process as well.

Once background information on the students is obtained, the school then has to carry out some initial assessment of the students’ English language competency and (where considered appropriate) level of attainment in various subject areas.
Exhibit 7: A Primary School’s Policy Statement in Relation to New (NESB) Enrolments

New Enrolments

Rationale
To quickly orientate new enrolments into [the school].

Guidelines for New Enrolments
1. NESB pupil records will include a phonetic pronunciation of the child’s name.
2. On entry to school, caregivers will be asked whether they need two copies of notices/reports — ie, for children living in shared parenting situations.
3. Liaison personnel for each new NESB pupil will be listed on the pupil’s records.
4. Interpreters will be used for obtaining background knowledge, and for interviews, etc, when necessary.
5. There will be encouragement for pupils to maintain their own language.
6. School notices and reports will be translated if necessary and where possible.
7. [The school] has an open door policy and parents/caregivers are welcome to stay at school for as long as is appropriate.

Conclusion
New enrolments to [the school] will settle and orientate themselves quickly into school life.

12 The wording in this exhibit is quoted directly from the document supplied by the school in question.
All participants in the study who commented on this particular topic made it clear that collecting comprehensive and accurate background information on each NESB student, together with initial assessment data, and then sharing the information obtained with all those in the school who are to work with the student, is an essential starting point for effectively supporting the student.

“Through our bilingual information gathering forms that are filled in at enrolment, we are learning a lot more about the family background and the child’s educational background. [Also], through bilingual assessments we are learning more about the children [which gives a much better basis for developing programmes for them].” [Classroom teacher, intermediate school.]

“I make up a profile on the student so that is there for staff to see when the student is ready to go into the mainstream. And for the profile I [collect information] on the languages they speak at home, the amount of schooling they’ve had before coming to New Zealand — how many years primary education and how many years secondary. And then I would be looking at their reading, writing, listening, and speaking skills. And that information is passed on for all of the teachers who are going to see or teach those students. ... Mathematically, I can test them, because I can give them something that’s numeracy-based so they’re not having to read language, and that gives you a fair idea as far as the numbers in maths are concerned, but so much of our maths in New Zealand now is based on language ... we’ve got to really see if they can understand the written word, too. So before we place them we’ve got to make sure what their literacy skills are. I find it very hard. I’ve got a list of the various equivalent exams, for the different countries, and that does help for senior students, but we don’t have anything much for juniors. And, no, I wouldn’t necessarily be guided by parents, because I think they will all say their children are very good, but we know that once they’re in the classroom, it’s very, very difficult for them. So, [even if they were doing very well in their own country], unless their English language is up to par, they’re going to find it very, very different [here]. [The information that we collect] is used by us, in the ESOL Department, so we can use it for future reference [if need be] and we have [also] been asked [for it] if they’re moving on to another school. And I actually use it to show the students where [they] are at, too, because sometimes they need convincing in black and white that they’re not doing as well as they had anticipated — mainly because their expectations are so unrealistic when they come here.” [HOD, ESOL Department, secondary school.]

How Schools Go About Assessing the Initial Learning Needs of NESB Students
If they do not have teachers who are bilingual in the appropriate languages on their staff, where possible, schools call on the services of bilingual speakers from outside agencies or the community to help with enrolment and initial assessment of NESB students. The types
of assessments teachers carry out with their NESB students depend on many factors — such as the student’s age, the nature and extent of previous schooling, first impressions of the student’s fluency in English, how well they feel the new student is likely to be able to cope with assessment procedures when they are in a strange environment, and so on. Some schools have a policy of not carrying out any form of assessment with an NESB student until several weeks after their arrival at school; whereas other schools, taking into account the background information already obtained, plus judgements about other characteristics or behaviours of the individual student, may carry out initial assessments much sooner.

“On the enrolment form that goes with each child when they enter school there is quite a bit of background information that allows us to form a general picture of the sort of background that the child has come from. We ask what the languages are that are spoken at home (their parents are asked to fill out the form or get help to fill it out), whether the child is fluent in their own language, whether they are actually verbal in their own language or non-verbal, whether they can read or write in their own language, etcetera. So we have a general picture when the child arrives at school as to what sort of languages they have been exposed to and how fluent they are in those languages. Then when they actually come to school we start to do our own assessment, if you like, not too much initially. ... When a child first arrives at school assessment is done but it is what I would call an informal assessment. There are no written tests we would administer initially. That might come later, depending on the age of the child as well. But if an [NESB] child comes into the school at new entrant level then basically [he or she] will be assessed along the same guidelines as any other new entrant arrival. If [an older NESB] child comes in further up the school there may be some written assessments done maybe a month after arrival but certainly not initially. We prefer to let the child actually settle in before bombarding the child with any kind of formal or written assessment. However, assessment is still being done on a day-to-day basis — it’s observational assessment I would call it. The classroom teacher simply observes the actions of the child and then we have our meetings and the classroom teacher will report on how the child appears on arrival and then how the child settles and how he or she fits in with the rest of the class and how he or she presents in a general sort of way. Further down the track the more formal assessment would be done — ie, running records, Burt [Word Reading Test] and various maths tests and things. But initially we prefer not to bombard the child with anything too formal. The initial period is a settling in period for the child with observations being done from a distance by the teacher.

“There is often a stage that children go through where they won’t actually say anything much. So if you give them an assessment when they first arrive in the classroom from a new country, it is too mind boggling for a lot of children to cope with. They could be labelled as something they are not.” [Special needs coordinator, primary school.]
“First they are assessed, usually in reading and writing. But all students are different and we use different approaches. We look at their immediate environment, where they live, who they live with, etcetera. We try to give them independence by giving them small tasks to do, not wanting them to become co-dependent.” [ESOL coordinator, secondary school.]

“Assessment takes into account that they are learning a second language. They are bilingually assessed by [our bilingual tutor] or someone else from the community when they first arrive, if we feel there is a need (this isn’t necessary in all cases). This lets us know how proficient they are in their first language.” [ESOL teacher/classroom teacher, intermediate school.]

“The information [that is collected] is then shared with other staff and in particular with me [the ESOL coordinator] and if it appears that the child has any specific needs then we will try and work out the best way of meeting those needs. That might be by providing in-class support or providing withdrawal support where the child comes here [to the ESOL room] for a specific task. It might be a specific area that they are having difficulty with or they need support in. On the other hand, the classroom teacher might feel as though the child’s needs are best met by providing support in the classroom setting. Most of our classes here, in the senior school in particular, are composite classes and there is inter-grouping within classes — like, with maths, there is a swap over so that the child might be in a particular group that goes to another class for maths. In those cases, all teachers involved with that particular child will be consulted and the child’s progress discussed with all the teachers that have input with that particular child. [ESOL coordinator, primary school.]

“We don’t often know [how able they are in their own language]. Sometimes we get them tested by a native speaker from their own country just to see what level they would be at in their own country, with their own language, because sometimes we find that they are perhaps a bit slow picking up things but then [we find] that they have got difficulties with their own language as well.” [Teacher aide (ESOL), primary school.]

“[Initially], we use a really basic test for all the children, and from that we know whether or not the child is going to be OK — you know, whether they can understand the basic instructions that the teacher’s likely to be giving. If not, then the teacher needs to know that this child needs to be really supported all the time — that while all the little five-year-olds are on the mat, he or she is not understanding anything you’re saying. That when you’re saying, ‘Now go back to your table, and go and get your pencils and things’, that the child doesn’t [understand] any of that. So then you really have to look at the strategies that the teacher is going to use, just day-by-day — you know, ‘This is a pencil’, [and] you get the word for pencil in Samoan, and you get the child to tell you what the word for pencil is in Samoan and then in English. So it’s quite demanding in the classroom — five-year-olds have a very short attention span anyway — because when you’re the only person in the room who has to be keeping everybody working and you’ve got one, or two, or three [or
more] children who have very little English, [or children] with neither English or Samoan, it’s just tremendously difficult. There really needs to be [a support] person in that classroom all day, working with those children, so that the transition from Samoan to English in their learning environment is easier for them. But that’s probably not going to happen.” [Special needs coordinator, primary school.]

“[Initial assessments of English language competency are carried out for newly arrived NESB students.] We give them reading tests — often subject-based reading, so it might be a map of the world, and then they’ll do some Cloze tests, you know, filling in the information — so we’re testing both the language and their knowledge. I’ve got some science-based ones, I’ve got some information transfer ones for mathematics. And then I’ll give them mathematics tests: a language-based one and a numeracy skills-based one. We’ll do listening tests, and the speaking tests are really fairly informal — it’s really how they respond to us, I wouldn’t go through an actual formal [speaking] test with them. It’s more like a conversation with them. A student who actually freezes, hasn’t got any oral skills, you just make a note, ‘Very poor’, and, particularly if the student can only respond in single words, it’s helpful I think for the teacher to know that — you know, ‘Please just treat this one gently for a little while’. So that sort of information is passed on to the teachers as the student is ready to leave the orientation programme. And the teachers actually asked for this sort of information last year. They said what they found difficult was that they would get students delivered to their classroom with very little information. They wanted to know where the student came from, what their first language was, and what they could expect from the student when he or she came to their class. And that’s why I got this profile sorted out.” [HOD, ESOL Department, secondary school.]

“We have used interpreters mainly for our [new] Vietnamese students [and their families] in the past. At the moment, the parents we have don’t seem to need quite so much in the way of interpreting help. But in the past we have had some Vietnamese parents who haven’t really had very much understanding of English themselves and whenever there have been interviews or anything requiring detailed explanations, we have got Vietnamese interpreters to come in or people from the community who have acted as interpreters for those parents. For our Samoan parents, there are various support people from within the church parish here — church-based people — who often [take part] in discussions and interviews regarding children’s welfare. There are quite a lot of people from the parish who are attached to [both] the church and the school so we use a lot of their resources to help with areas of concern that we may have, in particular, in the social welfare of our children. We [also] make use of all the normal agencies — [for example] we have a psychologist who comes for the children who need to be assessed. And the school also has time allocated by the Resource Teacher of Reading based [at a nearby school] and she works on a programme here with the children who have language, particularly reading, needs.” [ESOL coordinator, primary school.]
“We don’t have written criteria [for determining a student’s competence in English]. The class teacher assesses that child on working with the child and they decide which of those [Ministry] categories — 1, 2, 3, 4 — the child fits into and I, personally, don’t believe we need to give them [the teachers] any more written detail. They’ve got the categories [see Appendix 1 of this report] in front of them (and they’re very clear statements I think). They can tell with their own pupil how competent or incompetent they are. On their knowledge of the child, on talking to the child, [the teachers] assess how much the children can do, can say in English. Our only NESB students in the school these days are Samoan, and there are always other Samoan children who can translate for them, so the amount of translation that’s needed gives [the teachers] an indication of how poor the child’s English is. So we fit them into the categories on the basis of the class teacher’s knowledge of the child. And assessment is ongoing, to see if they’ve moved up a category or if they’ve stayed the same. If [their language] is very poor, they will have been referred to the special needs teacher, so the special needs teacher will have a part to play. (We have a strong special needs programme in the school — we actually employ a special needs teacher above our entitlement who doesn’t have a class. They take special needs and they organise the teacher aides. We also have a special needs coordinator.)” [Principal, primary school.]

“[Categorising students’ English language competency] is a judgement call. And what you’re reliant on is the professional competence and integrity of the person making the judgement. And as soon as you have difficulties with that, you try to put in absolute measures ([such as] if kids are going to do School Certificate they will need a vocabulary of around 4,000 words, then if they are going onto University Bursary then that vocabulary has to expand by probably another 2,000 words in 18 months to two years, which are quantifiable measures ... but which smack of a pretty harsh regime to be imposed) to compensate, and I don’t think that is acceptable. What we’ve got to do is affirm the professionalism and the integrity of the people [who assess the students] and you back their judgements. When there is a difficult call as to whether [the student] is Category 2 or Category 3 then there is a process, and the process is based on dialogue [involving classroom teachers and others who work with the student]. And there are a number of things you then put in place to support that dialogue and obviously that ranges from hard data like vocabulary testing through to instances of [the student’s] work, both written and oral forms. So you have something on which to make a judgement.” [Principal, secondary school.]

“[After he had had time to settle in I was working with a new student from Sri Lanka] to see what letters of the alphabet he could recognise. I found that they have a similar alphabet to us but a few [letters] are different so I found out what the differences are and the things that he was confused with. This was very helpful [too] as far as his speaking and reading out loud — at first he would say ‘w’ as a ‘v’, they sounded identical. And every time he was doing
some reading and he [came across] a ‘y’ he would get confused. And I gave him a placement test for maths. Some of the signs were different — for example, the times [multiplication] sign to us is ‘x’ but to them [Sri Lankans] it is a dot, and so we were able to put him right about that. He is fine with maths. I give this [sort of] information to the class teacher. They like to keep anything like that. If the [NESB student] is at the stage of running records, I would get a copy of the running records to their teacher and any assessments that I do. The teachers find this very helpful and we can [use the information to] work out goals for the children, some [of which] I would work on [with the child in a withdrawal situation] and some [of which] are good for the class teachers to use as a basis for interacting with the child or including the child in small group work.” [ESOL coordinator, primary school.]

“After they have been in the school for about three weeks [our multilingual teacher] talks to the child and he also gets a lot of information that he can pass on [to the class teacher]. Just knowing the schools in Hong Kong, he can judge the educational standards and parental expectations in their home country and this translates into what we can expect in New Zealand. After a settling in period, he does a bilingual assessment on each student and writes a report which goes to the class teacher. This proves very handy as there is often an absolute communication block between the teacher and the child initially, so if a student has difficulties in their first language, it usually follows through that they will have difficulties in their second language. It sorts out a lot of problems having that bilingual assessment. It’s very time-consuming [though] — it takes about an hour per student and is conducted on a one-to-one basis. But it is very important information.” [Deputy principal, intermediate school.]

“We don’t test until after they’ve been at the school six weeks. The ‘six-year net’ is used for the young ones after six weeks. For the older ones, we rely on teacher observations.” [Principal, primary school.]

Several of the people that we spoke to emphasised that careful, insightful initial assessment, the results of which are shared with all those who are to work with the student, greatly facilitates a new NESB student’s entry into the classroom — by helping the teacher prepare adequately, including preparing the other students in the class for the new arrival, and by helping the teacher select suitable work for the student to start on.

“Once you’ve got that [background] information you can plan your teaching programme, and strategies. [If necessary], you can also group them [the students] then. They might be absolutely brilliant in maths and be in the top group for maths, whereas in English or reading they might require a really special group of their own.” [Classroom teacher, intermediate school.]

“If they have absolutely basic needs in letter sounds and basic vocabulary then you are wasting your time doing a poetry unit, for example. [With appropriate background information
Exhibit 8: Example of a Bilingual Information-Gathering / Enrolment Form

To Parents and Guardians
Mo Matua Fa’aapea e o Vaavaia alo ma Fanau

Background information on your child:
Fa’amatalaga e fa‘atatau i lou alo:

(Please help us to know more about your child and the family by filling in this questionnaire. We hope that by having this information we can better cater for your child.)
(Fa’amolemoi fesoasoani mai ia te i matou, ia matou iloa ni fa’amatalaga e uiga i lou alo fa’aapea lou aiga, e auala lea i le talina o fesili ua saunia.)

1. Parents or Guardians:
Matua po’o e o vaia alo ma fanau:

Family Name: ______________________________________________________________________________
Fa’aiu’u ole aiga:

Husband’s First Name: ________________________________________________________________________
Suafa muamua ole tama po’o le tane:

Wife’s Family Name: __________________________________________________________________________
Fa’aiu’u ole suafa ole tina po’o le ava:

Wife’s First Name: ____________________________________________________________________________
Suafa muamua ole tina po’o le ava:

or Guardian’s Name: __________________________________________________________________________
Po’o ole suafa ole o vaia lou alo:

Ethnic origin: ________________________________________________________________________________
Tagata Nu’u

Country of Birth: ____________________________________________________________________________
Atunu’u sa fanau ai:

Last Country of Residence: _____________________________________________________________________
Atunu’u mulimuli sa nofo mau ai:

Date of Arrival in NZ: __________________________________________________________________________
Aso na taunu’u ai i Niu Sila:

13 Reproduced with kind permission from the publication Bilingual Information-Gathering Forms and Information on the Naming System — a resource to assist schools and families on the enrolment of bilingual students from non-English-speaking backgrounds (1993) prepared and produced by Education Advisory Service, New Settlers and Multicultural Education Team, Private Bag 92601, Symonds Street, Auckland 1035. Regarding use of the form, producers of the publication stated: ‘It is recommended that the forms are taken away for completion, to be returned within a week. Should the form be returned in first language and not English, it may be necessary to have it translated by someone in the school community. There may be some adaptations and additions you wish to make according to the specific nature of your school community. Note: This resource is only part of an effective transition-into-school model. For further guidance, the following resources are recommended: Assessment Procedures Kit; Effective Provisions for NESB; Transition into School — A Model. All are available from Education Advisory Service, Private Bag 92601, Symonds Street, Auckland 1035, phone 377 0881, fax 377 1571.’
2. Occupation in your Country:
   Galuega i lou atunu’u:

   Husband: _______________________________________________________________________________
   Tama po’o le tane:

   Wife: ___________________________________________________________________________________
   Tina po’o le ava:

   or Guardian: ___________________________________________________________________________
   o Le o vaaia lou alo:

3. Occupation in New Zealand:
   Galuega i Niu Sila:

   Husband: _______________________________________________________________________________
   Tama po’o le tane:

   Wife: ___________________________________________________________________________________
   Tina po’o le ava:

   or Guardian: ___________________________________________________________________________
   o Le o vaaia lou alo:

4. Contact Person for the Family/or Sponsor:
   Se tasi e mafai ona fa’afeso’ota’i i lou aiga:

   Full name: _____________________________________________________________________________
   Suafa atoa:

   Telephone Number: ______________________________________________________________________
   Numera ole telefoni:

   Address:
   Tuatusi o lo’o alala ai:
   ___________________________________________________________________________________
   ___________________________________________________________________________________
   ___________________________________________________________________________________
   ___________________________________________________________________________________
Exhibit 8: Example of a Bilingual Information-Gathering / Enrolment Form — continued

5. Your child:
Lou alo:

Family Name: ________________________________________________________________________________
Fa’aiu’u ole aiga:

First Names: _________________________________________________________________________________
Suafa muamua:

Date of Birth: ________________________________________________________________________________
Aso na fanau ai:

Date of arrival in NZ: __________________________________________________________________________
Aso na taunu’u ai i Niu Sila:

Numbers of brothers and sisters — (Please give their ages):
Aofai o uso ma tuafafine — (Fa’amolemole fa’alloa mai o latou tausaga):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Age</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tausaga:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age:</td>
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<td>Age:</td>
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<tr>
<td>Age:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Does your child have any health or medical problems? (Please explain clearly what they are):
O feagai po’o i ai foi ni fa’afitaui tau i le soifua maloloina i lou alo? (Fa’amolemole fa’amatala mai):

___________________________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________________________

Does your child take any medication?
Yes [ ] No [ ]
O fa’aogaina e lou alo ni fualaaau po’o ni vailaaau mai le fomai?
Ioe [ ] Leai [ ]

If yes please explain:
Afai e loe — fa’amolemole fa’amatala mai:

___________________________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________________________
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Please state any questions or concerns you may have:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fa’amolemole fa’aiola mai nisi fesili po’o nisi lagona fo’i o ia te oe:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>_______________________________________________________________________</td>
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<td>_______________________________________________________________________</td>
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<tr>
<td>What are your child’s hobbies/interests?</td>
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<tr>
<td>O a ni mea e fiafia tele i ai lou alo?</td>
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<td>_______________________________________________________________________</td>
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<tr>
<td>Things he/she likes to do?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ni mea e fiafia i ai o ia na te faia:</td>
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<td>_______________________________________________________________________</td>
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<tr>
<td>Do you or any other person read regularly to your child?</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E masani ona e faitauina po’o se tasi foi ni tusi i lou alo?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In what language/s?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ile a le gagana?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td>_______________________________________________________________________</td>
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<td>_______________________________________________________________________</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do you have access to books for your child?</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>O i ai ni au tusi faitau mo lou alo?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In what language/s?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ile a le gagana?</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Exhibit 8: Example of a Bilingual Information-Gathering / Enrolment Form — continued

6. Languages used in your home:
   Gagana fa’aogaina i lou aiga:

   spoken: _____________________________________________________________________________________
   tautala: 

   written/read: _____________________________________________________________________________________
   tusitusi/faitau: 

   languages you know:
   gagana e te silafiaina:
   1. __________________________________________________________________________________________
   2. __________________________________________________________________________________________
   3. __________________________________________________________________________________________
   4. __________________________________________________________________________________________
   5. __________________________________________________________________________________________
   6. __________________________________________________________________________________________

   Languages your child ...... 
   Gagana a lou alo ......

   understands: _____________________________________________________________________________________
   malamalama: 

   speaks: _____________________________________________________________________________________
   tautala: 

   reads: _____________________________________________________________________________________
   faitau: 

   writes: _____________________________________________________________________________________
   tusitusi
### Exhibit 8: Example of a Bilingual Information-Gathering / Enrolment Form — continued

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>7. Previous education in your country:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Aoaoga i lou atunu’u:</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

State if your child has had any previous educational experiences in your own country or another country; eg, play group, primary school, secondary school, or skills training.

Fa’aloa mai ni aoaoga sa feagai ai lou alo i lou atunu’u po’o nisi atunu’u, fa’ataitaiga aoga maualalo, aoga maualuga.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Names of schools:</th>
<th>Place:</th>
<th>Length of time:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Igoa o aoga:</td>
<td>Nofoaga:</td>
<td>Umi sa i ai:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>from: to:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>amata mai: e o’o atu:</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>8. In New Zealand:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I Niu Sila:</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Names of schools:</th>
<th>Place:</th>
<th>Length of time:</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Igoa o aoga:</td>
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<td>from: to:</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>amata mai: e o’o atu:</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>9. Other comments or information useful to us:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nisi manatunatuga po’o nisi fa’amatalaga aoga:</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Thank you for your help.

*Fa’afetai tele mo lau fesoasoani.*
on these students] you are able to focus from the first day they come on what they need. And also the other thing you can do with that assessment knowledge is decide how you are going to use your other staff, our two ESOL part-timers, for specific needs. [For example], how much peer tutoring they will [be likely to] need in the classroom because you just can’t get time to spend with them. I mean our own Kiwi kids are the losers here [if] we spend all our time with these kids. So, really, if you can get Kiwi kids helping [the NESB] children then that frees you up a bit more too. So then you just have to see how much assistance they require, which in most cases is quite a bit.” [Classroom teacher, intermediate school.]

“A copy [of the background information — age, nationality, languages they speak, etc — we collect at the initial interview] is given to the teachers so they can get some idea as to where the child is at. And [the information] is used for placing the child in a class, to try and place them with similar ethnic groups. Basically, that is it at that [initial] stage unless we need to contact the parents about anything else. [Once the child is in a class and some initial information on English language competency has been obtained, via ‘self-pacing boxes’ (explained in footnote 2 on page 170 of this report) and other means], this helps the teacher know at what level she should be putting the child: ‘Does this child need to sit next to a person who is going to translate totally everything?’ or, ‘Is this child going to be able to work a little independently and can I sit them next to a New Zealand child so they can start to get a little colloquial English going?’ So [the information gathered] is really for how you are going to seat the child and where you are going to group him or her, and how you are going to include them in your classroom programme as effectively as possible so they don’t feel isolated from the class.” [ESOL coordinator, intermediate school.]

On the basis of information obtained in the course of the study, it appears that there are no ‘standard’, or clearly established, guidelines for schools generally on how to obtain adequate and sufficient background information on students and their families from a range of ethnic backgrounds. Nor do there appear to be any particular tests or assessment tools that schools commonly use specifically for carrying out initial [and, as discussed later in the report, subsequent, ongoing] assessments of NESB students’ English language competency and subject knowledge or attainment. Participants in the study generally did not seem to find this was a matter of current concern in their school, frequently expressing the belief that the knowledge, skills, and commitment of teachers well used to ascertaining the learning needs of students generally, albeit predominantly by means of informal, teacher-devised tests, meant that good results were achieved in this area. However, many participants also acknowledged that what they now found to be effective methods had often been developed after a period of ‘trial and error’ and that there had been shortcomings in their methods in the past. For example:

“Assessment has been fine-tuned over the years. Initially, it was done very much rule of thumb, I understand — like, ‘Hello, what is your name, how old are you, you should go in
form this or that.’ And it was very arbitrarily done, you know, and with some mistakes in it. And I don’t think it was fair to the students, because it makes it very difficult if you put a student, say, in form five, and then you find they’re floundering, they can’t cope, to then tell the student to go down [a class]. So I would tend, when I’m placing a student, to put the student lower, because you can always hook them out and elevate them — there’s not so much loss of face, you know, nobody likes being put down [a class]. And it’s not fool-proof, what I’m doing, I’ll admit that. I mean, I’m quite happy for teachers to say we can move them on, but, particularly in maths, teachers will say, ‘Oh, look, this student’s doing very well’, and a lot of the Asian students do extremely well in algebra, but they don’t have the trigonometrical background or the statistics background that our students would have, and although you might feel that you should push them on, if you check around their other subjects which are more language-based, you find that they just aren’t coping. So, generally, they’re marking a little bit of time on some parts of maths, but, mostly, they’re really having to work very hard on their language.” [HOD ESOL, secondary school.]

As mentioned earlier, participants able to access such resources as the bilingual enrolment forms [Exhibit 8], produced by the Education Advisory Service (1993), said that this had helped improve their enrolment and orientation process for NESB students enormously. Schools who had access to bilingual tutors and/or interpretation services also found the assistance received invaluable. As one (English-speaking only) classroom teacher in the study put it:

“How do you know what they know when they don’t speak much English.”

There was one major problem that schools raised in relation to obtaining background and initial assessment data: that of time. The process of obtaining information on each new NESB student is often a lengthy process which can cause difficulties for staff whose time is at a constant premium.

“The main problem [with carrying out assessments] is probably the time factor. We could do a lot better assessment. I mean, to do a decent assessment, it would take an hour or so to run through some of the assessments that are available for assessing these children. Quite honestly, we don’t have the time to do that. So I will get an initial impression and I will talk to the teachers. It may be appropriate that I talk with the parents. I liaise with the deputy principal an awful lot, she does a lot of work with these children. Depending on where they are at, I will do running records, do [the] Burt [Word Reading Test], do one or two other tests some time but that depends very much on the individual. A lot of the children arrive with no English at all so a test is not appropriate in that case. It may be further down the track, six weeks later perhaps. The classroom teachers do running records about every six weeks so I pick up on that. I [also] pick up on the tests that the teachers do if appropriate.” [ESOL coordinator/special needs teacher, primary school.]
ESOL Funding

As explained in Chapter 1 (page 12), schools receive discretionary resourcing for NESB students in the form of funding, staffing, or both. Students’ eligibility for funding is dependent upon the category of need\(^{14}\) into which they are classified. Initial assessment of new NESB students therefore has a dual purpose: (1) to establish what programme/support a student requires initially and (2) to establish what category the student should be placed in for ESOL funding purposes. Most schools in the study seemed to find the categories easy enough to use for funding application purposes, although they emphasised that the categories should definitely only be used for funding application purposes and not for making decisions about students’ skills and knowledge as the basis for planning programmes. For example, a comment from the following respondent was fairly typical of the sort of response made by several other respondents:

“We find them [the ESOL resourcing categories] fairly prescriptive. They are good for what they are designed for. You know, you are trying to define a box that a child will fit in, and that is always difficult. But the staff don’t seem to have any great problems with it. It would only really become a problem if [the categories] were used as a basis for a learning programme, but they are not. We are totally flexible in that because they make no allowance for a kid’s skill in mathematics or the speed at which they are acquiring [new skills, etc] or anything like that. [Applying the ESOL resourcing categories] is very much a cut and dried assessment, if you like, at a certain time and a certain place. It is sort of like an instant profile as at this time, and that is always moving at a different rate all the time. So as far as resourcing categories go, they are fine. If they are used for anything more than that well then it would create problems. And so we don’t tend to use them for anything more than that.” [Deputy principal, intermediate school.]

However, a small number of respondents were less happy with using the categories. For example:

“I have difficulty with putting kids into boxes like these because you get students who can say ‘Hello’ and ‘Goodbye’ and not much else. I think I would probably leave the greetings out [as a category criterion] because I don’t think that’s any real indicator of the help they are going to need. For Category 1, I would just put ‘Can’t understand simple instructions or

\(^{14}\) At the time of the study, schools were required to use five broad categories to classify NESB students’ competence in English when lodging applications with the Ministry of Education for ESOL assistance. The five categories were defined as follows. **Category 1**: Cannot understand greetings, simple instructions, questions or statements in English; **Category 2**: Able to converse a little in English but has minimal reading and writing skills; **Category 3**: Adequate oral English, but needs reading and writing support; **Category 4**: Effective oral and written English, but needs subject specific support; **Category 5**: Reads, writes, and speaks English competently — needs no support. Schools did not receive funding in respect of students in Categories 4 and 5. Appendix 1 of this report contains a list of behavioural descriptors for each category which were produced by the Ministry in 1995 to better assist schools categorise their NESB students for funding purposes.
statements in English’ — the questioning itself would come a bit later. A lot of these kids come sort of knowing ‘set’ things such as ‘Hello’, ‘Goodbye’, ‘My name is —’, but it’s parroting and you try and tell them something and they look blank. Category 2, I have a little difficulty with for some cultural groups — for instance, the Somali children who come with very little education within their own country and can’t read and write in their own language, yet orally [in English] they might be quite good. Some of them, I would put in Category 1, [even though] they are OK orally, but as far as their writing and reading is concerned, it is nil. So you see how difficult it is to put people in boxes like this. There are times when I would put people into Category 1 who don’t strictly [fit there] yet I know that they are going to be in a beginners group and need a lot of time and effort.” [ESOL coordinator, secondary school.]

“There are problems with the criteria — [for instance], they are very broad [and] there is a big jump between Categories 2 and 3. Perhaps Category 2 could have two parts to it — 2a and 2b — so there is [scope for] movement within the category.” [ESOL coordinator, secondary school.]

As shown later in the report, however, although schools were grateful for the ESOL funding, no school felt that the funding that was available was anywhere near adequate enough for the programmes and support that they needed to provide for their NESB students.

Concluding Comments

This chapter has highlighted the way in which NESB students as a ‘group’ — albeit made up of individuals from widely different backgrounds, and with often very different needs — require particular, specialised attention within a school but, at the same time, are also very much an integral part of the overall student population. It is evident, therefore, that schools which aim to cater for their NESB students as best they can also aim to do this for all their students.

A stated school philosophy or policy in relation to meeting the needs of NESB students has obvious implications for teacher training, employment of support staff, types of materials available in the school, and so on, all of which, in ideal circumstances, would be sorted out prior to establishing programmes and support. But the circumstances in which most schools find themselves means that they often have to work out ways to accommodate the needs of their NESB students as they go along rather than in advance. Matters such as teacher training and support are therefore discussed later in this report rather than, as might be expected, in this chapter.
Schools with an overall philosophy of ‘doing their best’ for all students also recognise the importance of appointing one or more\textsuperscript{15} staff members to the role of ESOL coordinator and/or teacher. Amongst other things, an ESOL coordinator has responsibility for obtaining background information on NESB students and their families (often with the assistance of an interpreter or bilingual speaker), for carrying out initial assessments of NESB students, for providing pastoral care for students, and for liaising with other teachers in the school, as well as with parents/caregivers and with outside support agencies.

Finally, schools which aim to do their best for their NESB students recognise the importance of obtaining early on as much information about their new NESB students as possible — not only for funding application purposes but as a way of ensuring that the best possible decisions are made about classroom placement and about what initial programmes and support should be provided for these students. ESOL coordinators as well as classroom teachers in the study commented that obtaining comprehensive background and initial assessment data is of great value because it represents support for the teacher as well as being a sound basis for helping new students become integrated into the mainstream classroom as smoothly as possible.

\textsuperscript{15} While one person in the role of ESOL coordinator (or, in some instances, in a combined role such as ‘special needs/ESOL coordinator’) may be sufficient in schools with only small numbers of NESB students, in schools with large numbers of NESB students, it has been suggested that two or more teachers should share the responsibility of ESOL coordinator. This way, they can act as support for one another and be more likely to effect greater (and more positive) change in the teaching and learning of NESB students in their school.
CHAPTER 5: SOME CONSIDERATIONS PRIOR TO THE DEVELOPMENT AND PROVISION OF PROGRAMMES FOR NESB STUDENTS