The Characteristics of 'Good' Programmes for NESB Students
Key Points

According to those interviewed in the course of the study, all of the following factors are particularly important in developing good programmes for NESB students: in other words, for best meeting the needs of these students (and their families and community).

- The principal, senior staff, and the board of trustees are supportive of initiatives and programmes within the school for NESB students; this support is formally recorded in the school’s charter or policy statement.

- The principal and other senior staff are supportive (both practically and ‘philosophically’) of those who provide the programmes and support for NESB students.

- An inclusive welcome for parents and students of all backgrounds is inherent in the school’s philosophy and culture.

- The teachers who work with NESB students are committed to the idea of teaching those students.

- Those who work with NESB students and their families are empathetic to their prior and present circumstances — that is, they ‘tune in’ as much as possible to the needs of their different students in terms of age, gender, ethnic/cultural background, learning needs, previous life experiences, and personality.

- Teachers have the opportunity to take up relevant training opportunities related to their work with NESB students and can access support from outside agencies (e.g., teacher advisory/support services, the Refugee and Migrant Service).

- Classroom teachers receive in-class support (e.g., from teacher aides, parent helpers, interpreters) as much as possible/where necessary to allow more input with NESB students without jeopardising time spent with the rest of the class.

- NESB children are actively included or encouraged to become involved in the activities of the school and classroom.

- Involvement from members of the community in student learning is actively encouraged and supported.

- Where possible, language classes are held for the parents and other adult relatives of NESB students — this helps integrate adults into the school and the community and encourages or facilitates children and parents working together on homework and so on.
Key Points — continued

- Students in the classes which new NESB students are to join are prepared for the NESB students’ arrival; this is to facilitate the integration of the new students into the classroom and to minimise the likelihood of unsettling the rest of the class, due to lack of understanding and difficulties in communication.

- There is a good working relationship between the ESOL coordinator/teacher and the classroom teacher, which allows the former the freedom and scope to work with NESB students either in the normal classroom or in a ‘withdrawal’ situation.

Introduction

The previous chapter gave an indication in broad terms of the nature or ‘shape’ of the programmes that schools in the study provided for their NESB students. This chapter picks up on many of the characteristics previously identified but with a particular emphasis on aspects which participants felt had worked well or which made their programmes — or, at least, parts of their programmes — successful or especially worthwhile.

Support and Backup for Teachers within the School

It was clear that where there was tangible support and backup for teachers in a school, and also ‘philosophical support’ from the school administration for their work with NESB students, initiatives were more successful.

“The principal certainly has been extremely supportive of anything to do with ESOL. I think we’re very fortunate. If we look as though we’re going to be snowed under with more [NESB] students, it hasn’t been a problem to get more staff. I don’t know if that’s a wide-spread thing, either. I’ve had a lot of support, too, from the HOD maths and the HOD science in actually setting up the science and maths part of the [orientation] programme for [NESB students]. … We [the ESOL Department] take care of the vocabulary side of it [for different subjects] but for science, I only get one hour a week [so] the science teacher actually takes them into a lab and shows them how [not] to set fire to themselves (!) and all sorts of things you can do, because some of them have never worked in a science lab before so we’ve got to take them through that.” [ESOL coordinator, secondary school.]

“We have got a team of very committed people here — the headmaster and the staff are really supportive. The staff have a very good attitude to NESB children. That would be the major strength [of our programme] — the principal and the staff being so supportive.” [Classroom teacher, intermediate school.]
“The calibre of the staff is the major strength of our school’s programmes for NESB students.”

“I think she [the Deputy principal] is definitely one of the strengths [of the school’s NESB programme]. I think because she is driving it and she is the deputy principal and it does help to have somebody in a higher position of authority who is driving that and sees it as a great need. If she was just a normal teacher you wouldn’t get the same sort of drive, but she is the deputy principal and she is truly behind it the whole way.” [Classroom teacher, primary school.]

**The Calibre and Commitment of Teachers**

Frequently made comments about the strength of programmes run for NESB students referred to the commitment, resourcefulness, and hard work put in by teachers.

“The calibre of the people [is the major strength of this school’s programmes and support for NESB students] without a doubt whatsoever. Some of them have had extensive experience going back to the first days of the New Settlers programmes related to Asian refugees. And it has grown from there. We are really fortunate that we have been able to hang on to those people and attract others who have an interest and a commitment and a willingness. I think every principal wants to feel good about their staff and I certainly do about this lot. But it is really a commitment to giving kids a go, no matter what their backgrounds are. As a consequence of that they go the extra mile without being asked and they do so because they feel it is part of the job. There is considerable sort of peer pressure in the staffroom and as a consequence of that people really are hardworking with a good focus on kids.” [Principal, secondary school.]

“Having experienced, committed teachers [is a major strength of this school’s NESB programmes and support]. Teachers who have been here awhile, teachers who are not fazed by these sorts of kids. I really think that that is a key issue.” [Principal, primary school.]

**Staff Training/Schools’ Participation in a Professional Development Contract for Assisting NESB Students**

Participants from schools which made a concerted effort to ensure that staff had formal opportunities to acquire or extend their knowledge and skills for working with NESB students felt that this had a direct and positive impact on the programmes that they provided.

“We’ve tried very hard to provide training for our whole staff. We’ve done some major training for everybody, we’ve done some optional extra training, we’ve provided training [opportunities] for people to go to specific courses, we’ve got teachers who either have [done] or are doing the polytech postgraduate teachers course — and, in fact, all our ESOL staff have either done that or are doing it. We’ve had teachers visiting other schools to look
at their programmes. And I’ve been up to Auckland and looked at schools there. Our Director of International Students has done the same. Our Head of ESOL and I are going over to Melbourne to look at the programmes that the Victorian State Government organises — they’ve organised a programme for us. So, we’ve done specific training for the teachers involved in the ESOL [programme], and we’ve also done a number of whole staff training sessions. ... The more specific courses have mainly been just for the teachers with ESOL responsibilities, although our Head of Science, for example, is involved in an ongoing programme. She’s been heavily involved as a subject teacher in the professional development contract [for assisting NESB students]. We’re only allowed one teacher on that from the school; we tried to get more, but they’d only take one. [Also], the ESOL teachers belong to the ESOL Teachers Association, and I think they all go to meetings regularly.” [Principal, secondary school.]

A primary school principal also mentioned that staff undertaking training specifically tailored to the needs of the school and its community was particularly efficacious.

“We are running an ASTU [Advanced Studies for Teachers Unit] paper here at the school — it’s to cater for [the specific needs of] the school. We are all made to do it. We have just done the English [professional development] contract together and staff development is so much better if you do it [take part] yourself and [the whole staff] do it together. There has been a paucity of [appropriate training for working with NESB students], and it’s [now] in a state of change and we think this tailor-made course is probably the best for our needs, because in New Zealand we have two, or three, I suppose, groups of NESB students. You have got the large group of Asian who are affluent, but being poor is the biggest problem with [learning to speak in a second language]. Then you have got the small group of, say, Somali refugees, and Vietnamese, and then you have got what are the largest group [of NESB students] in New Zealand which are Pacific Islands kids who speak Samoan or Tongan [for example] at home. We have nearly all Samoans here [at this school]. They are poor and this is the group that are missing out and this is where I get hot under the collar about funding. You don’t have to be overseas born to have needs in this [ESOL] area and when you combine it with real poverty [you can have major problems]. What I feel is that courses in the past have tended to focus on these newly arriving Asians or the refugees [even though] the largest group of second language learners in New Zealand are Pacific Islands [students]. And what courses there have been [on Pacific Islands NESB students] have been academic, identifying they have got a problem. Well, that’s fine, but it’s not much use for actually teaching the next day. We know there are problems there and people learn through experience from teaching in Newtown or South Auckland but courses haven’t been strong. ... What we don’t need is research that says they are failing, what we do need [for example] is research that says here is a school with Pacific Islands kids who for some reason do well in literacy, better than you expect.” [Principal, primary school.]
Teachers and others at schools which had participated in a professional development contract on the teaching and learning of NESB students were full of praise for the contract and fully recommended that other schools also took part in such a contract. For example:

“[The school having participated in] the contract [for assisting NESB students] is the real strength of our programme, the staff being totally focused so that you can talk to anybody about anything [relating to NESB students] and they will know what you’re talking about. We have all had the same learning [experience] so it’s not just that little group that’s been to the course and they have got all the skills and the information and the rest of you have got nothing. Everybody has been a part of it, people are committed to it, and somehow it is part of their basic common practice now. They don’t realise any longer that they are doing something different with [the NESB students] from what they might have done [before taking part in the contract].” [Principal, primary school.]

“Two of us went on the contract [for assisting NESB students]. That was probably the most valuable thing I’ve ever done in terms of the pupils here. It helped to refine skills and acknowledge some things, giving you new ideas, and allowed us to focus far better on what we were actually doing for the children and what the children’s needs were and how to address them.” [Deputy principal, primary school.]

In-Class Support for Teachers

As indicated in the previous chapter, the assistance that support staff and parent and other volunteers provided for teachers by means of their work with NESB students either directly or indirectly (eg, through making resources or organising activities) was frequently referred to as an essential element of any good or effective programme of support for NESB students. What in-class helpers are able to give is time, time which participants in the study repeatedly said is at a constant premium.

“I have two teacher aides and they come in three times a week for about one-and-a-half hours each time. They basically work with our new immigrants or those children who have just come from Samoa and who have no English at all. They work with the children in small groups or on a one-to-one basis. Basically, the teacher aides do activities that cater for the needs of those particular children. For example, they will do a lot of language-type activities using matching words with pictures, you know, simple ones on a magnetic board, cutting out simple pictures from magazines and making simple, basic sentences for them underneath. Sometimes some of the older children work with one of the teacher aides and they write stories in Samoan if they able to and then either the teacher or the teacher aide will translate just to help and see if it is making sense. … Sometimes what they work on with the students is independent of what the rest of the class is working on and sometimes it ties in. [The teacher aides] keep the children in the classroom while they are working but to bring them
back to be with the rest of the class, they’ll buddy them up with other children from another reading group. So sometimes they are independent of the class programme and sometimes they get brought back in. But most of the instruction takes place within the room. They are hardly ever withdrawn out.” [Team leader, Samoan bilingual unit, primary school.]

“We have ten volunteer helpers from the community [who] are mainly New Zealanders. [We use] Individual Language Programmes [for] forms 3 to 7 [NESB students] from [the Correspondence School] and [these programmes are] monitored by ESOL staff and supported by these voluntary community helpers and three peer tutors. [This approach] is in support of the student’s language across the curriculum and allows for more individual tutoring.” [ESOL coordinator, secondary school.]

“A major strength [of our programme] is that we do have a good number of support staff [now] and that makes an enormous difference. For a while there wasn’t a lot of support staff [and] this [lack] came through in the evaluations we do every six weeks.” [Classroom teacher, primary school.]

Family/Community Involvement and Input in Students’ Learning

Many participants mentioned, as an integral part of their school’s programmes and support for NESB students, the assistance they received from students’ families or from other members of the school’s community. Much of the in-class support referred to above is provided by parents and other community members who become involved with the school. However, volunteers from the community also provide valued assistance in other areas of the school’s overall running — such as school trips and camps, and fundraising activities — which impacts on student learning, albeit in a less direct way than in-class assistance with subject-related tasks and activities.

“We’ve got a good community that’s prepared to get in behind what we’ve asked of them, and we haven’t even begun to tap their talent yet. We’ve got it right there, it is just a matter of setting it up and getting ready to roll.” [Classroom teacher, intermediate school.]

“We actually have a list of people in the community who are willing to help. We send out a note when they enrol to see if they would like to be involved, and if we [can] call on them [if needed]. Or we ask them in their language when they come to the school if they would like to help.” [Special needs coordinator, primary school.]

“From [our parent support meetings that we hold at school], we got some of our new immigrant parents onto the PTA. That’s our Parent Teacher Association and that is voluntary. And they do a lot of work around the school. So we do have now, for the first time, some Chinese parents on the PTA. They do fundraising for the general running of the school. A
typical parent-teacher association group really. A lot of fundraising, running the socials for the kids, providing dinner for the staff when there are parent-teacher interviews. It is general service to the school that they do. And it is neat to have some Chinese parents on that now.” [Deputy principal, intermediate school.]

“We use our parents quite a bit to get resource materials from overseas, like books for the library. And we’ve got a contract for CD Roms that will fit on our IBM [computers] that someone’s currently looking into. Because most of them (Chinese and Korean) go back [to their countries] every Christmas, and with the contacts we’ve built up, we just let them know what we’d like. We use them as a community resource.” [ESOL coordinator/Deputy principal, intermediate school.]

Another aspect of involving families in school life, one which participants felt was particularly important in terms of input into students’ learning to backup what teachers aim to do within school hours, was that of encouraging and facilitating parents/caregivers to read to their children and assist them with homework (and, at times, with their work in the classroom as well).

“I use the series of wee books in Rarotongan or Samoan quite a lot — I think they are put out by Learning Media [Ltd], they come out from Wellington — and the children who do have Samoan can read them in Samoan, then write the story for me in English. We then discuss the story in English. And [the books] are really helpful because they’re something the children can relate to. And if they take the book [which is written in Samoan] home, the parents can relate to it [too] and talk about it. Some of the parents who have English are very shy about using it and don’t sound very good when they’re speaking English, but they have been educated in Samoa, and you can see their [Samoan] vocabulary coming out in the things the kids are doing [at school] which is really good because then you know that they [parents and children] are talking together at home. So I’ve found those [books] to be a terrific resource that can be used [through sending them home with the children] to involve the parents, because otherwise it’s very difficult to involve the parents.” [Special needs teacher aide, primary school.]

“When I did one of my TESOL courses, one of the things I did was to produce a booklet which is in several languages and is a guide [for parents] on how to help their child at home with their reading. Teachers can take a leaf out if it, photocopy it, and put it in the child’s reading bag to take home. That’s proved to be a really good thing.” [Special needs coordinator, primary school.]

“We do training for parents in helping children with reading and writing in the classroom. This is for all parents but they [NESB parents] get involved in that. We don’t like to single them out all the time.” [Special needs coordinator, primary school.]
During our visits to schools, participants often made reference, in a variety of contexts, to the importance for students’ learning and general well-being of the range and quality of the experiences students have outside of, as well as at, school. As illustrated in the following passage, when schools are able to establish good [eg, friendly, culturally appropriate, non-threatening] communication links with parents and families this has the potential to considerably enhance students’ learning opportunities.

“I think many [of the NESB children that we have at this school] are missing out generally on experiences. There was a girl last year [whose] parents I battled with over her going on camp but didn’t get there, [but] this year they’ve allowed her to go on camp. (I go away to camp with the children, especially with the forms 1 and 2 [students] because the Pacific Islands parents trust me to look after their daughters, which is really very special.) But [in this case] it took lots and lots [of time and persuasion]. And I said, ‘Well, look, if you really need to you can go out and see the camp so you know where she is’. So I went away and got my map that night and photocopied it and went back after school hours and showed them where the camp was and how they could get there and mapped out a route for them. [Although they have a car they just use it] so they can go to church and they can get to town [but they don’t go on any other outings]. But [my showing them where the camp was and how to get there] opened up huge new horizons [for them] — [their daughter] said to me, ‘They [my parents] are talking about all these other places [we could go to now]’. And we’ve got families here who have got relatives in Invercargill and so I thought their kids would have seen Dunedin [on the trip down], and [that] they [would have] stopped at the rocks [the Moeraki boulders, a famous South Island landmark], they’d have done all those things. But [they don’t], they get in the car and they just drive, they stop for ice-cream, they stop for fish and chips, they get in the car again and go. They arrive and they’re there with the family group or the church or whatever is happening and then they get in the car and come back [and they don’t stop anywhere]. [With] my kids [we] would stop and have a run on the beach, and we’d have a book in the car that would tell us what each place was, and we’d stop at war memorials, and all those sorts of things. But, [to these children], Dunedin is a sleep and three ice-creams away. That’s how one child described it to me [when I asked her], ‘How far do you think it is?’ ‘It’s a sleep and three ice-creams’. (It’s a good description, don’t you think!!)” [Special needs teacher aide, primary school.]
Support from Outside Organisations for Schools/Teachers

Those in the study who had been able to access help from outside organisations — such as the Refugee and Migrant Service, the Education Advisory Service (Auckland), Teacher Support Services (Wellington), Teacher Advisory Services (Christchurch)1 — invariably found the advice and assistance they received to be very helpful in shaping and refining the programmes and support they were able to provide for their NESB students (although, as discussed later in the report, participants often mentioned that they were not always able to get as much support as they needed or, ideally, would have liked, due to the heavy workload of the staff in the outside agencies).

“We get help from […], who is in the New Settlers and Migrants — they’re attached to the teachers college — I don’t quite remember what her official title is, but she comes and gives us a lot of [support] — she goes round the secondary schools in the Canterbury–Nelson area, and she’s certainly been very supportive of anything we’ve done.” [ESOL coordinator, secondary school.]

“Having support during the year from [the facilitator of the professional development contract for assisting NESB students in the form of] new teaching techniques, and different ideas [for working] with the students and [for] producing the materials [for working with them] has been a great help.” [Teacher aide (ESOL), primary school.]

“I think the TESOL group in Wellington is a very good group and I think that the network they have in the community is superb. I think that sort of grass roots organisation and networking deserves to be supported in a formal way. I think the national organisation is also very good; the material they have produced that I’ve read I think is superb.” [Principal, secondary school.]

Support for NESB Families

A small number of schools in the study were able to offer some degree of direct support for the parents/families of their NESB students. This support included helping families understand how the school operated, and what was expected of their children as students in the school, and what role they, as parents, could or should have in the education of their students both within the context of the school and at home. Sometimes support also included classes being run for parents/families where they could practise English, learn about aspects of everyday life in New Zealand (eg, how to find a doctor or dentist, how to carry out banking transactions), and, simply, have the opportunity to meet socially with others to whom they could speak in their own language. Schools which were able to provide some sort of programme for parents/families — as well as schools which did not currently feel

1 Chapter 13 also lists other sources of support for teachers of NESB students.
they had the resources to do so — believed that this had positive outcomes not only for the parents but for the students as well: that is, the better and faster the family as a whole felt able to cope within their new country the happier they were likely to feel, which has clear implications for how well they are likely to learn. Schools also found that parents and others who felt comfortable and familiar with the school were more likely to help out at the school.

“[We have a home and school support group for NESB families.] And they meet regularly. There are two main groups in our school, Korean families and Chinese families, mostly Mandarin speakers, and the two groups sometimes meet together. ... [And] we have a parent (who works on a voluntary basis at least two to three hours a week, sometimes a lot more), in the pastoral care area [with both students and families].” [Principal, secondary school.]

“I think they [parents] need orientation within the school system and the whole structure so they know about health care and dental care and the hearing and eyesight testing, and all those things, and the cost of books and trips and camps for the kids.” [Classroom teacher, primary school.]

Programme Strengths or Specific Elements of Programmes which Worked Well

Teachers and others were asked ‘What do you consider to be the strengths of your school’s programmes and support for NESB students and why?’ and/or ‘What approaches or techniques do you consider to be most effective?’ The strengths or approaches or strategies that worked well mentioned by participants included the following: that school management was committed to providing the best possible programmes and support for NESB students, to the extent of redirecting school resources to meet the demand; that staff provided a warm welcome to new NESB students and their families from the moment they arrived at the school; that staff in the school worked cooperatively and supported each other by sharing ideas, experiences, and resources; that there was the flexibility to adapt programmes to meet the needs of different students, that one-to-one tuition and small group work was used as much as possible to further students’ progress; that teachers were committed to meeting the needs of NESB students and believed that these students would achieve as highly as other students; that there was a supportive classroom environment which facilitated the NESB students’ participation in class activities; and that parental and community involvement was both welcomed and fostered. Many of the particular strengths mentioned are illustrated by the quotes which follow. They have also been mentioned in many other contexts throughout the report.

“I think [a major strength of our programme is that] the principal is committed and he acknowledges that: ‘This is the community we serve, therefore this is what we will provide’. He really does believe that, and he really does his best in the way of hours [to work with...
NESB students], and whatever money is available. If he can do it, he will. And our Head of ESOL is the kind of person who is easy to work for — she inspires you, inspires loyalty, and you want to do your part too. She works extremely hard herself and you feel compelled to work just as hard. She gives you support and she gives you a free hand, too, to try new things.” [ESOL teacher, secondary school.]

“A strength of this school’s programmes and support for NESB students] is that our principal thinks it’s worthwhile. Because without her support I couldn’t do anything and it’s because of her being here that it [the programmes and support provided] has become more formalised. I was doing it off the top of my head when I first came, with our other principals who were here before, and I think the feeling was sort of, ‘She [the teacher aide] is just a funny old thing who relates to Island people’. So I spent a lot of time, [including] my time, outside time, doing it [working out programmes for the students] really on my own. But [our present principal] sees it as an important thing, [probably], I think, because she has lived overseas and she’s dealt in wider circles and she relates to the whole thing.” [Teacher aide, special needs, primary school.]

“A firm commitment to ESOL] staffing was always a problem until quite recently. [Our present principal] has made big improvements. ESOL used to be staffed by anyone who had a free period. Well, that was useless. But now it is more cohesive [with the establishment of the ESOL Department]. [ESOL teacher, secondary school.]

“I think the main strength [of our programme] is that it is classroom-based. It is teachers who are in control of it. It is not something imposed from management. The policy was really the last thing we developed and I think that was a good way to do it. The teachers worked out something that worked and then came back and wrote the policy that covered what they were doing and what they found had worked. And I think that was really good because it meant that it was teacher driven. And in that way it is flexible too. They [the teachers] have tremendous flexibility under the policy as to how they implement it. Even to the extent of how they implement it in individual classrooms, right down to individual kids. We provide the resources for them to do that. [But although] it is very open-ended as to how they implement [programmes], the outcomes are pretty structured as to what we expect from what we put in. But I think that [it being classroom-based and flexible] is its main strength, definitely. Management is purely a backup and a support. And the school has certainly got that. They have got the backing of the board, the backing of management.” [Deputy principal, intermediate school.]

“I think a major strength of our school’s programmes and support for NESB students] is they do have a warm and welcoming approach when they are enrolled. They are made very
welcome. They are shown the school [together with their] parents and all the family. It’s a family welcoming affair, if you like.” [Classroom teacher, primary school.]

“I think it is important to understand that the fact that parents are welcomed into the school and feel good here has a significant effect on the children informally. So without going into any formal programme [of obtaining assistance from parents], [children] knowing that there are people around who speak their same languages, who can help them in the library, and [who take part in] programmes in the junior classes, makes them feel supported.” [Principal, primary school.]

“Our strength would be that we actually celebrate the fact that these children are NESB and that we don’t look on them as a deficit model.” [Deputy principal, primary school.]

“I think the biggest strength is that we acknowledge that we have got a need. I have heard of other schools that don’t actually acknowledge that children have a need in their language development.” [Classroom teacher, primary school.]

“A strength of the school’s programmes and support for NESB students] I suppose is the fact that we don’t tie the programme to the funding that’s provided. So whether there’s enough money or not provided by the Ministry doesn’t influence whether the child gets any help. [And another strength is] the calibre of the people who work with our children, because they’re very fine people. [But] the only thing that I think hasn’t worked well is making the money stretch — and I know that our special needs programme [which includes NESB students] is one of the reasons why we’re running into debt. And I think the only way to address that problem is to fund the school adequately.” [Principal, primary school.]

“I think the quality of the teachers we’ve got is a really important strength of our programme. And I think the fact that the school has been prepared to put in so much money [over and above the ESOL funding allocation] to support the programme is critical, because, without this, you’re certainly going to have many more issues with racism and so on.” [Principal, secondary school.]

As already raised earlier in this chapter, and as can be seen from the next several quotes, participants in the study often mentioned the calibre of teachers and their support people as major strengths of their school’s programmes and support for NESB students. In particular, participants most often referred to the teachers’ and support people’s commitment to the students’ — and often, the students’ families’ — needs, their warmth, and their willingness to cooperate with and support each other.

 “[A major strength of our school’s programmes and support for NESB students is] the understanding of the teachers towards NESB students. The attitude of the teachers is very
welcoming [and their] expectations are that the children will succeed.” [Principal, primary school.]

“There is a lot of personal commitment from all of us.” [ESOL teacher, secondary school.]

“[A strength of our school’s programmes and support] is the commitment of those people who work in the area. We give our all and a bit more. We are really committed to what we are doing here with these kids, so we give a lot more of our time.” [ESOL teacher, secondary school.]

“I think [the strength of our programmes and support] is the fact that we have the commitment to help these children and that we recognise the needs of these children. Also that we have identified the level of learning that these children are at and that we are doing our best to help these children at that level and help them progress and make improvements. [Another strength] is the particular emphases that our teachers place on the reading, language, and the maths within the programme.” [Principal, primary school.]

“Teacher experience [is a major strength of our school’s programmes and support for NESB students]. But as your staffing changes, that’s something that has to be constantly updated. There’s got to be constant development input in that area.” [Deputy principal, primary school.]

“[A major strength is] staff who have been on [the professional development contract for assisting NESB students] and who share their ideas.” [Classroom teacher, intermediate school.]

“All the things that we learnt on the [NESB] contract this year, basic classroom techniques, they are strengths of the classroom programme too because we shared our knowledge at staff meetings and they are the core of the things that we do in the classroom and everyone who is teaching should have been enhanced through that. It has been very practical, that’s been the essence of it. And I think all the staff have taken that on board and they didn’t need to. It could have been, ‘Oh, yeah, there are those six key teachers [who took part in the NESB contract]. That’s their thing’. But if affects everyone in the school, because we have huge numbers [of NESB students] here.” [Classroom teacher, intermediate school.]

“I tend to flop onto the floor with them and really treat them like grandchildren, you know, the little ones, which is really important for them. And then I catch up with their parents and introduce myself to them and explain to them what I’m trying to do.” [Teacher aide, special needs, primary school.]

“As a staff, we generally do a lot cooperatively and support each other. [We do this] in other areas as well [as ESOL] but [this approach] again assists us [with our NESB students] because
we are never as classroom teachers left to face problems alone. If we have difficulties or problems or are needing advice, we generally talk things over and together look for best solutions. I really think that’s why we solve difficulties. And we often talk as a whole staff about problems that might be arising at staff meetings. And within our syndicates we do some cooperative teaching.” [Classroom teacher, primary school.]

Another aspect of staffing some participants mentioned as a particular strength of their schools’ programmes was that they were fortunate enough to have bilingual or multilingual teachers and support people from different cultural backgrounds and/or staff who had had first-hand experience of another culture’s life-style.

“I think [one of the major] strengths is our cultural mix of staff. We have Chinese, Samoan, Tongan [teachers].” [Principal, primary school.]

“There’s a Somali woman who comes in to teach the Somali children about their own language and culture. They come back [into class] happy, they love it. It fosters their development.” [Classroom teacher, primary school.]

“[Our teacher aide] who is Mandarin-speaking has been giving [some of the Chinese NESB students] extra support in their own language [which helps them enormously].” [Teacher aide, ESOL, primary school.]

“Probably the fact that I’ve been to Samoa and had practical experience of the life-style and culture [has been most helpful in my work with the Samoan NESB students that I work with]. That practical experience has been very, very good.” [Teacher aide, special needs, primary school.]

Other respondents, in identifying particular strengths of their school’s programmes and support for NESB students, outlined approaches to assessment and teaching and learning that they felt had worked well. There was a particular emphasis on ensuring that students were well orientated into the school.

“Initially, we get the enrolment forms containing information [about] age, nationality, languages they speak, etc. Then once they get into the classroom, we have set up a system this year [using] ‘self-pacing boxes’. They are a system whereby we find out whether the child recognises the alphabet, the alphabet sounds, and then clusters and things so they can understand. And whether they can actually decipher sounds in English. [The self-pacing boxes] are for any children who have an obvious English language difficulty. There are five levels of [the boxes] so it gives us a very good idea [of what students can do]. If a kid works through those efficiently, then we know that, OK, they have got a reasonable knowledge of the basics of English and they are going to fly ahead. [Jannie van Hees, of The Education
Advisory Service, Auckland\(^2\) developed [the self-pacing boxes.\] Last year we only had one [set] in the school and that wasn’t working, so this year we have got six [sets] so that we can have one for each syndicate. It [the system of using the boxes] works with peers. We train children up to work with [the NESB] children. We train two [peer tutors] per class and they work with these children every day at the same time for about 15 minutes until we know that we have got them through this [stage]. So if they are not efficient with those boxes immediately, then we get them efficient in those boxes. Really, within the first week [of their arrival] a teacher would probably start them on that. We also have what we call an ‘autobiography book’, which is written in English and [for example] Chinese and they just fill that in as best they can. They may just have to do it in their first language if they can’t do it in English. [They are asked to respond to] very simple questions like, ‘When were you born?’, just things like that to keep them feeling comfortable when they come in. ... The ‘self-pacing boxes’ are excellent because the student is working on a one-to-one basis, so they are getting praise when they deserve it, corrected when they need it, given encouragement, and they can see an actual progression, and so see that they are achieving. They are excellent. The self-pacing boxes [also] work well because they free the teacher up. If she has got two well-trained monitors [peer tutors] then they should be able to say, ‘Right, it’s 1.45 pm, this is the time each day that I do this’, and they go and get the [relevant] box.

\(^2\) Jannie van Hees, New Settlers and Multicultural Education Coordinator, Education Advisory Service, Auckland developed and produced the self-pacing boxes. She also prepared guideline notes for users. In these notes she stated a recommended approach for use of the self-pacing boxes as follows:

‘(1) Assess the student first so you have as clear an idea as possible of their strengths and gaps.

‘(2) After training the team of peer teachers, start as soon as possible. Be sure the team has a clearly laid out timetable plan. Peer teachers should know when they are teaching, the process of anticipating their teaching turn so they know what to do on their day and [should understand about] communicating with others in the team. [They should also know] where they are teaching, where the boxes need to be stored, who to turn to if there is a hiccup or problem.

‘(3) There are five boxes in the set. Start on Box 1 and move through each box in numerical order. ... (Note: even if the student has a large number of known sounds and blends in Box 1, and he/she may find the sentences relatively simple, it has been found that a quick revision is most worthwhile. It also gives both the learner and the teachers [peer tutors] confidence in the use of the materials. Additionally, there are quite often assumptions made that the learner has all the bits and pieces in Box 1, when in fact he/she still could do with a lot more practice and learning in sound knowledge, in building a greater vocabulary base, in remembering sentences in English, in writing and self-editing.) Regularly revise ways of teaching the parts of the self-pacing boxes’ materials. (This is enormously important as it cannot be expected that the peer teachers will have taken on board all the most important aspects of how they are to teach – they need reminders, preferably demonstrated again by the adult teacher and practised by the peer teachers.) Evaluate the programme, particularly pertaining to each learner. Check that all materials are in order and organised.

‘If there is no maintenance meeting for the [peer tutor] teams, the programme will slowly become less and less effective. Children cannot be expected to sustain the programme by themselves.

‘Remember: The self-pacing boxes programme is only one small but very significant part of the entire language provision students from language backgrounds other than English need. Without it, however, key gaps remain unattended to. Without it, hiccups, slower progress, plateaued learning will occur. Enjoy it!!!! Good luck!!!!’
get the kid [they are working with], fill in the chart [at the end of the session of what they’ve covered], and just report to the teacher. It frees the teacher up and she knows the [NESB child] is getting something [ie, is working and learning]. The autobiography books are part of the welcoming process but [along with the self-pacing boxes] they also give us a lot of information [about the student] too. We also have boxes that each teacher with NESB children has that I have put together. In there, there are activities at Level 1 (no English), Level 2 (a little bit of English), and Level 3. So if the teachers see the kid has whizzed through the ‘self-pacing boxes’ then [they can say]: ‘OK, we’ll just put you on some of the Level 2 work’. So the boxes are there for the teacher to photocopy [activities from] and she doesn’t have to go rushing around looking for other things. So that also is a form of assessment too, what level we are putting them on.” [ESOL coordinator, intermediate school.]

“One of the approaches we have [that works well] is to familiarise the [new NESB] students with school and to establish routines and procedures with the students because we do a lot of encouraging, of teaching them how to work in groups. So [in our] orientation programme we’re trying to build up [their] confidence and those sorts of things — [because] unless you’ve got all that, your teaching can’t be effective. So I would put making the student feel happy within your environment very high [on the list of priorities] so that when they go from [the orientation programme] into the mainstream, they’re familiar with what we’re doing [in the school].” [ESOL coordinator/HOD ESOL, secondary school.]

“[The initial information you collect on their English language ability] governs how you teach them, what you need to teach them, and your approach to them. I mean, those who speak a bit of English normally have a better understanding of what you’re saying but can’t give you anything [back]. So the understanding comes first, but you have a period where they can’t give anything back so there isn’t much feedback, there’s not much to go on at all, because you’re not really sure how much is being understood and how much isn’t. That’s where the older children who can interpret are useful. And so it’s just a matter of taking them for English and giving them the basics to build on. But their first language is extremely important, and we have first language maintenance for [our] largest group of [NESB] children who are Somali children. A parent comes once a week and takes a group of children for reading and writing in their own language. And that’s extremely important for them. It’s very good because there are a lot of things that they understand that they appear in English not to understand, but as soon as you have somebody to explain to them in their own language, they know it, it’s there. They have basic concepts which aren’t totally apparent [when they’re working in English] but there are also some of them who, even in their own language, have missed out on those basic concepts and so you can see that you’ve got to build from there, and that’s where the first language maintenance is useful. And the [parent] who comes in [to work with the Somali children], I give her an indication of what I’d like
her to cover with them and she does that for me, so it’s good.” [ESOL coordinator, primary school.]

“I would really emphasise the buddy system and making sure they feel safe and secure in the environment they are in. They are buddied for as long as it takes. And we have other buddy systems in place too. We do paired reading and writing. And even when we have sports days, an older class might be buddied with a younger class. ... Lots of praising is really important too, of what the child can do, no matter what their background, so as to make them feel confident as soon as possible. If they don’t feel confident, they are not going to show what they really can do. Also, having the right role models around them, as in [both] children and adults, helps their confidence [too], and knowing that they are valued.” [Special needs coordinator, primary school.]

“I think [our most effective approaches with NESB students include] just being there for them, just having small groups. You need to build up trust, build up rapport with them. You find out the basic things they know and build from there. Using older children for translating, [getting] them learning by looking and doing [are also effective techniques].” [ESOL coordinator, primary school.]

“I guess we are more student-centred than teacher-centred. I think most teachers talk too much and we try and get students interacting among themselves and talking as much as they can. At the beginning of the year we do a great deal of orientation to get them used to the style of learning, because a lot of them think that they’re playing and it’s not real learning. So it’s a gradual thing and I think you have to be aware of that. We make sure that we have different teachers coming into the different [orientation] sessions so that [the students do] not [become] dependent on one teacher and [become] used to [just one] person’s way of talking and one accent. We look at the different accents that mainstream teachers have — they [the NESB students] have got an awful lot to get used to.” [HOD ESOL, secondary school.]

“My new five-year-old [NESB students], I find I treat them very naturally like all my new entrants [except that] I place a high emphasis on my oral language programme and I’m careful in the way I speak to them and with the language that I use, and I do a great deal throughout the day of oral language and repeating other children’s answers and those sorts of strategies so that they hear plenty of sentence patterning and have plenty of opportunities to repeat rather than produce [language], which they can’t do at all [at first]. It’s amazing, if you just keep talking to them, how quickly they begin to respond. Except the talking part is actually the last. I mean, I usually teach my five-year-olds to read before they are able to talk to me, because talking is by far the hardest thing for them to learn to do, because they’ve got to generate the sentences themselves and they find this a riskier situation. So they have their silent periods [because of this]. ... Having a very structured day is the other thing I have...
in place, too, to help. Because if you’ve got very regular routines, then they pick up those routines quite quickly and feel at home and know what’s happening. I think that’s fairly valuable as well.” [Classroom teacher, primary school.]

“Because of our children’s love of music and dance we find that is an excellent way of developing new language skills. This school is quite renowned for the children’s musical ability, and a lot of their singing is Samoan singing but also they do a lot of English singing. Singing and dance is an excellent medium for developing oral language skills anyway so that is one strength we try and build on because the children have got a natural ability at anything musical.” [ESOL coordinator, primary school.]

“They get involved in a lot of music and a tremendous amount of English is learnt through that. And also sports. They are very keen on things like basketball, badminton, and table tennis, so they tend to join those clubs. So there is all that peripheral type English coming in from there.” [ESOL coordinator, intermediate school.]

“[NESB students learning English is] really an all-round thing, and everybody in the school contributes to it. I take them over to our groundsman to learn about a wheelbarrow and I introduce them to him, so they learn to say, ‘Good morning’, and ‘This is a lawn mower’, and ‘What is it doing?’, and ‘This is grass, he’s cutting the grass’, so we do a lot of wandering around the school, probably looking quite aimless and stupid [but] it’s really necessary. And, you know, walking and creeping and running and hopping and putting the words to it, and that way I can say, ‘Well, who is going to go behind and who is going to be in front, and who is going to come beside me!’ With the little ones, it [the early learning] is all done with play, as far as I’m concerned, or as much of it as possible. ... So long as they’re talking, or trying to talk, I can throw words at them. Then as they go on, we work out what they need [next]. Some haven’t got anything [much] in the way of language [structure] so they need help there and some can read, but they’ve got [very little] comprehension of what they’re reading.” [Teacher aide, special needs, primary school.]

“[A strength of our school’s programmes and support for NESB students] is the fact that everybody’s class has a similar composition [ie, everyone has NESB students]. It’s not like in some schools where you might have one [class], or maybe two classes, that has an [NESB] student, one-off kind of thing. But here everybody [every teacher] is in the same boat and so you are able to pass on information about students that you have one year and actually see the progression that they are making. [Also], we do a lot of oral evaluation as a staff, formally. We have got [an ESOL teacher/coordinator] here for that particular purpose, and she gives us support by working with [NESB] children who need that extra help. And children in this school feel good if they have been [withdrawn], if they have been to Reading Recovery [etc]. They don’t think it is anything dreadful, but [rather ask], ‘Why can’t I go?’ So all the children
“A major strength of our programme is that we do have an ESOL teacher who can work with the children in the class and individually.”

“[A major strength of our programme is that] we do have an ESOL teacher [even though funding means she can only work part-time] who can work with the [NESB] children in the class and individually. We have resources we have built up over the years. Probably a plus in the junior school is that we [the teachers] feel we can cope with [NESB children] in the classroom without having [our ESOL teacher] come in [to help us] so that means she can give her time to the middle–senior school and not have to spread herself throughout the whole school, whereas [in] some schools [she] might. Some [NESB] children come into the senior school and they are just reading at the five- to six-year-level so they need a lot of additional help because they have got to make up for lost time.” [Classroom teacher, primary school.]

“I’d say one-to-one [is the most effective approach we use]. And this is most effective because you are working with one child, one step at a time, and concentration is very effective. But it has to be on a consistent and regular basis — as in once a day.” [Assistant principal/classroom teacher, primary school.]

“Having the children in small groups is vital and most effective. One-to-one tuition is also very important. Having the time [as ESOL teacher] to go and observe their progress in the classroom. Not removing the children for too long from the classroom, but just long enough in small groups to give them support to work well in the classroom.” [ESOL teacher, primary school.]
“I think [a strength of our school’s programmes and support for NESB students is] the combination system of providing in-class support with withdrawal support [and the fact that] it varies from year to year and from term to term depending on the needs at the particular time. In-class support is when I go into the classroom — at the moment I go into one of the classes when they have their maths time because the children there are having real difficulty in understanding the language of the maths they are meant to be doing. They might know the maths concepts in their own language but they can’t do the [tasks] because they don’t understand the maths language [relating to] what it is they are meant to be doing. So I go into the classroom and give support. And the other thing I feel is very important is that we have all noticed here that some of the children who don’t talk in a classroom situation, who have very little to offer orally, once they come in here [to the ESOL room] they open up and they start to use their verbal skills much, much more. And then they can take those oral skills back into the classroom and that’s one of the main reasons we like to have withdrawal periods for some groups of children, because the classroom teachers have found that they are not contributing: they appear to be listening but they never contribute, they are shy, they are very inhibited within the large group setting, but when they have been in a small group setting for a time it actually gives them confidence to start to talk and then they take that with them back into their own room and then they are away.” [ESOL coordinator, primary school.]

“We are really happy this year with the way cross-groupings of [NESB students] have gone on ability rather than age. It gives you flexibility, in the beginning of the year particularly. All of these [ESOL] classes are on at the same time so that we can shift the students around. It has worked really well. And we all seem to be suited to the groups that we are taking ... And the flexible use of the Correspondence School [programme for NESB students] also works well. Three of the very new Somali arrivals have been put on a [Correspondence School] programme and when they are in my class they have the option of doing what the rest of the class is doing, but when that gets beyond them, then out comes the correspondence [programme]. I think we use that wisely and that is successful.” [ESOL teacher, secondary school.]

“Some students come to the ESOL Department] for study [skills] so that’s when they get extra help with their subject-specific things, because in the ESOL programme we’re actually teaching them how to use English, and it’s really academic English, especially at fifth and sixth form level, so they’re learning how to write comparisons and contrasts — the sorts of things that they eventually may have to do at university. Because they really need to know how to write an essay, they need to know how to do research and to scan and read quickly and use context — it’s not grammar specifically. And I try to teach them a lot of vocabulary. I guess we provide moral support
too. There’s a lot of, if you like, warm fuzzy stuff that goes on. And they see us as a friend — a friend who can still come on heavy if necessary!" [HOD ESOL, secondary school.]

“I think the strength [of our school’s programmes and support for NESB students] is the ongoing assessment of what we are doing. I think we do enough self-review to keep up to date and modern. [Other strengths are] our emphasis on staff development and identifying the needs of these kids. We are good at how we identify them and that results from a very informative and detailed evaluation system. At enrolment we use [the bilingual enrolment form produced by the Education Advisory Service, Auckland] and we will invite a [bilingual] staff member who can speak the same language [as the child and his or her family] to be there if needed.” [Principal, primary school.]

Finally, a number of participants made reference to resource materials or ideas that they had found particularly useful. For example:

“Taped stories [are a very effective strategy for use with NESB students]. [You] must never forget the tapes. You know when the children can follow text and listen to a tape as well. [With the tapes], they are getting some listening skills and you can put directions on the tapes too so they are having to follow directions. And this is something that they can work on independently.” [ESOL coordinator, intermediate school.]

“One of the key resources that I use [for my form 3 programme] is the [School] Journals [series produced for the Ministry of Education by Learning Media Ltd], and without those my programme would near enough grind to a halt. But I still need time to develop worksheets and things. This year I am mainly using Parts 1 and 2 [Journals] but it depends on their needs. Very rarely do we get near a Part 4 [Journal] in the third form. Learning Media [Ltd] is also putting out other very good resources [for the Ministry, for example], the non-fictional stories in the Applications series went down really well with the advanced students. And the thematic journals that they are now putting out where they extract stories on a particular theme and put them together are a good idea.” [ESOL teacher, secondary school.]

“The individual Correspondence School course [materials] that we use [are a major strength of our programme] — they meet student needs. [Another strength is the] Advanced Intermediate ESOL Programme [see the last part of Exhibit 11 on page 129 of this report for a programme outline] we have developed, as it is meeting the language needs of the students. [Still another strength is] the wide variety of resources that have been developed by the reading teacher and the ESOL staff.” [ESOL coordinator, secondary school.]"
“I would like to try some more guest speakers [with the NESB students] — someone who comes in from the outside world. We had the nurse and that was good. But it is really important that the person can come down to their [English language] level, so it is simple for them to understand.” [ESOL teacher, secondary school.]

Concluding Comments

Providing good programmes and support for NESB students involves many factors: a school-wide commitment to meeting the needs of NESB students; the availability of teachers and others who are not only well prepared for and committed to meeting the educational needs of NESB students but are also empathetic to the emotional and social needs and day-to-day living problems or concerns of these students and their families; and staff who are willing and able to establish open and friendly communication with parents/caregivers. Appropriate and sufficient resource materials are also a fundamental aspect of good programmes.

Good programmes and support depend upon the cooperative input and effort of many people: the school’s administrative personnel; classroom teachers; the school’s ESOL coordinator and/or ESOL staff; teacher aides; parents/caregivers and other community members; peer tutors, the NESB students’ classmates; the outside organisations which provide information and support and resource materials; and, of course, the NESB students themselves.