

101 EAL Conversations – sample card



Management

Four pupils from an asylum seeking background have recently arrived late into Key Stage 4. Very little is known about their background except that they are all at early stages of acquiring EAL. The plan is to create a small withdrawal intervention group for the remainder of the year (5 months), taught by a Support Assistant who has a Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL) qualification.

What are your thoughts about this provision?



We shouldn't assume that because these four young people are all asylum seekers in the early stages of acquiring English that their learning needs are the same. Therefore, grouping the four learners together would probably be a mistake. Some may be highly educated and fully literate in first language (L1), whereas others might never have been to school. An initial assessment of each learner is essential to ascertain individual needs.

Wholesale withdrawal of new-to-English pupils from the mainstream classroom is not recommended as it is hard to create a context for curriculum based learning and provide natural opportunities for oral interaction. However, an older learner who has never been to school will need additional intervention to develop reading and writing skills that might involve some withdrawal work.

Finally, it is important to understand that learning English for these young people should not become the only educational priority as their social needs must also be met. The most effective provision builds upon the background and skills of each learner, offering a broad and balanced curriculum, realistic exam opportunities and effective preparation for their future education beyond school.