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'Here to support anybody who needs to come'? An investigation of the provision for EAL pupils in secondary school libraries in England

Shortened version of title for running head:

EAL provision in English secondary school libraries

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Abstract

This paper presents the findings of a mixed methods investigation of the effectiveness of provision for EAL pupils by secondary school libraries in England. Data from a quantitative survey of secondary school librarians are triangulated with those of qualitative interviews with staff responsible for EAL provision. A picture emerges of a hybrid environment which addresses a number of the educational, cultural and social needs of EAL learners, but in which a series of barriers to effective provision are also identified. Recommendations are made to key stakeholder groups for the short and long term improvement of EAL provision, and for further research.

Keywords or terms:

EAL, ESOL, (secondary) school library, (secondary) school librarian

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INTRODUCTION AND CONTEXT

English as an Additional Language (EAL) refers to students for whom English is not their first language (DfES 2007). This includes individuals born in England who have been exposed to another language at home, as well as new migrants who have arrived in England who speak little or no English (Strand et al. 2015, 11; Safford & Drury 2013, 71). Levels of literacy and language skills, as well as the level of education learners with EAL will have previously received, therefore, vary tremendously (DfES 2004, 9). As of 2013, there are over one million pupils in schools across England with English as an Additional Language (NALDIC n.d.). This number has 'more than doubled' between 1997 and 2013 from 7.6% to 16.3% of the student population (Strand et al. 2015, 5). Inclusion and equality have been seen as fundamental to the education of EAL learners ever since the Swann Report (DES 1985) concluded that the education system was discriminatory, and called for EAL provision to be met within mainstream schooling. However, a 2009 report produced by the Institute of Education argues that the 'principles of inclusion and equality of opportunity for EAL learners' are being undermined, due to the 'mismatch in the system between demand and the available specialist workforce' (5). Others have raised concerns that EAL provision across the country is inconsistent and that classroom teachers feel they do not have the time, resources or necessary training to effectively and confidently support EAL learners in the mainstream classroom (Costley 2014, 289; Foley et al. 2013; Franson 1999; Safford & Drury 2013, 72). These findings raise questions about whether the core principles of inclusion and equality are being met. It may also be the case that this inconsistency in provision is inevitable, due to the massive variation in EAL numbers between individual schools across England as well as in the kinds of support each individual EAL student will require (Strand et al. 2015).

Rationale and Scope

Interest in this topic emerged from Badock's involvement in a project led by Birdi, which provided voluntary student support to adults engaged in ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages) classes in Sheffield, helping them to participate in the Six Book Challenge. A number of these ESOL learners commented on the progress of their children who were attending local schools, and the extent to which they felt they could support their learning. Badock also had previous experience as a Learning Support Assistant in a secondary school in the East Midlands region, and recalled interesting discussions about EAL student support with the librarian at the school. Having only anecdotal evidence on the subject provided the impetus for an empirical investigation of EAL support in school

libraries, particularly after an initial literature search revealed that relatively little had been published on the subject in Library and Information Science.

With growing numbers of pupils with EAL across the UK, arguably there is an increasing need for specialist EAL support in schools. School libraries not only have a responsibility to provide for EAL as all other students in the school, but their unique role may also enable school libraries to offer types of support that are not available to EAL learners within the mainstream classroom. Given the lack of previous research on the subject, the present study has been designed to learn more about the extent to which secondary school libraries in England are engaging with EAL provision. Insights from such research could then be used to gain a greater understanding of what is happening in practice, and to identify recommendations for shared best practice and improvement.

It was decided that the study would focus upon England, due to the geographical location of the researcher and the fact that the variations in educational practices and policies across the UK home nations would make generalisation difficult. Given the timing constraints of the project (May-August 2015), it was not thought feasible to undertake research into both primary and secondary school libraries in England. It could be argued that EAL provision is particularly important in primary schools where there are greater numbers of pupils with EAL who, because of their age, require greater levels of intervention. However, funding restrictions unfortunately mean that there are currently very few primary school libraries in state-funded schools (National Literacy Trust & MLA 2010, 9), whereas it has been reported that the majority of secondary schools in England have some form of library facility (LAPPG 2014, 7; National Literacy Trust & MLA 2010, 9). Furthermore, it has been reported that even EAL secondary school pupils with advanced English language skills require additional support, particularly when preparing for examinations, but that they do not seem to be receiving the help they need (Murphy 2015; Ofsted 2003). Therefore, in order to focus on both new arrivals and more advanced EAL learners, as well as to gain an opportunity to collect as much data as possible, the present study has focused on secondary school libraries in England.

The aim of the research was to investigate the nature and extent of provision by secondary school libraries in England for pupils with English as an Additional Language (EAL), with the following specific research questions:

1. In what ways can the secondary school library support the academic and social development of EAL pupils?
2. What support are secondary school libraries and librarians currently providing for EAL pupils in practice?
3. Do secondary school librarians feel informed about the needs of EAL pupils in their school and do they feel included in the design and implementation of EAL provision?
4. Do members of staff involved in EAL provision view the school library and librarian as important resources in supporting EAL pupils?

5. To what extent do EAL staff feel the school library can support EAL pupils and what do EAL staff do to involve the school librarian in EAL provision planning and implementation?

6. To what extent are secondary school libraries and librarians in England providing high quality support for EAL pupils?

7. How can EAL provision be improved to better support the academic and social development of EAL pupils?

LITERATURE REVIEW

That EAL pupils should receive their education in the mainstream classroom is confirmed in both English policy and pedagogy (Ofsted 2013; DfES 2003, 2004, 2007; DES 1985). Costley's 2014 review of English EAL policy reveals that whereas previous pedagogy favoured the assimilation and withdrawal of EAL pupils, there had been a relatively recent move to include such pupils in mainstream education. This pedagogical shift is due, in particular, to the Swann report (DES 1985) on a review commissioned by the government in response to a society-wide rise in protests into racial inequality. The report concluded that the school performance of EAL pupils was being negatively affected by their 'discriminatory' withdrawal from mainstream schooling, and recommended that the needs of all EAL pupils would be more effectively met in the mainstream classroom (DES 1985, 389). More recent government policy has emphasised the right of EAL pupils to access the full curriculum, and that any withdrawal of EAL pupils must be for a specific purpose (DfES 2007; Ofsted 2013). It is therefore the responsibility of each mainstream class teacher to provide for the linguistic needs of their EAL pupils to ensure they can participate in lessons, even when there is specialist help available (DfES 2004).

In more recent years, there has been a growing emphasis on partnership teaching, whereby specialist EAL staff and mainstream teachers collaboratively prepare and deliver class work appropriate for EAL pupils (Franson 1999). Within this pedagogy, linguistic diversity is perceived as a positive asset that can enrich the classroom by promoting cultural awareness (Costley 2014; DES 1985). Indeed, a recent briefing paper from German economic research institute IZA, the German Institute for the Study of Labor, comments on the potential impact of 'a high concentration of immigrant children on the educational outcomes of native children', and suggests that in fact these effects vary 'from negative to zero, depending on the country'. Observing that 'in most cases, the negative effects are rather small', they advise that 'the effects might be remedied by improving immigrant children's language acquisition and providing general support to all children from disadvantaged backgrounds (Jensen 2015).

This perception of linguistic diversity as an asset is noticeably different from the previous emphasis on the importance of assimilation into English society. However, the provision of specialist support within the classroom obviously requires funding, and although Ofsted guidance (2003) highlights the ongoing needs of more advanced EAL learners (particularly as they progress to higher

key stages where the linguistic requirements are more demanding), arguably this issue is not recognised in current funding structures. Whereas funding for the academic year of 2015-16 includes a minimum level made available to local authorities for all EAL pupils who have entered the English state school system in the last three years, these funds are not subject to any accountability mechanisms, so schools and local authorities are not required to use the funds for EAL provision (NALDIC 2015).

EAL provision in practice

The extent to which the above-stated policy has been transferred to practice in UK schools has been questioned in a number of studies. Case studies of 10 English schools found that withdrawing EAL pupils was common practice, whilst interviews with primary school teachers found that they lacked confidence in how to support EAL learners in the classroom and tended to see EAL provision as someone else's responsibility (Franson 1999; Institute of Education 2009). It appears that most mainstream teachers have limited training or experience of how to support learners with EAL, and those who had received training felt it was not necessarily relevant to their particular needs (Costley 2014; Institute of Education 2009). Concerns have been expressed that EAL is not considered a subject in its own right either in Initial Teacher Training courses across England and Scotland or within the National Curriculum (Costley, 2014; Foley et al., 2013). Safford and Drury (2013), meanwhile, have suggested EAL students are hindered by the 'strongly centralised' and 'monolingual' nature of the curriculum and assessment process (73). Similarly, Costley (2014) argues that despite rhetoric about diversity and equality, policy disregards the differences in EAL needs and hence places EAL students at a disadvantage, a view which echoes the findings of the above-mentioned Swann report (DES 1985). It appears that full- scale and successful mainstreaming is restricted by limited training and resources, and that EAL provision across England is inconsistent and ad hoc (Costley 2014; Safford & Drury 2013; Franson 1999). This does mean that provision can be tailored to meet the particular needs of EAL learners present in an individual school, but it can also result in EAL pupils across England failing to receive the level of consistent teaching and support their native English speaking peers enjoy.

Recommendations for best practice

In response to this problem, numerous attempts have been made to identify those factors harming EAL provision, and to make recommendations for improvement. Such recommendations tend to focus on assessment, monitoring, leadership and strategy, training, and partnerships. The lack of a standardised assessment tool for EAL students has been criticised as leading to an inconsistent, localised approach, whilst the close monitoring of results is seen as good practice in helping to identify and plan individualised provision (Strand et al. 2015; Safford & Drury 2013; Ofsted 2003, 2013; DfES 2003; QCA 2000; Franson 1999). Schools that are currently successful in supporting

EAL learners are identified as those with strong leadership and a coherent whole-school approach to EAL pupil support (Foley et al. 2013; Ofsted 2003, 2013; DfES 2003). A perceived lack of specialist training and knowledge amongst mainstream teachers has resulted in a call for a national qualification in EAL teaching, a greater emphasis on local CPD courses and a compulsory EAL module for Initial Teacher Training courses (Costley 2014; Foley et al. 2013; Ofsted 2003, 2013; Institute of Education 2009; DfES 2003; Franson 1999). Finally, good practice in effective EAL teaching is seen as involving partnerships between school staff, and the close involvement of the EAL learners' parents and the wider community (Safford & Drury 2013; McCorriston 2012; Institute of Education 2009; DfES 2003, 2004; QCA 2000). It is acknowledged that learners with English as an Additional Language are often from a minority ethnic background or are refugees or asylum seekers (Strand et al. 2015; Safford & Drury 2013; DfES 2004) . The importance of celebrating EAL learners' linguistic diversity, including content in lessons related to their ethnic and cultural heritage and instilling an ethos of respect within the school as a whole, are accentuated as key factors in supporting the academic achievement of EAL learners (Costley 2014; Safford & Drury 2013; Institute of Education 2009; DfES 2003, 2004; DES 1985).

School libraries and EAL in literature

Although education policy and previous research have considered the roles and responsibilities of mainstream and specialist teachers and senior educational decision makers, the role of the school library and librarian in supporting EAL pupils has been relatively under-explored in the UK, although more research has been conducted in the US, as emphasised by a recent systematic review into intervention research (Murphy 2015). A US study by De Souza (2009) emphasises the positive academic, linguistic and social impact that public and school libraries can have for EAL pupils newly arrived in the US, reporting that many students from low income backgrounds relied upon the library for much-needed resources that they could not access at home. Meanwhile, Goley (1985) presents libraries as places that can both ease the transition to a new culture and enable users to develop their own sense of identity by ensuring collections represent a person's heritage and language. Both UK and US studies have emphasised the positive impact that school libraries can have on students' learning and personal growth, and have also confirmed that students in schools with a well-staffed and funded library and librarians who are involved in planning and delivering teaching perform better academically (Lance 2002; Lance et al. 1992).

Reading enjoyment in young people is a greater indicator of academic performance than their socio-economic background (National Literacy Trust 2014). Reading can help young people to develop socially, culturally, academically and spiritually, all of which are arguably important for EAL pupils who may have different linguistic and cultural needs. With a body of evidence that engaging school libraries could have a positive effect on the academic performance of pupils with EAL, the lack of discussion in the literature about the role of the library is disappointing. Also, given the fact

that many studies indicate that specialist EAL classroom support is so limited, the potential role of school libraries in supporting the development of EAL learners both in and outside of the classroom seems even more worthy of exploration.

Functions of the school library

Although the literature on the role of school libraries in supporting EAL learners is limited, the available research does indicate that school libraries are well placed to provide additional support to EAL learners. Key functions of the school library have been identified as resourcing the curriculum, developing reading for pleasure, encouraging cultural awareness and improving pupils' information literacy skills (IFLA 2006; Williams & Wavell 2001). There is consensus among writers on the topic that it is fundamental that school libraries understand their different user groups and meet their particular needs. The IFLA/UNESCO School library manifesto (2006), for example, states that school libraries must offer equal access to services to all school members with specialist services being made available for those who can't access the mainstream resources. The National Literacy Trust and MLA (2010), meanwhile, explicitly mention the need to support pupils with English as an Additional Language in the statement that provision of EAL resources should be 'integrated in library planning' (7). This report advises that school librarians improve their ability to support the school community needs by developing their pedagogy through training, gaining an awareness of the library's potential and being willing to act as an advocate for this (National Literacy Trust & MLA 2010). The active involvement of school librarians in wider school activities has been taken further by the School Library Association (2011), which recommends that school librarians be given head of department status and should attend curriculum and department meetings (SLA 2011). Kotler et al. (2002) see oral competency as fundamental to developing higher level language skills, but argue that there is not enough interaction to achieve this in the classroom. The interactive and social potential of many school library spaces could be utilised to develop EAL pupils' social spoken English.

EAL in Higher Education

In contrast to school librarianship, there has been a 'proliferation' of literature on library services for EAL students in higher education (Baron & Strout-Dapaz 2001, 315). This tends to focus mainly upon exploring pedagogical methods for supporting international students with EAL (ibid. 2001), although other issues have been explored such as collaboration with different departments, staff training, collection development, and the use of technology to support their learning (Ishimura & Bartlett 2014; Johnston & Marsh 2014; Bordonaro 2006; Schomberg & Grace 2005). Research into students' English language learning, for instance, found that many EAL students use the library to develop their speaking, listening, reading and writing English skills through 'self-directed' language learning (Bordonaro 2006, 518). Overall, previous research emphasises the valuable role libraries can play in

actively supporting and engaging with EAL students, and could offer some useful suggestions for school libraries (Baron & Strout-Dapaz 2001, 318).

The relevance of the empirical research to the literature

To summarise, the literature on the provision in English schools for EAL pupils has focused on improving the achievement of EAL learners within the mainstream classroom. The difference between policy and practice is frequently emphasised, and recommendations made to help remedy this disparity. The role of the school library in supporting EAL learners, however, has not been discussed at length, particularly in the UK, either from the educational or the LIS viewpoint, and existing documents are generally theoretical guidelines rather than examples of good practice. It is also notable that all such examples come from LIS sources or from the National Literacy Trust, which suggests that educational researchers and policy makers are not engaging with the school library as a source of support for EAL pupils. This may be because school libraries are not statutory in England, so national policy does not include the library in its recommendations. This does not explain, however, why the school library is not mentioned at a local level in research into EAL support in practice. Although EAL provision is currently a popular topic of research and discussion within the education sector in England, it is clearly under-researched in the LIS field. The present study has therefore been designed in an attempt to address this omission.

METHODOLOGY

A mixed-methods approach was adopted for the study, with data collected using both qualitative and quantitative methods. Quantitative data was gathered with the aim of establishing patterns of similarity and difference in provision and experience from secondary school librarians across England. Meanwhile, qualitative data was collected in order to give the quantitative results greater detail and explanation (Creswell 2008). It was also felt that qualitative data would add context to the findings, which was particularly important as the literature review had emphasised the localised nature of current EAL provision (Silverman 2011).

Given the lack of previous research on the topic, the study began with no hypothesis, but instead aimed to answer the above-listed research questions through an exploratory approach to data collection, and a grounded theory approach to data analysis. Although no hypothesis has been identified, it is important to acknowledge the potential influence of the researcher's own attitudes and preconceptions (Bryman 2012; Walliman 2006). Badock has previously worked with students with special educational needs in a secondary school in England (although not specifically with EAL learners), and the experience and training of both authors in librarianship has led to a belief in the key role that libraries can play in supporting the academic, cultural and social needs of EAL pupils.

In terms of the research design, after the initial literature review to establish current thinking and to develop the research questions, it was initially planned to collect qualitative data through a case study

format by focusing upon one secondary school. It was felt that this would give the results greater depth and context which would be relevant for such a brief study exploring a new research area. However, it was finally decided to collect the qualitative data via interviews with participants from different schools. This was partly because of the difficulty of gaining sufficient access to one school in order to conduct an effective case study, and partly because it was felt that there would be a value in collecting and comparing qualitative data from participants working in different contexts. Data were therefore collected via an online questionnaire survey of secondary school librarians, and semi-structured interviews with secondary school staff responsible for EAL and secondary school librarians. The data were then analysed using graphs and spider diagrams for visualisation, coding and categorisation, and simple statistical analysis techniques before the qualitative and quantitative results were compared and contrasted.

Data collection

An online, semi-structured questionnaire was designed to investigate current EAL provision in English secondary school libraries, and distributed via the School Librarian's Network (SLN), a popular online group for school librarians in the UK. To widen the distribution beyond active members of the SLN, the questionnaire was also distributed via the LIS-EDUC Jisc mailing list, the School Library Association Twitter account and emails to the researcher's professional contacts. The questionnaire gathered data over a three week period during June 2015, and collected data from 39 respondents. The questionnaire design was informed partly by the literature review, and partly by a series of training materials generously shared by an educational consultant. It consisted of 17 closed questions, and 3 open questions.

Qualitative data were then collected through semi-structured interviews with secondary school librarians and school staff responsible for EAL support. A semi-structured approach was chosen, to allow the discussion to be directed by the interviewee and his or her particular context. The EAL specialists interviewed were asked a number of questions that were similar to those asked of the librarians based at the same school in order to explore similarities and differences in experience and attitude (Alvesson, 2011). In total, six interviews were conducted with staff working at four secondary schools. Three of these schools were based in the Midlands and one was located in London. Four of the interviewees were secondary school librarians, and two were staff responsible for EAL support. Three interviewees were identified using personal contacts whilst three others showed an interest through completion of the questionnaire.

The quantitative data were analysed descriptively, identifying the most common responses to each question, and noting any divergences and areas of disagreement. Graphs, bar charts and tables were created to help illustrate these. Qualitative interview transcripts were repeatedly read and coded to allow for thematic and comparative analysis. Coding and categorisation was used to clearly identify similarities and differences between respondents on different issues (Kvale 2007). As Silverman

(2011) and Bryman (2012) observe, qualitative data can help to address contextual sensitivity. Brief descriptions of each school were therefore used in order to ground findings and theories within context. Data were weighted depending on how frequently a theme was discussed, as well as on participant emphasis. Quantitative and qualitative findings were then triangulated per each research question, in order to identify key similarities and differences to explore within the discussion.

Due to the small number of participants involved in this study, it is not possible to generalise the findings to the whole research population (Walliman 2006). Restrictions on time and resources have made some limitations inevitable, however a consistent effort was made to minimise these and ensure that meaningful data were collected.

RESEARCH FINDINGS

Almost half (n=19, 49%) of the 39 questionnaire respondents were working in schools with an EAL proportion of 1-10%, so it is worth noting that the results may be biased towards respondents from schools where EAL provision may be less of a priority. However, nothing can be assumed about the backgrounds or needs of the students who fall into the category of EAL, and numbers alone do not offer the full context of a school community and its possible needs. More of this context can be gained from the interview data, examples of which are presented with the questionnaire findings below. A number of the interviewees commented that only a small number of pupils with EAL had support specifically because of their lower level of English language skills. This is logical due to restrictions on time and resources, however one librarian in particular expressed concern that EAL students were often left to 'muddle through' (I4). Of particular interest are comments made by the librarian of a school with a very high EAL intake. This librarian spoke specifically about the particular kinds of needs EAL students from a certain cultural background were displaying (I3). This exemplifies that support not only differs based on EAL numbers, but also on the particular situation. This school has seen the variety of languages decrease, but the challenges increase due to the changing demographics. This has shown that it is difficult to make generalisations about what EAL support is effective or important because it will not only change between schools, but will also change over time within schools. Most questionnaire respondents (n=20, 51%) work in schools with a proportion of EAL students remaining below 10%. These participants will have different experiences and opinions to those in schools with higher numbers of EAL pupils. It is valuable that there have also been responses, both in the questionnaire and in the interviews from librarians, and an EAL specialist, with more EAL experience. This provides the results with more variety in opinion and their experience can act as an example of good practice and key barriers to other librarians.

The findings will now be considered in the light of the seven research questions.

RQ1. In what ways can the secondary school library support the academic and social development of EAL pupils?

For the questionnaire respondents, there are multiple ways in which school libraries can support EAL learners. Resources were highlighted by most respondents, however, many others do also identify the potential social and cultural needs that the library can support both through the provision of resources and through other means, such as events, displays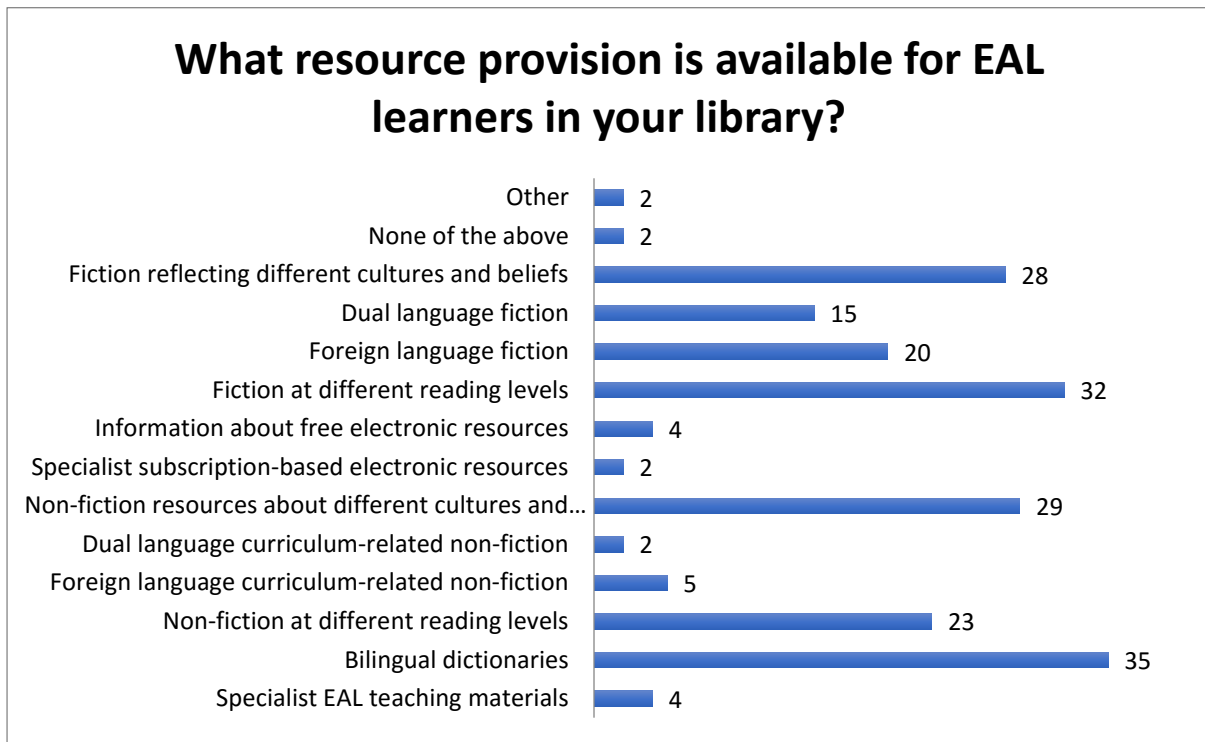, and simply providing a welcoming space. Teaching is mentioned by just two members of staff which implies that many librarians do not see this as a way for them to support EAL learners. Some interviewees focused on cultural or social inclusion whilst others emphasised specialist teaching. Overall, though, interviewees viewed the library as a provider of resources to support EAL learners. This is interesting when we look at the results which show that not all librarians feel confident or satisfied with the resources they provide for EAL learners. Overall, resources were most commonly touted as the main form of support that libraries can provide for EAL learners. There was also consensus about the role of activities and the library as a welcoming space in supporting these learners.

The interviews offered a greater level of depth on this area. For instance, some interviewees described the library as a hybrid environment that facilitates peer-supported independent learning: 'They're not doing school work, but they are helping their peers' (I1), 'A lot of our Sixth Formers… will often work with those younger students to help them with their language skills' (I4). There is an implication from these results that although most librarians view the role of the library as primarily related to resource provision, many also see their role as offering pastoral support to their EAL users: 'I think the role of the library is exactly the same for all students' (I4), 'We're here to support anybody who needs [somewhere] to come' (I1).

RQ2. What support are secondary school libraries and librarians currently providing for EAL pupils in practice?

Having first considered ways in which school libraries can support EAL pupils' academic and social development, questionnaire respondents then identified multiple ways in which school libraries are currently supporting EAL learners, as Figure 1 illustrates:

FIGURE 1   Questionnaire responses regarding EAL resource provision in the school library

What resource provision is available for EAL learners in your library?

Resource	Count
Other	2
None of the above	2
Fiction reflecting different cultures and beliefs	28
Dual language fiction	15
Foreign language fiction	20
Fiction at different reading levels	32
Information about free electronic resources	4
Specialist subscription-based electronic resources	2
Non-fiction resources about different cultures and…	29
Dual language curriculum-related non-fiction	2
Foreign language curriculum-related non-fiction	5
Non-fiction at different reading levels	23
Bilingual dictionaries	35
Specialist EAL teaching materials	4

The questionnaire results suggest that most librarians are using similar types of resource (e.g. bilingual dictionaries) to support pupils with EAL. On a positive note, this means that many EAL learners will experience a consistent service irrespective of the school. It may also suggest, however, that some forms of resource are potentially being under-used. Possible reasons for this are considered below (RQ7). This finding is potentially concerning, given that respondents work in very different library contexts, so different resources may be useful in different situations. Apart from bilingual dictionaries, the most common resources are not specialist materials. This suggests that little is being provided to specifically support EAL students. On the other hand, the fact that librarians appear to be selecting resources and services with the potential to support a variety of needs is a creative use of their often limited resources. The results suggest that there is much more conformity in resource provision across libraries in comparison to other means of provision and support. It may be that respondents were confused by the fact that many of the options are not overtly related to EAL provision. It may also mean that some librarians do not view some of their forms of provision as things that can support EAL learners.

There was no great consensus between different interviewees about what resources they stocked in the library. However, there did appear to be more evidence of specialist foreign and dual language resources in the school, with a larger population of EAL learners as well as in the independent school. Three interviewees required prompting before considering the potential importance of these forms of support for EAL learners (I1, I3, I6). Some school libraries are providing specialist resources or teaching support, and librarians spoke of tailored support and buying resources

for particular students which fits with expectations about what school libraries should offer. Overall, it does seem to depend on the school and context. All school libraries provide some support for EAL, usually in a few different ways. Two librarians emphasised the pastoral support that can be provided within the library environment. Another spoke about the amount of social time EAL learners were spending in the library, but did not necessarily see this as direct support. EAL staff gave limited information about the services offered in the library. Interestingly, this was focused on social support in one case, but solely on resource support in another case.

RQ3. Do secondary school librarians feel informed about the needs of EAL pupils in their school and do they feel included in the design and implementation of EAL provision?
The results illustrated in Figure 2 show that most respondents are receiving information about EAL learners:

FIGURE 2   Questionnaire responses regarding information about EAL learners
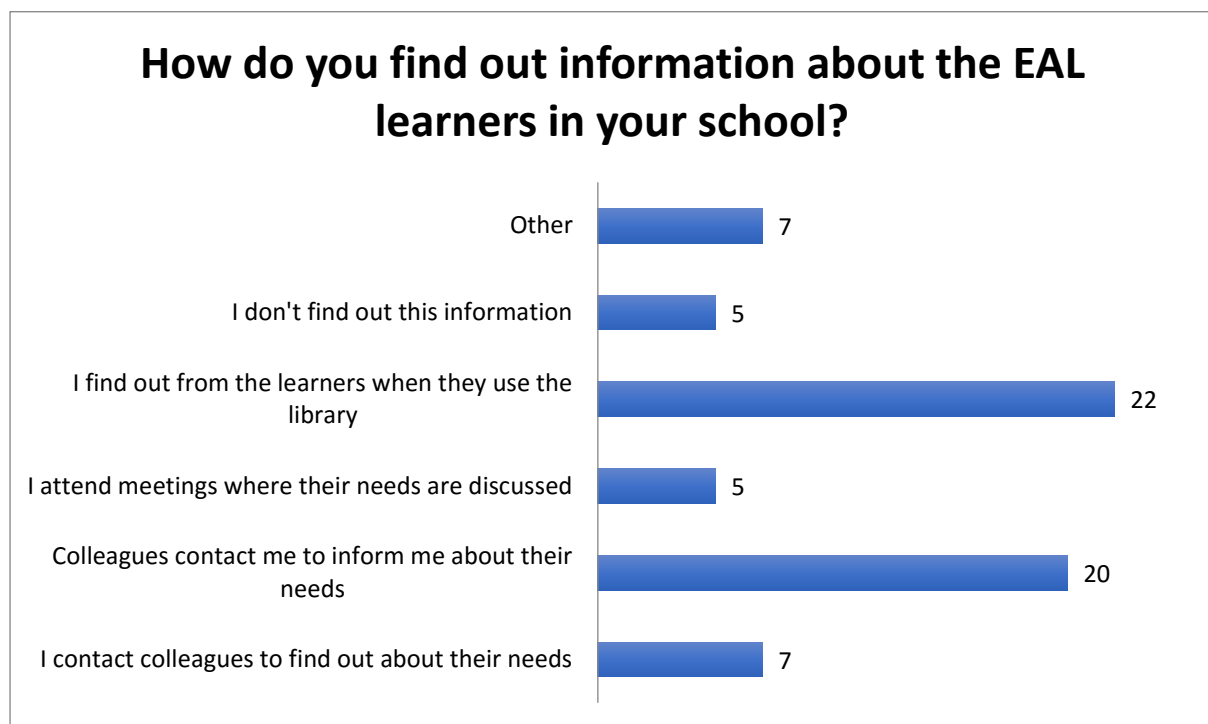
The most popular means of obtaining this information seem to be from the students themselves and from colleagues. However, we cannot establish from these results to what extent they are happy with these communication methods and the levels of information they receive. Questions are raised, however, by the fact that five respondents do not find out information about pupils with EAL at all. The questionnaire results also show that many respondents do not feel included in the planning and implementation of EAL provision in their schools. This implies that the valuable impact that the school library can have on pupils with EAL is not being recognized by key stakeholders. It is

unclear why a large number of participants neither agreed nor disagreed with the statement. Possibilities could range from librarians feeling included to a certain extent to them feeling unsure about what EAL planning takes place. It may also highlight that the question was difficult to understand. The fact that eight participants agree or strongly agree with this statement could be a sign that some librarians are more engaged with EAL provision planning and implementation. This may relate to schools with larger numbers of EAL or where more emphasis is placed on EAL provision from senior leaders.

The interview results appear to show a link between the level of communication and involvement enjoyed by the librarian and the subsequent EAL provision they are able to offer in their library. This can be seen by comparing two librarians working in schools with similar EAL numbers who seem to have experienced very different levels of inclusion. Interviewee 1 has Head of Department status and speaks of feeling involved in the transmission of information about new EAL learners. This appears to transfer to the support she is able to provide because she feels that her library is successful at providing specialist resources for new EAL students 'fairly quickly' (I1). In contrast, Interviewee 4 expressed the following concerns: 'Communication is so poor that we aren't able to provide the best service that we can...I'm not sure what I need to provide' (I4).

The other two librarians interviewed were indifferent about the extent to which they are involved in planning and implementation of provision which suggests the situation has not raised issues for them. In both of these instances, the interviewees speak of relevant information being available to them 'indirectly' via email (I3, I6). You will again note that these librarians work in an independent school and in the school with the highest EAL population. This could imply that an acceptable level of communication and involvement has been established for all staff because either there are more resources for this to happen or because it is seen as a priority.

Overall, it appears that in most cases more could be done for librarians to be included in policy planning and implementation and that many feel uninformed. This lack of involvement may cause librarians to feel unable to provide adequate support for EAL learners. Most questionnaire respondents spoke of gaining information from pupils. This is undoubtedly an effective way to gain a good understanding about learners' needs and interests, however, it is still important to also gain information from colleagues with the professional expertise to advise on effective forms of support. As can be seen from the interview responses, there are numerous ways that librarians can become more informed or involved in this area. It may be useful for librarians to work with their colleagues to find the most effective forms of communication and collaboration that work for them.

RQ4. Do members of staff involved in EAL provision view the school library and librarian as important resources in supporting EAL pupils?

This research question is difficult to answer given the low number of EAL staff interviewed for this study (n=2). The fact that it was a challenge to gain EAL staff willing to participate in itself perhaps

in itself implies that the school library is often not viewed as a key source of EAL support by other staff. If EAL staff viewed libraries as a central resource, more individuals may have been willing to participate. In the case of the particular participants involved in this research, both interviewees seemed to view the school library as a useful resource for EAL support, but to a limited and often simplistic extent: neither explicitly acknowledged the school library as a key form of provision for students with EAL. The focus remained mainly on books, with only one interviewee briefly mentioning the potential social role of the library. This is an issue that requires further exploration before any conclusions can be drawn about EAL staff attitudes towards the importance of the school library in EAL provision.

RQ5. To what extent do EAL staff feel the school library can support EAL pupils and what do EAL staff do to involve the school librarian in EAL provision planning and implementation?

Neither of the two EAL interviewees actively involved or communicated with the librarian in their school. This is particularly noteworthy in the case of I2, who worked in a school with very high EAL numbers. This interviewee highlighted that EAL provision is seen as an important issue in the school with support being a 'team effort'. The lack of liaison, therefore, is something that she highlights as in need of improvement. I5, however, did not seem particularly concerned by this issue, perhaps because such connections were not being encouraged by leadership. Both interviewees were unsure how much importance was placed on EAL provision by management. It could also be argued that the fact that the EAL staff member is working alone means that the library could be even more important to supporting EAL learners.

RQ6. To what extent are secondary school libraries and librarians in England providing high quality support for EAL pupils?

The majority of questionnaire respondents agreed that they understood both who the EAL learners were (n=31, 79%) and the nature of their academic and social needs (n=28, 72%). This reflects the findings of the literature review, which revealed that a key principle of school librarianship is to understand the needs of all potential users (IFLA/UNESCO 2006; National Literacy Trust 2010). These results are therefore very encouraging. More concerning, however, are the results illustrated in Figures 3 and 4, below:

"I feel confident that I can provide for the needs of pupils with EAL in my school"
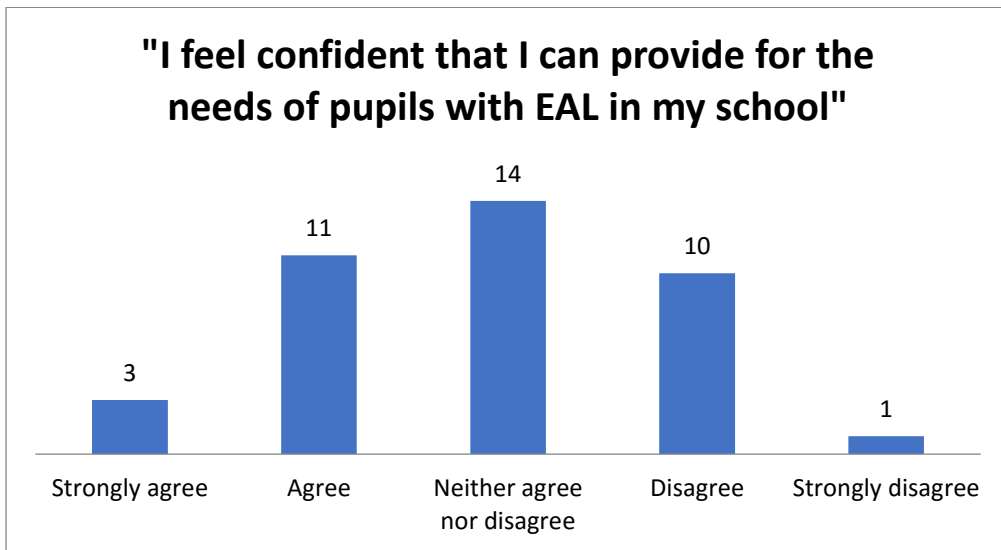
FIGURE 4   Questionnaire responses regarding whether or not EAL provision could be improved

"I think provision in my school library for pupils with EAL could be improved"
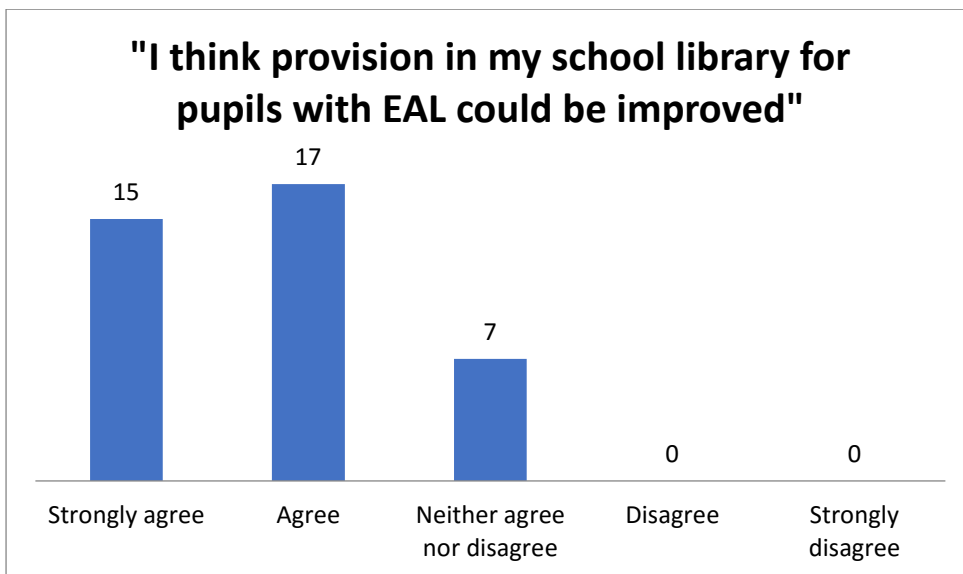
Figures 3 and 4 reveal a lack of consensus about the extent to which respondents feel confident in their ability to provide for EAL pupils and a large majority of participants feel their EAL provision could be improved. This final point is made even more significant by the fact that no respondents disagreed with the statement. This indicates that their understanding of their users is not always being translated to effective support.

All interview responses acknowledged that EAL provision in their school library could be improved. As has been accentuated by the participants, however, the quality of provision is reliant upon the context and availability of resources. It is, therefore, impossible to compare schools and

draw generalized judgments about service quality. The quality of provision, can, however, be judged to an extent by the librarian and their colleagues themselves. The fact that all interviewees could identify ways that the service could improve suggests that they are not fully satisfied with their EAL provision.

Without a framework representing best practice and a more comprehensive study, it is not possible to draw conclusions about the extent to which secondary school libraries are providing high quality provision for EAL learners. Arguably it would be a challenge to even create such a framework due to the fact that support is so dependent upon the local situation, as I3 suggests: *'Tackling EAL needs is dependent upon the make-up of the school. Having a few EAL students per year is vastly different to having half of your school as EAL.'*

RQ7. How can EAL provision be improved to better support the academic and social development of EAL pupils?

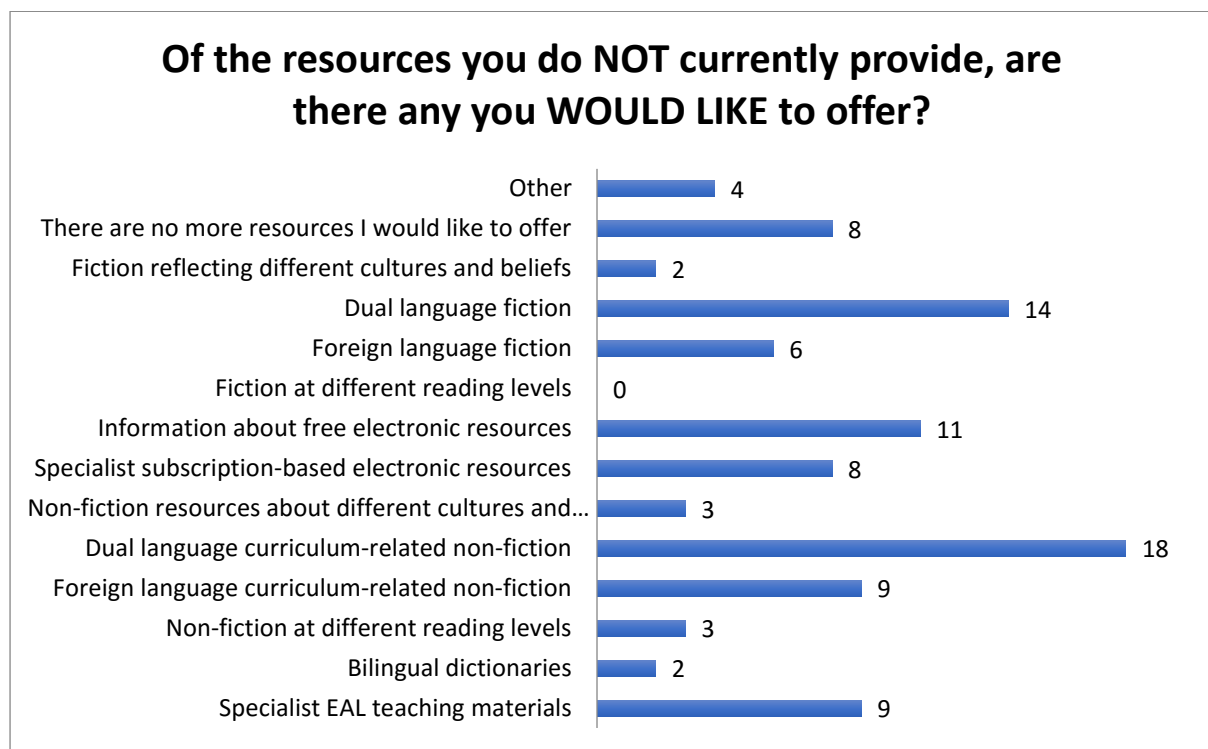**FIGURE 5   Questionnaire responses regarding desired general resources**

Of the resources you do NOT currently provide, are there any you WOULD LIKE to offer?

Resource	Count
Other	4
There are no more resources I would like to offer	8
Fiction reflecting different cultures and beliefs	2
Dual language fiction	14
Foreign language fiction	6
Fiction at different reading levels	0
Information about free electronic resources	11
Specialist subscription-based electronic resources	8
Non-fiction resources about different cultures and…	3
Dual language curriculum-related non-fiction	18
Foreign language curriculum-related non-fiction	9
Non-fiction at different reading levels	3
Bilingual dictionaries	2
Specialist EAL teaching materials	9

As Figure 5 shows, there was a wide range of desired resources, with seven options selected by more than six respondents. The resources that respondents would most like to provide to support EAL learners are 'dual language curriculum-related non-fiction' (n=18, 46%) and 'dual language fiction' (n=14, 36%), and two respondents perhaps unsurprisingly commented that they would like 'more of the ones I already have'.

FIGURE 6   **Questionnaire responses regarding desired EAL resources**

Of the methods and activities you do NOT currently employ to support EAL learners, are there any that you would LIKE to offer?

Category	Value
Other	0
There are no more methods or activities I would…	8
Collaboration with external organisations	10
Collaboration with teachers and specialist staff	9
Engagement with the parents of pupils with EAL	11
Dual language signs	10
Provision of teaching and learning spaces	2
Classes led by librarian	4
Student library volunteers	2
Displays and/or posters	7
Events, e.g. Promoting reading for pleasure	9
Reading groups	9

There is an even more noticeable spread in selections shown in Figure 6. Six different options were selected by nine to eleven respondents, with no particular activities or methods standing out. The most obvious level of agreement appears to comprise the options with the least results, which include 'provision of teaching and learning spaces' and 'student library volunteers'.

It is interesting that although there are improvements respondents would like to make in their school libraries both in general terms (Figure5) and in specific relation to EAL provision (Figure 6), the number of participants who actually plan to make such improvements is much smaller, as Figures 7 and 8 illustrate:

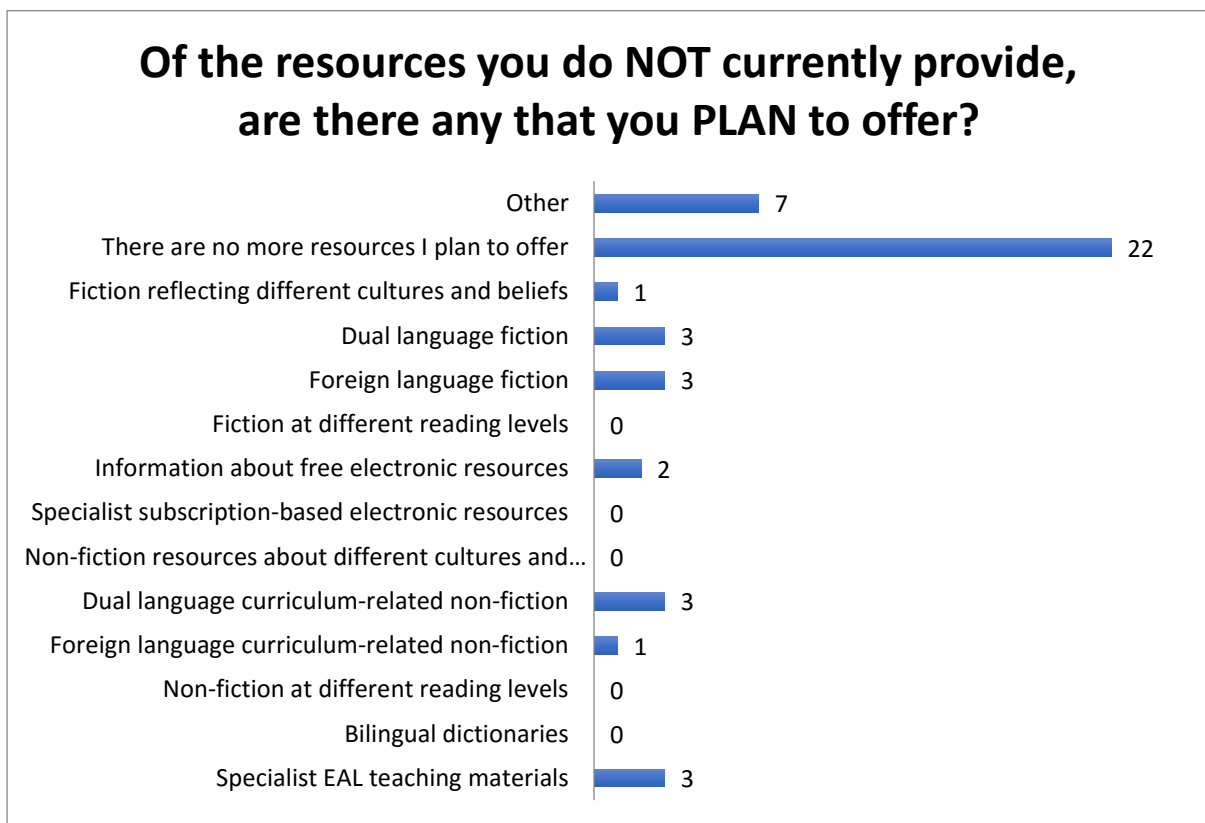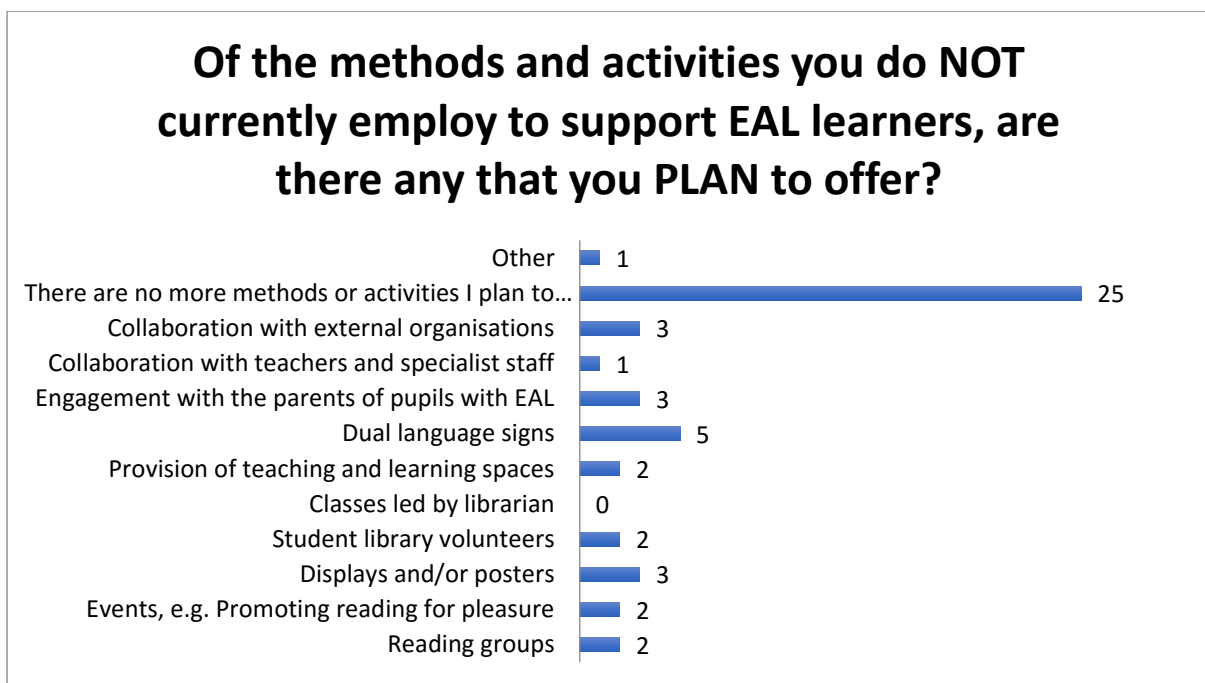**FIGURE 7   Questionnaire responses regarding planned general resources**

Of the resources you do NOT currently provide, are there any that you PLAN to offer?

Category	Value
Other	7
There are no more resources I plan to offer	22
Fiction reflecting different cultures and beliefs	1
Dual language fiction	3
Foreign language fiction	3
Fiction at different reading levels	0
Information about free electronic resources	2
Specialist subscription-based electronic resources	0
Non-fiction resources about different cultures and…	0
Dual language curriculum-related non-fiction	3
Foreign language curriculum-related non-fiction	1
Non-fiction at different reading levels	0
Bilingual dictionaries	0
Specialist EAL teaching materials	3

FIGURE 8   Questionnaire responses regarding planned EAL resources

Of the methods and activities you do NOT currently employ to support EAL learners, are there any that you PLAN to offer?

Category	Value
Other	1
There are no more methods or activities I plan to…	25
Collaboration with external organisations	3
Collaboration with teachers and specialist staff	1
Engagement with the parents of pupils with EAL	3
Dual language signs	5
Provision of teaching and learning spaces	2
Classes led by librarian	0
Student library volunteers	2
Displays and/or posters	3
Events, e.g. Promoting reading for pleasure	2
Reading groups	2

Both questionnaire and interview findings revealed certain barriers perceived to be preventing school librarians from improving their services for EAL learners:

FIGURE 9   Questionnaire responses regarding perceived barriers to EAL provision

Do you think there are any barriers to providing the best possible EAL provision in your library?

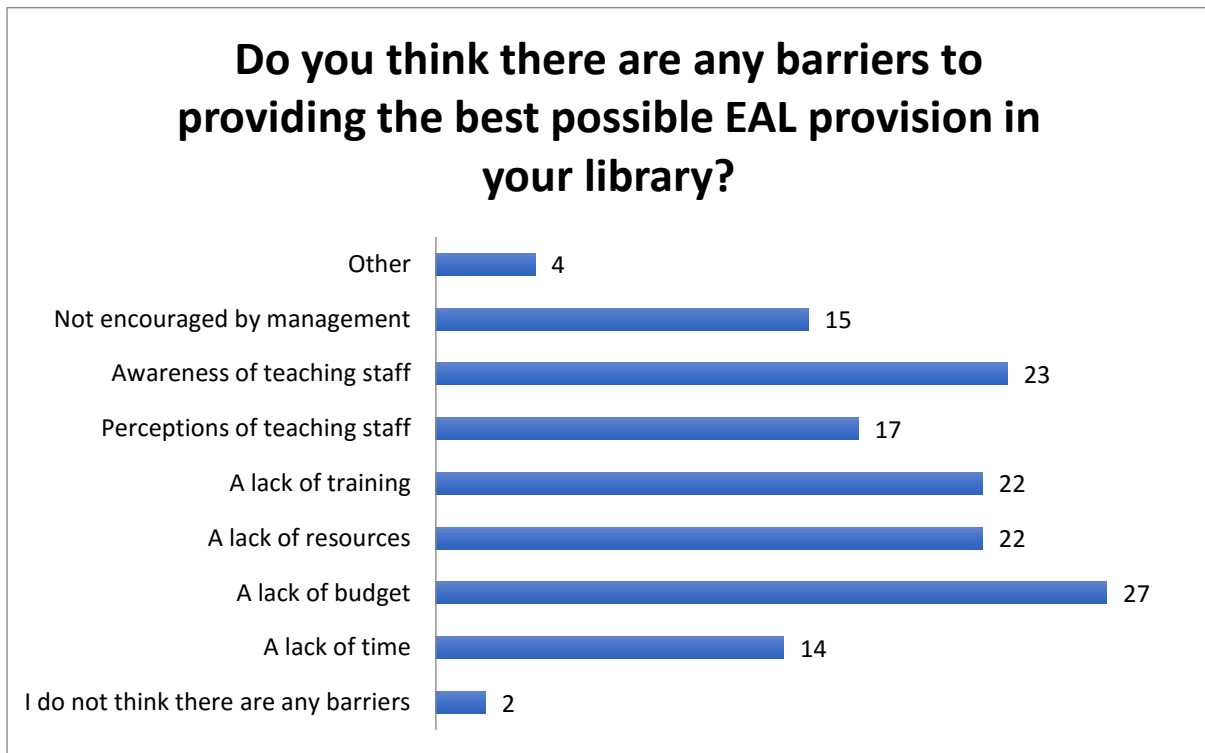| Category	Value
Other	4
Not encouraged by management	15
Awareness of teaching staff	23
Perceptions of teaching staff	17
A lack of training	22
A lack of resources	22
A lack of budget	27
A lack of time	14
I do not think there are any barriers	2

Figure 9 shows that most participants agreed there are barriers to providing the best possible EAL provision, with only two respondents saying that they did not think there to be any barriers. Although a lack of budget was the most commonly cited issue, responses were spread quite evenly across all options and most respondents identified numerous barriers. This suggests that there are multiple issues that need to be addressed if EAL provision in school libraries is to be improved. In the interviews, there was a consensus that funding is a key problem hindering their abilities to provide better quality support: 'It would be very difficult without the funding to get non-fiction in another language... it would be very expensive' (I4), 'There's a limit to resources' (I5).

Although budget is a difficult barrier to surmount, other problems suggested by respondents would be easier to overcome. Indeed, the experience of other interviewees could act as good examples to follow. For example, communication issues could potentially be addressed by staff working to accentuate why the library is an important source of support for these students: 'We've built on it over the years... I try to advertise what I do, what I can provide at the beginning of the year, throughout the year, so they know to come to me now' (I1). Raising librarians' awareness of ways in which the library can effectively support EAL learners may require some professional development. Training presents more of a challenge because it can be reliant on spare money and time, which as we can see from this study are not forthcoming at present. On the other hand, we can see examples of interviewees developing their own knowledge in creative ways. One EAL interviewee participated in

an inexpensive online training course, and another reported subscribing to local school library services for access to a wider range of resources (I1, I5).

Summary of Findings

Overall, it seems that those secondary school librarians who participated in this study are using a variety of different means to support students in their school community with English as an Additional Language. Methods include providing access to fiction and non-fiction materials at different reading levels, offering a safe space within which to socialise and develop their language skills, as well as utilising activities and displays to promote cultural awareness and social inclusion. A few libraries are even stocking specialist EAL resources such as bilingual dictionaries and dual language fiction and are differentiating their information literacy lessons to meet the needs of their EAL learners. Most librarians feel confident that they know their EAL users, but some feel that they could benefit from more training and access to information about how to support learners with EAL. The extent to which librarians are being involved in school-wide EAL provision planning remains unclear with the responses of some interviewees implying that, in some instances, relationships between EAL staff and school librarians requires further attention. There are many barriers hindering librarians from offering the best possible service to EAL learners. Some of these barriers will be difficult to change, but others could arguably be overcome with some creative thinking and the support and experience of other school librarians.

RECOMMENDATIONS TO KEY STAKEHOLDER GROUPS

Based upon the findings of this study, recommendations can be made to different stakeholders involved in EAL provision in English secondary schools. It is worth noting that EAL provision must be designed to meet the specific context of each school and academic year. Therefore, all stakeholders are encouraged to gain a clear understanding about the local and national context in order to identify the most relevant provision. The following recommendations are therefore made:

Stakeholder	Short term	Longer term
Secondary School Librarians	Learn about the EAL learners in your school and their needs Establish practical methods of regular communication with EAL staff	Promote library services to teachers, leaders, and EAL staff Engage in professional development to improve your

	Network with other school librarians to share issues and methods of good practice related to EAL support in school libraries	understanding about EAL provision
Secondary School Staff with EAL responsibilities	Communicate key information about learners with EAL to library staff regularly and systematically Visit the school library to gain a greater understanding of the services they offer and how EAL learners use the space	Offer and advice, training and expertise to librarians about EAL support Include the librarian in decision making and EAL provision planning
Secondary School Leaders	Promote EAL provision as an important school-wide issue Develop and encourage training opportunities such as supporting staff to share their expertise	Channel some EAL funding towards to library to contribute to specialist resource acquisition Place pressure on publishers to improve materials available for EAL learners at school level
LIS professional networks, associations and researchers	Begin a conversation about the issue of EAL support in our schools to encourage professionals to share best practice	Support and undertake further research in this area and share the findings accordingly Place pressure on publishers to improve materials available for EAL learners at school level

RESEARCH CONTRIBUTION, AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

This brief study has emphasised the potentially valuable role a school library can play in the provision of support to EAL learners in schools, a group of students we know to have at least doubled in size in recent years. Building on an identified omission in previous research in library and information science, this new study has shown that EAL provision in English school libraries is perceived as undeniably important, but which many librarians feel is not being effectively addressed. From the empirical data and the literature review have emerged a series of short term and longer term recommendations to four key stakeholder groups to encourage greater understanding of the EAL context, and to develop the most appropriate and relevant services for EAL students in their schools.

In conducting this study we have identified three main areas in which further research would help to obtain a more complete picture of this critical role of the school library. Firstly, a larger scale study would help to elicit a clearer indication of levels of support for EAL learners across England and the UK, taking into account levels of provision in primary schools. Secondly, it would be valuable to conduct a series of case studies in order to obtain a more in-depth understanding of EAL provision in different types of school, and hopefully to provide useful and transferable examples of best practice. Finally, it is important that further research be conducted to investigate the perspectives of EAL students and potentially their families, in order to obtain data regarding their experiences as users of a school library, and the extent to which they felt supported by its services.

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