



## **Supporting children's learning in the early years**

*Including all children*

### **Narrator**

All children bring something valuable to an educational setting. In a multi-ethnic society, children draw on and contribute a wealth of cultural and linguistic expertise and knowledge. At Pillgwenlly Nursery School in Newport, South Wales, teacher Jenny Summers, works with a team of bilingual assistants. Surinder Lottay who works mostly in Punjabi, Lupfha Begum who works in Gujarati and Amena Alnamari who speaks Arabic. It's a stimulating environment for the children, and one which values and recognises the importance of learning in their mother tongue in these early stages. Teacher Jenny Summers believes that the work of the bilingual assistants is vital in supporting children whose first language is not English.

### **Jennie Summers**

Ninety per cent of our EAL children would speak their mother tongue at home, so when the children arrive with us in September, well in fact when we visit on our home visits, we would pick up the children who maybe speak a few words of English. We take our EAL language assistants with us on the home visits and they of course help enormously in assessing that home situation before the child starts. So there is we have this input of children who don't speak any English at all, and then during the summer term it's superb to see that growth in that language development from single words to sentences, and it's usually quite well developed with the majority by that summer term, through this small concentrated approach that we use with our bilingual assistants.

### **Narrator**

Surinder is involved with a group of children in one of the many experiences offered throughout the nursery. Why does Surinder feel it's important to teach children in their mother tongue?

### **Surinder**

I think it's more valuable really to keep their culture going. So if they've got the language, the language and culture go side by side. The other thing I find that in the nursery, with every year children bringing in they bringing their festivals in and, it's a multicultural community it is, and that's how I feel I've picked up my languages.

### **Narrator**

Meanwhile Lupfha and Amena are working with other groups. Wall Hall Nursery School, which we visited in the first band of this video, provides for many children, some of whom have complex learning needs and disabilities. One of these children is Malana, whose key worker is Jackie Dowden, who meets her from a bus each day as she arrives. Malana is involved in the many activities and experiences on offer. Jackie is there to support her if necessary.

### **Cindy Willey**

In terms of involving Malana in all of the activities, we see the session as very free flowing we want the children to make the nursery session their own, and we want them to follow their interests, and the it's the adult's role to really support their interests and to try and challenge their thinking, and provide experiences for them that will really enable them to think more broadly. Because Malana is so very social she's very much a part of that. We obviously talk about specific activities that Malana might like to engage with, but basically because Jackie supports her so sensitively, she enjoys playing with the other children and Jackie stands back and supports her when it's necessary.

**Narrator**

In this video we've seen how skilled and reflective practitioners work together to plan for, and support learning for all children. The skills and knowledge of practitioners clearly impacts on children's day to day experience of the curriculum, and on their future lives.