



English – the Key to Integration in London

English Skills Development through Outdoor Learning

Springfield Primary School

Project Lead: Fiona Judge, Head of School, Springfield Community Primary School

Introductory paragraph

Springfield is located in north Hackney, an area that contains the highest percentage of ‘Main Language not English’ residents and the highest percentages of residents who ‘do not speak English well’, or ‘do not speak English at all’ in the borough (see data below). This is reflected in the student demographic where 50% of children attending the Primary Advantage Federation (cluster of 6 schools) are non-EU EAL speakers.

The project was designed to balance highly structured ESOL lessons in the classroom with outdoor sessions in a local woodland environment. Not only does it offer a unique context to apply language but it provides learners an opportunity to engage directly in a popular aspect of school life with their children and share in exploring, risk-taking, communicating and self-initiated learning.

Key points

- Interest in ESOL lessons high.
- The project has a high profile in school and received positive feedback from teachers, parents and children.
- Learners report feeling more confident coming into school and talking to teachers.
- A few learners are taking up childcare qualifications or are volunteering in childcare settings with a view to further study in future.
- Recruitment and outreach was a struggle initially. Crèche facilities on offer at the ESOL site would help mothers attend classes e.g. ESOL at Children’s Centres better attended than those at sites with no crèche.

Impact on mothers’ English

“The mothers seem a lot more confident now. They are much more chatty with each other and there is a lot of laughter in the lessons. It’s a lot of fun teaching them.” – **ESOL tutor**

“My English got better as a volunteer. It also helps me in other activities like going to the gym or the park. I am happy because my daughter gets (EAL) reading support” – **Participant (Participant studying Functional English Skills, Level 1 and Supporting Teaching and Learning in Schools, Level 2).**

“Children are happy to see their parents become more confident speaking English. Seeing their parent become an active member of the school community has given our EAL pupils extra confidence and pride in their parents work so far. It has increased links in communication too between school and home. Children and parents are becoming more united on their learning

journey and as they learn together, they grow together collaboratively, in one holistic learning community. This ultimately helps our links with family life and gives the ESOL parents more confidence in talking to teachers about school policies, learning and coming up with ideas for school events in the future.” - **Acting Head of School**

Impact on mothers’ involvement with the school

“She seemed more confident talking to the teacher [at parents evening], she didn’t look at me all the time for help.” – **Turkish translator**

We have had a surge in support from parents since the beginning of ESOL project. Our ESOL parents are readily volunteering for school trips, helping out with homework clubs, relentlessly giving up their time to come into class lessons, in order to improve their English levels. This in turn has had a knock on affect in their children's lives and the rest of the school. Additional adults in classes, benefits both the parent learning English and the class teacher. We often have new arrivals and our ESOL parents, who are from a variety of nations, have been instrumental in doing some translation work as well as nurture with some new children to our school. As they are familiar with the initial stages of learning English they have more empathy and skills to pass this knowledge on. - **Head Teacher**

Impact on pupils

“X loves homework club. He is eager to show it to me every week and is really proud.”
– **Year 2 teacher.**

The ESOL project has allowed us to really help and nurture those children who were not getting any support at home to begin with due to language barriers. We have seen a marked increase in the amount of homework completed. Additionally, as homework club has supervision and ESOL support homework standards have risen greatly because of increased parent confidence and support from school. Overall, EAL children are progressing very well and some of our new arrivals, who came to the project half way through the year, are showing accelerated progress. The ESOL project has helped progress levels across all year groups so that EAL children are performing very well in comparison to national figures. The ESOL project has also highlighted the need to get home support right and school support right and to give children the best possible chances of achieving success. By nurturing and trying to bridge gaps in parent knowledge it then creates a ripple affect with our pupils learning journey also. - **Acting Head of School**

Project delivery

The project started at Springfield Primary School. Since January 2015, the project has grown and ESOL classes run in 4 locations: Springfield Primary School, Morningside Children’s Centre, Lubavitch Children’s Centre and Gladesmore School (Secondary). In addition, the project provided a number of parental engagement activities including: Forest School, Family Fun (after-school club), Homework Club and opportunities to volunteer time in a classroom.

In May 2015, all learners were sign-posted to Hackney ESOL Advice Service to register for free ESOL classes from September. Advice sessions were held at Springfield to facilitate the assessment and registration of mothers at Springfield School and provide continuity post-funding.

Further details: Contact Project Lead, Springfield School.



Homework club



ESOL lesson – learners from Turkey, Poland, Romania, India, Bangladesh.



Parent volunteering in the classroom.



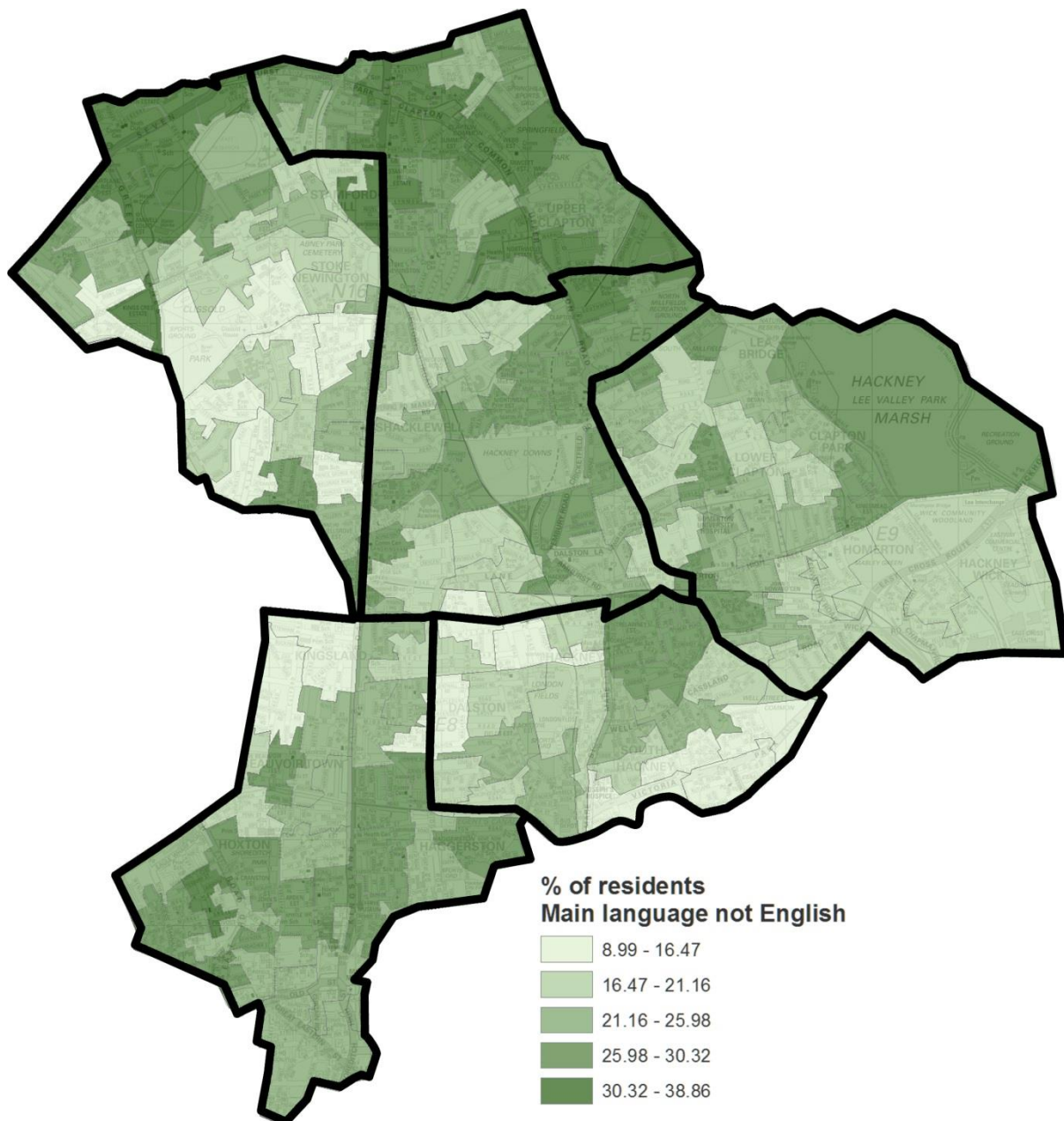
Forest School session – exploring, risk-taking, communicating



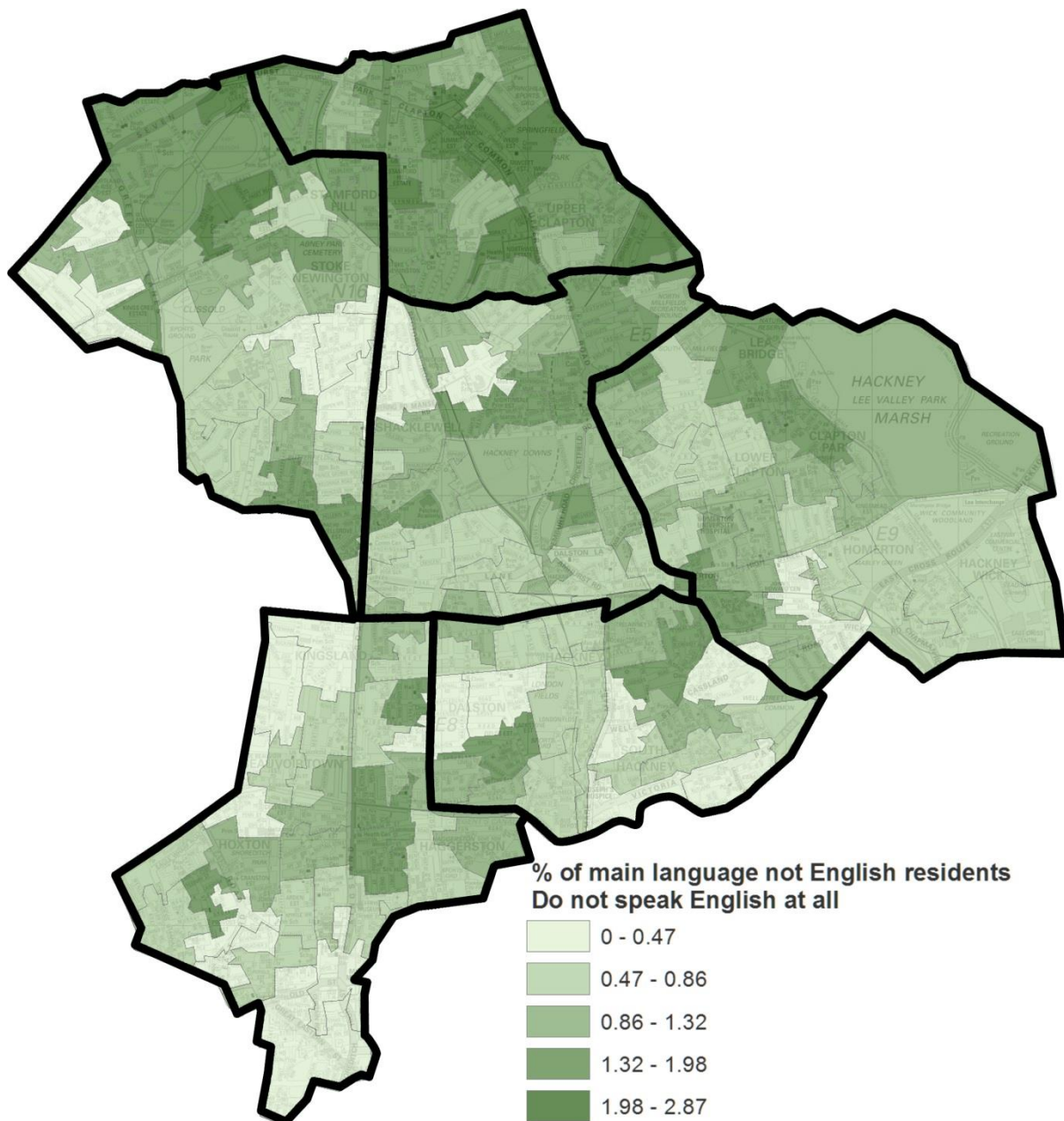
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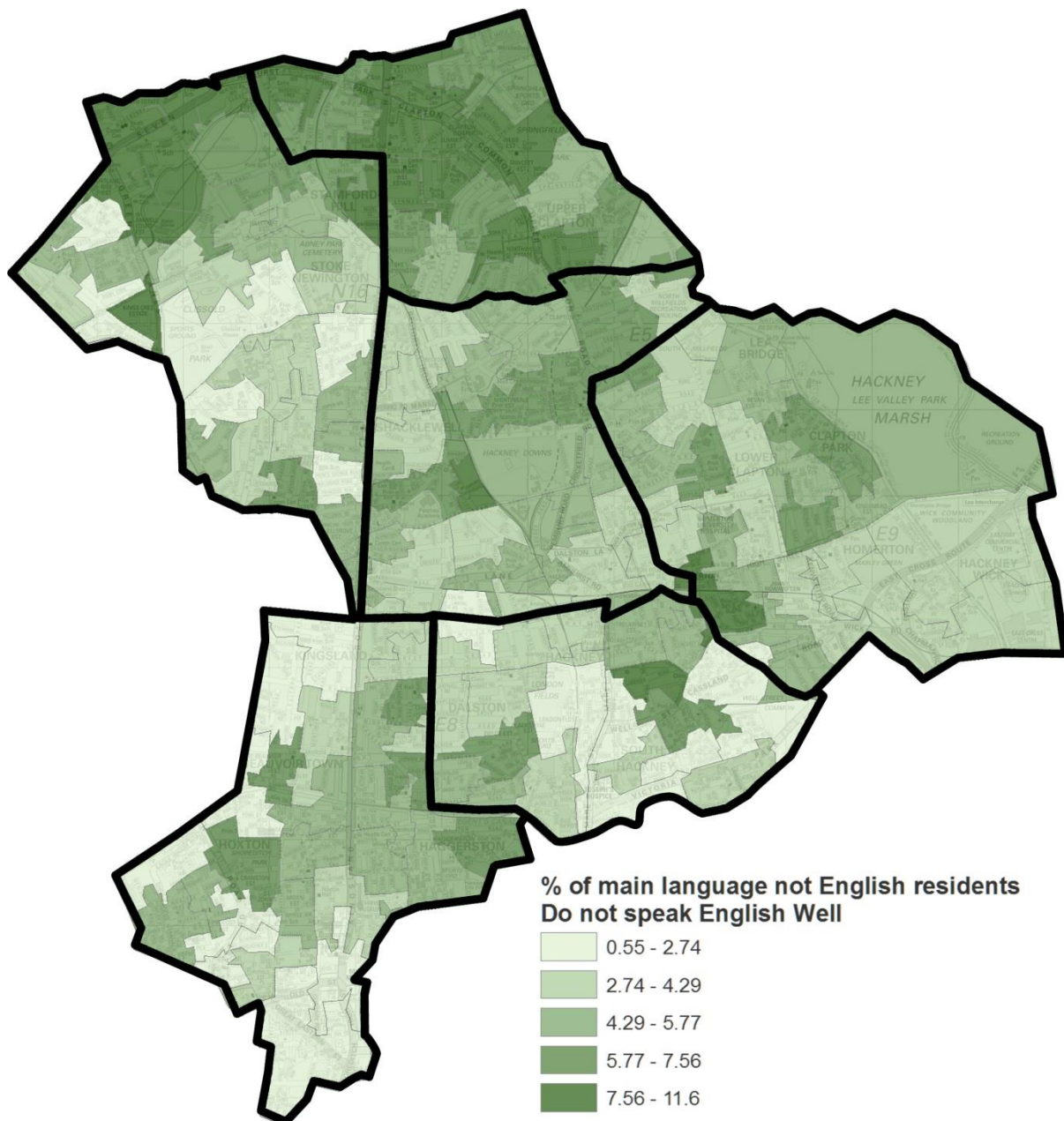
Graduation celebration!
Maps from Hackney Learning Trust: ESOL Advice Service



Source: ONS / Hackney Learning Trust - Hackney ESOL Advice Service



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