



Southfields Primary School

Speech, Language and Communication Needs Policy

Date agreed: September 2022

Review Date: September 2024

This policy, having been presented to, and agreed upon by the whole staff and Governors, will be distributed to:

- All teaching staff
- School governors

A copy of the policy will also be available in:

- The Staffroom
- The Head's office
- School web site

This will ensure that the policy is readily available to visiting teachers, support staff and parents.

Southfields Primary is totally committed to social justice and improving life chances for potentially vulnerable children. It is dedicated to sharing its work and findings beyond the school to improve outcomes for as many children as it can reach and has a particular specialism in Speech and Language development.

We are proud to be accredited by ELKAN – a professional body in supporting young people with SLCN. We are a 'Communication Friendly School'

1. Introduction

Speech, language and communication are a major part of our everyday lives. Communication is made up of several strands: use of language, comprehension, social interaction and expression.

Martin and Miller (1989) explain: Language is central to learning. It provides the main tool for teaching and learning and by experiencing language for these purposes children's language develops further. Through active participation and through interaction with people and their environment, children learn to make sense of their world. Learning, and in particular, learning through the use of language is an intellectual, emotional and social activity.

Therefore, we ensure our provision embeds and enriches children's speech language and communication needs, supporting both parents and children using a wide range of strategies.

2. Aims

- To provide an optimal communication environment that promotes and encourages communication throughout the whole school.
- To provide a personalised approach to teaching and learning, reflecting an understanding of a pupil's language, learning and literacy needs, social and communication difficulties and academic progress.
- To provide interventions at all levels to support children who can catch up to do so and those with longer term difficulties to communicate to the best of their ability.

3. Whole School Strategies

These are supported through regular staff training, monitoring and information sharing as coordinated by the Hub Manager

- Around our school you will see relevant displays to inspire children and provide confidence and self-belief.
- Every teacher is required to display key features of learning in his/her classroom. Alongside this, teachers are aware of the fundamentals of what a 'Communication Friendly' Classroom looks like through our ever-evolving 'Communication Checklist'. This is regularly updated and shared to ensure staff understanding and implementation. The checklist outlines the following fundamental aspects (sections 3 and 4):
- Visual timetables are used throughout the school, from Reception to Y6.
- A wide range of media strategies to communicate meaning to pupils – signs,

symbols, text, actions, songs and verbal instructions.

- A shared understanding across our staff of the children's speech and language needs e.g.
- 'chunking' information/instructions, using the '10 second rule'.
- A shared understanding that vocabulary needs to be explicitly taught. Pre-teaching is necessary for children with SLCN. Staff have had training into how to effectively teach, apply and review new vocabulary.
- Differentiated questioning skills are used as appropriate to the children's level of understanding (using both Blooms Taxonomy and Blank Levels).
- Having a wide variety of texts available to our pupils at differentiated levels.
- In line with the new Reading Framework (July 2021) and our new 'Voice 21' membership, more focus will be given to spoken language, 'talk time', rhyme-time and the explicit modelling and teaching of oracy skills such as good listening skills and discussion guidelines.

In the Classroom teachers:

- Give children time to process information (thinking time)
- Listen to the child
- Visual timetables
- Use communication in print across the school curriculum and within the organisation of the school
- Check for shared meaning of vocabulary through pictures, communication in print, definitions and explanation webs; the explicit teaching of vocabulary is practised throughout the school
- Encourage children to ask for clarification
- Make the focus of the lesson explicit and explained the expectations
- Check the speed of delivery – am I talking too fast?
- Explain concepts and vocabulary
- Use word banks and vocabulary sheets
- Pre-teach vocabulary (where required)
- Generate discussion
- Provide opportunities to engage in speaking and listening tasks
- Use talking partners to encourage conversation
- Repeat instructions before rephrasing
- Use displays and working walls to support learning and teaching
- Use non-verbal cues (hand signals and body language)

During Small group/ individual work

- Encourage Dictionary use and Thesaurus us Comment rather than question – encourage children to expand on their answers and comments
- Use mind maps to extend vocabulary
- Use word games and listening activities

4. Identification and assessment procedures

- Due to our daily interaction with the children and consistent assessment and monitoring of progress we aim to ensure that all pupils who are experiencing difficulties with aspects of speech, language and communication are identified as early in their school career as possible.
- Teaching staff and school SaLT (Helena Pook) work collaboratively to identify and prioritise children throughout the school for evidence-based intervention which is carried out individually or in small groups by the SaLT or a teaching assistant with the support and guidance of the SaLT.
- We complete a Baseline Reception assessment, the NELI (Nuffield Early Language Intervention) in the Autumn Term, in order to identify those children who come into school with significantly below national expectations in speech and language. From this assessment, children with SLCN (or at risk of) are identified early on. From this identification we can then focus on closing the gap and accelerating progress of speech and language skills in Early Years.
- The school's assessment and tracking procedures facilitate early identification of difficulties, whilst highlighting individual abilities. Areas of difficulty are highlighted by the teachers to the speech therapist (Helena Pook) and an appropriate intervention programme is developed by the school speech therapist.
- These programmes may be individual, paired or small group work.
- The children are regularly assessed and monitored by the speech therapist to ensure progress is being made and that the intervention has a successful outcome. This is through a review of our 'Big Strides' targets. For those with NHS SaLT input, this progress will also be reviewed by the link therapist on a termly basis.
- For highly specific speech and language assessment that can only be administered by the speech therapist, parental consent will be sought prior to the assessment taking place. This may then result in a referral to the Speech and Language Therapy Service.
- The speech therapists working will liaise with the class teachers and keep them informed of the programme that the child is currently engaged in and the outcome of the intervention through a summary report at the end of the programme.
- Children who are supported through the Community Speech and Language Therapy Service (NHS) will have their programmes completed regularly throughout the week by Hub teaching assistants wherever possible. Their targets will link into their 'Big Strides' books as a way of class teachers monitoring, measuring and evidencing progress.
- Children on the Hub for Speech and Language will also be supported through the Community Speech and Language Therapy Service (NHS) and will have their programmes completed regularly throughout the week by Hub teaching assistants wherever possible. Their targets will link into their 'Big Strides' books as a way of class teachers monitoring, measuring and evidencing progress.

5. Behaviour

- There is a clear acknowledgement of the impact of SLCN on the social, emotional and behavioural development of children.
- The school 'light' system has been revised and adapted to take into account Key Stage 1 with the addition of the 'Road' system, plus Blanks levels of verbal reasoning and has been symbolised using 'Communicate in Print'.
- Children whose behaviour is giving cause for concern either because they are disruptive or overly quiet, anxious and/or withdrawn are prioritised for assessment by the school SaLT.

6. Parental Involvement

- Parents/Carers/Guardians are invited to attend Parents' Evenings in the Autumn and Spring Terms to discuss their child's progress including any speech, language and communication issues. Children with SEND are offered longer appointments to discuss the child's needs in greater depth.
- Parents of children who are on the Hub are offered a further meeting with the Hub Manager to discuss their child's specific speech and language difficulties, their progress and their targets and to sign and comment on their Big Strides target book.
- Parents of children on the Hub are also offered an opportunity to 'Meet and Greet' their child's speech and language therapist in the Autumn term in order to build positive relationships
- The children on the Hub and children who have moderate to severe speech and language difficulties are provided with Home/School communication diaries and/or the use of Class Dojo in order for there to be positive communication between home and school about the major events of the day, both at home and at school.
- When a child needs a specific speech and language assessment that is administered only by a speech therapist, parental consent is always sought.
- Parents are always welcome to make an appointment to speak with the Hub Manager or the Speech therapist at a mutually convenient time.

7. Staff Development

- Induction training for all new staff by the school SaLT and the Hub Manager.
- Regular training providing continued professional development for teachers to support their knowledge of speech, language and communication; what to expect at different ages and stages and enable them to identify those children who have SLCN.
- To develop an awareness of their own language use and adapt it to meet the children's needs.
- Training will be given annually. This may be as:

- Professional Development day
- Twilight sessions for teachers and teaching assistants
- Specific 'new to Southfields' induction sessions
- Rolling programme for teaching assistants and lunchtime play leaders throughout the year
- 1:1 coaching and support for class-based staff delivered by the Hub Manager through a variety of means such as team teaching, joint observations and other monitoring methods.