

Definition: To be effective communicators we need to be able to use speech and language.

Language is the ability to understand words and sentences so that we can follow what is being said to us. It involves organising our thoughts and ideas using appropriate vocabulary into grammatically correct sentences ready for talking.

Speech is the ability to process and combine sounds together to say words.

Communication is the ability to say the right thing, at the right time in the right way. It involves using speech and language skills to send the message we want to send to others.

Non verbal communication is the ability to understand and use gesture, body language, facial expression and our voice to help communicate our message.

Speech, Language and Communication Need encompasses difficulties children may experience with all three areas of communication. Some children may only have difficulties in one area whilst others may have difficulties in all three.

Characteristics seen in the classroom:

- Difficulties in attention and listening, particularly in large groups.
- Difficulties in making themselves understood.
- Reluctant to volunteer information or join in discussions.
- Difficulties in following complex instructions. May always be watching to see what others do.
- Difficulties in acquiring and using a broad vocabulary, including concepts, as in maths.
- Difficulties in accessing the curriculum.
- Difficulties with literacy-decoding and segmenting words for reading, spelling and comprehension of reading.
- Difficulties with organisational skills.
- Difficulties forming and maintaining friendships particularly with their own age.
- Difficulties with complex language skills, eg, inference, verbal reasoning and non literal language.

Where to go for help:

- The Speech and Language Therapy Service
- Severdale Outreach Service

Speech, Language and Communication Needs

Assessment and Diagnosis:

Assessments can be carried out by professionals such as a Speech and Language Therapist, or a Specialist Language Teacher (SSLIC Team)
Dependent on the communication needs of the child, assessments will look at a range of areas, for example: attention and concentration, listening skills, speech production, phonological awareness, expressive language skills, receptive language skills, auditory memory, sequencing, understanding of abstract language concepts, vocabulary and naming, word retrieval, word order and sentence structure.

Standardised tests that may be used include: The Renfrew Language Scales, British Picture Vocabulary Scale, Diagnostic Evaluation of Articulation and Phonology, Pre-school and Primary Inventory of Phonological Awareness, Bracken Basic Concept Scale, Clinical Evaluation of Language Fundamentals and the Test of Abstract Language Comprehension.

Frequently used interventions:

- Visual timetables in class and around school.
- Individual speech and language therapy programmes devised by SALT or specialist teacher.
- Daily 1:1 practice of targeted skills.
- Pre tutoring of new vocabulary.
- Use of symbols and gestures to help facilitate speech and literacy. Eg Jolly Phonics, (makaton, communicate in print, Widgit)
- Slow your rate of speech.
- Use short chunks of information.
- Give pupil time to respond.