



Communication and Language at Swaffham Church of England Primary Academy

Our intent is for every child at Swaffham Primary Academy to develop their speech, language and communication skills so that they are a confident communicator, with the ability to express themselves as individuals, share their thoughts, ideas and feelings and participate in discussion, taking turns and listening to others.

Rationale

At Swaffham Primary Academy improving and supporting children's speech, language and communication is a priority from the moment children join us in our Reception class. The national picture supports speech, language and communication as a primary focus area for schools.

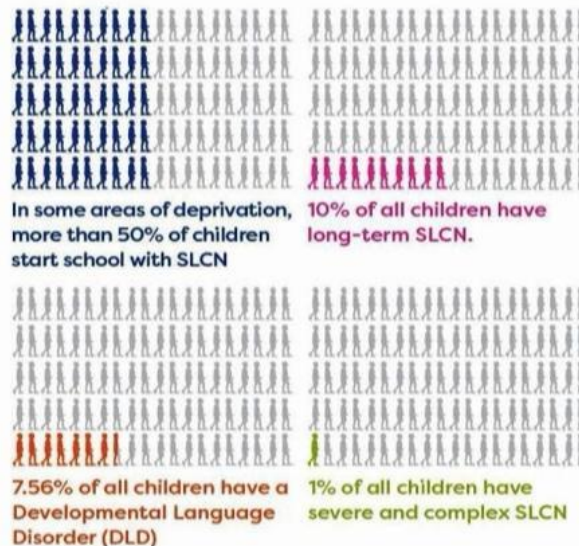
Why are we focusing on speech, language and communication?



The National Picture



Prevalence of SLCN in the UK:



70% of children with identified language difficulties at 5 ½ still demonstrate language difficulties at 15 years old, and of these pupils, 93% also have literacy difficulties. The national picture of speech and language highlights the importance of identifying any speech, language and communication needs (SLCN) early on and putting in place effective support to facilitate progress and build confidence and self-esteem.

SLCN can impact a wide range of developmental areas:

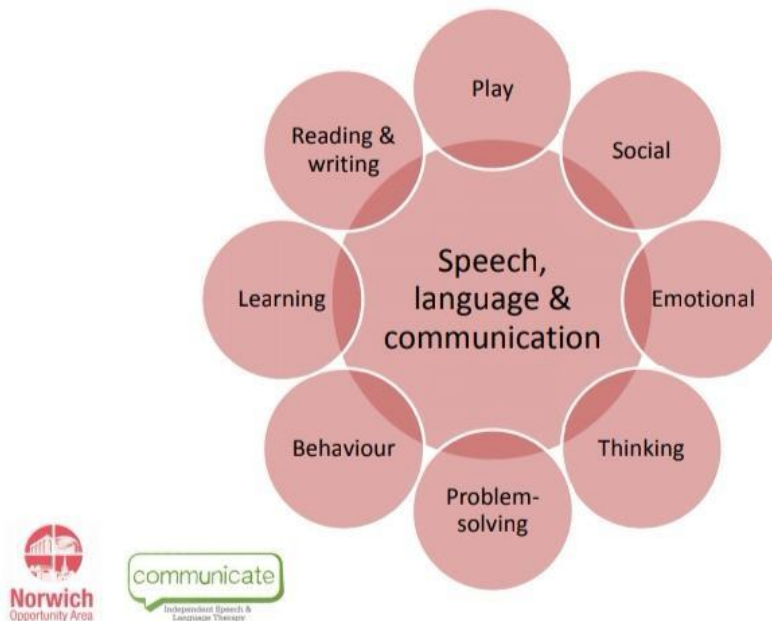
- Learning
- Behaviour



- Social development
- Emotional development

Speech, language and communication are central skills with a wide ranging impact:

Speech, language and communication are central skills, with a wide ranging impact



Speech, language and communication are a priority in order for children to access, understand and make progress across all areas of the curriculum, to enable children to develop as a learner as well as progress with their personal, social and emotional development. Language, and everything that encompasses from speech to communication, is the key to a child's progress, confidence and success as a learner, a friend and a member of their community.

Language is essential to children's social and emotional development and wellbeing.

Language and phonological skills are the foundation of early literacy development.

Therefore, early identification of SLCN and early intervention is absolutely vital in order to maximise progress and development and minimise any potential negative impact.

In Norfolk, the waiting list for a child to access speech and language therapy support is up to 2 years. This makes it even more crucial for schools to support and develop SLCN as well as supporting families with their understanding of SLCN and how best to support this at home.

Assessment of SLCN



Pupils in our Reception class are assessed three times a year for their speech, language and communication needs, using a toolkit called Wellcomm. Depending on the individual needs of the child, they may be assessed at other points throughout the year.

Swaffham Primary Academy assesses all children on joining Reception, in Autumn Term 1. This establishes a baseline of SLCN. We use the Wellcomm assessment, which was developed and supported by Speech and Language Therapists. This consists of a set of questions, such as 'When do you brush your teeth?' and picture cards, for example cartoon pictures of a variety of transport. Our intent here is that every child with potential SLCN will be identified in EYFs so that we are able to carefully support them to build on their language skills so that their speech, language and communication will not be a barrier to their behaviour, social and emotional development and their understanding or ability to access the curriculum. Every family will have a good understanding of where their child is at with their SLCN and what support they need. Families and teachers will work together to support language development. This will continue beyond EYFS throughout every child's educational journey.

It is important to remember that even if a child is below their age related expectations for speech, language and communication, they may not have a specific **Speech, Language and Communication Need**, if they make the appropriate amount of progress. For example, if a child at 4 years old has the speech and language of a 3 year old, but they make 6 months progress in a 6 months period, they may not have SLCN as they are able to make sufficient progress in sufficient time, with the appropriate support.

Once children in Reception have completed their baseline we are then aware of which children require more support with their SLCN and which children require intervention.

Through the Wellcomm SLCN assessment we can establish if a child scores Red, Amber or Green. This is closely linked to their age, and depending on the age of the child depends which assessment we start on. If a child scores amber or red, we then complete the assessment from the age band below until a child scores green. This will determine their 'age' in SLCN. For example, if a child scores green in their age related band then their language skills are age appropriate.

Red	Amber	Green
Language skills are significantly delayed	Language skills are mildly delayed.	Language skills are age appropriate.
Repeat the screening process for the age bands below until the child achieves a Green Score. Follow the Wellcomm intervention support for SLCN from the Big Book of Ideas. Complete a NELI assessment to consider NELI intervention. Re-screen for SLCN in 3 months. If the child has not made sufficient progress (3 months) and continues to score a Red/Amber, consider a referral to an outside agency.	Repeat the screening process for the age bands below until the child achieves a Green Score. If a child achieves two successive Amber Scores they may have a specific communication difficulty. Follow the Wellcomm support for SLCN. Complete a NELI assessment to consider NELI intervention. Re-screen for SLCN in 3 months. If the child has not made sufficient progress (3 months) and continues to score a Red/Amber, consider a	This indicates language development is at the level it should be. You do not need to carry on once you have a score in the Green Band in the child's age expected band. Advice to continue to develop a child's language skills further can be found in the Wellcomm Big Book of Ideas.



	referral to an outside agency.	
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Implementation of Speech, Language and Communication Support

Early Intervention and support in EYFs

The Wellcomm Toolkit has a range of fantastic activities to develop a child's language skills whether their current language skills are age appropriate or significantly delayed. These sessions can be delivered as whole class sessions, in small groups or one to one, as appropriate. Our EYFs class delivers these sessions to the whole class during their All About Words sessions. Additional sessions can be put in place for those pupils who need this. For children who require specific speech and language intervention, the intervention toolkit we use is called NELI: Nuffield Early Language Intervention. This intervention program is specifically designed for younger children and focuses on that early intervention to support progress in their SLCN. Children may go on to Year 1, and beyond, and continue to need SLCN support or intervention.

	EYFS	Year 1
Autumn Term	Assess all pupils using the Wellcomm assessment SLCN teacher-led sessions for all pupils using the Wellcomm Big Book of Ideas. Red Score - pupils will be assessed using the NELI assessment. Share the results with families - Discussion with families and child around SLCN support.	Continuation of NELI Intervention for any pupils identified in EYFs. Share the results with families - Discussion with families and child around SLCN support.
Spring Term	Assess all pupils using the Wellcomm Re-assess all Amber/Red scores. If less than 3 months of progress has been made or a child is still at 'Red' consider referral to an outside agency. SLCN teacher-led sessions for all pupils using the Wellcomm Big Book of Ideas. Red Score - pupils will be assessed using the NELI assessment.	Assess pupils undergoing NELI using NELI assessments. Continuation of NELI support and intervention for those pupils who require it. Share with families. A referral can be made at any time if needed.
Summer Term	Assess all pupils using the Wellcomm SLCN teacher-led sessions for all pupils using the Wellcomm Big Book of Ideas. Red Score - pupils will be assessed using	Assess pupils undergoing NELI using NELI assessments. Continuation of NELI support and intervention for those pupils who require it.



	the NELI assessment. Share the results with families - Discussion with families and child around SLCN support. Consider referral to an outside agency for pupils who have not made sufficient progress and are scoring Red/Amber. Inform Year 1 transition	Share with families. A referral can be made at any time if needed. Inform Year 2 transition and consider what SLCN is required in Year 2, depending on the needs of the child/children.
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Areas of speech, language and communication:

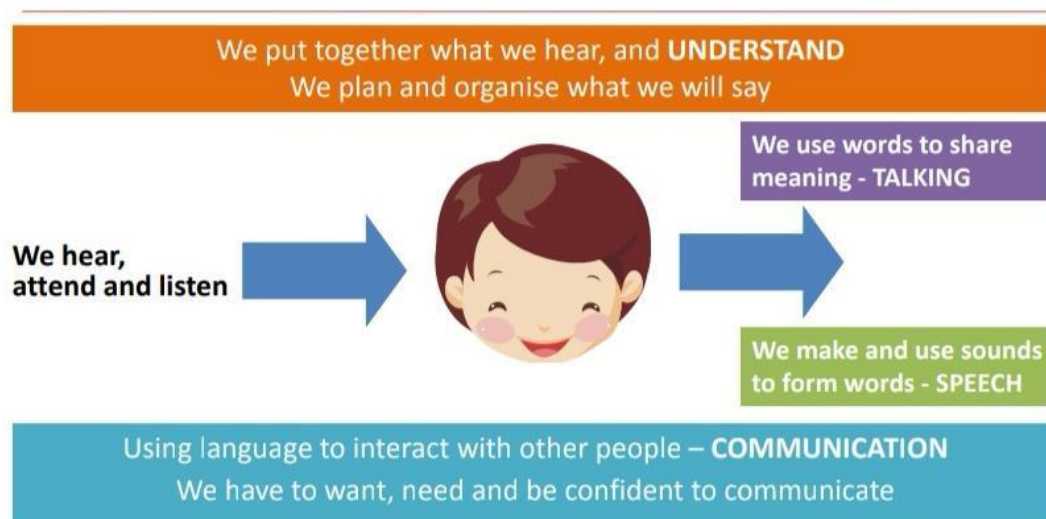
Speech is how children use sounds to make up words, so articulating the sounds and then joining them together e.g. articulating c-a-t then joining them to say 'cat'. **Speech** also involves speaking with a clear voice, minimising hesitation and repetition and speaking in a way that interests the listener, for example use of prosody.

Language is made up of understanding and talking. **Understanding** - sometimes called comprehension or receptive language. **Talking** - sometimes called expressive language

Language includes knowing and choosing the right words to explain what we mean (vocabulary), joining words together (in the correct order) into sentences, stories or conversations, using word endings (grammar) and using different types of sentences such as a question. **Language** is also about making sense of what people say.

Communication is how we use language with others. This includes non verbal communication such as eye contact, body language, gestures and turn-taking. Communication also includes how we might change what we say and how we say it, depending on who we are talking with.

What do speech, language and communication mean?



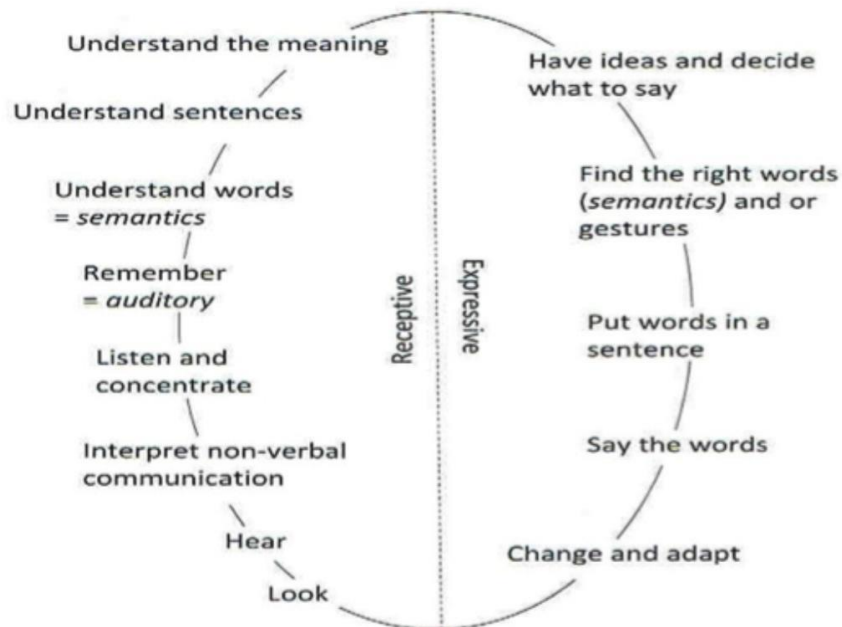


Before we can expect children to be secure in their Literacy skills they need to have developed:

- Speech sounds
- Interacting and talking
- Understanding
- Play
- Attention and listening

These key skills are a priority in our EYFs provision.

Communication is a complex process: The Communication Chain



Communication Champions

At Swaffham Primary Academy we have two Communication Champions:

Mrs Rice, SENDCo and Assistant Headteacher

Miss Lambert, Reception Class teacher

Our Communication Champions attended training to improve children's early speech, language and communication development as well as being trained in using the Wellcomm toolkit and attending local Communication Hubs to keep up to date with the latest information and developments in speech, language and communication.

Our Reception teaching assistant, Mrs Smart, is fully trained in delivering NELI interventions and support. We are in the process of appointing a Communication and Language Teaching Assistant to support this priority area.

Every day support for SLCN

An effective way to support the progression and development of speech, language and communication is in our every day practice. The staff at Swaffham Primary Academy apply all of these strategies daily to support our children. This is more crucial at an early age, in our Reception and Year 1 classes, but it plays a vital role throughout a child's learning and development across all ages and key stages. We draw on our professional experience and expertise as well as the



Wellcomm Big Book of Ideas to ensure this is effective. Whole class, small group or one to one discussion and interaction is a great tool in supporting the development of language skills.

Everyday strategies

- **Modelling:** model language and talk about what you are doing throughout the day
- **Repetition:** this helps children to learn new words and reassures them that they have been heard and understood. It also allows children to hear the correct way of saying something if it is repeated back to them correctly.
- **Expand:** add to what the child says to help extend vocabulary and sentence structures.
- **Use open questions:** questions that require more than a yes/no answer encourage children to develop their use of language.

Where a child's speech sounds are delayed and they need additional support with speech sound development, we employ these strategies:

Strategies to support children's speech sound development



- **Repeat sounds back in the correct way** – don't correct the child, but say the word back to them, so they have an opportunity to hear the sound – say the word a few times if you can
- **Emphasise sounds** – when you are modelling the correct sound in a word, put a slight emphasis on the sound that you want the child to listen to
- **Specific praise** – Let the child know when they have said a sound well – 'that was brilliant! You said 'cat' with a 'c' sound!
- **Don't pretend to understand** – make it out to be your fault if you can't understand a child, and encourage the child to use gestures, or to show you if you can't understand them
- **Try some sound awareness activities** – syllable counting, listening out for rhymes, listening out for sounds in words are all helpful



A language learning environment will support pupils' development in all areas of SLC development. In our Early Years and Key Stage 1 classrooms you will see:



1. Language Learning Environment



- Learning areas are clearly labelled with pictures/words throughout the classroom
- Children's own work is displayed and labelled appropriately
- Book specific areas are available
- Background noise levels are managed consistently throughout the observation, and children and adults are able to hear one another with ease
- There is good light
- The majority of learning resources and materials are labelled with pictures/ words
- Resources that are available for free play are easily reached by the children or easily within their line of vision
- An appropriate range of books are available in the book area (for example, traditional stories, bilingual/dual language books and a variety of genres and books related to children's own experiences)
- Outdoor play (if available) includes imaginative role play
- Good quality toys, small world objects and real/natural resources are available
- Musical instruments and noise makers are available
- Role play area is available



Speech and Language Referrals

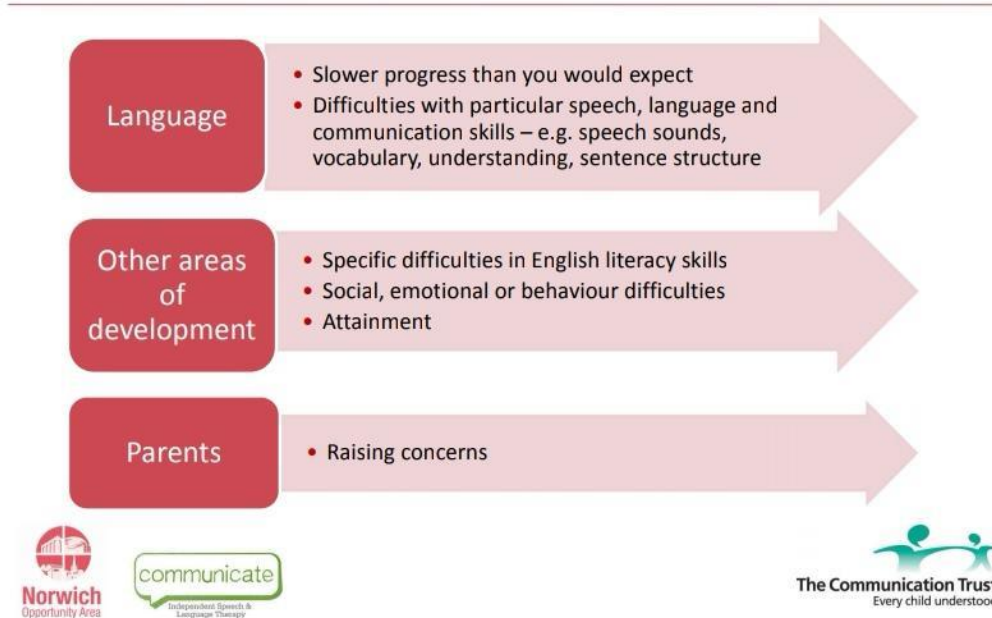
A referral can only be made in Norfolk if a child has had a minimum of 12 weeks SLC intervention and has not made 12 weeks progress within that time. At Swaffham Primary, this intervention will be NELI. There is about a 2 year waiting list for SLC referrals. This highlights the importance of school support and intervention even more.



EAL

English as an additional language is not a Speech, language and communication need. Some EAL pupils may also have SLCN. The most important element here is progress. If an EAL child is making sufficient progress with their speech, language and communication, then there is not a specific SLC need.

EAL and SLCN – what to look out for



- Instead of correcting, model the right way.
- Explain phrases and words a child does not understand
- Instead of asking lots of questions, focus on one open ended question like “tell me about your morning.”
- Use every day routines to practice communication skills
- Be consistent in your choice of words to name objects
- Continue to speak in your chosen language (usually English) even if the child responds in a different language. If the child responds, it is likely they have understood
- Use nursery rhymes and stories from any culture and language.
- Give lots of praise
- Show an interest in their language.

Families

We involve families every step of the way. The baseline assessment of every child, using the Wellcomm pack, will be shared with their family. For those children who will continue with NELI support, this will be discussed with the child and their family.

We share and discuss ways to support children at home and at school with the development of their speech, language and communication needs. We have a family poster highlighting our approach and support for speech, language and communication. If families have any SLCN



concerns they should discuss these with their child's class teacher, in the first instance. The SENDCo oversees the Wellcomm assessment and NELI interventions, as well as closely monitoring the progress and impact of these interventions.