

Speech and Language Development at Stoke Park School



At Stoke Park Infant School we are committed to ensuring that our children reach a good level of development in their speech and language skills. As a school with a Resourced Provision (RP) for children with Speech, Language and Communication Needs (SLCN), which is an integral part of the school, we have a level of expertise and experience that means we are well-placed to achieve this aim.

Training and skills of staff

Our RP staff provide a rolling programme of whole school and bespoke training which, although primarily aimed at meeting the needs of children with complex SLCN, promotes good practice and pedagogy which is of benefit to all children in the school. There are a number of staff within the school who have achieved the accredited ELKLAN award and all staff have accessed the recent County training on Developmental Language Disorder (DLD). Stoke Park Infant School has also achieved a Philosophy for Children (P4C) Bronze award and is working towards a higher level. This is a whole-school approach which has a specific focus on thinking and articulating ideas through language. We have a linked NHS speech therapist who visits regularly and is able to provide staff with guidance and training that enables them to deliver regular therapy work in school for those children under NHS speech therapy services.

Identification of needs

All children in Year R carry out a screen of their receptive language skills (known as Speech Link or Language Link). This highlights children who have a potential difficulty with their understanding of language and appropriate action is taken. This might be access to small group catch-up work or as part of evidence gathering for children whose needs require a referral to the NHS therapy services. Our RP manager is able to carry out a number of diagnostic assessments that support the referral process when this is necessary.

Universal, targeted and specialist approach

The new Early Years Foundation Stage Framework focuses on Communication and Language as one of the 3 prime areas of learning. Stoke Park Infant School was an early adopter of this framework and so have already embedded the principles into our practice. As well as the whole school P4C approach, our pedagogy for all children incorporates other strategies that are known to be beneficial to early language development. These include: the use of learning partners; small world and drama; Y2 reading gardens; Key stage 1 specific vocabulary teaching (root, trunk and branch words); visual environments; word mats; text drivers for literacy and the use of sign language and cued articulation.

For children whose needs require approaches over and above those stated above we may use other strategies and resources such as Lego Therapy, Social Stories, Clicker and Communicate in Print. We recognise that visual resources are very important but also acknowledge that, in some cases and situations, they can be overwhelming. Children who need it have regular access to quieter areas which are less visually cluttered to carry out focused activities.

Monitoring

The development of children's speech and language skills is monitored through assessments linked to subjects; the National Curriculum and Early Years Foundation Stage Framework. We also use specific assessments, including Speechlink, to measure progress. The senior leadership team meets regularly with teachers to discuss pupil progress and plan measures to help children continue to develop their skills.

We monitor our communication provision via an annual audit tool.

Impact

- 94% of children in EYFS (who do not have EHCPs for complex needs including speech and language) have made expected progress in speaking in the academic year 2021 – 2022