



Whole School Communication Strategy

Supporting Speech, Language and Communication

Vision

At our school we recognise that **speech, language and communication underpin all learning, social development and wellbeing**. We are committed to ensuring every child develops the vocabulary, confidence and communication skills they need to succeed academically and socially.

Our approach is informed by research from the **Education Endowment Foundation and Voice 21** which highlights the significant impact that high-quality talk, vocabulary instruction and targeted language interventions have on pupil outcomes.

We therefore implement a **graduated, whole-school approach** that includes:

- High-quality classroom practice for all pupils
- Targeted support for pupils needing additional language development
- Specialist intervention for pupils with identified speech and language needs

This strategy ensures communication development is embedded **across the curriculum from Early Years to Year 2**.

Intended Outcomes

Through this strategy we aim for all pupils to:

- Develop a **broad and rich vocabulary**
- Communicate confidently and clearly
- Listen actively and respond appropriately
- Articulate their ideas and reasoning
- Use talk to support learning across the curriculum

By embedding high quality communication practices across the school, we ensure pupils develop the speech, language and communication skills necessary for lifelong learning and success.

Principles of Effective Communication Support

Our practice is guided by the following principles:

1. Language-rich environments

Classrooms are designed to maximise language exposure through:

- Explicit vocabulary teaching
- High quality modelling of language
- Structured talk opportunities
- Visual support and scaffolding



- Visual timetables
- Makaton/signs where appropriate
- Clear routines and transitions
- Chunked instructions
- Modelling and recasting children's language

2. Explicit vocabulary instruction

Vocabulary is deliberately taught through a structured approach informed by **Word Aware**, ensuring children develop both breadth and depth of vocabulary.

3. Structured talk and oracy

Pupils are taught how to speak, listen, reason and present effectively through the progression of oracy skills and knowledge based in the **Voice 21 Oracy Framework**, ensuring progression in spoken language skills across the school.

4. Early identification and intervention

Children who require additional support are identified early through screening and assessment tools such as **WELCOMM Early Language Assessment** and **Nuffield Early Language Intervention** allowing timely targeted support.

Whole School Communication Approach

1. Universal Provision – High Quality Teaching for All

All classrooms provide a **communication-rich environment** where talk supports learning.

Teaching approaches include:

- Explicit modelling of language by adults
- Structured partner and group talk
- Talk frames and sentence stems
- Visual supports and gestures
- Vocabulary displayed and revisited regularly
- Opportunities for questioning, reasoning and discussion

Teachers use strategies recommended by the **Education Endowment Foundation** including:

- Pre-teaching vocabulary
- Structured classroom talk
- High quality questioning
- Explicit explanation of new words



2. Vocabulary Development – Word Aware

- Recasting: repeating a word/phrase used by a child with the correct grammar/pronunciation
- Extending: repeating a word/phrase used by a child and adding additional words to support their understanding
- Commenting: articulating an observation to highlight information – for example, connecting new vocabulary with similar words (synonyms) children already know.
- Narrating: modelling increasingly complex language structures.
- Commenting: articulating an observation to highlight information - or example, how a child has used language
- Explaining and showing: providing extra information to support children's understanding – for example, of word meanings and/or language.

The school uses the **Word Aware framework** to systematically develop vocabulary.

Implementation

Vocabulary is taught through the **four tier model**:

Tier 1 – Everyday words

- Supported through modelling, play and conversation.

Tier 2 – High-utility academic words

- Explicitly taught across the curriculum.
- Used in sentence stems and discussion.

Tier 3 – Subject specific vocabulary

- Pre-taught and revisited in lessons.

3. Early Language Development – EYFS

High Quality interactions

- Back-and-forth conversation with children to promote their communication and extend their thinking and learning following 6 principles for high quality interactions and communication.



SIX PRINCIPLES FOR COMMUNICATION AND INTERACTION



Principle 1

Comment More, Question Less

Use comments and statements rather than questions. Full sentences provide meaningful language models. Reduces pressure on quieter children. Instead of: "What's that? What colour?" Say: "You're making a tall tower. You've chosen the big block."

Principle 2

Use SHREC Approach

Evidence-based strategy for language development:
Sh - Share attention
Be at child's level, focus on their interest
R - Respond
Follow their lead, comment briefly
E - Expand
Repeat and add words to build sentences
C - Conversation
Extended back-and-forth, give time to reply

Principle 3

Teach Words Practically

Introduce vocabulary through multisensory experiences
Use real objects, actions, and contexts
Children need approximately 12 encounters to secure a new word
Repeat target words across different contexts and interactions

BIG - Find and compare objects that are genuinely big

Principle 4

Use Key Interaction Strategies

Naming & Labelling - Give clear words for objects/actions
Explaining & Showing - Demonstrate and describe
Repetition - Repeat key vocabulary multiple times
Recasting - Improve child's sentence ("Him fall" → "He fell down")
Extending - Add new information to their ideas
Commenting - Describe what they're doing, not questioning.

Principle 5

Mathematise During Play

Make natural maths in play visible through talk:
Spot opportunities: Counting, comparing, discussing shapes
Use precise vocabulary: "longer", "heavier", "more than", "pattern", "tallest"
Gentle prompts: "How many now?" "Which is tallest?"
Not formal teaching - notice and name the maths already happening.

Principle 6

Interact, Don't Interrupt

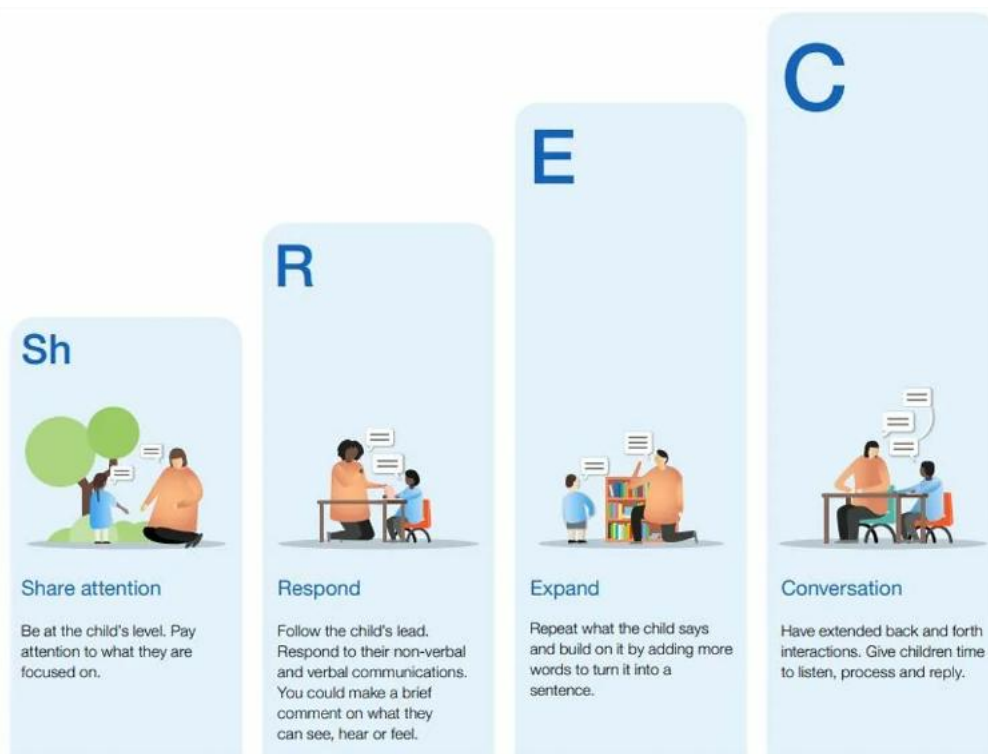
Interacting means: joining child's thinking, following interests, enhancing play

Interrupting means: stopping focus, asking too many questions, taking over play

Step in at moments of struggle, curiosity or need. Step back when children are deeply absorbed. Timing is key.

Shared sustained Thinking

Sustained Shared Thinking is an interactive process where two or more individuals work together intellectually to explore ideas, solve problems, and extend understanding over time.



Scaffolding

Scaffolding involves providing temporary support for a child during a task, to adjust the level of challenge. This includes in talk with practitioners providing scaffolds for talk through sentence stems or filling in the gaps.

Modelling language

- **Questioning:** using questions to encourage children to think about and use new knowledge
- **Sequencing:** using language to organise a story, event or experience into simple, ordered steps
- **Recalling:** using language to describe a previous event or experience
- **Recasting:** repeating a phrase used by a child with the correct grammar/pronunciation
- **Repetition:** intentionally repeating and reinforcing a taught concept in different contexts, over time
- **Imitation:** encouraging children to copy a word/phrase

Interactive/ shared reading

- **Questioning:** using questions to encourage children to think about and use new knowledge



- **Completion:** leaving a blank or gap for the child to fill in.
- **Sequencing:** using language to organise a story, event or experience into simple, ordered steps
- **Recalling:** using language to describe a previous event or experience – for example, connecting the story to the child's own experiences
- **Commenting:** articulating an observation to highlight information – for example, connecting new vocabulary with similar words (synonyms) children already know.
- Choosing books which include repeated refrains or repetitions of key vocabulary
- Encouraging the repetition of key words or phrases
- Re-reading the book on several occasions, to embed children's understanding and use of key words or phrases.

Screening and assessment

Children's speech and language development is assessed using:

WELCOMM Early Language Assessment

This allows staff to:

- Identify children with delayed language development
- Plan targeted activities to support communication
- Track progress over time
- Children identified through screening receive tailored sessions
- Activities target comprehension, expressive language, and social communication
- Reviewed every 6–8 weeks

Targeted Intervention

Children identified with language delay receive structured support through:

NELI

This programme:

- Develops vocabulary
- Supports listening skills
- Strengthens narrative language
- Builds confidence in speaking

NELI sessions are delivered in small groups by trained staff.



Where children require more than targeted intervention:

- SENCO liaises with Speech and Language Therapy (SaLT) services
- Individual plans are created with specific communication targets
- Staff receive training to deliver SaLT programmes
- Parents are supported to reinforce strategies at home

4. Oracy Development Across the Curriculum

The school uses the **Voice 21 Oracy Framework** to ensure progression in spoken language skills.

Oracy is embedded across all subjects to support thinking, reasoning and communication.

Key elements of oracy development

Pupils develop skills in:

Physical

- Voice projection
- Pace and clarity
- Body language

Linguistic

- Vocabulary
- Sentence structures
- Formal and informal language

Cognitive

- Reasoning
- Justifying opinions
- Clarifying ideas

Social and emotional

- Listening
- Turn-taking
- Building on others' ideas

Classroom practices include:

- Structured debates



- Presentations
- Collaborative discussion
- Talk partners
- Questioning routines

Role of Staff

Teachers

- Provide language-rich classrooms
- Explicitly teach vocabulary
- Model high quality language
- Provide structured talk opportunities

Teaching Assistants

- Deliver targeted interventions
- Reinforce vocabulary and language structures
- Support pupils during structured talk activities

SENDCo

- Oversees identification and intervention
- Liaises with speech and language therapists
- Monitors provision and progress

Senior Leaders

- Ensure communication development is prioritised within the curriculum
- Provide staff training
- Monitor impact of the strategy

We know communication thrives when school and home work together.

We will:

- Share WELLCOMM results and next steps with families
- Provide simple home-language activities
- Offer workshops on supporting speech and vocabulary
- Encourage parents to model rich talk, storytelling, and book-sharing

Monitoring and Evaluation

The impact of this strategy is evaluated through:



- Language assessments
- WELCOMM screening outcomes
- Pupil progress data
- Observations of classroom talk
- Monitoring of intervention programmes
- Pupil voice

Regular review ensures provision continues to meet the needs of all learners.

9. Staff Training and Development

To ensure consistency:

- Annual training on EEF guidance and oracy pedagogy
- WELCOMM and NELI training for EYFS staff
- Word Aware refresher sessions
- Coaching and peer observations focusing on talk-rich practice
- Induction for new staff includes communication strategy overview