



## **SPEECH AND LANGUAGE SUPPORT POLICY**

Approved by FGB on 26.11.18

***Subject Leader: Michelle Mansbridge***

Speech and Language Support is an additional resource available at Holmwood School for pupils who have this particular need. Speech and Language Therapy will be provided as determined by, and at the discretion of, Holmwood School's Speech and Language Therapists for:

a) Pupils who's Educational Health Care Plan indicates the need for help and support in this area of their development. Which is the responsibility of Speech and Language therapists who give targets to our teachers.

b) Pupils who through concerns expressed by their parents or carers, teachers or other involved parties are brought to the attention of Holmwood School's Speech and Language Therapist(s) will be seen for assessment and advice. (A referral may be made to the NHS).

Speech and Language may be short term to remedy a minor or temporary problem or for a significantly longer period of time dependent upon the problem. Pupils and their families are informed that therapy will continue for as long as appropriate provided that the need continues to exist. Discharge from our Speech and Language occurs when sufficient progress has been made for support no longer to be necessary; readmission to Speech and Language is possible should the situation change. A discharge summary will be put in the school files.

Speech and Language will take place either in a 1:1 session or in a group. We will strive to ensure that children receive at least 2 x 15 minute sessions each week with the possibility of additional Early Talk Boost sessions.

Methods of approach will vary to allow each pupil the optimum chance of benefiting from Speech and Language whatever his or her preferred learning style, strengths and weaknesses. Plans and targets are included in the pupils' files and targets are circulated to staff as required.

All Plans are individually formulated and are modified as the weekly sessions take place in the light of each pupil's response to sessions. It is not helpful for pre-written 'programmes' to be distributed as this inhibits flexibility and reduces effective practice; it is the intention that all staff will be involved in supporting our work, but will not have to assume responsibility for it.

Reviews of progress are carried out regularly in order to assess the efficacy of support and the pupils' responses to it. Adjustments are made as required to Speech and Language, targets and approach. Attainment is easily measured on an ongoing basis from response to Speech and Language as well as by the more formal process of testing. Review by testing, facilitates and enables decisions to be made about future Speech and Language thus allowing for better planning and strategies for future work to be developed.

Targets are drawn up for each pupil bi-annually. These are determined by the therapists (Joanna Henfrey/Bridget Heggarty ASC Gaynor Thorpe) alone after assessment. Target review and feedback are made possible by target sheets maintained within each pupil's file. Information is readily available to staff and targets are written to help staff support the Speech and Language needs across the entire curriculum.

Record keeping is done within each pupil's speech and language file as assessments/reassessments are made. Speech and Language notes are recorded on each occasion the pupil is seen.

Current Speech and Language records (personal pupils' details, assessments and Speech and Language) are kept in a locked cupboard within the Speech and Language room. The contents are discussed with staff to facilitate programme planning and to aid the child's education.

Feedback to staff, parents and professionals is, as already mentioned, through the process of reports and meetings. Pupils can receive immediate feedback during a Speech and Language session by means of praise and by reward.

Cross curricular support is one of the prime considerations of the Speech and Language provided as it is essential that such Speech and Language is relevant to the pupils' overall educational programmes and needs and will facilitate and enhance their other learning opportunities. Attention is given to concerns expressed by staff involved with the pupils in determining the course of their Speech and Language, and particular needs from other curriculum areas are integrated. Communication with and feedback to all staff concerned are possible through weekly staff meetings as well as by direct contact with individual staff. Besides specific Speech and Language work, Speech and Language will seek to support the pupils in other ways necessary to enable and enhance their chances of success, both academically and socially; this may involve working through some study skills to allow pupils to learn how to learn, for example. Increasing provision is required to address the social skills pupils need in order to use language effectively and the pupils' awareness of the impact of their communication habits upon those around them.

#### Sessions:

During Speech and Language sessions the children use a variety of resources and approaches to help them develop in this area, including Makaton, PECs, TEACCH, Early Talk Boost and BLAST.

## Professional Development

If any guidance is needed for teaching specific targets set by the Speech and Language therapists then this is given while they are in school assessing the children. The teachers/teaching assistants may occasionally attend other meetings, such as annual reviews, by invitation. Other meetings to discuss any pupil's progress/problems will be convened and attended by such personnel as the situation demands.

Staff will be kept up to date with developments by the curriculum co-ordinator and, if they feel there are any areas where they feel they need support individually, a request should be made to the Speech and Language Co-ordinator for staff training and development to be supplied. Holmwood School feel it is vital to support teachers to excel and provide the best possible education for the children in their care therefore staff development will always be supported and looked upon favourably.

Staff are also encouraged to become involved in and attend any courses of interest and relevance held either nationally or locally. Staff must ensure they fulfil their commitment to continuing professional development by attending courses, keeping up to date with reading etc. Inset training is made available by staff involved to all staff from time to time by specifically arranged sessions.

Advice will be sought from Joanna Henfrey Holmwood School's SLT should this be required.

## Resources

All Speech and Language resources are kept centrally in the Speech and Language room.

Additional Speech and Language resources can be loaned from the Speech and Language Department within Tees Valley NHS.

## **Appendix:**

### **BLAST**

A structured, fully prepared and resourced 6 week program designed to: remediate mild communication delays, improve listening & discrimination as a pre-cursor to literacy, improve social communication, interaction & turn-taking, boost language skills to enable children to access the curriculum and be a fun, positive experience for children.

### **BLAST 2**

Has been designed to follow on where BLAST 1 finishes. It is intended for use in reception aged children or older children with additional needs. It places a greater emphasis on vocabulary, speech processing and pre-phonics skills.

### **Makaton**

Makaton is a language programme designed to provide a means of communication to individuals who cannot communicate efficiently by speaking. The Makaton language programme has been effectively used with individuals who have cognitive impairments, autism, Down syndrome, specific language impairment, multisensory impairment and acquired neurological disorders that have negatively affected the ability to communicate, including stroke patients.

The Makaton Language Programme uses a multimodal approach to teach language and literacy skills, through a combination of speech, signs, and graphic symbols used concurrently, or, only with speech with signs, or, only with speech with graphic symbols as appropriate for the student's needs. It consists of a Core Vocabulary of roughly 450 concepts that are taught in a specific order (there are 8 different stages). For example, stage 1 involves teaching vocabulary for immediate needs, like 'eat' and 'drink'. Later stages contain more complex and abstract vocabulary such as time and emotions. Once basic communication has been established, the student can progress in their language use, using whatever modes are most appropriate. Also, although the programme is organised in stages, it can be modified and tailored to the individual's needs. In addition to the Core Vocabulary, there is a Makaton Resource Vocabulary of over 7,000 concepts which are illustrated with signs and graphic symbols.

### **PECs**

Also used within the daily routine of the children in Reception class and throughout Holmwood School where needed.

The Picture Exchange Communication System (PECS) is a form of augmentative and alternative communication produced by Pyramid Educational Consultants, Inc. While the system is commonly used as a communication aid for children with autism spectrum disorder (ASD), it has been used with a wide variety of learners, from preschoolers to adults, who have various communicative, cognitive, and physical impairments, including cerebral palsy, blindness, and deafness. PECS has been the subject of much academic research, with currently over 85 PECS-related publications. PECS is designed to teach functional communication skills with an initial focus on spontaneous communication. It has been and continues to be implemented in a variety of settings and contexts (home, school, community) so users have the skills to communicate their wants and needs. PECS does not require complex or expensive materials since it uses picture symbols as the modality. PECS is a method to teach young children or any individual with a communication impairment a way to communicate within a social context. Research has shown that many preschoolers using PECS also begin developing speech. Based on the current evidence base, PECS has been described as an emerging treatment shown to increase communication skills for individuals with ASC.

### **TEACCH**

The TEACCH philosophy recognises autism as a lifelong condition and does not aim to cure but to respond to autism as a culture. Core tenets of the TEACCH philosophy include an understanding of the effects of autism on individuals; use of assessment to assist program design around individual strengths, skills, interests and needs; enabling the individual to be as independent as possible; working in collaboration with parents and families.

Strategies:

The emphasis on individualisation means that TEACCH does not distinguish between people with very high skill levels and those with learning disabilities. Strategies used are designed to address the difficulties faced by all people with autism, and be adaptable to whatever style and degree of support is required. TEACCH methodology is rooted in behaviour therapy, more recently combining cognitive elements, guided by theories suggesting that behaviour typical of people with autism results from underlying problems in perception and understanding. The strategies put forward by TEACCH do not work on the behaviour directly, but on its underlying reasons, such as lack of understanding of what the person is expected to do or what will happen to them next, and sensory under- or over-stimulation. By addressing communication deficits, the person will be supported to express their needs and feelings by means other than challenging behaviour. Working from the premise that people with autism are predominantly visual learners, intervention strategies are based around physical and visual structure, schedules, work systems and task organisation. Individualised systems aim to address difficulties with communication, organisation, generalisation, concepts, sensory processing, change and relating to others. Whereas some interventions focus on addressing areas of weakness, the TEACCH approach works with existing strengths and emerging skill areas.

Also used within the daily routine of the children in Reception and throughout Holmwood School where needed.

### **Early Talk Boost**

Early Talk Boost is a targeted intervention aimed at 3–4 year old children with delayed language development, boosting their language skills to help narrow the gap between them and their peers. Early Talk Boost has been designed by specialist speech and language therapists and a highly experienced nursery teacher. The intervention's design is based on strong evidence of what is known to support language development in the early years.

Early Talk Boost supports:

- Attention and listening as a foundation skill for speaking and listening
- Developing vocabulary; as research shows that children with weaker vocabularies are at risk of difficulties with reading.
- Building sentences; putting words together is a vital skill for having conversations and telling stories.

Early Talk Boost is designed for children with delayed language skills due to reduced opportunities to develop language and communication skills in their early years. Studies show that children from areas of deprivation are 2 over twice as likely to have poor language development in the early years. Early Talk Boost aims to give children who have missed out on these early communication opportunities the boost they need to catch up in their language development.