



## **Inclusive Communication Strategy – Whole School (inclusive of EYFS)**

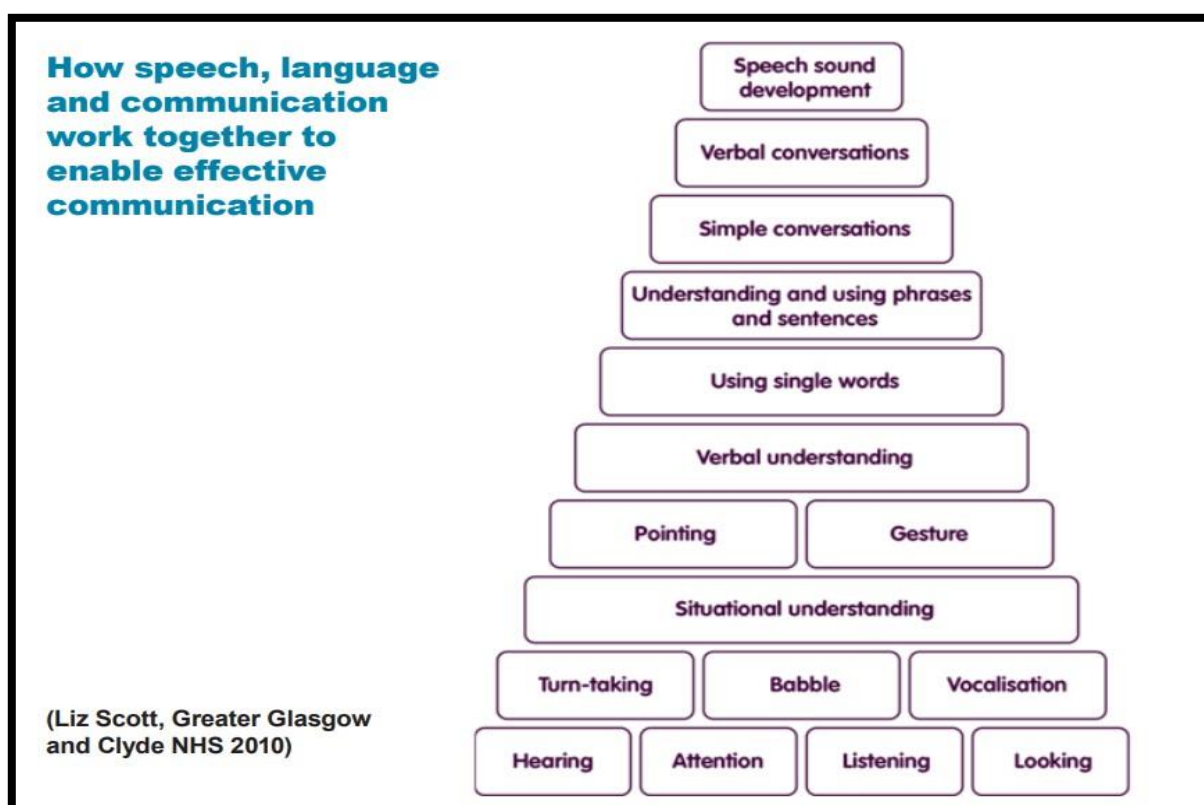
<b>Ratifying Committee</b>	<b>Curriculum &amp; Standards Committee</b>
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<b>Review</b>	<b>Annually</b>

## Communication

At the Bridge School we adopt an Inclusive Communication approach. This means that all forms of communication are recognised and valued equally as forms of interaction. Therefore, we do not follow just one approach; we follow evidence-based research, have regular consultations with the NHS Speech and Language Therapist (SALT) team, in addition to accredited Elklan training for identified subject co-ordinators.

Within our school intent, we have identified that communication and understanding are part of the foundations of engagement and learning at the Bridge School. The aspiration for all pupils is they achieve their potential in all aspects of their development. All pupils who attend the Bridge School, have severe/profound learning difficulties. Many pupils have additional needs such as autism, physical disabilities, sensory impairments, complex medical needs etc. We work in a determined way to ensure that all pupils can make personal progress in their communication and understanding skills.

We recognise that speech, language and communication are complex skills that must work together to effectively enable an individual to communicate. The model of language development (Liz Scott, 2010) identifies the building blocks made up of the fundamental skills for communication. It demonstrates the importance of developing attention and listening skills before a pupil can make progress in the later communication skills such as verbal understanding and using single words.



This diagram illustrates our approach to providing an inclusive communication strategy at the Bridge School and reinforces our English curriculum.

## **Speech, language, and communication:**

Developing a pupils' ability to communicate is fundamental. We aim to ensure all pupils have a communication system that allows them to be able to engage in meaningful interactions with those around them for example, to be able to request, resist, choose, comment and develop social relationships. These communication systems could be speech, however for some pupils they can be working towards speech sounds or may need to use alternative and augmentative methods of communication throughout their lives (objects/symbols/communication books/high-tech communication devices). In addition, some pupils at the Bridge School may display pre-intentional communication methods which supporting adults need to interpret and create opportunities to encourage interactions for communication.

Language at the Bridge School can be identified as:

### **Receptive language –**

The ability to understand words or sentences and underpinning foundational learning such as contextual and routine understanding, representational use of symbols, photographs, objects etc.

The processes involved in understanding spoken language are:

- Looking, listening and sustaining attention
- Tuning into sounds and spoken language
- Remembering using short term memory
- Remembering more using long term memory
- Understanding vocabulary/ concepts/ sentence structure.

### **Expressive language –**

The language that we use to convey our thoughts, emotions, or needs. This may include speech, facial and body reactions/gestures and alternative and augmentative communication. This may be pre-intentional or intentional.

The processes involved in using expressive language are:

- Having something to communicate about (wants/needs/ideas)
- Choosing words
- Combining words
- Knowing how to engage in a conversation, using a turn-taking approach.
- Modifying the message
- Selecting sounds, planning how to say the word or sentence.
- Speaking fluently and self-monitoring

To support the progression of pupils' personal speech, language and communication, the school has mapped out the following key skills and knowledge, encompassing the evidence-based research and guidelines:

- the intended progression of fundamental key skills and knowledge for EYFS pupils at the Bridge. This can be found in the EYFS Curriculum Progression booklet (**Appendix A**).
- the intended progression of fundamental key skills and knowledge for pupils working at below pre-key stage standards that are pre-subject specific, including speech, language and communication skills (**Appendix B**).
- the progression/intended sequence of learning of early foundational skills and knowledge including linked key vocabulary and concepts for English (**Appendix B**) working towards the NC programmes of study (**Appendix C**) and links to the relevant area of the EYFS Curriculum (**Appendix D**).

### 'Means, Reasons and Opportunities (Money and Thurman, 1994).'

To action our school motto of 'No missed opportunities', and in response to the evidence-based research identified in the Hanen Program 'It Takes Two to Talk' (Elaine Weitzman, 2017), we aspire to create opportunities throughout a pupil's school day to develop their communication skills. All staff are trained in how to make the most of every interaction with the pupils, for example, not only are communication skills taught and practised during structured lessons they can also be developed during transitions in the school environment, through play and leisure time, and during snack and lunchtimes.

Subsequently, we as a school understand the factors that must be considered when working to engage pupils in these interactions, following the 'Means, Reasons and Opportunities' model (Money and Thurman, 1994).



Money,D.(1997) adapted by Leeds SLT Service

To create high-quality opportunities that encourage pupils to engage in interactions for the purpose of communicating, the below factors must be understood:

- pupils need the '**means**' to communicate. This can be intentional and pre-intentional, non-verbal (facial expression, gesture, signs, symbols etc.) or verbal communication. This requires supporting adults to know and understand individual pupil's communication methods and to support them in using them, ensuring they have the appropriate augmentative and alternative communication aids if necessary.

- pupils need a **'reason'** to communicate. This refers to the 'why' a pupil will communicate, for example, does the individual want to gain your attention, communicate what they want or need, to make requests or refuse or make choices etc.
- pupils need **'opportunities'** to communicate. Staff members have engaged in training to develop strategies on how to create opportunities for pupils to communicate e.g., activities that require help, offering a small amount and expectantly pausing in highly motivating activities. Staff have also been taught to observe and provide processing time allowing pupils to initiate or respond in an interaction (Weitzman, E. 2017).

In this next section we identify the interventions and provide examples of strategies that are used at the Bridge School to support the development of pupil's speech, language and communication. For all pupils this is highly personalised and class teachers follow guidance in the Inclusive Communication Strategy, English Policy and through discussions with HOP, subject co-ordinators and SALT, to identify the most appropriate methods of communication for the individual.

### **Communication Profiles**

All pupils at the Bridge school have a detailed communication profile completed by their current class teacher. The documents report the expressive and receptive language skills of the individual, any communication equipment/AAC resources the pupil uses and their personal motivators and dislikes.

These documents are displayed in the classroom, where all staff members can see them, to inform practice and strategies used for individual pupils. Class teachers are required to ensure that their class team have read and understand the information and request specific training for the whole team or individual staff if they are unfamiliar with strategies/AAC methods (**Appendix E**).

These documents are regularly reviewed at the 6 and 12 monthly outcome reviews, and they are updated and shared with class teams where necessary.

Templates for the communication profiles are located **here**.

### **Visuals**

Visual aids can support all pupils by providing clear structure, routine and develop a pupil's understanding and communication skills. Elklan (2019) identifies that visuals may help an individual by, making information easier to understand, making communication quicker and easier, stimulating emotions, and making information more interesting.

There are many different ways that visual aids are used effectively in school:

- When starting or finishing an activity pupils may be shown a single photograph/symbol to support their understanding of what is happening or where they are or going.
- Sequencing visual aids, including 'Now and Next' and 'Now, Next, Later' boards used as a visual timetable that sequence two or three pieces of information. These boards can support pupils' awareness and understanding of what is happening now and what they will be moving onto next.
- Schedules and timetables can be made from objects, pictures of references or symbols of reference. They can display a whole day or teachers will select the appropriate amount of

information on show to support the pupils in the class. Some pupils may have personal schedules to support their communication, understanding and behaviour needs.

- To support pupils in making choices, for example, to make requests of what they want or do not want throughout the school day. This promotes pupil's communication and independence skills.
- To express their opinions, for example by using 'more' and 'finished', 'like' and 'don't like' symbols.
- To express their emotions and tell you how they are feeling.
- To support transitions or changes to familiar routines, for example, photographs or symbols can be used at the start of a transition to a different environment and social stories can be used to support pupils understanding when they may be doing something new.
- Visual routine strips can be used to develop pupils' independence in routines including personal-care routines e.g., handwashing and toileting routines. These can be used to support pupils understanding, reduce any anxiety around specific routines and teach the individual how to independently carry out tasks.

Visual aids are created based on the individual pupil and must be personalised to meet their needs to be most effective. All class-based staff engage in training in their induction training programme to develop their knowledge and understanding of the different forms of visual aids and how best to model and use these with an individual.

Visual aids are kept alongside the pupil where appropriate, class teachers discuss with co-ordinator and HOP if a pupil's visual aid needs to be accessed differently to support their behaviour/attention needs, e.g., kept out of sight to reduce distraction. Staff are consistent in their use of a pupil's visual aids, ensuring they are updated and accessible for the individual so they can develop their understanding and be supported by the visual information during their school day.

Templates for visual aids are located [here](#).

### **The Hanen Early Language Program (2017 – 5<sup>th</sup> Edition)**

At the Bridge School, all staff have training on the core principles identified in the Hanen Program 'It Takes Two to Talk', to make the most of every interaction with a child, developing their language skills.

### **The fundamental strategies all staff are taught include:**

- Observe, wait, and listen, to let the child initiate an interaction.
- Follow the child's lead.
- 'Add one more' – adding appropriate level key language to interactions.
- Taking turns to keep an interaction going.
- Creating opportunities to engage a child in interactions.

This evidence-based programme encourages supporting adults to create opportunities for pupils to practise and develop their language skills during every-day routines e.g., during mealtimes, leisure on the playground and during transitions around school. All the identified strategies are appropriate to develop pupils' language when they are used at the right stage of communication for each individual.

See below for more information on the Hanen Approach.

- [https://integratedtreatmentservices.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/\\_mediavault/2015/01/Hanen-approach.pdf](https://integratedtreatmentservices.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/_mediavault/2015/01/Hanen-approach.pdf)

- <http://www.hanen.org/About-Us.aspx>

The staff and parent library has published books. School have purchased videos. SALT and English coordinators can provide more information.

### **Intensive Interaction**

Intensive Interaction (Hewett, D and Nind, M. 1994) is an approach to teach the pre-speech fundamentals of communication, “The approach works on early interaction abilities – how to enjoy being with other people – to relate, interact, know, understand and practice communication routines” (Intensive Interaction Institute, 2023).

This approach is used with pupils who have speech, communication and language needs, and it may be referenced in a pupil’s short-term outcomes or as a focussed area for development for specific individuals. Teachers will plan this regularly into a pupil’s day where appropriate and it initially requires 1-to-1 working as the pupil becomes familiar with the activity. Intensive Interaction supports teachers in developing pupil’s core areas of early communication, including the “use and understanding of eye contacts, facial expressions, vocalisations leading to speech, taking turns in exchanges of conversation and the structure of conversation” (Intensive Interaction Institute, 2023).

See below for more information on the Intensive Interaction approach.

<https://www.intensiveinteraction.org/>

### **Attention and Listening skills**

Attention and listening skills are the foundation for all language and communication development. It is about being able to focus their attention on someone/something/specific tasks using their senses. Children need to have frequent opportunities to experience a range of sounds in their everyday lives, tuning into and responding to sounds and spoken language. This is with the intent to develop their ability to understand and communicate effectively with others.

At the Bridge School, pupils have many opportunities to engage in activities that are chosen to develop their ability to sustain their attention and listen to others. The length of time a pupil can attend in an interaction can differ for every child and there are many factors that may influence or support an individual in the amount of time they can sustain their attention:

- Pupils may work 1-to-1, in a small group or in a whole class group.
- Opportunities to work in different environments to support reducing the level of distractions in the area for some pupils (workstation/ quiet room/ nurture room).
- Some pupils follow a ‘burst-pause’ approach where they are not expected to sit for long and have opportunities for sensory/active breaks before being encouraged to attend to an adult.
- For pupils who do not readily engage or attend to activities, the Engagement Model assessment (STA, 2020) tool is used by the HOP and class teacher to create an action plan in supporting the pupil in developing early engagement skills.

Throughout school, teachers plan a variety of activities and use varying strategies to develop the attention and listening skills of pupils. For example:

- Intensive Interaction
- Use of the Hanen Language strategies
- Musical Interaction.
- ‘Listening with Lucy’ Programme
- Soundabout.
- Action songs and rhymes
- Drama games and songs to encourage sustained attention, anticipation, and communication.
- ‘Ready, Steady, Go!’ And turn-taking games.
- Attention Autism Programme – Gina Davies
- Twinkl Phonics Level 1 Programme of listening and attention activities.
- Sharing stories

### **Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC)**

“Augmentative and Alternative Communication covers a huge range of techniques that support or replace spoken communication. These include gestures, signing, symbols, word boards, communication boards and books, as well as Voice Output Communication Aids (VOCAs)” ([communicationmatters.org.uk](http://communicationmatters.org.uk)).

At the Bridge School, we ensure that pupils have access to appropriate AAC aids to support them in communicating their needs, engaging and developing interactions, expressing their thoughts and feelings, making comments on what is happening around them and to increase their independence.

A wide range of AAC aids are used at the Bridge School:

**Low-tech aided communication** – This term often refers to AAC systems that do not require batteries or power. This includes Makaton signing, objects of reference, photographs of reference, symbols, communication boards and books, E-Tran frames.

**High-tech aided communication** – These AAC devices require batteries or a form of power and enable the pupil to use pictures, symbols, letters etc. linked with pre-recorded/ electronic voice output. These devices are carefully selected for individuals with guidance from the SALT team and often with the advice from the Sensory Inclusion Service team, who work with the Bridge School, as for some pupils the devices can be or need to be activated and used using either the pupils hands, feet, head or eyes to meet the needs of pupils with physical disabilities, visual or hearing impairments.

### **Selecting appropriate AAC methods for pupils:**

AAC methods are identified for individual pupils by class teachers, often with guidance from the SALT if a pupil has/ or has had a SALT referral, with knowledge of the forms of AAC and the pupil’s speech, communication, language and understanding skills. The form of AAC a pupil uses may remain the same for the rest of their lives, or it can change as the individuals needs change or they make progress in their communication, language and understanding skills.

There is currently not an evidence-based hierarchy of visual representation. In agreement with the SALT team, at the Bridge School we take a developmental approach to the teaching and learning with visuals and AAC methods. Class teachers use their knowledge of the individual pupils they teach, and the skills required to use different forms of AAC. It is then often child-led in the initial stages of how a pupil engages with the visual aids and teacher judgement supported by the skills and knowledge progression maps. Class teachers regularly monitor and assess pupils use of AAC methods to ensure they are appropriate and

providing enough challenge to continue to extend opportunities for pupils to develop their communication skills.

### **AAC methods that are used at the Bridge School:**

#### **Object Of Reference (OOR)**

An Object Of Reference (OOR) is any object which is used systematically to represent an item, activity, place, or person. Understanding real objects is the first stage of symbolic development. Therefore, using objects is considered the most concrete way of representing a word. Objects of reference are used with pupils at the Bridge who find it difficult to understand spoken words, signs, symbols or photographs. They are used to:

- To increase understanding of the spoken word
- To signal the beginning of a new activity
- To enable pupils to make their own choices
- To enable the pupils to request items and activities
- To provide a visual representation of their day (when used in a sequence)

Smells and sounds of reference can also be used to provide multisensory feedback – however, these must be used in line with whole school policy to ensure consistency.

#### **How should an OOR be used?**

‘OOR should hold meaning for individual pupils’ (Ashdown, R., 2001. Ockelford, A., 2002., Park, K., 1997)  
Consistent OOR are used across the whole school for learning environments pupils may access (see chart below), every class base has a box containing these OORs that should be used with identified pupils (through SALT reports, SIS reports and Annual Review reports)

#### **Transitions to new learning environments:**

Appropriate time, in line with pupils processing abilities, should be planned into transitions to new environments. This will enable the pupil time to handle, attend to and process the OOR in preparation of the transition – the appropriate level of physical support should also be given to maximise engagement. When the OOR is given, the adult leading the communicative interaction will use the keyword which the OOR represents e.g. pupil handles armband and adult reinforces ‘Swimming’. When reaching the swimming pool, this will then be reinforced by sharing the OOR and key word once again.

#### **Introduction of activities.**

OOR’s are used to signify the start of an activity, these OOR’s are items which are accessed during individual activities to support pupils understanding. The OOR is linked to the activity clearly and consistently, for example, when the individual is engaging in exploring soil during an activity about plants/seeds– soil would be the consistent OOR for the activity, the pupils’ personal spoon would be used at mealtimes, the parachute would be held and explored before beginning parachute games etc. Appropriate time, in line with pupils processing abilities, should be planned into introducing activities, this will enable the pupil time to handle, attend to and process the OOR in preparation of the new activity – the appropriate level of physical support should also be given to maximise engagement. When the OOR is given, the adult leading the communicative interaction will use the keyword which the OOR represents e.g. pupil handles the parachute and adult reinforces ‘Parachute’.

## **Making choices:**

Pupils may also use OOR to support making choices (food / drink / activities). It is essential that all staff working with the pupil are aware of a pupil's preferred methods of communication to ensure they respond promptly and correctly to the pupil. For example pupils may reach, gesture, eye point to their preferred object when offered a choice of two

## **Photographs of Reference (POR)**

A POR, similar to the object of reference, is a single photograph that is used consistently to represent the item, activity, person or place in the image. At the Bridge, all staff have department 'lanyard key rings' with photographs of the areas in and around the school environment that pupil's access in each key stage e.g., Toileting areas, Classroom, Playground, and Sensory rooms. These photographs may be shown singularly to support an individual's understanding of what they are doing/where they might be going/what they are playing with. For some pupils, to support their understanding of expectations throughout the school day, they may be shown two or three photographs at the same time in the form of a 'Now and Next' folder or a 'Now, Next, Later' folder or strip. This is based on class teacher judgement and may be with guidance from the SALT.

Photographs of reference can also be used in the communication strategy 'PECS – Picture Communication Exchange System' (see below), and to support pupils learning of new vocabulary and subject specific content. Teachers may work with individual pupils in developing their understanding that photographs have meaning in a wide range of contexts.

## **Symbols**

Symbols provide visual representation of a concept. These symbols are used to support pupil's individual communication, independence and participation, literacy and learning, creativity and self-expression and access to information.

At the Bridge School 'InPrint 3 – Widgit' is the chosen software used to generate all symbols used with the pupils. **See appendix G**, for the agreed and consistent use of symbols in the school environment.

Symbols are used in a range of AAC approaches to support pupils individual receptive and expressive language:

- Single symbols are used to consistently label and give meaning to an item, activity, person or place.
- Single symbols can be made into flashcards/ symbol lanyards to support pupils understanding during the school day, e.g., sitting, walk, more symbols.
- Single symbols and symbol sentences are used in a literacy and learning, display work, social stories etc, they highlight the keywords with a visual representation to support pupils understanding.
- Core and fringe vocabulary boards have one symbol per grid cell, and these can range from a choice of two symbols or multiple symbols based on class teacher judgement. These boards are closely matched to the context that it is intended to be used in e.g., linked to food items available at snack, available paint colours during an art lesson, story characters and verbs for pupils to identify what is happening in story illustrations. These can be low-tech AAC printed on paper or high-tech and used on devices with voice output.

The use of symbols must be consistent across the whole school to support pupils understanding. It is essential that once an appropriate symbol has been chosen to provide the visual representation of a concept, it is used every time that concept is used. Therefore, 'InPrint' core vocabulary has been created for the whole school and all of the core vocabulary 'InPrint' templates can be found [here](#).

For more information on how to use symbols click here ['Guide to Good Symbol Content' \(Widgit Software, 2021\)](#)

### **Picture Exchange Communication System (PECS)**

PECS is an evidence-based communication system (Bondy, A. & Frost, L. 1985) that is used with a large number of pupils at the Bridge School. Class teachers may work closely with SALT and with guidance of the speaking and listening coordinator to identify whether this system is the most effective means of communication for the individual.

The approach is made up of six phases. The pupil is initially taught to hand a single picture of an item they want to an adult the "communicative partner", who then honours the request and gives them the item on the picture. The pupil then works through the phases, learning to travel to make requests, discriminate between two or more pictures/symbols, build sentences and use concepts to make request/comments.

**See appendix H.**

A PECS session must initially be highly personalised for an individual, to gain their engagement and attention based on interests and motivating items, staff must also honour pupils' requests when they succeed in exchanging a photo/symbol of the item they want. Careful consideration must therefore be made into the items on offer to ensure pupils don't become demotivated when they can't access what they've requested.

### **Communication Books**

Individual pupil communication books are created by the Bridge School AAC team, in line with an evidence-based guide set by Latham (2004) and guidance from the Speech and Language therapists. Class teachers work with the AAC team to ensure the communication book is personalised e.g., key vocabulary linked to the pupil's school routine, key stage, peer group and home environment, so they are functional for the individual. The communication books contain pages with photos or symbols (InPrint3) for pupils to communicate their needs, ideas, make comments, express their feeling, ask questions etc. The communication books can be used alongside speech or Makaton signs.

Latham & Buckley (2006) identify key principles when using communication books with individuals:

1. It is important that pupils using a communication book are supported by a 'communication partner' so they can see consistent modelling and be engaged in communication interactions to develop their own skills. Ensure the environment supports the pupils in being exposed to a range of photos/symbols and that adults are modelling the key language themselves during everyday practice.
2. Individuals' communication books are developed over time as they demonstrate 'learner readiness' at the beginning of each stage, with guidance from the SALT team. There are five outlined stages when developing pupils' communication and language skills using the communication books.

3. The communication books contain core vocabulary that is always available and increases in complexity through the five stages. These words are based on language functions which have been identified through work by O’Kane & Goldbart (1998) and supported by curriculum guidance for the foundation stage (DfEE,2000).
4. The use of core and fringe vocabulary takes into account the statutory guidance set in the National Curriculum to reflect topics taught.
5. The layout of the communication books remains the same, e.g., the core language has allocated positions. This is to support pupils’ knowledge and understanding and to allow them to build on skills learnt in the earlier stages.

Communication books require supporting adults to model how to use the systems to teach the pupil how to use it to communicate with others and generalise these skills in a range of contexts throughout the day. This is for the purpose of developing the pupil’s independence in using their communication book functionally. Therefore, supporting adults must ensure that the pupil has their communication book with them throughout the school day to ensure there are ‘no missed opportunities’.

For more guidance on communication books and the five stages, the school has purchased the ‘Developing & Using a Communication Book 2nd Edition’, originally designed by Clare Latham – Ace Centre [www.acecentre.org.uk](http://www.acecentre.org.uk)

## **Makaton**

Makaton is a language programme that is designed to support communication, development of language skills and to aid understanding.

Evidence based research indicates that:

- Signs help in learning words.
- Signs build on normal patterns of communication development.
- There is a relationship between manual signs and expressive language development.

### **How are Makaton signs used in school?**

At The Bridge School we use Makaton signs to support and develop receptive, expressive, and functional communication skills. It is used by staff as part of an inclusive communication approach to support students understanding of language and facilitate and encourage their expressive communication.

There has been significant evidence-based research into the effectiveness of using Makaton signs alongside speech in spoken word order. Therefore, Makaton signs are used alongside speech at all times

There are three formal levels of Makaton use:

- Functional
- Key Word
- Full grammatical

At The Bridge School we use Makaton anywhere between Functional and Key Word level. The use of Makaton at the Full Grammatical level is a literacy teaching and learning methodology and not used for everyday social context communication.

Makaton is used throughout the day by all staff, this is inclusive of break-time, snack-time, lunch-time and transitions.

There may be a very rare exception where a pupil is felt to be confused by staff signing or may display a negative reaction to staff signing where Makaton will not be used. However, this will be agreed through consultation with HoPs, Communication Leads, Makaton Regional Tutor and SaLT.

### **Whole class / Small group teaching**

- Usually only the adult leading the session will sign when leading a whole class activity. The staff supporting pupils in the group will not sign unless responding to the person leading the group. The focus for the pupil should be the person who is speaking.
- One key exception to the above would be during singing activities when it is expected that all staff will sign to encourage pupils to join in with the activity.
- When meeting specific pupil needs e.g. visual impairment, a supporting member of staff may be directed by the teacher to sign to the pupil individually.

### **Individual Work**

- Individual pupils who have Makaton signs as part of their personal communication system will have signs targeted through outcomes, planning and support plans.

**Staff Training:**

- Regional Makaton Tutor qualifications will be maintained.
- All teachers / HLTA's and STA's to be trained to a minimum qualification of Level one and two with the intention to train teachers to level 3 and 4.
- All classroom staff to be trained in Makaton levels one and two over time
- Lunch time supervisors and admin staff to be trained on a Makaton bespoke course.
- Visiting professionals to be offered places on a Foundation level course – no cost.
- Class teams to do practice of key signs with the priority linked to their everyday signs or signs linked to their curriculum focus. School Regional Tutor will send out the Makaton 'Sign of the Week' for classes to practice.

**Resources:**

- Trained Regional Makaton tutor – Claire Beckett.
- Resources for delivery of level 1-4 courses
- Makaton signs resource books.
- Access to Core Vocabulary Makaton signs which can be accessed here:

**Support for parents**

- Annual Level 1 and 2 workshops will be run for parents/carers in the Spring Term
- A refresher session will be offered in the Summer Term
- Parents will be supported by SaLT/teacher in learning individual signs their child is using.
- Materials will be available for loan through the Parent's Library.

## **Key Vocabulary and Concept Development**

Pupils' acquisition and command of vocabulary are the key to their learning and progress across the whole curriculum (DFE. 2014). At the Bridge School we follow the statutory guidance, and recommendations in addition to the advice from the Speech and Language Therapy team to develop pupil's knowledge and understanding of words.

### **Core and Fringe Vocabulary:**

Pupils are exposed to and taught functional core vocabulary, that will allow them to request, comment, refuse, label, question. These core words make up most of the speech we use every day, for example, words such as, want, more, like, good, help, open, stop, no and finished.

Fringe vocabulary is vocabulary that is topic specific. It can also be personal language for individual pupils based on their home life and interests.

At the Bridge school we have mapped out vocabulary tracking documents. Teachers use these documents to track and record pupil's individual knowledge and understanding of both core and fringe vocabulary through the different methods of AAC/visual aids (**See Appendix I**).

The vocabulary has been selected based on core functional words, the 'first 120 words' document from the DSE learning centre, and key vocabulary identified in the National Curriculum within foundation subject areas. This is not a systematic tracking document, as pupils at the Bridge School need different key vocabulary to meet their wants and needs, as well as many pupils having personal interests and motivators that help them engage in learning and using vocabulary.

Teachers carefully plan opportunities to introduce, model and develop pupils understanding of key vocabulary. Emphasis is placed on individual words and pupils experience the word in a range of contexts, e.g., they will hear the spoken language, see the corresponding Makaton sign/ photograph/ symbol/ physical object, or engage in a linked activity to experience the language. Repetition is key when developing pupil's knowledge and understanding of key vocabulary and concepts.

### **How is key vocabulary taught in school?**

- Personal key words are identified by class teachers and through discussions with parents/ carers, e.g., drink, more.
- Specific key vocabulary and early concepts, for individual pupils, may be targeted through in 12-monthly outcomes, in teachers planning for specific subjects with the aim that this will embed in the long-term memory.
- The use of photographs/symbols/Makaton signs alongside the verbal key vocabulary to provide visual representation of a concept.
- The use of 'core and fringe' vocabulary boards used in classrooms, differentiated by the class teacher for the specific needs and development of pupils in their class.
- Explicit teaching of key vocabulary may take place in core and foundation subject lessons, with opportunities for repetition of activities, but use of the vocabulary in a range of wider contexts.
- Exposure to wider vocabulary through the curriculum to capitalise on spontaneous learning, engagement, and interests. This may be retained or may be more easily recalled if not retained but revisited in the future.
- Pupil's individual AAC methods reflect key vocabulary being taught.

- Key vocabulary may be introduced through weekly literacy lessons, for example vocabulary linked to a whole class shared text.
- Subject specific key vocabulary introduced appropriately, based on class teacher judgement of the individuals in their class, during lessons.
- Staff use the Hanen Program communication strategy 'add one more' to model key vocabulary and increase the number of words pupils hear throughout the school day. This is often in response to pupil's leading the communication interaction and is based on the individuals' interests.
- Use of stories, songs, rhymes and drama games to introduce key vocabulary and early concepts.
- Interaction with others, e.g. parallel play and turn-taking games.
- Staff matching their language to the level of understanding of pupils and modelling next level where appropriate, using the structure of 'Information Carrying Words'.
- Use of the tracking sheets on vocabulary and concepts.
- Use of the mapped-out skills and knowledge progression to identify pupils individual next steps.

**NB. The key words we add need to be in line with the pupil's individual communication and understanding. Class teachers must ensure the staff team working with individual pupils know what stage the pupils are working at, in line with Information Carrying Word skills recorded on Onwards and Upwards.**

### **Functional Words –**

The key vocabulary that pupils are taught is carefully planned, this is following guidance from the SALT team. The SALT team identified that pupils need to first develop their understanding of 'core' language that allows them to request, comment, refuse, label, question. Pupils are then introduced to a wider bank of language called 'fringe' vocabulary. This language needs to be personal and motivating to a pupil to encourage communication opportunities. Therefore, at the Bridge School the expressions 'please' and 'thank you' are not modelled to the pupils with the intent of developing their knowledge and use of these words. These expressions do not support pupils in being able to make requests, comment, refuse, question, thus they are not fundamental, functional language. However, it is agreed that key community words and safety symbols are taught in KS4 to support learners' individual independence and life skills. Below KS4, class teachers will discuss with HOP and coordinator if an individual pupil needs to be taught specific key vocabulary such as 'please' and 'thank you'.

### **Communication including speaking.**

Communication at the Bridge School encompasses all means of communication from pre-intentional communication (interpreting behaviour) to intentional communication using gestures, body language, Makaton, AAC (Alternative and Augmentative Communication) and speech. The skills and knowledge progression has been mapped out (**Appendix A & B**) using a range of evidence-based research and in consultation with Speech and Language Therapists.

In addition, some pupils may have additional progression steps for specific areas, and this may include specific therapy programs.

Staff members use consistent systems and strategies, implementing them throughout school day, ensuring they are personalised to each pupil due to their needs and abilities. The pupils' abilities are detailed in their annual review report and the strategies used are also documented within the report and support plans.

At the Bridge School the following strategies are used to support the development of speech:

- Staff may model words and language at assessed level of pupils.
- Staff will add language e.g., if the pupil says “Door”, the adult may say “Open door”.
- Staff emphasise the key word in a sentence, e.g., by changing their volume/tone to make a word stand out.
- Staff add language to pupils’ exploration and play throughout the school day, e.g., “Car”, “Ball”, “More.”
- Use of repetition in staff modelling, e.g., as a pupil is coming down steps “Down, down, down”.
- Agreeing consistent use of words, e.g., drink rather than multiple words such as pop, drink, milk, water etc
- Use of key single words, e.g., ‘Drink’ and not using other words
- Following the Hanen Early Language Programme strategies, including creating opportunities for pupils to communicate, following pupil’s interests, and adding language appropriately.
- Using the Intensive Interaction strategy to imitate and respond to pupils in their own communicative interactions, and to encourage them in copying new sounds/spoken language.
- Using alternative communication systems, for example, voice-output devices and software.

**NB. Some pupils who do use speech may have a delay in specific speech sounds. Some pupils may have a specific difficulty with production of specific speech sounds and may work on a therapy program. (Appendix J has the Speech Sounds Development Chart).**

### **Understanding Spoken Language - Information Carrying Words (ICWs)**

The ‘Information Carrying Words’ programme has been developed around the Derbyshire Language Scheme (Knowles, W and Masidlover, M. 1982). This strategy is used as a whole school approach to develop and assess individual pupils understanding of language.

When thinking about the early stages of language development at the Bridge school, one approach to support language development is we track pupil’s progress by the number of information carrying words that they are able to understand in an instruction.

The number of information carrying words is not the same as the number of words in a sentence. The information carrying words are the ones that the child needs to understand in order to complete a task/follow the spoken instruction.

Pupils work through one to four key word levels (**see appendix K**), and the linked language and concepts have been incorporated into the progression/intended sequence of key skills and knowledge for English (**appendix C**) working towards the NC programmes of study.

Staff at the Bridge School take part in ICW training with the SALT. Staff are trained in how to deliver ICW activities and the role of the adult as a pupil processes the spoken instructions, e.g., no visual or gestural prompting.

### **Developing Children’s Language and Thinking - Verbal Reasoning**

‘Blank Levels of Questioning’ is an intervention used at the Bridge School to develop pupils verbal reasoning and abstract language. This strategy is used for specific pupils through discussions between class teachers and the English co-ordinator, based on an individual’s progression in the mapped out key skills and knowledge for English.

The intervention is also known as the 'Language of Learning model' (Blank, Rose and Berlin, 1978) and has been further developed by the Elklan programme (McLachlan and Elks, 2012). The model identifies four different levels of questions that can be used in the classroom.

#### Levels:

Blank level one – Naming

Blank level two – Describing

Blank level three – Re-telling

Blank level four – Justifying

#### When can Blank Level Questioning be used in school?

- Structured work tasks
- 1-to-1 work task
- Small group activity
- During everyday routines and functional activities

#### How can Blank Level Questioning be used in school?

##### Level 1- Naming

- Object identification in a range of activities (feely bag/Attention Autism Bucket/ drama games).
- Identifying what they can see and hear.
- Naming familiar people.
- Naming actions they are using.

##### Level 2 – Describing

- Asking questions during the school day (Who? What doing? Where?)
- Use of the Colourful Semantics programme.
- Looking at photographs and asking questions about what is happening.
- Categorising activities e.g., food, clothing, toys.
- Opportunities to develop understanding of the function of items.
- Barrier Games – click [here](#) for examples.
- Developing understanding of concepts through shared texts, cross-curricular activities and in everyday routines.

##### Level 3 – Re-telling

- Barrier Games
- Following longer instructions (2 ICW +) to carry out tasks/everyday routines.
- Sequencing information/stories/routines.
- Re-telling familiar stories.
- Developing an understanding of 'negatives', e.g., "find something that is not..."

##### Level 4 – Justifying

- Comic Strip Conversations to develop their conversation skills and reasoning.  
<https://library.sheffieldchildrens.nhs.uk/comic-strip-conversations/>
- Board games and activities for pragmatic skills.

- Opportunities to make predictions e.g. “What will happen if...?”
- Opportunities created for the pupil to justify their decisions e.g., “Why?”
- Opportunities to select the means to a goal e.g., “What could we use...?”
- Developing skills for inference.

### **Colourful Semantics**

Colourful Semantics is a therapy programme created by Speech and Language Therapist, Alison Bryan (1997). The approach is used to support pupils in developing understanding of sentence formation and structure. It uses a colour code on symbols or words to identify each element of a sentence using an associated question prompt. This supports the children in recognising patterns during sentence construction.

This Colourful Semantics programme is used with specific pupils based on an individual’s progression in the mapped out key skills and knowledge for English, and through discussions between class teachers and the English co-ordinator. The pupils experience and learn to use a wide variety of language for different purposes, they may develop the use of nouns, verbs, adjectives, and prepositions. This will develop the pupils’ ability to comment and answer questions in a range of contexts which can be transferred to written sentences and supports language comprehension.

### **How is the Colourful Semantics approach be used in school?**

- During shared stories – pupils can identify ‘who’, ‘what doing’, ‘what’ and ‘where’ when story illustrations and narratives are shared.
- Creating sentences
- Peer interactions
- Role Play
- Reading Comprehensions
- Vocabulary building

The SALT team have endorsed the ‘Black Sheep Press Ltd’ semantics resources, in addition to class teachers following the pupil’s interest and links to current learning in both Literacy lessons and cross-curricular subjects, to create meaningful colourful semantics activities.

Click here for school templates and resources - [..\..\SHARED W\CURRICULUM\Literacy \(English\)\Literacy\READING & PHONICS\Colourful Semantics](#)

### **English Curriculum – Speaking and Listening (Communication)**

The English Curriculum has been carefully devised based on the statutory guidance from the National Curriculum, in support of the Early Learning Goals, Birth to Five Matters, and Development Matters, in addition to specific evidence-based research from the SALT team. The curriculum includes speaking, listening (comprehension), reading and writing for pupils in Key Stage one and above. Within EYFS it’s broken down into the educational programmes under the prime area of Communication and Language and the specific area of Literacy.

Within the English curriculum communication and understanding is the foundation of all work and throughout all other areas of school life. Pupils build on their prior skills and knowledge and may progress in wider areas of English including early reading and early writing skills.

### **Overall implementation of Speaking and Listening for KS1 and above.**

- Speaking and listening, inclusive of all forms of communication, is taught within the specified timetabled English lessons and teachers set targets to be achieved within the lesson or across a series of lessons/over time. The time allocation could be varied based on a pupil need and would be agreed with Head of Phase.
- Speaking and Listening skills are also taught in a wide range of other contexts: Functional Skills, Child initiated, work on 12-month outcomes, through other subject delivery and everyday routines and experiences.
- Pupils may have cross curricular 12-month outcomes (non-subject specific) or speaking and listening related outcomes in their 12-month EHCP outcomes that are priority areas to work on at home and at school.
- Decisions about when to progress should always be based on the security of pupils' understanding and their readiness to progress to the next stage. It is understood that some pupils do have particular learning strengths and interests and may not have an even profile.
- High quality teaching with engagement strategies outlined in Support Plans and EHCP outcomes, communication systems and integration of therapy advice where relevant.
- Correct modelling by staff and addressing of any misconceptions linked to Speaking and Listening skills.
- There is a coordinator that is linked to the Speaking and Listening subject.
- There are a wide range of interventions and strategies that may support pupils in their progress, and many are referenced in this strategy and the English Policy – [click here](#).
- Some pupils may have specific needs that need to be carefully considered and planned for to access the English curriculum, for example, physical disabilities, sensory impairment or sensory issues such as tactile defensiveness.
- Alternative access is provided where appropriate, e.g.
  - Use of software story telling programmes
  - Use of low-tech and high-tech communication aids as appropriate for individual pupils.
  - Use of adapted communication books/resources – larger print/highly contrasting background/tactile elements.
  - Providing opportunities to regularly participate and engage with the appropriate level of adult support, e.g., a second physical prompter to support in PECS Phase 1.
  - Alternative activities to work on the next steps of skills and knowledge.

### **Speech and Language Therapy (SALT) Professionals role:**

The Speech and Language Therapists from the Shropshire Community Health NHS Trust, work on a consultative basis with the pupils, parents, and the school staff at the Bridge School. The SALT team work closely with the class teachers and families to enable them to support the development of speech, language and communication needs and the assessment of eating, drinking and swallowing needs of identified pupils.

Pupils may be supported by the SALT team long term or short term based on the pathways the individual needs, through assessment and advice. Re-referrals to the service can take place if there has been a change within the individuals' speech, language, or communication needs. This is identified through discussions between class teachers, parents and heads of phase.

SALT role within school to support the Inclusive Communication approach includes:

- Individual assessments of pupils and liaison with class teachers, parents and carers.
- Guidance on interventions, signposting, and resources, to support and develop pupils' communication skills.
- Contribution to pupil Education Health Care Plan reviews for identified individuals.
- Guidance on AAC methods identified for specific pupils.
- Coaching for class teams/families
- Staff and parent training packages.

**Training**

Teachers and supporting adults all engage in training during their induction period to the Bridge School and access updates during the year. Specific training is organised by Heads of Phase and department coordinators when updates are needed.

All staff have access to subject knowledge, knowledge and understanding training packs, as well as constant access to support from class teachers or department reading coordinators.

Teachers will work with support staff so that they know the linked skills for the pupils in their class. Wider training is provided that supplements this and so that staff know the wider contexts and progressions.

**Support for parents in supporting and developing their child's speech, language and communication:**

Regular opportunities during the year are organised for training sessions for parents and carers and this includes development of understanding and communication as well as early reading and writing.

Training offered includes:

- Makaton
- Communication sessions including Intensive Interaction, PECS, How to Share Stories.

Class teachers are also available for discussions with individual parent/carer support to support their children at home in agreement with department HOP, e.g. in creating a communication system that matches what the pupil uses in school, offering guidance on how to create opportunities for communication, how to use Intensive Interaction strategies etc.

# Appendices

## **Appendix A –**

Click below for the progression booklet – **To be added Summer Term 2026 following update.**

## **Appendix B –**

### **Mapped-out pre-subject specific communication skills progression.**

Click below for the progression booklet – **To be added Summer Term 2026 following update.**

Please note that teachers, based on needs and profile of pupil, can break down into small steps or widen and apply laterally.

### **The intended skills and knowledge communication progression for pupils who attend the Bridge.**

Click below for the progression booklet – **To be added Summer Term 2026 following update.**

The teacher may break the steps down further, differentiate linked to individual pupil access and profile. Some pupils may have uneven profiles based on their strengths, abilities and needs.

## **Appendix C - Attainment targets for each key stage for English.**

Click below for – National Curriculum in England: English programmes of study – Key stages 1 and 2

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/335186/PRIMA\\_RY\\_national\\_curriculum\\_-\\_English\\_220714.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/335186/PRIMA_RY_national_curriculum_-_English_220714.pdf)

## **Appendix D – EYFS Curriculum**

Click below for – Early Years Foundation Stage Curriculum

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/974907/EYFS\\_framework\\_-\\_March\\_2021.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/974907/EYFS_framework_-_March_2021.pdf)

## Appendix E



### Communication Profile



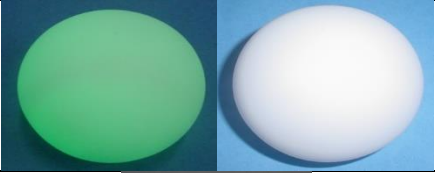




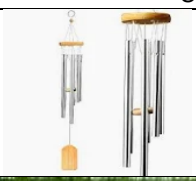

Pupil School  
Photo here

<u>Name:</u>	<u>Date Written:</u>
<u>Expressive language skills</u>	<u>Receptive language skills</u>
<u>Equipment</u>	<u>Motivators</u>  <u>Dislikes</u>
<p><b>Pupil has a current SALT report:</b> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p><b>Class team have read and understood current SALT report:</b> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p><b>Communication Profile shared with Co-ordinator/ HOP</b> Signed..... Date: .....</p>	<p><b>Class teacher has discussed profile with staff team</b></p> <p>The class team has read and understood the communication profile and will inform the class teacher should changes occur in a pupil's expressive and/or receptive language.</p> <p>Signed..... Date: .....</p>

**NB. Please check if a pupil has a recent SALT report, they do not have to be on the SALT current caseload.**

**Communication Profiles to be reviewed at the 6 & 12 monthly outcome review and document to be updated if necessary and shared with Co-ordinator/ HOP.**

**Object of Reference (OOR) List**

<b>Places</b>	
Swimming Pool/Hydro Pool	
Toilet	
White Room	
Dark Room	
Nurses Office	
Soft Play	
Classroom	
Outside	OR 
Wild Area	

## **Appendix G**

### **Agreed and consistent use of symbols in the school environment**

#### **Environment Labelling**

Displays in and around the Bridge reinforce the school's inclusive communication approach. Classroom, and whole school displays incorporate use of photos, symbols and text – where appropriate interactive sound buttons are also used to reinforce language and content.

The agreed font for the Bridge is Sassoon Primary Infant, this should be used for all labelling and resourcing. The agreed bank of symbol vocabulary is **InPrint 3 – Widgit Software**.

Focus and content for the corridors in Foundation, Primary and Secondary are agreed with each Heads of Phase. Classrooms are the responsibility of the class teacher. Shared areas are the responsibility of the Heads of Phase.

#### **Classroom environment:**

- Every class must display a daily timetable, using symbols agreed for the phase. Timetable symbols can be accessed here: [Timetable symbols](#)
- Drawers / Cupboards must be labelled using Sassoon Primary Infant Font size 50 in bold to identify what is in the drawer, this will then be supported by a symbol / photograph. Drawer labels can be accessed here: [Drawer labels](#)
- Peg labels are located outside of the classrooms and must display pupils photograph and name using the Peg Label template which can be access here: [Peg labels](#)
- Role play / small world areas should be labelled with symbols to support language development.
- Resources to support learning (e.g., number lines / Phonics Grapheme-Phoneme cards) should be readily available for pupils / staff to access as scaffolding tools (as appropriate to needs of the class).
- Schedules and visual supports should also be available (in line with support plans / pupil needs).
- Fire evacuation procedures must be clearly displayed (Health & Safety requirement)
- Designated Safeguarding Leads must be displayed (Safeguarding requirement)

## **Appendix H**

### **PECS Phases**

#### **Phase 1 - How to communicate.**

Students learn to explore and exchange single pictures for items or activities they really want.

#### **Phase 2 - Distance and Persistence**

Still using single pictures, students learn to generalise this new skill, across distances.

#### **Phase 3 - Picture Discrimination**

Students learn to select from 2 or more pictures. These are placed on a communication book.

#### **Phase 4 – Sentence Structure**

Students learn to construct simple sentences on a detachable sentence strip using 'I want'.

#### **Phase 5 – Answering Questions**

Students learn to use PECS to answer the question, "What do you want?"

#### **Phase 6 –**

##### **Commenting:**

Students comment in response to questions like "What can you see?", "What can you hear?"

##### **Attributes and language expansion:**

Students work on adding in adjectives, verbs, prepositions.

PECS has published guidance books. School have purchased the guides.

SALT and English coordinators can provide more information.

See website for more information - <https://pecs-unitedkingdom.com/pecs/>

# Appendix I

## Vocabulary Tracking Documents

### Example A – Transport Vocabulary

Core Vocab Sheet	Linked Curriculum Areas											Comprehension				Communication	
	Science	Geography	History	D&T	Art	Music	P.E.	RE	PSHE	MFL	Computing	Object	Photo	Symbol	Understands	Says word in imitation	Uses word spontaneously
Category 1	Transport																
Boat	✓	✓	✓		✓			✓									
Bus	✓	✓	✓		✓		✓										
Car	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓										
Plane	✓	✓	✓		✓					✓							
Tractor	✓	✓	✓		✓												
Train	✓	✓	✓		✓					✓							
Ambulance	✓	✓	✓		✓				✓								
Bicycle/bike	✓	✓	✓		✓		✓										
Fire engine	✓	✓	✓		✓				✓								
Lorry	✓	✓	✓		✓												
Motorbike	✓	✓	✓		✓												
Police car	✓	✓	✓		✓												
Pushchair	✓	✓	✓		✓				✓								
Ship	✓	✓	✓		✓					✓							
Truck	✓	✓	✓		✓												
Helicopter	✓	✓	✓		✓												
Trike/tricycle	✓	✓	✓		✓		✓										
Van	✓	✓	✓		✓												

### Example B – Animals Vocabulary

Core Vocab Sheet	Linked Curriculum Areas											Comprehension				Communication	
	Science	Geography	History	D&T	Art	Music	P.E.	RE	PSHE	MFL	Computing	Object	Photo	Symbol	Understands	Says word in imitation	Uses word spontaneously
Category 2	Animals																
Bird	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓			✓								
Cat	✓	✓	✓		✓				✓								
Chicken	✓	✓	✓		✓				✓								
Cow	✓	✓	✓		✓				✓								
Dog	✓	✓	✓		✓				✓								
Duck	✓	✓	✓		✓				✓								
Fish	✓	✓	✓		✓				✓								
Monkey	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓			✓								
Pig	✓	✓	✓		✓				✓								
Rabbit	✓	✓	✓		✓				✓								
Badger	✓	✓	✓		✓				✓								
Bear	✓	✓	✓		✓				✓								
Beetle	✓	✓	✓		✓				✓								
Budgie	✓	✓	✓		✓				✓								
Butterfly	✓	✓	✓		✓				✓								
Camel	✓	✓	✓		✓				✓								
Crocodile	✓	✓	✓		✓				✓								
Deer	✓	✓	✓		✓				✓								
Donkey	✓	✓	✓		✓				✓								
Elephant	✓	✓	✓		✓				✓								
Fox	✓	✓	✓		✓				✓								
Frog	✓	✓	✓		✓				✓								
Giraffe	✓	✓	✓		✓				✓								
Goldfish	✓	✓	✓		✓				✓								
Goose	✓	✓	✓		✓				✓								
Hippo	✓	✓	✓		✓				✓								
Horse	✓	✓	✓		✓				✓								
Kitten	✓	✓	✓		✓				✓								
Lamb	✓	✓	✓		✓				✓								
Lion	✓	✓	✓		✓				✓								
Mouse	✓	✓	✓		✓				✓								
Owl	✓	✓	✓		✓				✓								
Penguin	✓	✓	✓		✓				✓								
Pony	✓	✓	✓		✓				✓								
Puppy	✓	✓	✓		✓				✓								

Click here for Vocabulary Tracking Documents - [..\..\SHARED\\_W\CENTRAL - Assessment, Planning and Reporting Documents\Vocabulary Tracking](..\..\SHARED_W\CENTRAL - Assessment, Planning and Reporting Documents\Vocabulary Tracking)

## Appendix J

# Speech Sound Development Chart

This chart outlines the sounds a child will be learning around certain ages, examples of words containing those sounds and the most common errors they make.

STAGE (AGE)	SOUND	EXAMPLES			COMMON ERRORS HEARD	
		Initial position	Middle position	Final position	Substitution Used	Example
STAGE 1 (3 years)	m	<u>m</u> ine	ham <u>m</u> er	ar <u>m</u>	b  r/y t  l  d t/d	Pear becomes bear  White becomes right Dog becomes tog  Yes becomes les  Get becomes det Car becomes tar
	n	<u>n</u> o	h <u>o</u> ney	ma <u>n</u>		
	h	<u>h</u> air				
	p	<u>p</u> ear	happ <u>y</u>	cu <u>p</u>		
	ng		finger	ri <u>ng</u>		
	w	<u>w</u> alk	flow <u>e</u> r			
	d	<u>d</u> og	ladd <u>e</u> r	mu <u>d</u>		
	t	<u>t</u> ap	butter	si <u>t</u>		
	y	<u>y</u> es	yoy <u>o</u>			
	b	<u>b</u> ig	bab <u>y</u>	clu <u>b</u>		
g	<u>g</u> o	tiger	egg	d	Get becomes det	
k	<u>c</u> ar	p <u>o</u> cket	loo <u>k</u>	t/d	Car becomes tar	
STAGE 2 (3 ½ years)	f	fi <u>r</u> e	teleph <u>o</u> ne	rou <u>gh</u>	p/t	Four becomes pour
STAGE 3 (4 years)	l	liza <u>r</u> d	yellow	ba <u>ll</u>	y	Light becomes yight
	sh	sh <u>i</u> p	push <u>i</u> ng	fi <u>sh</u>	t/s	Shop becomes top
	ch	ch <u>a</u> ir	kitch <u>e</u> n	cat <u>ch</u>	t/s	Chair becomes tair
STAGE 4 (4 ½ years)	s	so <u>a</u> p	rac <u>i</u> ng	gr <u>ass</u>	t/d	Sun becomes tun
	z	z <u>e</u> bra	sciss <u>o</u> rs	no <u>s</u> e	d	Zip becomes dip
	j	ju <u>m</u> p	sold <u>i</u> er	brid <u>g</u> e	d	Jump becomes dump
STAGE 5 (5 years)	r	<u>r</u> abbit	or <u>a</u> ng		w	Rain becomes wain
STAGE 6 (6 years)	v	<u>v</u> an	se <u>v</u> en	stov <u>e</u>	b/d	Van becomes ban
	consonant blends (i.e. 2 or more consonants together)	<u>s</u> plash	bas <u>k</u> et	ask		
		<u>t</u> ree	libr <u>a</u> ry			
		<u>b</u> lue	aeropl <u>a</u> ne			
STAGE 7 (8 years)	th (voiced)	<u>t</u> his	broth <u>e</u> r	with	v	Brother becomes brover
STAGE 8 (8 ½ years)	th (voiceless)	<u>t</u> humb	noth <u>i</u> ng	mouth	f/d	Thin becomes fin

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**0 ICW**

**No choice.**

- The child has something, an adult gestures to ‘come here’ or points to the item and says ‘Give me that’
- Only dolly available on the table and adult says ‘Give me dolly’ or ‘Show me dolly’.

**One ICW**

This is where there is only one word in a phrase or short sentence which the child has to understand to follow an instruction.

- “Pass me the scissors” when there is a choice of scissors, pencils and paper.
- “Where’s the book?” when there is a choice of book, key and monkey.
- “Wash dolly?” when there is a choice of washing dolly or teddy.
- “Where’s your nose?” when there is a choice of other body parts.

If there is a choice of dolly and a brush, then saying ‘Brush dolly’s hair’ contains no key words because there are no alternative choices and ‘brush’ is the natural thing to do.

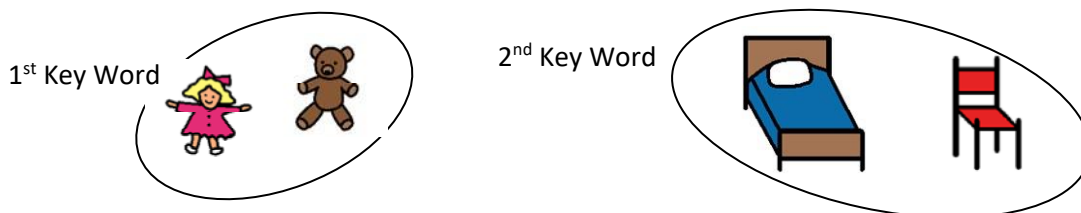
For further activities please refer to Language Steps (One Word Level) or the One Word Level Programme.

**Two ICWs**

This is where there are two words in a sentence that have to be understood for the child to follow the instruction accurately.

**Example:**

“Put teddy on the chair” when there is a choice of teddy or dolly **and** chair or table.



“Wash teddy’s ears” when there is a choice of teddy or dolly and a range of body parts.

For further activities please refer to Language Steps (Two Word Level) or ‘Developing Comprehension and Expression at Two Word Level’.



### Three ICWs

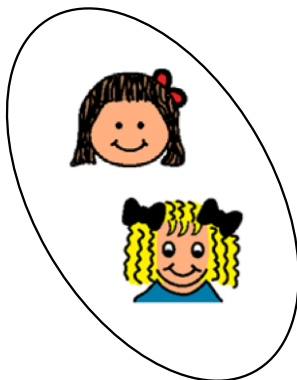
At a three key word level you can start to introduce concepts such as 'under' and 'big/little'.

#### Example:

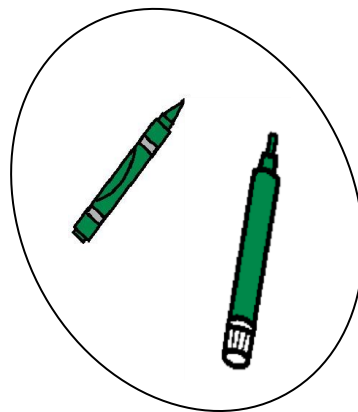
"Put big cat in the car" when there is a choice of a big cat, a small cat, a big dog and a small dog, a car and a boat.

"Give Lucy the small crayon" with a choice of Lucy or Kate, a small and big crayon and a small and big felt tip.

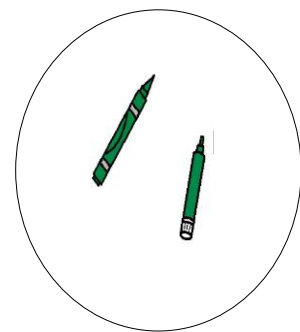
1<sup>st</sup> Key Word



2<sup>nd</sup> Key Word



3<sup>rd</sup> Key Word



For further activities please refer to Language Steps (Three Word Level) or 'Developing Comprehension and Expression at a Three Word Level'.

### Four ICWs

At a four key word level you can introduce colours and more complex position words such as 'behind' and 'next to'.

- Give Alice the big red brick' with a choice of Alice or Matthew, and red/blue/yellow bricks and cars which are big and small.
- 'Put Sponge Bob in the box and Barbie in the house', where there is a choice of Sponge Bob/Barbie/cow/Bagpuss and box/house/basket.
- 'Put the car behind the big tree' with a choice of car/lorry, big/small tree, big/small house and different options for position (e.g., behind/next to/on).

For further activities please refer to Language Steps (Two Word Level) or 'Developing Comprehension and Expression at a Four Word Level'.



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<https://www.hanen.org/About-Us/What-We-Do/Early-Childhood-Language-Literacy-Development.aspx>

Girolametto, L., Pearce, P. & Weitzman, E. (1996b). Interactive focused stimulation for toddlers with expressive vocabulary delays. Journal of Speech and Hearing Research, 39, 1274-1283.

## **Intensive Interaction:**

Dave Hewett and Melanie Nind in 'Access to Communication: Developing the basics of communication with people with severe learning difficulties through Intensive Interaction' (1994)

NIND & HEWETT (2001) A practical guide to Intensive Interaction. British Institute of Learning Disabilities.

Intensive Interaction Institute - <https://www.intensiveinteraction.org/>

Barber, M. (2005) Intensive Interaction: some practical considerations, PMLD LINK, 17 (3), (Issue 52), 22-27.

## **Augmentative and Alternative Communication – Guidance & Research:**

Communication Matters, 2020, Augmentative and Alternative Communication, ISAAC (UK) Accessed November 2020

<https://www.communicationmatters.org.uk/overview>

<https://www.communicationmatters.org.uk/resources/publications/>

<https://acecentre.org.uk/>

[Information on Additional Support Needs and Assistive Technology \(callscotland.org.uk\)](https://www.callscotland.org.uk/)

## **Objects of Reference (OOR):**

Ashdown, R. (2001) Communication with Objects of Reference, PMLD LINK, 13 (2), (Issue 39), 20-23;

Ockelford, A. (2002) Objects of Reference. London: RNIB;

Grace, J. (2019) Why Standardising Objects of Reference Can Render Them Meaningless, Disabled Living  
<https://www.disabledliving.co.uk/blog/why-standardising-objects-of-reference-can-render-them-meaningless/>

Park, K. (1997) How do objects become objects of reference? British Journal of Special Education, 24 (3), 108-114

### **Photographs of Reference (POR):**

Anderson, C., Lacey, P., Rai, K., Burnford, H., Jones, K. and Jones, R. (2015) Inclusive talking: Language Learning. In P. Lacey, R. Ashdown, P. Jones, H. Lawson and M. Pipe (eds) *The Routledge Companion to Severe, Profound and Multiple Learning Difficulties*. London: Routledge

Lacey, P. (2012) Low Tech Ideas, PMLD LINK, 24 (3), (Issue 73), 22

### **Picture Exchange Communication System (PECS):**

Pyramid Education Consultants - <https://pecs-unitedkingdom.com/pecs/>

Bondy AS, Frost LA. The picture exchange communication system. *Semin Speech Lang.* 1998;19(4):373-88; quiz 389; 424. doi: 10.1055/s-2008-1064055. PMID: 9857393.

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### **Communication Books:**

Developing & Using a Communication Book 2nd Edition, originally designed by Clare Latham – Ace Centre [www.acecentre.org.uk](http://www.acecentre.org.uk)

[Augmentative & Alternative Communication](#) 33(3):1-11 June 2017 – AAC journal available on RCSLT website if a member. ***The effectiveness of aided augmented input techniques for persons with developmental disabilities: a systematic review***

O’Kane, C., Goldbart, J. (1998). *Communication Before Speech*. David Fulton Publishers, London

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Curriculum guidance for the foundation stage (2000) DfEE., London.

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### **Makaton:**

<https://makaton.org/>

Research Articles available on the Makaton website.

### **Information Carrying Words:**

Knowles, W and Masidlover, M (1982) *The Derbyshire Language Scheme*. Published by Derbyshire County Council.

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