



Developing Language and Communication at St. Joseph's Catholic Primary School

Early language is the single most important factor in influencing literacy levels at age 11. More important than behaviour, peer relationships, emotional wellbeing, positive interaction and attention. Vocabulary at age 5 is also linked with wider outcomes in mental health and employment in adulthood

At St. Joseph's Catholic Primary School, we place a strong emphasis on children developing competence in speaking and listening and acknowledge that all other areas of learning make a vital contribution to the successful development of communication.

Language and communication is nurtured and developed through

- children being exposed to daily high quality texts, rhymes and poems
- key vocabulary being planned for
- high quality interactions between both staff and children and children and children is scaffolded
- high quality role play within the indoor and outdoor ensures that children can use and develop language effectively
- Partnership working with parents and carers
- Partnership working with external agencies such as Speech and Language Therapists
- Identified target support for children such as 'Wellcomm' and 'Nuffield Early Language Intervention (NELI)'.

Staff Training

All staff have completed 'Talk for Writing' training in addition to Wellcomm or NELI training. This has enabled staff to identify and close skill gaps and to ensure progression for all through quality first teaching. Language development and enrichment is an ongoing priority for CPD.

Planning and Practise

Medium and short term plans include focused vocabulary based on tier 1, 2 and 3 words. The planned vocabulary is based on the topic and/or book of the week and the daily focus. The 'Word of the Day' is explicitly taught, the children will hear and see the word and discuss its meaning. Throughout the day the children will have opportunities through play and continuous provision to hear and use the word in different contexts.

Staff will always be a good role model for spoken language. Daily routines model vocabulary and allow the chance for children to begin to join in as they develop and extend expressive language. Language enrichment is differentiated, inclusive & progressive. Through interactions and observations staff will know how to interact and model vocabulary so that it is matched to children's individual next steps. For example, those children who are working at 1 word level to those children who are working at more complex language. Every opportunity such as meal times, story times, putting on coats, etc is used to enhance language development.

A focussed story will be planned for every 2 weeks. The children will become very familiar with the text developed through activities such as talk for writing, role play and continuous provision activities. This will be shared with parents at home. Other texts, both fiction and non-fiction, are read alongside the text. A rhyme or poem of the week supplement the text or topic. Again, this is shared with parents.

High quality role play significantly impacts and develops language and communication. When children are interacting together they learn new words and expressions from those around them. Child begin to discover the most effective words to get their point across to their friends. As they use new words, they become confident communicators and subsequently learn to listen to others. Staff model the use of

language and provide further opportunities to extend children's language skills through quality interactions.

Reading opportunities are given on a daily basis. The children will be read to, children will be heard reading, and staff will share books with children within continuous provision / reading area. Children will take home a reading book -matched to their phonic phase, and a book from the 'Home Readers' collection to share with parents. Opportunities are made available for parents/ carers to change the 'Home Readers' on a daily basis so that all pupils experience a wide range of stories. In accordance with the school's home / school agreement, the children are expected to read at home daily. Parents are also encouraged to come into school to attend storytelling sessions in the classroom with their children.

Interventions

We recognise that some children have specific language needs and in order to make progress require additional support alongside quality first teaching. On entry to Nursery all children are screened using the 'Wellcomm Communication Screen' and on entry to Reception all children are screened for the Nuffield Early Language Intervention (NELI) programme. Children identified as scoring low will then either be referred to Speech and Language Therapy Services or take part in interventions programmes such as

- Wellcomm (Nursery)
- NELI (Reception)

Working with Parents

A weekly Parent focus newsletter is shared with parents which informs them of the focus book, focus rhyme / poem and focus vocabulary. Parents are encouraged to come into school on a daily basis to choose home reading books. Parents are offered 'Teaching your child to read' workshops where staff deliver the key messages of reading and language and communication development.

Half- termly Family Learning sessions where parents stay and play alongside their child support and develop children's vocabulary through interactions, stories and rhymes. Staff scaffold language to parents and carers and offer support and guidance on language development, reading and singing to young children. Stay and play sessions on entry to Nursery and Reception ensure that we can identify early intervention requirements and signpost parents for support.

Working with External Agencies

We value research based approaches and acknowledge that a multi-agency approach to the development of language and communication significantly impact upon the development of early communication and language. We work with

- Nuffield Early Language Intervention
- In 2022-23, Hanen, Nat Cen & the Education Endowment as a control school participating in the Hanen Learning Language and Loving it Project Trial.
- The local authority to support language and communication development
- Speech and language therapy services for targeted support
- Parents in school
- Visitors in school and staff at places we visit