



# Devonshire Primary Academy Speech and Language Policy



Adopted by Governors/HT: HT  
Implementation date: Feb 2017  
Review period: 3 Years  
Last review date: Sep 2026  
Person responsible for policy: S&L/EAL Lead

## **What is Communication?**

- LANGUAGE – the ability to understand words and sentences and organise thought to be able to respond using appropriate vocabulary and grammar.
- SPEECH – the ability to combine sounds together to say words. This involves the physical elements of pronunciation.
- NON-VERBAL COMMUNICATION (NVC) – the ability to understand and use gesture, body language, facial expression and voice to communicate your message.

These strands occur in all areas of school life: attention, listening, play, negotiating, and are fundamental to the progress a child makes.

## **Our Aims**

- To provide a whole school environment where all forms of communication such as verbal and non-verbal, are valued, used and understood by all members of the school community;
- To integrate HANEN and communication-friendly principles and methodologies throughout all aspects of school life;
- To identify children with Speech, Language and Communication Needs (SLCN) as early as possible and to provide appropriate support and intervention as necessary;
- To ensure that Speech, Language and Communication is given a high profile through regular training and inclusion on staff meeting agendas;
- To ensure that children leaving Devonshire are effective communicators; and
- All staff recognise that they have a responsibility to develop the communication skills of children in their care.

## **Methodology**

At Devonshire we create a learning environment which supports the communication needs of our pupils. To achieve this, we use:

- Visual timetables
- Symbol support through Widgit Online
- Sensory areas
- Clearly labelled areas in classrooms
- Symbols in EYFS to support labelling
- Communication friendly areas such as reading corners
- Learning takes place through paired, small group and whole class settings
- Use of technology to support communication

At Devonshire we use programs and allocated staff to support the communication needs of individuals. To achieve this, we utilise:

- Vocabulary lessons / Word of the Week
- Colourful Semantics
- HANEN training
- Phonics grouping
- Makaton sign of the week
- WellComm
- Dedicated small group speech and language work with identified SLCN pupils
- Close liaison with the Sea View Trust Speech and Language therapists
- Liaison with NHS SALTs

## **Planning**

At Devonshire we recognise the importance of subject-specific vocabulary, as well as a solid base of general vocabulary, for children to progress in their learning. We promote this by planning:

- Daily subject-specific vocabulary sessions in Early Years, and woven into lessons in KS1 and KS2 throughout lessons.
- Whole school methodology for learning new vocabulary – “the vocab circle”
- Vocabulary displayed on ‘vocab trees’ in all classrooms
- Subject-specific vocab mats on Dojo at the beginning of each term
- Vocab mats provided to children who need them in class.
- Key vocabulary is listed on all subject planners

## **Assessment and Recording**

Upon entry to Preschool and Reception, speech and language is assessed using a baseline assessment against the school EYFS Communication Curriculum and using the WellComm programme. Parents are encouraged to discuss any issues from that indicate the child may require additional speech and language support.

Children identified through this process as needing specialist intervention, can be assessed by the in-school Speech and Language Therapist, following the discussion of the case with the S&L Coordinator and the completion of the parental consent form.

Following assessment (which may focus on speech sounds, grammatical use of words, understanding and vocabulary or all of these) a report with recommendations will be produced by the therapist and sent to the SENDCO and S&L Coordinator. The S&L Coordinator will then distribute the report to relevant people; the class teacher, any support staff who will be included in the intervention support for the child and also the parents. Any parents who would like to discuss the report are encouraged to attend a meeting with the coordinator, the SENDCO and the Speech and Language Therapist who wrote the report where possible.

Any report that recommends further speech and language intervention will be accompanied by individualised targets for the child, which are reviewed and updated as deemed necessary by the therapist, e.g., if a member of support staff or teacher raises further concerns or if the child has exceeded their targets earlier than the review date. The targets are distributed in the same way as the reports; parents are also informed via Parent App each September to confirm that their child is still on the speech and language register and what this means in terms of support.

Children who score within the limits of their age group in these assessments will be discharged from the external Speech and Language provider; a letter recording this will be distributed to parents.

Every child who is registered as having speech and language needs – either with the Speech and Language therapist, or with the NHS, or both – will be included on a spreadsheet which records the therapy and interventions that each child has had and when throughout the year, as well as showing when new targets are needed and if the child has been discharged during this time. This record, along with pupil information such as pupil premium eligibility, is used to produce data for governors.

## **Parental Involvement**

Parents are encouraged to be involved in all aspects of their children’s communication. We nurture this in the Early Years setting through home visits or parent and child visits to school, welcome meetings and courses for parents. We are also a part of the Ready, Steady School Project.

Parents who have children receiving specific teaching assistant intervention on a 1:1 basis can be invited into school to observe a session if this is deemed appropriate. We hope that this will encourage families to adopt strategies that will support their child at home.

### **Staff Development**

In-service training is undertaken to incorporate communication principles i.e. HANEN, Colourful Semantics, Makaton etc. This includes staff refreshing their skills as well as induction of new staff. As opportunities arise, staff will attend external training also. The S&L Coordinator will keep informed of new developments nationally by reading articles or attending conferences when possible.