



# Communication and Literacy Curriculum Overview



## Intent

At Ivy House, we adopt a holistic approach to communication and provide an inclusive communication environment where pupils can use a variety of approaches to develop their communication skills. Every pupil will have opportunity to access a method of communication appropriate to their individual need.

**We inspire** our learners to communicate by creating multiple opportunities for all of our students to have meaningful and purposeful communication. We have exciting and fun learning activities which engage our learners and motivate them to communicate.

**We nurture** all types of communication through good listening and interpreting of different methods of communication. We "listen" to different movements, vocalisations and gestures. Our staff are attentive to pupils' communication and always respond appropriately by acknowledging their communication. We aim for our pupils to have a powerful voice in and out of schools. Every student has their voice "heard" through a range of communication techniques which are appropriate to them and their needs.

**We empower** our students to use their voice to communicate wants, needs, thoughts and feelings. We provide opportunities for our students to interact with one another, with different staff members and with the community.

It is important to maximise learner's ability to understand our messages and the world around them using an inclusive communication approach. We use a multimodal approach to communicate alongside spoken word to portray the message we want the learners to understand.

We aim to:

- To develop competence in speaking (or expression) and listening (or comprehension)
- To be aware of the purpose to communicate
- To communicate functionally or express self through preferred modes
- confidently and competently appropriate to individual needs and abilities
- To interact and communicate for social reasons and personal self esteem
- To communicate needs, ideas and emotions
- To listen and attend
- To comprehend or understand others
- To develop early visual skills
- To develop functional hand skills leading to early mark making, name



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- writing or labelling.
- To develop and increase an appropriate vocabulary for individual students
- To read with understanding
- To develop reading for purpose and pleasure
- To develop writing skills for purpose
- To utilise communication skills across all subjects and sessions

## Implementation

At Ivy House, we offer a bespoke learning programme for the communication needs and knowledge of each pupil. Communication underpins each and every lesson from the moment they walk through the door.

Every lesson is an opportunity for communication, saying hello in the morning, choosing an activity, asking for more, answering questions and much, much more!

Throughout the day and during communication sessions, our pupils are exposed to a range of communication methods to help find a method that is suitable for every individual. Some of our learners have access to both high-tech and low-tech communication aids.

Lessons are planned on a topic, which is a hook for different learning opportunities. They are individualised and made engaging and motivating for every individual to ensure a personalised and bespoke communication experience.

Communication lessons are specifically aimed to work on individual's communication targets from their PLGs which are taken from their EHCP's. Our lessons engage and motivate our learners to communicate.

Approaches to communication at Ivy House include:

- Facial expression
- Gestures
- Vocalisations
- Voice
- Eye pointing (both high tech and low tech)
- Objects of reference and sensory cues
- Yes/No bands
- Photos and symbols
- Makaton signing
- TASSELS (on body signing)
- PECS



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- ❑ Communication books
- ❑ Big Mack and other switches
- ❑ Grid 3
- ❑ Electronic communication aids and the use of iPads

## Early Years



In Early Years, Communication is broken into two main sub-sections, Communication and Language, and Literacy. Within Communication and Language, there are listening and attention, speaking and understanding and within Literacy, there are Word Reading, Comprehension and Writing.

## Pre-formal



Pre-formal learners have five components of learning within their communication; Encounter, responding, interacting, communicating and then the pre-requisite reading skills. More information on these areas are located within the Pre-Formal Scheme of Work for Communication.

## Semi-Formal Curriculum



Semi-formal students work on seven areas of learning within communication and literacy. These are phonics, reading behaviour, writing, handwriting, understanding language (receptive), using language (expressive) and reading. More information on these areas are located within the Semi-Formal Scheme of Work for Communication and Literacy.

Our semi-formal learners access at least 4 communication and literacy lessons per week, including phonics. We follow Read, Write, inc. for our phonics and information for this can be found in our reading curriculum.



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## The Branch Curriculum

Communication and Literacy for our 14-19 students is linked with their Skills for Life. All students up to 16 must have lessons on Literacy. For more information on this curriculum, please see the Branches Curriculum Documents.

## Whole School

Within school, we celebrate communication and literacy each and every day. Classes have plenaries which highlight achievements within communication and we have star of the week which may be based around communication. We host events which are planned to promote communication. These include, but are not exclusive to, themed days such as World Book Day, National Story Telling Week and religious celebrations.

## Impact

Progression with communication is evident in small steps. Our learning experiences are designed to provide maximum engagement and opportunities for communication. The pace of progression sequence is set by the individual learner and therefore is not linear. Learning to communicate in any form enables our students to have a "voice". This allows our learners to become members of the school community, local community and supports the learners in building relationships both with staff and peers. In our school community, we have pupils/students who represent their peers on the school council, who run larger enterprise projects, such as running a café, and students/pupils who go into different learning environments within the community, for example soft play and the local garden centre. Our students having their communication listened to enables them to express themselves which helps the mental health of our students. Some of our students learn to communicate expressively and receptively which empowers them to make decisions on their day to day lives. Ivy House has successfully helped to transition some of our students into the next stage of their education, whether that is moving onto a mainstream school or going onto further education.

## Assessment

For many of our students, their progress will not be able to be charted in a linear way but they will show the developments in a more lateral sense and may show breadth and depth of learning. Once evidence is collected it is mapped against criteria, including:

- The Engagement Model
- Rainbow Profile- my Communication and My Thinking (Listening, Attention and Understanding, Speaking, Reading and Writing).
- Personal Learning Goals (PLGs)
- EHCP targets
- Reception Baseline
- Phonics RWI baseline