

# Communication and Interaction



## **Communication and Interaction**

Our approach of teaching communication and interaction is directed heavily by pupils' individual needs and each pupils' level of development. The visual presentation of information and teaching materials is of particular importance to support consistent and clear communication. Makaton signing is consistently used by staff to reinforce speech and understanding. In appropriate cases, it is taught to pupils and they are encouraged to use it to support their speech. Some pupils use communication aids designed to meet their individual needs. These might be in the form of single symbols, communication books, choosing boards, E-Tran Frames or technological aids such as Eye-Gaze, Widget, or Grid 3.

The school's Speech and Language Therapists have an important role to play in developing pupils' communication. They work with whole classes, individuals or with groups. More commonly, the therapists act as a point of reference for teachers in their work with pupils.

The aim for developing these skills is to provide our pupils with a means to communicate universally with the world around them, in order for them to get their needs met, undertake daily activities in the community and to build relationships. This is a fundamental life skill and underpins the majority of our English teaching.

# **Communication and Speech and Language at Amwell View School**

## **INTENT**

Through teaching Communication, we aim to improve the autonomy and independence of all pupils, so that they are able to understand functionally and independently. Outcomes are focused so that the pupils can effectively communicate across all environments and to a range of adults and peers. Communication development and support focuses on receptive and expressive skills. Pupils have opportunities for Communication development throughout the curriculum in order to encourage progress and contextualisation of communication skills. Communication involves developing requesting, commenting, questioning, negating and turn taking skills.

The Speech and Language team intervention is implemented both universally and through a targeted approach. Pupil's receptive and expressive communication skills are baselined jointly with therapists and class teachers using the Hertfordshire Community NHS Trust Communication Framework. This is an evidenced based framework using the following references:

B = Buckley; Children's Communication skills: from birth to five years

S = Sheridan: From birth to five years, Children's Developmental Progress

Reynell Attention Scales

LARSP developmental profile (Language Assessment and Remediation Screening Programme)

PLS = Pre School Language Scales

Individual Communication outcomes are initially identified by Speech and Language Therapists but shared and agreed with parents and class teachers. They are then embedded into half-termly outcomes and lesson planning across the curriculum by class teachers. Teacher liaison with Speech and Language Therapists is used to inform outcome setting in EHCP reports. Communication outcomes are individualised and differentiated to meet each pupil's own communication needs and approach. To ensure consistency of approach and expectation for communication, each pupil has a jointly set up communication snapshot. These are regularly updated and amended in response to pupil progress and change in need by teachers and the Speech and Language Therapists collaboratively.

## **IMPLEMENTATION**

At Amwell View School, we adopt a holistic approach to communication. Identified pupils have individualised communication passports, which are created jointly by Speech and Language Therapists and class teachers. Specific pupils, who have been identified by English Subject Leads, have their

own reading profile, which details their reading level and specific outcomes related to reading.

All outcomes, communication plans and progress are regularly shared with teaching staff, professionals and parents to support consistency across all contexts. These plans are shared and discussed between class teachers and other professionals as the pupils transition throughout the school to ensure continuity across Key Stages. Home visits are conducted by Speech and Language Therapists and class teachers across the year to support implementation of communication strategies at home.

At Amwell View School, we provide a total communication approach. The school environment supports the pupils' expressive and receptive communication needs throughout the school day. The classroom methodology provides pupils with constant access to communication aids to encourage spontaneous communication. Specific pupils have individualised communication aids such as communication books, lanyards or choosing boards. These are differentiated by their own communicative needs and developmental level, such as using TOBIs, photographs, symbols or words level. These are used across the school day to provide a range of communicative opportunities in learning, dinner and play contexts. In cases where this is appropriate, communication aids travel between school and home each day to provide the pupils, and parents, with a means of universal communication.

Pupils' receptive understanding is supported through individualised now/next boards, classroom visual timetables, visual instructions, visual supports in and around the classroom and through the use of activity cues. Activity cues provide a multi-sensory approach to support understanding for pupils that are not yet able to understand paper-based forms of communication.

Augmentative and Alternative communication (AAC) is used in many forms to support individual communication needs across contexts. Pupils are assessed for suitability to use specific AAC technologies such as EyeGaze, VOCAs, E-tran frames or switches. Parents are invited to assessments alongside Speech and Language Therapists and class teachers.

Makaton signing is used to provide another means to support communication. Tactile signing is an alternative method of communication, involving signing using touch. This is used in certain cases with appropriate pupils to support their understanding of transitions and activities. Teaching staff use Makaton in addition to speech across the school day for all pupils. Each week in staff meetings, teaching staff practice new signs, relevant to celebrations, current news or curriculum topics, which are then imbedded into lessons and shared with teaching assistants. Makaton training is delivered to staff and parents.

Training has been well received by parents who have spoken of its effectiveness at home.

Regular training is provided to staff in Makaton, Expressive and Reception Communication (REEL training) and Elklan training to support and empower staff subject knowledge in communication development.

Pupils in EYFS are initially baselined in a joint assessment led by the Speech and Language Team and class teachers. From this, a communication profile or snapshot is created to detail the communication and speech and language needs and outcomes for that pupil. As pupils move through Key Stages, communication plans are amended and shared through discussion between Speech and Language Therapists and class teachers.

Pupils who have been identified as high attainers by English Subject Leads, attend regular English booster sessions in which they are supported to stretch and challenge their communication and speech and language skills. Pupils have the opportunity within booster sessions to work in joint learning groups, to share in discussions and work together with pupils of similar abilities. Pupils have responded positively to these sessions and teachers highlight increased confidence and engagement from these sessions.

Outcomes for pupils with Profound and Multiple Learning Disabilities (PMLD) are drawn from the Routes for Learning framework and are adapted to individual needs by class teachers. Pupils learn about very early communication and interaction skills through a multi-sensory curriculum. Teaching staff support these pupils' communication and speech and language through the use of EyeGaze, switches, E-tran frames and sound buttons.

In Post-16 and the Community Classroom, communication focuses on consolidation and contextualisation of communication skills. Pupils are given opportunities to practice these skills off site and in the community to prepare them for transition to new settings. All communication plans are shared with professionals from colleges and new settings. Where possible, pupils complete visits to their new settings or are visited by a transition support worker to discuss their communication needs.

## **IMPACT**

At Amwell View School, we believe teaching communication is essential in providing pupils with a lifelong means to communicate with the world around them. By supporting our pupils with these skills across the whole of their education, we positively impact our pupils' wellbeing and quality of life, by equipping them with an effective means to be universally understood, listened to and respected as individuals.