

Supporting children with speech, language and communication needs

Plume Avenue Nursery aims to provide an inclusive setting, following the guidance within the Inclusion Development Programme, supporting children with speech, language and communication needs. We will promote effective strategies, meeting the individual needs of all the children, ensuring our setting supports every child's opportunity to fulfil their potential in becoming a skilful and confident communicator.

Each child's key person will have knowledge of their level of speech, language and communication skills, recording their progress and achievements in their child record books. These observations alongside information from parents will be used to identify children with speech, language and communication needs.

When planning activities, each child's individual communication and language skills will be taken into consideration. We will strive to present the activities to ensure each child will benefit from them, taking into account their level of attention and that the language used is appropriate.

Time for new children to settle will be allowed in order for them to demonstrate their communication skills.

Should a child's speech, language and communication progress become a concern, practitioners and parents will discuss the implementation of strategies to help and support the child within the setting. Where necessary there may be a need for a referral to a speech and language therapist, this will again be discussed if necessary. If a child's hearing is a cause for concern, a referral for a hearing check through their doctor would be advised. If the child still uses a dummy or bottle, parents will be encouraged, with support, to phase out their use as soon as possible as they can contribute to the delay of communication development.

We will develop communication skills by a number of different strategies.

- Modelling and promoting good listening skills. We will do this by looking at the children who are talking to us and listening to what they have to say. This demonstrates and models good listening behaviours. We will use specific indications when we want the children to listen, using symbols, signs and visual strategies.
- We will allow the children time to respond to both conversation and questions. This allows the children to focus their thoughts and process a response, with practitioners knowing that children with communication needs will require more time.
- When a child pronounces a word incorrectly, for example 'gog' instead of 'dog', or 'T hurted my knee' instead of 'T hurt my knee', practitioners will model the correct language back instead of correcting the child, for example 'Oh! You hurt your knee' or 'yes, it's a dog'.
- We will repeat with corrections and extend the children's language in order to both model the correct language as well as introducing new vocabulary. It also shows the child that the practitioner is listening.

- Practitioners will adapt their language to each child's needs, keeping vocabulary short and clear for those with speech, language and communication difficulties and making sure those who are confident communicators are suitably challenged.
- When a child relies on augmentative methods of communication (signing and symbols) as a way of either supporting their speech and language or a standalone method of communicating, staff will work with parents and other professionals to ensure their needs are being met and that all staff are aware of the communication system in place.
- We consider it important to involve all the children in this system so it opens opportunities for them to communicate with each other during play and will introduce basic Makaton signing throughout the term to every child with a new sign every two weeks.

All the above strategies will be continued and used for children with English as an additional language, giving them ample time to develop understanding of the English language and the confidence to start using English words.

The SENCo will ensure practitioners are supported when implementing strategies for speech, language and communication and also addressing any training that may be required or requested.

We will reflect regularly on how we implement this policy and on how effective these strategies are. We will ensure the indoor and outdoor environment provides opportunities to develop children's speech, language and communication skills.

Our approach to the development of these skills will also be displayed for the parent's information, including local information that may be of use.

Children with known speech, language and communication needs will have their information shared and transferred (with parental consent) during their transition to a new environment; a new room within our setting, transfer to another early year's setting or when moving on to Reception Class.

The person with overall responsibility to ensure this guidance is followed is the setting SENCO

Steven Catley