



Speech, Language and Communication Policy

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Our School Vision

Our school vision is based on the theme of '*Taking Care*'. We strive to encourage our children, staff and wider community to 'take care' of one another through the core Christian Values of:

Kindness, Hope, Courage and Respect.

Our vision is inspired by the words in Corinthians:

"Let love and kindness be the motivation behind all that you do."

(1 Corinthians 16.14)

Ravenshead C of E Primary School is committed to valuing diversity and to equality of opportunity. In biblical tradition, children in particular are seen to hold a special place in the priorities of God. Furthermore, we hold to the foundational belief that all people are created in God's image and are intrinsically valuable. Everyone should be treated as fundamentally precious, irrespective of behaviour, achievements or potential.

Therefore, we aim to create and promote an environment in which pupils, parents/carers and staff are treated fairly and with respect and feel able to contribute to the best of their abilities. The school's biblical foundation provides a model of Christian community described as the 'body of Christ', in which everyone has a part to play, and everyone without exception has God-given gifts which are to be used for the benefit of others.

Ravenshead C of E Primary School recognises that language and communication underpin all aspects of learning. We are committed to maximising the communication potential of all our pupils by providing a communication-friendly environment where children are encouraged to develop and practise their speech, language and communication skills. We seek to celebrate each child's communication strengths and meet their individual needs through a child-centred approach. Our mission is that no child should be left out or left behind because of a speech, language or communication need.

1. Aims

- To ensure that all pupils make progress to the maximum of their communication potential.
- To establish the early and accurate identification of pupils with speech, language and communication needs and act upon these, seeking external support if necessary.
- To ensure accessibility to the curriculum for all pupils through effective differentiation and planning.
- To plan (with external support if necessary) effective programs for intervention and deliver these regularly.
- To develop and maintain a positive working partnership with parents and outside agencies.

2. Provision

- 2:1 Speech, language and communication support at Ravenshead C of E Primary School is a highly collaborative integrated model which is focused on enabling pupils to access the class-based curriculum and to communicate effectively. Ravenshead C of E Primary School seeks to continually increase staff knowledge of speech, language and communication in order to enhance provision.
- 2:2 Support for developing children's speech, language and communication is conceptualised at three levels: universal provision for all children (wave 1); targeted provision for children requiring additional support within the mainstream setting (wave 2); and specialist support

within the mainstream setting with a high level of direct intervention or frequent and sustained consultation by a Speech and Language Therapist with teachers and teaching assistants (wave 3).

3. What do children need to develop communication?

- 3:1 **Play and Interaction** - young children learn early communication skills through play. They need lots of opportunities to play. Play, particularly symbolic play, is an important step in language development. For example, by understanding that the toy cup represents the real cup, a child starts to understand that words represent things, people, events etc. For example: through play the child realises that the toy cup in the tea set is “symbolic” of the real cup in the kitchen even though they may look different.
- 3:2 **Attention & Listening** - children need to be able to physically hear as well as to listen and pay attention to language. Children need skills in attention and listening before language can develop successfully. Attention is a skill which develops from birth and is the ability to look and listen to what other people are saying or doing. For example: a child is able to look at a cup at the same time as an adult and hears the word “cup”.
- 3:3 **Understanding Language** - children learn to understand words, sentences and conversations. They need to be able to understand words before they can use them. With a solid foundation of listening and attention as well as play skills, children will develop an understanding of language. Often young children can understand a lot more than they can say. For example: the child understands that the sounds they hear from the adult e.g. “cup” relate to the object that they can see.
- 3:4 **Expressive Language** - children learning how to talk, using words and then sentences to share their message and join in conversations. They start with single words and move on to join two words together then three, four etc. For example: the child has a go at saying “cup” when they see or want the cup.
- 3:5 **Speech** - children develop their use of different speech sounds, so they can be understood by others. Some children continue to develop speech sounds up until the age of 7 years. For example: they may say “tup” for ‘cup’ to start with.

4. Universal Provision

- 4:1 Every child acquiring and using speech, language and communication skills benefits from good communication environments to facilitate development. All staff at Ravenshead C of E Primary School are dedicated to providing a communication-friendly environment based upon three primary principles:
 - 1. Environment: the environment is conducive to effective communication.
 - 2. Opportunities: everyone has the opportunity to talk, listen, understand and participate.
 - 3. Interactions: every adult-child interaction promotes and supports effective speech, language and communication skills.

5. Environment

- 5:1 All classrooms are organised to support effective speaking and listening. All pupils are able to see the teacher easily from their desks and pupils with speech, language and communication needs sit near the teacher or an additional adult during periods of teacher talk.

- 5:2 Quiet, low-distraction areas are available for pupils who need support to attend to individual tasks or activities or benefit from 'down time'. These spaces also enable differentiated work to be more easily delivered.
- 5:3 Learning outcomes and success criteria are shared and related vocabulary displayed.
- 5:4 Visual supports including use of visual timetables are used in all classrooms to support comprehension, develop vocabulary and concept knowledge, promote independence and reduce anxiety.
- 5:5 Equipment is well organised and labelled using pictures as well as words to support children with literacy difficulties. Consideration is given to how resources and equipment are stored (e.g. by category) to aid pupils with poor organisational skills and to promote independent learning and categorisation skills.
- 5:6 Learning areas are clearly defined throughout the classroom.
- 5:7 Wall displays relevant to teaching in different subject areas include items that invite pupil comments and key vocabulary with pictorial support which is used interactively to support comprehension and aid learning.

6. Opportunities

- 6:1 Opportunities for talk are specifically included in curriculum delivery in each classroom.
- 6:2 Pupils have opportunities to engage in interactive story telling facilitated by an adult. Staff ensure an interactive experience by asking appropriate questions, encouraging children to join in, using props etc.
- 6:3 Pupils have opportunities to engage in structured conversations with adults.
- 6:4 Key vocabulary is taught using a multisensory approach, displayed in the classroom and repeated in many different contexts. Regular opportunities are provided for pupils to practise using new vocabulary.
- 6:5 Opportunities are provided for pupils to discuss ways of tackling a problem/task. Pupils are encouraged to contribute and explore their ideas through talk with an adult, with peer talk partners, in small groups and in whole class contexts. Opportunities are provided for pupils to present, explain and justify their ideas/methods to adults and peers.
- 6:6 Staff ask questions which encourage the participation of all pupils and pitch questions to challenge pupils of all abilities.
- 6:7 Open-ended questions are used to encourage pupils to think, reason and speculate. Opportunities are provided for specific teaching of social communication skills.

7. Interactions

- 7:1 Staff:
- Respond to all of the pupils' communication attempts.
 - Get down to the pupils' level during interactions.
 - Use the pupils' names to gain their attention.

- Explicitly teach and model 'good listening'.
- Provide good language models and encourage pupils to reflect on their own speech/grammar in a positive manner.
- Repeat, extend and expand on what pupils say to develop their knowledge and language skills.
- Comment on what pupils are doing.
- Provide pupils with choices and encourage them to explain their choice.
- Reinforce their spoken language with non-verbal communication.
- Emphasise key words when speaking and explain new vocabulary.
- Encourage turn-taking.
- Monitor comprehension, encourage pupils to monitor their own understanding and break down instructions into short, simple chunks where necessary.
- Pause frequently during interactions to allow pupils to process verbal information and formulate a response.
- Ask a range of open-ended questions appropriate to the pupils' age and stage of development to encourage pupils to problem-solve and expand their thinking.
- Scaffold responses to questions which pupils find difficult to answer.
- Encourage pupils to respond in full sentences.

8. Targeted Provision

- 8:1 Targeted provision (wave 2) provides enhanced speech, language and communication support for children with speech, language and communication needs for whom universal input is not enough. It is targeted at pupils known to have a speech, language and communication needs and where there is a risk of educational, emotional or other difficulties arising as a result of their speech, language and communication need.
- 8:2 Targeted support (wave 2) at Ravenshead C of E Primary School comprises:
- 'Skilling up' teachers, teaching assistants and/or parents/carers to develop particular aspects of a child's speech and language development.
 - Supporting teachers and teaching assistants to adapt their language and teaching materials so that the pupil can fully participate in lessons.
 - Delivering group intervention.

9. Specialist Provision

- 9:1 Specialist level intervention brings the most intensive specialist knowledge and skills to bear on the child's speech, language and communication needs. It is aimed at pupils with complex speech, language and communication needs or those who do not respond to universal and/or targeted provisions. Specialist support is most commonly provided in episodes – the pupil works with the Speech and Language Therapist individually or in groups for in depth assessment then has a period of targeted work delivered by the teaching assistants.
- 9:2 Specialist support (wave 3) at Ravenshead C of E Primary School comprises:
- Direct intervention, for example the Speech and Language Therapist works directly with pupils either individually or in groups to conduct an in depth assessment of language gaps.
 - Indirect intervention through in-house training so teachers and teaching assistants can carry out specialist interventions.
 - Indirect intervention through a consultation approach where the Speech and Language Therapist acts as a consultant to staff who work directly with a pupil.

- 9:3 Specialist support typically involves:
- Detailed assessment (either from NHS or Private Therapy Services- which we have in school fortnightly)
 - A child-specific programme- delivered by school practitioners.
 - Training school staff and parents/carers to deliver the programme.
 - Monitoring and adapting the programme based on progress.
- 9:4 Individual speech, language and communication targets are incorporated into the teachers' planning and assessments. The effectiveness of support is evaluated on a termly basis in terms of pupil progress and cost effectiveness.

10. Assessment and Referral

- 10:1 On entry into school, all pupils' speech and language skills are assessed using a formative assessment approach. Where concerns are raised, the pupil is referred to the Language Lead who ensures appropriate support is accessed. This often takes the form of a targeted intervention group or specialist assessment.
- 10:2 If, on review, the pupil continues to present with speech, language and/or communication difficulties, a referral is made to Nottinghamshire Healthcare NHS Trust Children's Speech and Language Therapy Service or the school funded SALT therapist. Parental permission is sought before submission of the referral. Where it is suspected that a pupil has other difficulties, referral to the appropriate agencies will be made once parental permission has been sought.

11. Roles and Responsibilities

- 11:1 Ravenshead C of E Primary School Language Lead is: Alex Sutcliffe.
- 11:2 Ravenshead C of E Primary School Speech and Language Therapist is: Lucy Sammons.
- 11:3 Governors and members of the Senior Leadership Team have a responsibility to:
- Understand the impact that speech, language and communication needs have on learning.
 - Be aware of the language development of children learning English as an additional language.
 - Support the development and implementation of a whole school communication-friendly environment.
 - Identify key personnel responsible for speech, language and communication across the school and curriculum.
 - Establish and monitor the speech, language and communication policy.
 - Develop and maintain expertise in speech, language and communication by facilitating access to training opportunities for staff.
 - Have an identified Language Lead.
- 11:4 ***The Language Lead has a responsibility to:***
- Understand speech, language and communication development and be aware of difficulties that may occur.
 - Be aware of the language development of children learning English as an additional language.
 - Ensure appropriate record-keeping.

- Provide direction, advice and assistance for pupils with an Education Healthcare Plan and/or Funding for Inclusion to help provide or organise training or discussion opportunities for teachers and teaching assistants so that significant information can be exchanged.
- Maintain contacts with outside agencies with respect to inclusion provision for the school.
- Provide specific support for pupils with identified inclusion needs.
- Oversee, maintain and organise inclusion files, resources and records.
- Update the SENDCo regularly with information regarding children with speech and language needs.
- Coordinate between school and the Speech and Language Therapists.
- Support staff in making referrals to the NHS SALT Team.
- Signpost EY pupils to relevant Talk group sessions at the local children's centre.

11:5 *The Speech and Language Therapist has a responsibility to:*

- Disseminate information and train staff in approaches and interventions.
- Ensure the pupils with speech, language and communication needs are identified, that their needs are met through appropriate provision and that they are enabled to access the curriculum.
- Provide detailed and accessible information about the pupils' speech, language and communication skills and recommended strategies to all involved with each pupil.
- Work collaboratively with other staff to integrate speech, language and communication intervention and within the curriculum.
- Work collaboratively with class teachers to ensure communication targets are incorporated into planning.
- Review individual pupils' targets in a timely manner.
- Increase each pupil's confidence in their communication skills.
- Liaise and work with parents to monitor and review progress of pupils with speech, language and communication needs.
- Ensure parents have access to information about their child's speech, language and communication needs and involve them in any decisions about their child's care.
- Encourage parents/carers to play an active role in their child's speech, language and communication development.
- Ensure appropriate record-keeping

11:6 *The Class Teachers have a responsibility to:*

- Understand speech, language and communication development, difficulties that may occur and the impact these may have on play and learning.
- Be aware of the language development of children learning English as an additional language.
- Provide a communication-friendly environment in the classroom setting.
- Ensure quality teaching to include a range of strategies to support speech, language and communication.
- Incorporate individual pupils' speech, language and communication targets into planning.
- Direct and support teaching assistants and other practitioners in their delivery of tasks and interventions.
- Monitor the progress of pupils receiving Wave 2 or 3 speech, language and communication interventions.

- Ensure that speech, language and communication records are handed on to new class teachers/school during transitions.
- Differentiate tasks and outcomes in order that pupils' individual speech, language and communication needs are met.
- Consider the speech, language and communication needs at all points in the planning process.

11:7 *The Teaching Assistants/Other Practitioners have a responsibility to:*

- Understand the impact that speech, language and communication needs have on play and learning.
- Be aware of the language development of children learning English as an additional language.
- Provide a communication-friendly environment at all times.
- Be familiar with and use a range of strategies to support speech, language and communication.
- Record relevant information regarding progress within an intervention group and liaise with the class teacher/Speech and Language Therapist/Language Lead.
- Deliver one-to-one and small group interventions with the direction and support of the class teacher/Speech and Language Therapist.

11:8 *The Parents/Carers have a responsibility to:*

- Take part in decisions about their child's speech, language and communication intervention.
- Share information about their child's speech, language and communication development with school staff as part of the assessment process.
- Support their child with their speech, language and communication needs at home.
- Access support where necessary/ attend SALT assessments and reviews.

12. Strategies embedded into practice at Ravenshead C of E Primary School

12:1 Key Principles of Interaction; Staff provide good language models by:

- Repeating: repeating clearly what the child says with correct grammar.
- Extending: extending what the child has said by adding a word or two.
- Expanding: giving more information about a word.
- Introducing/ Pre teaching new vocabulary.
- Providing opportunities to talk.
- Creating an environment where discussion is promoted.
- Staff reinforce their spoken language with symbols, pictures and objects as well as nonverbal communication (e.g. natural gesture, key word signing, facial expressions etc.).
- Staff pause expectantly and frequently for 10 seconds during interactions to allow pupils to process verbal information and formulate a response.
- Staff ask a range of open-ended questions appropriate to the pupils' age and stage of development to encourage pupils to problem-solve and expand their thinking.
- Staff scaffold responses and provide forced alternatives to questions which pupils find difficult to answer. E.g. 'How do you know the boy is sad?' 'I know the boy is sad because he is smiling or because he is crying?'