



Communication Guidelines Policy

Introduction

The Bercow Report (2008) on services to children and young people with speech, language and communication needs highlighted the crucial nature of communication:

With strong communication skills, children can engage and thrive. Without them children will struggle to learn, achieve, make friends and interact with the world around them...the ability to communicate is a vital piece of equipment for citizenship, fundamental to our humanity and central to the quest to improve life chances in the 21st century"

(The Bercow Report, A review of services for children and young people (0-19) with speech language and communication needs, DCSF, 2008).

Our communication policy reflects the needs of our children and incorporates both the EYFS and the Equals documentation

"Communication and language development involves giving children opportunities to experience a rich language environment; to develop their confidence and skills in expressing themselves; and to speak and listen in a range of situations "EYFS

"An education that is mindful of the individuality of each pupil's learning difficulty and recognises the need for a multi-modal approach, supported by a range of multi-sensory activities delivered over an agreed timeframe. The acquisition of core skills is essential to enhance the lives of special needs children and young people; with English and its component strands claiming centre stage."

Equals

The development and use of communication and language are at the heart of young children's learning and our school curriculum. Learning to joint attend, listen and speak emerges out of non-verbal communication, which includes body language such as facial expression, eye contact, bending the head to listen, hand gesture and taking turns. The ability to communicate gives children the capacity to participate more fully in their society. Without communication, teaching and learning is greatly restricted.

As adults, it is recognised as vital that we have a responsibility to examine our own behaviour and communication when developing ways to support our pupils to develop their communication,

"Communication is a shared activity – dependent on both partners. Attention needs to be paid to providing pupils with a means of communication, reasons for communication and opportunities for communication."

(*BILD Guide: Communication is a human right, S. Thurman, 2009*)

Aims and objectives

Within Acorn and Oakleigh, we work in a multi-disciplinary way with a range of other professionals. These guidelines have been drawn up between teachers from the school/Centre, SALTs and Arts Therapists. In addition, related professionals within Barnet have been sent copies so they are aware of our guidelines. We adopt a Total Communication approach, where all means of communication are recognised and valued and promoted as appropriate.

The need to create positive, enabling and responsive learning environments (Jean Ware (2003) is integrated across the school day. Key adults need to build positive relationships with the pupils, including parents/carers, other teachers, LSAs, SLT, OT, Physio, etc to have a broad and detailed picture of the pupil's strengths and needs, and to develop the trust needed for pupils to communicate.

We recognise that not all pupils will follow the same route in learning and many may show atypical development. Specialist approaches to communication development add to our practice. Teaching approaches will support the pupil's movement through stages of communicative development by providing opportunities for interaction and communication learning during everyday activities and routines as well as during school lesson time.

Communication skills will develop when pupils can;

- Joint attend, interact and develop trusting relationships with others, while having fun.
- Learn to pay attention to others and share the focus of their interest.
- Enjoy and understand two-way communication.
- Understand what others say and mean.
- Have structure, routine and predictability in their lives.

Teachers will support communication development by:

- Following a pupil's lead and including their interests.
- Providing frequent opportunities for communication throughout the day.
- Observing, waiting and listening to what the pupil is doing before adapting and adding new experiences.
- Using familiar routines to build skills and to interpret the pupil's communication and to support understanding.
- Establishing joint attention and developing turn taking.
- Using play as a means of developing communication skills.
- Modelling, reinforcing and extending appropriate language, through signs and symbols (Makaton, PECS, Communication boards and devices).
- Supporting pupils in using their knowledge of communication to underpin their literacy development.
- Recognise that all behaviour is a form of communication.
- Develop appropriate ways of helping pupils express their needs, opinions and feelings.
- Support emotional regulation by making expectations clear and using visual support systems e.g. TEACCH and SCERTS
- Use Social Stories to develop social understanding and communication.

The following approaches are used across the school to support the communication skills of our pupils;

- Observation of the children, to take time to interpret body language and to interpret the pupil's behaviour and to respond to their communicative attempts. The pupil's strengths and difficulties, sensory preferences and preferred learning style, alongside what motivates and engages the pupils, will be recognised.
- Staff will not make assumptions about the children's understanding of behaviours.
- Intensive Interaction (Dave Hewitt) will be used as appropriate to each child, across the day. All of the pupil's attempts to communicate will be recognised and honoured.
- Objects of reference and object cues, will be used as per each pupils needs to support their understanding of communication and language.
- Visual prompts, including the use of symbols and signs, and on body signing, will be used across the day.
- Written or visual symbol timetables to help pupils understand what they are doing now and what will happen next, will be used as per each pupils needs.
- Tasks will be broken down using written or symbol prompts to encourage independent working and help pupils to complete individual tasks.
- Pupils will be given visual prompts to help them move on to new tasks.
- Class rooms will be well organised and clearly laid out to develop positive learning environments.
- School days will be structured and routine, to facilitate understanding and learning.
- Children will have opportunities to work in class groups, small groups and individually to support communication development.
- Liaison with SALT will be ongoing across classes.
- Strategies will be shared with parents and our home/school support worker will support families at home to imbed communication systems.
- Assessments will be robust and PLP targets will be under constant review.
- Children will have access to sensory activities to facilitate learning.
- Play will be a large part of the school day.
- Where appropriate, children will have access to a range of different communication aids and devices, including, Eye gaze, PECS, switches, communication boards and books, iPad with Grid player or Prologuo2 go.
- Attention Autism (Gina Davies) is used across the school to develop focused attention and communication skills.
- Children will also have access to drama and music therapy.
- Pupils will also have opportunities to visit places within the local community, to develop their communication, language and social interaction skills.
- When appropriate, pupils will have integration visits to local schools or meet with mainstream peers at our school.
- Music, swimming, art, cookery, soft play, the sensory room and sensory den, will provide a breadth of opportunity to develop positive communication and language skills.
- Story telling will enrich attention and communication and literacy skills during the school day.

Across the school a range of different approaches are used to meet the needs of our pupils. Consistency of approaches is needed to ensure smooth transitions between classes and to ensure a continuum of learning as the children progress through the school. There are clear guild lines (see below) to ensure positive transitions between classes are made.

As a school we are committed to ensuring that our children's needs are met and that they are given every opportunity to develop the skills needed to enrich their lives. Assessment and monitoring are core values, to ensure that all pupils have the very best opportunities to develop communication systems that best fit their needs

Definitions of Approaches

Object Cues

Object cues can help children with SEN make sense of the world around them by developing understanding and improving memory. They can provide a visual and tactile clue as to what is going to happen and may also relay a multi-sensory message through being tactile as well as visual. They can enable children to understand the divisions of the day and their daily routine and help them to recognise the structure of their situations.

Object Cues can also help children to express what it is that they would like to do well as to demonstrate their preferences and likes and dislikes. Once object cues are in regular use, they can help link children's understanding of situation with spoken words, thus building a 'bridge' with other forms of communications such as signing and symbols.

There are three categories of **Object Cues**

A: Real Life objects that are used in the activity. The object must form a practical and relevant part of the activity. For example, a coat can be an object cue for 'going into the playground', if put on child or child puts it on themselves, immediately prior to going into the play ground. A child's own cup can be used if it is then given to the child with drink in it. If going to a particular shop, use a carrier bag with the shops logo on it as Object Cue. The shopping can be placed in the bag once bought and carried back to school.

B: Objects that have some sensory resemblance to their references. These can be either **Visual** or **Tactile** similarities. Miniature objects which represent their real life counterparts, e.g. miniature car mean 'going in the car', or a shop logo stuck to a piece of card means 'going to the supermarket'. Pieces of material from furniture or places, for example, a soft play cube.

C: Abstract Objects. Anything can be used, provided the meaning to the learner is clear. For example, a paintbrush might be used to indicate art but not used in the session; therefore it is an abstract object.

Signing

At Oakleigh School we use two signing systems.

Makaton comprises of a core vocabulary of concepts graded in complexity which are considered to be most appropriate for the needs of children and adults with a language difficulty. The initial stages introduce basic ideas and the later stages become more complex. The aim is to ensure that even if limited learning ability and poor retention prevent an individual child or adult from progressing beyond the initial stages then that person will still have acquired some useful communication. The emphasis is on essential and useful language which is always accompanied by normal grammatical speech. This means that the child receives basic information in a visual way to support their understanding.

Canaan Barrie On-Body signs have been adapted from BSL signs to make them more multi sensory. They involve body sounds, rhythm and currents of air. The signs themselves are simpler

and do not involve complex hand gesture. There are three ways of using the signs, signing 'in front', 'on-body' and 'hand over'. The core vocabulary of 50 signs focuses on actions and emotions important and relevant to children with visual impairment. As with Makaton the signs should always be accompanied by speech. Touch replaces eye contact and has the effect of involving the child with visual impairment in the conversation.

PECS (Picture Exchange Communication System)

'PECS is an augmentative / alternative communication training package developed for use with young children with autism and other social-communication deficits' (PECS Training Manual, 1994) The aim is to develop functional communication, allowing pupils with autism and severe disabilities a means to express their needs and wants.

Colourful Semantics

Colourful semantics is an approach created by Alison Bryan. It is aimed at helping children to develop their grammar but it is rooted in the **meaning** of words (**semantics**). Colourful semantics reassembles sentences by cutting them up into their thematic roles and then colour coding them. At Oakleigh and Acorn this approach is used to help develop understanding of simple language and to focus on bringing people into our pupils lives.

Simple sentences are modelled to the children to support their understanding of simple statements. Some pupils are able to use a Colourful semantic board to construct a simple sentence, such as "Billy blow bubbles".

Communication Books

These are used for pupils who are developing a wider range of language than can be easily supported by a PECS book. These use the Colourful Semantics approach by using colour to give order to simple sentences. The vocabulary used in the books can then enrich the language available for children to use. Core vocabulary boards can be added to these books to further supplement the language offered for the pupils to use. Adults can then model a range of language and concepts to the pupils.

High-tech AAC:

A range of different devices are also used to support pupils across the school

A variety of switches are used as per the pupils needs. Ipad's with Clicker are available and Proloquo2go is now being trailed with two pupils. Eye gaze is also available and SALT lead both teaching and development for pupils with this device.

Intensive Interaction

Elements of the Interactive Process:

Mutual enjoyment seems to be very important. Stern (1977) writes of the purpose for the infant and caregiver as being to 'interest and delight one another'. We always attempt to make activities as enjoyable as possible for both participants. Indeed, enjoyment is a 'rule'.

The client's own behaviour, as with an infant, is often the starting point of an interaction and the practitioner uses this behaviour, 'comments' upon it, elaborates it and helps to build 'the game'. There is, we feel, something satisfyingly and crucially reassuring to the client about this aspect of the process.

Imitation can be an important part of the process. It is thought that infants learn much about others by seeing themselves reflected in the imitations of the caregiver. Use of friendly, fun-filled imitation is an excellent way of seizing upon a piece of client behaviour.

Burst-pause sequences occur where the caregiver or practitioner leaves spaces after her/his own utterances or actions which are just the right length for a response. The infant or client hopefully starts to fill the gaps, thereby joining in a dialogue-like game.

Tension-Expectancy games seem to have importance in their ability to attract and maintain

attention and to develop anticipation. These games often feature a crucial, repetitive build up to a dramatic climax e.g. walking round the garden.

Physical contact is assumed to be a fundamental form of communication, and while it is possible to set up good interactions without using touch, there should ideally remain intent that this should eventually be part of the experience. Use of touch is of course crucial with people who have visual disabilities.

Intentionality occurs where the practitioner behaves as if the utterances or actions of the client have meaning even where no meaning is present. The intention to communicate is thought to develop partly from this continual reinforcement (e.g. Schaffer 1977),

Gentle running commentary is an often seen caregiver behaviour, with the caregiver or practitioner using a naturally simplified and/or repetitious verbal input.

Rhythm, Repetition and Timing are used naturally by caregivers with infants and seem to have importance in maintaining attention and the infant's involvement in the activity.

Voice/Face/Body modifications are used by the caregiver/practitioner in order to offer these attributes in the most attractive and accessible manner to the infant/client.

Watching & waiting – *waiting for attention to come back*

Sensory Integration

Many pupils at our school have sensory integration and processing difficulties. Without sensory integration some children cannot focus on anything but their sensory needs. We therefore have a range of sensory activities available at the beginning of the school day and throughout the school day, to address these needs. Movement and play, alongside OT programs are recognised as key strategies to enhance learning outcomes for our pupils.

Arts Therapies

Communication is at the centre of the arts therapy work at Oakleigh. As therapists, we aim to observe/notice, think about and reflect back the child's communication. This approach may be useful across the school in many different situations. Music and drama are incorporated into the school day.

TEACCH

(Treatment and Education of Autistic and Communication related handicapped Children)

Taken from <https://www.autismspeaks.org/what-autism/treatment/teacch>

“TEACCH developed the intervention approach called “**Structured TEACCHing**”, an array of teaching or treatment principles and strategies based on the learning characteristics of individuals with ASD, including strengths in visual information processing, and difficulties with social communication, attention, and executive function. In response to this profile of strengths and challenges, Structured TEACCHing includes:

1. External organizational supports to address challenges with attention and executive function
2. Visual and/or written information to supplement verbal communication
3. Structured support for social communication”

The principles of the TEACCH approach are used across the classes at school, to ensure organised classrooms, visually supported learning and task break down to make learning manageable. Clear routines and structure, visual timetables and individual, small group and group work support teaching and learning across the school.

Attention Autism (Gina Davis)

Attention Autism is an intervention model designed by Gina Davies, Specialist Speech and Language Therapist. It aims to develop natural and spontaneous communication through the use of visually based and highly motivating activities. Gina's primary objective is that the sessions are fun and "*offer an irresistible invitation to learn*"!

This approach is used across classes to develop attention and listening skills and to help develop independence

OAKLEIGH / ACORN OBJECT CUE LIST

CORE LIST FOR ALL CHILDREN

SOFT PLAY	CUBES
SENSORY ROOM/MULTI-SENSORY WORK	FIBRE OPTIC TORCH
BUS	SEAT BELT
HYDROTHERAPY	SWIMMING BAG
TOILET	NAPPY/TOILET ROLL
ASSEMBLY	'SMILE AND WAVE' SONG
LIBRARY	BOOK BAG
DINNER	APRON
SNACK	CUP

SUPPLEMENTARY LIST FOR INDIVIDUAL CHILDREN (Adapt where appropriate)

MUSIC/DRAMA SINGING/DANCE	BELLS
PE	SMALL BALL
ART	PAINTBRUSH / INDIVIDUALISED TO RESOURCE USED
PLAY – INSIDE/OUTSIDE	INDIVIDUALISED
FOOD TECHNOLOGY	WOODEN SPOON
SPEECH AND LANGUAGE THERAPY	MAGIC MIKE
CONDUCTIVE EDUCATION/PHYSIOTHERAPY/MOVE	LITTLE LADDER
COMPUTER	JELLY BEAN SWITCH
RECEPTION	ATTENDANCE SLIP (LAMINATED)

Barnet Agreed list of symbols. Please also see class lists of agreed Matrix symbols



Subjects



geography



history



music



assembly



science



art



literacy



PE



numeracy



cooking



library



swimming



motor skills



work

People



people



OT



physio



nurse



speech therapist

Food



drink



fruit



biscuit



crisps



dinner

Places/rooms



school



home



classroom



bus



individual room



shop



cafe



office



toilet



playground



softplay



sensory room



hall

Activities



puzzle



sand tray



reading



painting



choose



drawing



singing



tv



story



massage



play



gluing



walk

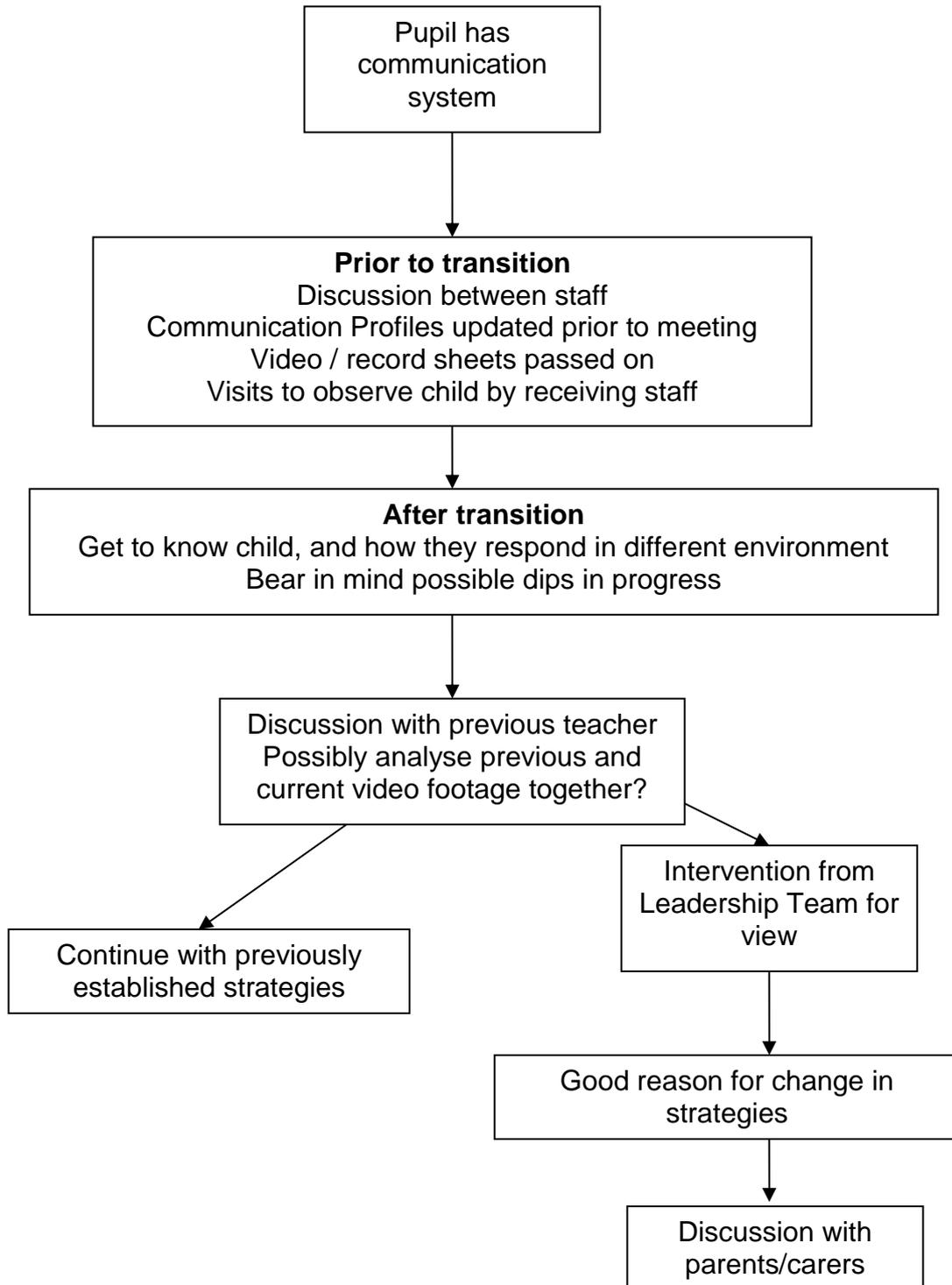


time



group

Oakleigh / Acorn transition flowchart



References

The Bercow Report A review of services for children and young people (0-19) with speech, language and communication needs, DCSF (2008)

BILD Guide: Communication is a human right, S.Thurman (2009)

Equals (1999)

Creating a Responsive Environment, Ware (2003)