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Speech, Language and Communication Needs and Primary School-aged Children

I CAN Talk Series – Issue 6



Speech, Language and Communication Needs and Primary School-aged Children

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1. Introduction

Effective language skills are essential for children to access the curriculum. In the classroom, spoken language is the primary medium through which teachers teach and children learn. Language development is accepted as being critical to cognitive development and learning itself is seen by many as a social activity.¹ The specific links between language and literacy are well documented in research literature² and the *Rose Report* highlights the importance of language, not only for accessing literacy, but across the whole of the curriculum and the child's development.

*“The development of speaking and listening skills requires fuller and more intensive attention to make sure that children acquire a good stock of words, learn to listen attentively, and speak clearly and confidently. ...they are prime communication skills, hugely important in their own right and central to children's intellectual, social and emotional development.”*³

It is expected that when a child starts primary school, they will be able to understand much of what is said, express themselves clearly, share their feelings and make their needs known. This level of proficiency in speech, language and communication is critical to the development of a child's cognitive, social and emotional well-being.^{4,5}

In many ways our ability to communicate defines us, it is one of the ways we are judged and measured by others and the means by which we forge our relationships. Children starting school with speech, language and communication needs (SLCN) may struggle with any aspect of communication and they can become withdrawn or present with challenging behaviour within the primary school environment.⁶ Based on recommendations from the *Rose Report*, the renewed *Primary Strategy for Literacy and Mathematics*⁷ recognises the importance of speaking and listening in order for children to learn.

Starting primary school is a huge transition in a young child's life. Children need to find their place in a new social and learning environment. Entering this new environment with SLCN can have a resounding, long-term impact on a child. Children may struggle to make friends, to learn, and to be themselves as part of their new community.

Terminology in the area of SLCN represents a source of unlimited confusion. To clarify the use of terminology, The Communication Trust has written a report highlighting how terminology is used, with examples. Therefore although in education SLCN is used to describe a primary communication need, it is used by The Communication Trust and in this paper as an umbrella term that covers all children with SLCN.⁸

SLCN therefore may be a primary need – i.e. speech, language and / or communication needs in the absence of any other impairment, the group of children known as having specific language impairment (SLI) an accepted 5-7% of the population.

It may be a secondary need – i.e. speech, language and / or communication needs as secondary or co-occurring with other impairments, for example, cerebral palsy, autism and learning disabilities etc.

Or it may be the group of children coming into school with delayed language.

This report outlines the nature and extent of SLCN in our primary schools, what this means for children and their families and what can be done to ensure primary school is a positive, enriching experience for children with SLCN.

The term communication disability is also used by I CAN to describe SLCN that arise from an underlying impairment and is often long-term and persistent in nature.

1 Goswami, U. and Bryant, P. (2007) *Children's Cognitive Development and Learning (Primary Review Research Survey 2/1a)* Cambridge: University of Cambridge Faculty of Education.

2 Snowling, M. and Stackhouse, J. (Eds) (2006) *Dyslexia, Speech and Language: A Practitioners Handbook – Dyslexia Series* Whurr

3 Rose, J. (2006) *Independent Review of the Teaching of Early Reading* DfES

4 *ibid.*

5 *Chatter Matters DVD I CAN 2007* www.ican.org.uk

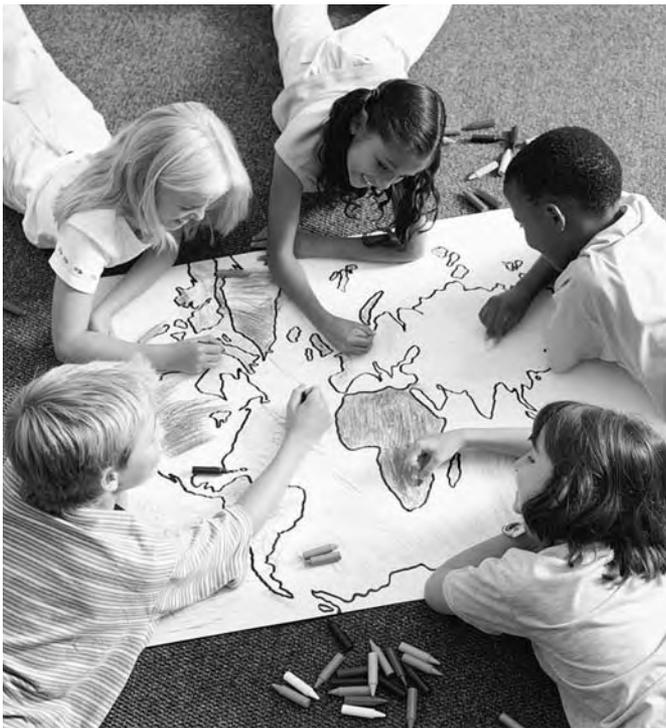
6 Hart, K.I., Fujiki, M., Brinton, B. and Hart, C.H. (2004) *The Relationship between Social Behaviour and Severity of Language Impairment* *Journal of Speech, Language and Hearing Research* 47, 3, p. 647

7 DfES (2006) *Revised Strategy for Literacy and Mathematics*

8 The Communication Trust (2008) *Explaining Speech, Language and Communication Needs (SLCN)* www.thecommunicationtrust.org.uk

Speech, Language and Communication Needs and Primary School-aged Children

2. Speech, language and communication needs at primary school



Children with SLCN may have difficulties with one or more of the following areas:

- Understanding and formulating spoken language
- Processing and producing speech sounds
- Using and understanding all aspects of language appropriately in different social contexts.

Understanding and formulating spoken language

Some children may not be able to understand the words being spoken to them and/or the grammatical rules of sentence construction. Therefore, when their teacher tells the class what they need to do, or explains a new idea or concept,⁹ they may struggle to understand what is being said. Having an appropriate vocabulary is essential for the learning process, however learning vocabulary has been identified as one of the most significant difficulties for some children with SLCN,^{10 11} leading to much of their teacher's talk being inaccessible.

The ability and confidence to ask questions is a vital skill for provoking and shaping new thinking.¹² The *Primary Strategy* recognises the importance of language for thinking and encourages paired talk and discussion among pupils as a way to enhance learning.¹³ This is hugely difficult for children with SLCN, so vital learning and opportunities to talk with peers can be missed. They may struggle with developing an age appropriate vocabulary, formulating sentences, using the right words in the right order and with following grammatical rules to understand or make it clear to others what has happened in space and time.

In addition, children may have difficulties effectively processing language. They may struggle to remember information given verbally, making it difficult for them to follow more than one instruction at a time.¹⁴

For many children with SLCN, their language skills are not proficient enough to be used as a learning tool and so they can fail before the task has even begun. This can be incredibly frustrating and have a serious impact on how they see themselves and how they are seen by their peers.¹⁵

9 Bishop, D.V. and Adams, C. (1992) Comprehension Problems in Children with Specific Language Impairment: Literal and Inferential Meaning *Journal of Speech and Hearing Research* 35(1) : 119-29

10 Haynes, C. (1992) Vocabulary Deficit: one problem or many? *Child Language Therapy and Teaching* 8 1-15

11 Bishop, D.V.M. (1997) *Uncommon Understanding Hove: Psychology Press*

12 Reilly, J. and Murray, S. (2005) *Thinking and Speaking in Primary Schools* Barrington Stoke

13 DfES (2003) *Primary National Strategy: speaking, listening, learning*

14 Nation, K., Adams, J.W., Bowyer-Crane, C.A. and Snowling, M.J. (1999) Working Memory Deficits in Poor Comprehenders Reflect Underlying Language Impairments *Journal of Experimental Child Psychology* 73(2): 139-158

15 Jerome, A.C., Fujiki, M., Brinton, B. and James, S.L. (2002) Self-Esteem in Children with Specific Language Impairment *Journal of Speech, Language and Hearing Research* 45, 4, p700-14

Processing and producing speech sounds

Children with SLCN may not be able to effectively process the speech sounds that make up words. This means they cannot identify which sounds come at the beginning of words or break up words into their component parts.¹⁶

These skills are essential for children starting at primary school as they learn to read and to spell which involves linking sounds to letters and breaking up words so that they can effectively read them. Children who struggle with processing speech sounds are at risk of literacy difficulties.^{17 18}

An inability to produce speech sounds appropriately can also have a significant impact on a child's ability to make themselves understood,¹⁹ which can mean difficulties contributing in classroom discussions, making their needs known, sharing information about themselves, answering questions and joining in with conversations with peers.

Using and understanding all aspects of language appropriately in different social contexts

Difficulties with pragmatic language – the ability to understand and use language in a social context – can cause significant problems with social interaction. Children may have difficulty knowing when and how to use their language in different social situations,²⁰ or knowing the differences in how to speak to adults or peers. They may not understand jokes or sarcasm or may struggle with metaphorical language, taking well-known phrases literally.²¹ This can often result in adults and other children misunderstanding reactions from these children as they can seem perverse, pedantic²² or unsympathetic.

There is a whole range of well used phrases, which are new to children starting school, that can be very difficult and confusing for children with SLCN to understand. Phrases such as 'fold your arms', 'line up' and 'break time' can all be interpreted literally. Talk and social interaction among children play a key role in children's social development and learning²³ and it has been found that improving pragmatic language skills can help prevent problems in later educational performance.²⁴

In addition to using language socially, using language effectively for a range of functions can be problematic to many children with SLCN; to infer, debate, reason and predict or to clarify a message to others can be areas of difficulty. Verbal reasoning is at the foundation of many elements of education and difficulties with using language to reason, to investigate and problem solve or to infer meaning has a significant impact on school work.²⁵

16 Carroll, J.M. and Snowling, M.J. *Language and Phonological Skills in Children at High Risk of Reading Difficulties* *Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry and Allied Disciplines* Volume 45, Number 3, March 2004, pp. 631-640(10)

17 Stackhouse, J. and Wells, B. (1997) *Children's Speech and Literacy Difficulties* London, Whurr

18 Goswami, U. and Bryant, P. (2007) *Children's Cognitive Development and Learning (Primary Review Research Survey 2/1a)* Cambridge: University of Cambridge Faculty of Education

19 Yont, K.M., Hewitt, L.E. and Miccio, A.W. (2002) "What Did You Say?": understanding conversational breakdowns in children with speech and language impairments *Clinical Linguistics and Phonetics* Volume 16, Number 4, 1 June 2002, pp. 265-285 (21)

20 Bishop, D.V.M., Chan, J., Adams C., Hartley, J. and Weir, F. (2000) *Conversational Responsiveness in Specific Language Impairment: evidence of disproportionate pragmatic difficulties in a subset of children* *Development and Psychopathology* 12, 177-99

21 Leinonen, E. and Letts, C. 1997 *Why Pragmatic Impairment? A Case Study in the Comprehension of Inferential Meaning* *European Journal of Disorders of Communication* 32, 35-52

22 Bishop, D.V. and Chan, J. et al. (2000) *Conversational Responsiveness in Specific Language Impairment: evidence of disproportionate pragmatic difficulties in a subset of children* *Developmental Psychopathology* 12(2): 177-99

23 Howe, C. and Mercer, N. (2007) *Children's Social Development, Peer Interaction and Classroom Learning (Primary Review Research Survey 2/1b)* Cambridge: University of Cambridge Faculty of Education

24 Anderson-Wood, L. and Smith, B.R. (1997) *Working with Pragmatics* Winslow Press

25 Bishop, D.V. and Adams, C. (1992) *Comprehension Problems in Children with Specific Language Impairment: literal and inferential meaning* *Journal of Speech and Hearing Research* 35(1):119-29

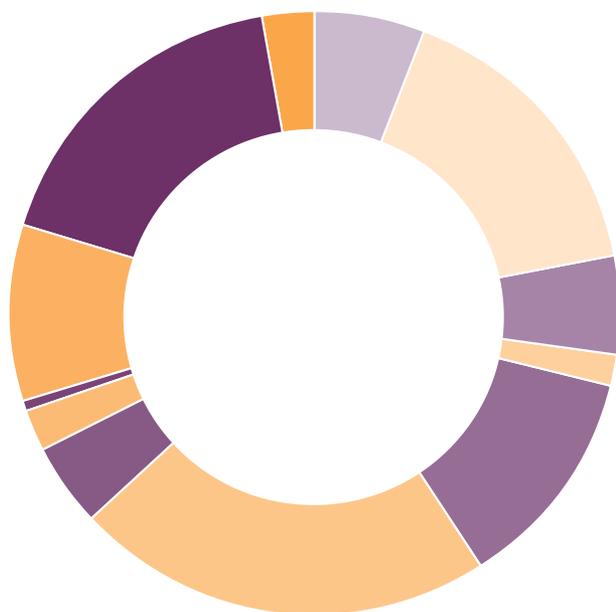
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3. Prevalence

In primary schools, SLCN represent the most prevalent type of special educational need (SEN) amongst pupils with statements of SEN (almost 23%).²⁶

The total number of children with a statement of SEN is 229,100 (around 2.8% of the population).

Children with a statement of SEN in primary school



	% of pupils by type of need
Specific learning difficulty	5.1
Moderate learning difficulty	16.2
Severe learning difficulty	5.4
Profound and multiple learning difficulty	1.5
Behaviour, emotional and social difficulties (BESD)	12.1
Speech, language and communications needs	22.5
Hearing impairment	4.5
Visual impairment	2.3
Multi-sensory impairment	0.4
Physical disability	9.7
Autistic spectrum disorder	17.6
Other difficulty/disability	2.6

²⁶ DfES (2006) National Statistics First Release Special Educational Needs In England

SLCN represents one of the most prevalent disabilities in early childhood. More than 11% of educational tribunals are related to children with SLCN.²⁷ Most children with SEN have difficulty with some aspect of speech, language and/or communication.^{28 29} Around 6% of children in the UK have specific and primary communication impairments.³⁰

There are a number of children with persistent long-term difficulties. This includes children with a primary speech and language impairment.³¹ It also includes children who have SLCN resulting from or co-occurring with other underlying impairments. For example, children with general learning difficulties, or other conditions, such as cerebral palsy, hearing impairment or autistic spectrum disorders. It is difficult to determine an exact number of these children, though there is evidence to suggest it is in the order of around 10% of the population.

A systematic review, looking at the prevalence of primary speech and language difficulties,³² found little evidence to suggest that the prevalence declines across the 0-16 year age range. It has been noted however, that the nature of SLCN changes as children get older; as educational and social demands change, so does the nature and the impact of the impairment.³³

In addition to these children with long-term and persistent SLCN, it has been identified that in some areas there are 40%–50% of children who enter education with 'delayed language'.³⁴ This has been echoed in surveys of school staff who have expressed concern that around half of children starting school do so with inadequate language skills.³⁵ These language difficulties are seen as more transient, however, and with the right support, many of these children can catch up with their peers.

Most adults working in primary schools will come into direct contact with children who have communication difficulties every day. In real terms, the prevalence rates mean that on average, every primary school classroom in the UK will have two or three children who have some form of SLCN. In addition children with language delay can be as many as 1 in 2 in some parts of the country.

Not only is prevalence of SLCN an issue, but there is considerable variation of need within this group of children; they are recognised as being a heterogeneous population, which results in a variation of need within the educational context.³⁶ The challenge for school staff is to recognise children's communication needs, however they manifest themselves and appreciate the need for a variation in approach in order to address each individual pupil's needs effectively.^{37 38}

Children having other difficulties, such as learning difficulties, autistic spectrum disorders and hearing impairment may also have significant communication difficulties. In other categories such as behaviour, emotional and social difficulties (BESD), children often have SLCN, which may be hidden and go unresolved.

27 *Special Educational Needs and Disability Tribunal Annual Report 2005/2006*

28 TTA (1999) *National Special Educational Needs Specialist Standards* London

29 *The Foundation for People with Learning Disabilities (2000). Learning Disabilities. The Fundamental Facts* London: The Mental Health Foundation

30 Law, J., Boyle, J., Harris, F., Harkness, A. and Nye, C. (2000) *Prevalence and Natural History of Primary Speech and Language Delay: findings from a systematic review of the literature IJLCD Vol 36*

31 Law, J., Lindsay, G., Peacey, N., Gascoigne, M., Soloff, N., Radford, J., Band, S. and Fitzgerald, L. 2000 *Provision for Children with Speech and Language Need in England and Wales: facilitating communication between education and health services* (London: Dfee)

32 Law, J., Boyle, J., Harris, F., Harkness, A. and Nye, C. (2000) *Prevalence and Natural History of Primary Speech and Language Delay: findings from a systematic review of the literature IJLCD Vol 36*

33 Conti-Ramsden, G. and Botting, N. (1999) *Characteristics of Children attending Language Units in England: a national study of 7 year olds IJLCD 42*

34 Locke, A., Ginsborg, J. and Peers, I. (2002) *Development and Disadvantage: implications for early years IJLCD Vol 27 No 1*

35 Basic Skills Agency (2002) *Summary Report into Young Children's Skills on Entry to Education* No. 4, 423–440

36 Dockrell, J.E., Lindsay, G., Letchford, B. and Mackie, C. (2006) *Educational Provision For Children with Specific Speech and Language Difficulties: perspectives of speech and language therapy service managers IJLCD July–August 2006 Vol. 41 No. 4, 423–440*

37 Daniels, H. and Porter, J. (2007) *Learning Needs and Difficulties Among Children of Primary School Age: definition, identification, provision and issues (Primary Review Research Survey 5/2)* Cambridge: University of Cambridge Faculty of Education

38 Goswami, U. and Bryant, P. (2007) *Children's Cognitive Development and Learning (Primary Review Research Survey 2/1a)* Cambridge: University of Cambridge Faculty of Education.

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4. The impact of speech, language and communication needs



SLCN can have a profound and lasting effect on children's lives. Longitudinal studies of children with SLCN have shown that children whose language difficulties are unresolved by the time they start school are more likely to have later academic,³⁹ social⁴⁰ and emotional difficulties,^{41 42} associated with their language difficulty.⁴³

Use of communication in schools – tools for learning

Spoken language pervades the primary school environment and is the vehicle for most learning. It is crucial for development in primary school children.⁴⁴ On arrival at school there is an expectation for children to listen to language from adults and peers, understand what is being said to them and respond with well structured, clear and appropriate sentences. It is important to acknowledge the importance of talk to support and extend children's thinking and to advance their learning and understanding.⁴⁵

Language at home is used for communication, with friends or family members and can be a positive environment for learning, however it is very different from language use in school.⁴⁶ Language is used within primary school education

as the main tool for teaching. Children need to have proficient language skills in order to use their language to learn.

Language is also used by teachers to manage their classrooms, determine rules and routines and ensure children are aware of their expectations. It is suggested in the current review of primary education⁴⁷ that the ways in which teachers talk to children can influence learning, memory, understanding and the motivation to learn. It is also noted that there are enormous individual differences in language skills between children and therefore in their ability to benefit from a particular level of instruction.⁴⁸

For children with SLCN at primary school the demands and pace of the National Literacy Framework, for example, have led to concerns about opportunities for differentiation.⁴⁹ Observations in primary classrooms carried out as part of the Cambridge University *Primary Review*, suggest that children seldom have the opportunity to engage in productive social interaction and that group or pair-based activity needs more careful organisation in order to best achieve productive interaction and learning.⁵⁰

The hastened transition towards reading and writing as key performance indicators, accompanied by increasingly complex and challenging language expectations on the part of the

39 Snowling, M.J., Adams, J.W., Bishop, D.V.M., and Stothard, S.E. (2001) *Educational Attainments of School Leavers with a Pre-School History of Speech-Language Impairments* IJLCD 36

40 Botting, N. and Conti-Ramsden, G. (2000) *Social and Behavioural Difficulties in Children with Language Impairment* CLTT 16

41 Silva, P., Williams, S. and McGee, R. (1987) *A Longitudinal Study of Children with Developmental Language Delay at Age 3 Years: later intellectual, reading and behaviour problems* *Developmental Medicine and Child Neurology* 29, 630-640

42 Law, J. and Garrett, Z. (2003) *Speech and Language Therapy: its potential role in CAMHS Child and Adolescent Mental Health* 2

43 Lindsay, G., Dockrell, J. and Strand, S. (in press) *Longitudinal Patterns of Behaviour Problems in Children with Specific Speech and Language Difficulties: child and contextual factors* *British Journal of Educational Psychology*

44 Goswami, U. and Bryant, P. (2007) *Children's Cognitive Development and Learning*

(*Primary Review Research Survey 2/1a*) Cambridge: University of Cambridge Faculty of Education

45 Alexander, R. (2006) 3rd Edition *Towards Dialogic Teaching: rethinking classroom talk*

46 Martin, D. and Miller, C. (1999) *Language and the Curriculum* David Fulton Publishers

47 www.primaryreview.org.uk

48 Goswami, U. and Bryant, P. (2007) *Children's Cognitive Development and Learning* (*Primary Review Research Survey 2/1a*) Cambridge: University of Cambridge Faculty of Education.

49 Eke, R. and Lee, J. *Pace and Differentiation in the Literacy Hour: some outcomes of an analysis of transcripts* *The Curriculum Journal* Vol. 15, No. 3, Autumn 2004

50 Howe, C. and Mercer, N. (2007) *Children's Social Development, Peer Interaction and Classroom Learning* (*Primary Review Research Survey 2/1b*) Cambridge: University of Cambridge Faculty of Education

teacher and learner alike have their greatest impact on children with any degree of SLCN. Interim reports of the primary review have suggested a more fundamental problem, suggesting the current drivers to target outcomes and raise standards is at odds with the ethos of inclusion:

“In practice, tensions between the policy agendas of raising standards of pupil attainment and achieving inclusive schooling can give rise to considerable difficulties within the school.”⁵¹

The impact of SLCN in primary school can seriously affect the outcome of children’s learning.⁵² It is often a daily challenge for children with SLCN to make their thoughts and needs known and to make themselves understood; just listening to the amount of language in school can be an overwhelming task in itself.

Literacy

Well-developed language and subsequent literacy skills are crucial factors in ensuring access to the whole of the curriculum, later academic success, positive self-esteem and improved life chances.⁵³

The link between speech, language and literacy skills has been well documented in the literature. There is research evidence which highlights a clear link between spoken language and speech difficulties with subsequent literacy difficulties.^{54 55} All children with a SLCN are at risk of having difficulty with some aspect of learning to read and write.^{56 57 58} Difficulties may be compounded if children are exposed to teaching of reading and written language before their spoken language skills are developed enough to access this teaching.⁵⁹

The *Rose Report* has highlighted the link between language and literacy, not only for the development of phonic skills, but for the development of reading comprehension,⁶⁰ which is the foundation of understanding for many areas of the

curriculum. Without the ability to understand and produce written language, much of the curriculum is inaccessible, as is the ability to record their achievements and their learning.

Social development

Friendships are extremely important for children in primary school. The ability to socialise with peers, negotiate disagreements and be part of a friendship group is paramount. For children with SLCN, making and maintaining friendships can be a real challenge. It becomes particularly difficult as children progress through primary school, when there needs to be an increased understanding of reciprocity and awareness of motives, thoughts and feelings of others.⁶¹



“ Feeling self confident is vitally important for children in primary schools. ”

51 Daniels, H. and Porter, J. (2007) *Learning Needs and Difficulties Among Children of Primary School Age: definition, identification, provision and issues (Primary Review Research Survey 5/2)* Cambridge: University of Cambridge Faculty of Education.

52 Bernstein, B. (2000) *Pedagogy, Symbolic Control and Identity; theory, research, critique* Rowman and Littlefield

53 Snow, P.C. and Powell, M.B. (2004) *Developmental Language Disorders and Adolescent Risk: a public-health advocacy role for speech pathologists? Advances in Speech Language Pathology* 6 (4) 221-229

54 Dockerill, J. and Lindsay, G. *Specific Speech and Language Difficulties and Literacy in T. Nunes and P. Bryant (eds) (2003) Handbook of Children’s Literacy pp 403-435* London Kluwer Academic Publishers

55 Myer, L. and Botting, N. (2008) *Literacy in the mainstream inner-city school: its relationship to spoken language CLTT* 24, 1pp28-114

56 Stackhouse, J. and Well, B. (1997) *Children’s Speech and Literacy Difficulties: A psycholinguistic framework* Whurr

57 Dockrell, J., Lindsay, G., Mackie, C. and Connolly, V. (2007) *Constraints in the Production of Written Text in Children with Specific Language Impairments Exceptional Children* 73, 147-164.

58 Mackie, C. and Dockrell, J.E. *The Writing Skills of Children with SLI Journal of Speech Language and Hearing Research* 47

59 Locke, E., Ginsborg, J. and Peers, I. (2002) *Development and Disadvantage: implications for early years IJLCD Vol 27 No1*

60 Rose, J. (2005) *Independent Review of the Teaching of Early Reading: Interim Report*

61 Attwood, T. *The Development of Friendship Skills* www.tonyattwood.com

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Many children with SLCN show withdrawn social interaction styles, which means they are less likely to initiate conversation, they play alone more and are less liked by others in their class.⁶² Others display significant behaviour difficulties, which can equally alienate their peers.

Children with SLCN perceive they are at risk of being the target of bullies at school.⁶³ It has been found that if a child has good communication skills and is able express feelings through facial expression they tend to be more popular.⁶⁴ SLCN can have a devastating effect on interpersonal relationships, within the family, with peers and in the longer term.⁶⁵

Emotional development and behaviour

Language and emotional development occur together in children and affect each other powerfully.⁶⁶ This shared development is evident with very young children as they learn about different emotions through play.

In the early stages of primary school, children learn to share their feelings in words, consider the effects of their actions, reflect on and plan what they feel, do and say. All of this requires an appreciation of the emotions and thoughts of other people, and the language to put this into words.

There are opportunities in school and in the playground to play and interact through language, which allows children to develop skills in managing their emotions and behaviour appropriately. With developed language skills, children can negotiate their roles in play situations, organise activities, clarify their thoughts to others and make it clear when they are unhappy with a situation. For older primary school children, these skills are necessary for team games and group activities within the classroom.

Children with SLCN often do not have these skills and abilities, resulting at times in frustration and behaviour that is seen as poor, in reaction to situations that could be easily resolved through language.⁶⁷ Unfortunately, often the behaviour of children is seen as the difficulty and the underlying language difficulties can seem less important or can be missed completely.

There is increasing evidence for a link between SLCN and emotional and behavioural problems.⁶⁸ Several longitudinal studies have found that children with an early diagnosis of language or communication difficulties are more likely to have behavioural difficulties than their peers^{69 70} and that these problems can increase with age.⁷¹ In addition, studies investigating children with identified behaviour difficulties, found that three quarters of them had significant language deficits.⁷² However, it is important to distinguish between different kinds of BESD as each may show different patterns; also behaviour does not exist in a vacuum and children may show different patterns of behaviour at home and school.^{73 74}

Self-esteem

Feeling self confident is vitally important for children in primary schools. However, there is evidence that older primary-aged children with SLCN perceive themselves more negatively in scholastic competence, social acceptance and behavioural conduct than children with typical language development,⁷⁵ although this low self-esteem is not so apparent in younger children.⁷⁶ Implications of these studies suggest that with prolonged language difficulties, children's underlying self-esteem and self worth suffers, which can have a huge impact on their future lives and development.

62 Coster, F.W., Goorhuis-Brouwer, S.M., Nakken, H. and Lutje Spelberg, H.C. (1999) Specific Language Impairments and Behavioural Problems *Folia Phoniatrica et Logopaedica* 51:99-107

63 Conti-Ramsden, G. and Botting, N. (2004) Social Difficulties and Victimization in Children with SLI at 11 Years of Age *Journal of Speech, Language and Hearing Research* Vol 47

64 Ripley, K., Barrett, J., Fleming, P. 2001 *Inclusion for Children with Speech and Language Impairments* David Fulton

65 Benner, J., Nelson, J., Ron, Epstein, M. (2002) Summary of Language Skills of Children with EBD: a literature review *Journal of Emotional and Behavioural Disorders* 2002

66 Cross, M. (2004) *Children with Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties and Problems: there is always a reason* Jessica Kingsley Press

67 Greenberg, M.T., Kusche, C.A., Cook, E.T. and Quamma, J.P. (1995) Promoting Emotional Competence in School-aged Children: the effects of the PATHS Curriculum *Development and Psychopathology* 7, 117-136

68 Lindsay, G. and Dockrell, J. 2000 The Behaviour and Self-esteem of Children with Specific Speech and Language Difficulties *British Journal of Educational Psychology* 7, 4

69 Willinger, U. et al (2003) Behaviour in Children with Language Developmental Disorders *Canadian Journal of Psychiatry* Vol 48, 9, 607-614

70 Botting, et al (2000) Social and Behavioural Difficulties in Children with Language Impairment *Child Language Teaching and Therapy* 16, 2

71 Ripley, K. and Yuill, N. 2005 *Patterns of Language Impairment and Behaviour in Boys Excluded from School* March, 75

72 Benner, J., Nelson, J., Ron, Epstein, M. (2002) Summary of Language Skills of Children with EBD: a literature review *Journal of Emotional and Behavioural Disorders* 2002

73 Dockrell, J., Lindsay, G., Palikara, O. and Cullen, M.A. (2007) Raising the Achievements of Children and Young People with Specific Language and Communication Needs and other Special Educational Needs through School, to Work and College Nottingham: DfES

74 Lindsay, G., Dockrell, J. and Strand, S. (in press) Longitudinal Patterns of Behaviour Problems in Children with Specific Speech and Language Difficulties: child and contextual factors *British Journal of Educational Psychology*

75 Jerome, A.C., Fujiki, M., Brinton, B. and James, S. 2002 Self-esteem in Children with Specific Language Impairment *Journal of Speech, Language and Hearing Research* 45,4

76 Lindsay, G. and Dockrell, J. 2000 The Behaviour and Self-esteem of Children with Specific Speech and Language Difficulties *British Journal of Educational Psychology* 7, 4

5. Children's services



“ Children's services are undergoing a fundamental and radical period of change. ”

Children's services are undergoing a fundamental and radical period of change. The focus of the integrated children's services agenda on early intervention and the ethos of 'good practice for all children' is reflected in a range of recent government initiatives. These continue to influence, and have impact on, the overall service provision for primary-aged children with SLCN.^{77 78 79 80} Inclusion of children into mainstream settings is part of this agenda; this includes

those children with a range of SLCN. There is an emphasis on children and their families being at the centre of service provision and on service providers working in partnership with them to ensure children's needs are met.

In respect of primary education, the recently commissioned review of the primary curriculum as part of the Children's Plan⁸¹ is welcomed. In addition, the ongoing Primary Review, an independent enquiry into primary education in England, is viewed as the most comprehensive investigation of the primary education system since the 1960's.^{82 83}

At the time of writing, the re-organisation of services, including the commissioning of speech and language therapy, varies in pace and approach across the UK but the landscape of children's services is changing, as education, health and social services draw closer together.

Current provision for children with SLCN

Currently, provision for children with SLCN varies greatly across the UK.⁸⁴ The variability of approach from both education and health in different areas is marked and there are varying interpretations of inclusion of children with SEN. Not surprisingly, there has been criticism of the confusion that exists⁸⁵ in interpreting and implementing the Government's inclusion policy, this is summarised in an Education and Skills Select Committee report on SEN.⁸⁶ In the same report, concern was expressed about the way in which the SEN Code of Practice⁸⁷ is interpreted. A statement of SEN might guarantee the quantity of provision/resources but it does not necessarily ensure the quality of provision or outcomes for the pupil in any type of setting,⁸⁸ nor does it allow for the multiplicity of interpretations and practices across local authorities.⁸⁹

77 DfES (2004) *Every Child Matters: Change for Children in Schools*

78 *The National Service Framework for Children, Young People and Maternity Services* DoH (2004)

79 *Removing Barriers to Achievement – The Government's Strategy for SEN* DfES 2004

80 *The Children Act 2004*

81 DCSF (2007) *The Children's Plan: Building Brighter Futures*

82 *The Primary Review (2007) Children, their world, their education* University of Cambridge

83 *The Plowden Report (1967) Children and their primary schools* Central Advisory Council for Education

84 Law, J., Lindsay, G., Peacey, N., Gascoigne, M.T., Soloff, N., Radford, J. and Band, S. (2000) *Provision for Children with Speech and Language Needs in England and Wales:*

facilitating communication between education and health services DfEE Research Report 239

85 Lindsay G. and Dockrell J. *Meeting the Needs of Children with Speech Language and Communication Needs: a critical perspective on inclusion and collaboration* *Child Language Teaching and Therapy* Volume 18, Number 2, June 2002, pp. 91-101(11)

86 *House of Commons Education and Skills Select Committee Report on SEN (2006)*

87 DfES (2001) *Special Educational Needs Code of Practice*

88 Ofsted (2006) *Inclusion: does it matter where pupils are taught*

89 Daniels, H. and Porter, J. (2007) *Learning Needs and Difficulties among Children of Primary School Age: definition, identification, provision and issues (Primary Review Research Survey 5/2)* Cambridge: University of Cambridge Faculty of Education.

Speech, Language and Communication Needs and Primary School-aged Children



“ Choosing the right primary school is a big decision for any parent. ”

There is a range of provision in which children with SLCN in their primary years may be educated. They may attend mainstream school, resourced provision or generalist special schools. There is also a number of specialist special schools nationally, which support children with a severe SLCN. The majority of children with SLCN are educated in mainstream schools.⁹⁰

Children receive varying degrees of additional support by a potentially wide range of professionals, including speech and language therapists (SLTs), specialist teachers, occupational therapists, support staff and educational psychologists. The level of additional support is often determined by the

‘graduated response’ to their needs.⁹¹ SLTs are usually central in the support of children with SLCN in the primary years. However again, local variations in provision are marked.

Alongside the inclusion agenda is a change in models of SLT practice, with support moving away from clinic-based services to school-based provision.⁹² There is also a move away from direct intervention to a more indirect or ‘consultative’ approach, which is not clearly defined and can cover a wide range of intervention levels.⁹³ To optimise the contribution of SLTs in educational provision, it is useful to consider national and local policies, as well as considering types of intervention.⁹⁴ The current *Bercow Review; Children and young people and speech, language and communication* is considering services to children and young people with SLCN and how their needs can best be met.⁹⁵

Staff in mainstream schools may have limited awareness of SLCN. When a child starts primary school, teachers and support staff may have had no additional training in what can be an extremely complex and far reaching difficulty.⁹⁶ It is argued that there is a need to support schools and teachers in supporting children with SEN, which applies equally to children with SLCN.

“There is a need to support schools as they strive to provide for children’s needs rather than simply deliver a curriculum. Teachers need expertise and support to make adjustments and adaptations to their teaching practices in the context of inclusion”⁹⁷

Choosing the right primary school is a big decision for any parent. For a parent of a child with SLCN, it can be an extremely difficult, confusing and stressful time; ensuring their child’s needs are understood and met can be a source of much distress to many parents.⁹⁸ Transition from pre-school into primary and from primary to secondary phases needs to be carefully planned for children with SLCN in order that children, their parents and teachers are prepared.

90 Dockrell, J.E., Lindsay, G., Letchford, B. and Mackie, C. (2006) *Educational Provision for Children with Specific Speech and Language Difficulties: perspectives of speech and language therapy service managers IJLCD July–August 2006*, Vol. 41, No. 4, 423–440

91 DfES (2001) *Special Educational Needs Code of Practice DfES Nov 2001*

92 Law, J., Lindsay, G., Peacey, N., Gascoigne, M., Soloff, N., Radford, J., Band, S. and Fitzgerald, L. 2000 *Provision for Children with Speech and Language Need in England and Wales: facilitating communication between education and health services* (London: Dfee).

93 *ibid.*

94 Dockrell, J.E., Lindsay, G., Letchford, B. and Mackie, C. (2006) *Educational Provision for Children with Specific Speech and Language Difficulties: perspectives of speech and language therapy service managers IJLCD July–August 2006*, Vol. 41 No. 4, 423–440

95 www.dfes.gov.uk/bercowreview/

96 Dockrell, J.E., and Lindsay, G. (2001) *Children with Specific Speech and Language Difficulties – The Teachers’ Perspective Oxford Review of Education Volume 27, Number 3, 1 September 2001*, Pp. 369–394(26)

97 Daniels, H. and Porter, J. (2007) *Learning Needs and Difficulties Among Children of Primary School Age: definition, identification, provision and issues (Primary Review Research Survey 5/2)* Cambridge: University of Cambridge Faculty of Education.

98 Paradise, R. and Adewusi, A. (2001) *‘It’s a Continuous Fight Isn’t It?’: parents’ views of the educational provision for children with speech and language difficulties* I CAN London, 2001

6. Effective intervention in the primary school context

The context

Speech, language and communication does not develop in a vacuum. By its very nature it occurs within a context of family, education, community and interpersonal interaction. Children need to be supported in all contexts; the language context, but also family, school and community contexts.⁹⁹ Speech and language therapy provision needs to consider the functional impact of children's SLCN and work to support not only their underlying impairment, but their ability to participate in the environments in which they live. Part of this provision involves SLTs working within an appropriate multi-agency team, including parents, to support the children effectively.¹⁰⁰

Collaborative working

Regardless of educational placement, collaboration by practitioners and parents is seen as being fundamental for effective management of children with SLCN.¹⁰¹

*"The value of multi-disciplinary assessment, that includes observation in the classroom AND playground, can't be understated. It is so vitally important to get a whole picture."*¹⁰²

However, there is evidence of a lack of shared understanding between education, health, schools and parents, which can have a negative impact on meeting the needs of the child.^{103 104}

Times of transition, between educational phases, key stages and even between classes needs careful planning and a collaborative approach to ensure information is available and all concerned understand the implications of SLCN on individual children.

For collaboration to work to best support the communication development of children with SLCN:

- **Children and young people need** to have their needs understood, to be consulted and involved in decisions concerning them and to have an advocate within their learning environment¹⁰⁵
- **Teachers need** to feel supported in developing the necessary knowledge and skills to work with children who have SLCN¹⁰⁶
- **Parents need** to feel the needs of their child are being understood and provided for¹⁰⁷
- **SLTs need** to understand the school community, curricular demands and family context.

Any new models of practice must be fit for purpose; the challenge is to provide:

*"...effective models of collaboration, based on mutual respect of differential expertise, with both complementary and integrated delivery of support provided in a cost-effective manner"*¹⁰⁸

Collaboration at grass roots is not enough. All evidence suggests that collaboration should take place at all levels from strategic planning at service level, through to practitioner level.¹⁰⁹ The integrated services agenda should facilitate this strategic planning to ensure children with SLCN are recognised and their needs met according to best practice.¹¹⁰ The Children's Plan¹¹¹ also emphasises inter-agency working and collaboration across the range of children's services with creation of the 'team around the child'. There is a strong argument that SEN provision should be integral to the Every Child Matters (ECM) agenda to ensure a seamless service is in place with multi-agency involvement across key transition phases.¹¹²

99 Gascoigne, M. (2006) *Supporting Children with Speech, Language and Communication Needs within Integrated Children's Services* RCSLT Position Paper London

100 *ibid.*

101 Wright, J.A. (1992) *Collaboration between Teachers and Speech Therapists with Language Impaired Children* in Fletcher P. and Hall D. (Eds) (1992) *Specific Speech and Language Disorders in Children* Whurr Publishers

102 Johnson, S. (Parent) www.ican.org.uk/TalkingPoint/Themes/Assessment

103 Lindsay, G. and Dockrell, J. (2002) *Meeting the Needs of Children with Speech and Communication Needs: a critical perspective on inclusion and collaboration* *Child Language Teaching and Therapy* 18, (2), 92-101

104 Barron, I., Holmes, R., MacLure, M. and Runswick-Cole, K. (2007) *Primary Schools and Other Agencies (Primary Review Research Survey 8/2)* Cambridge: University of Cambridge Faculty of Education.

105 Tierney, P. (2005) *The peer relationships of children with specific speech and language impairment* MSC dissertation, Sheffield University Library

106 Dockrell, J.E. and Lindsay, G. (2001) *Children with Specific Speech and Language Difficulties: the teachers' perspectives* *Oxford Review of Education* 27, 369-394

107 Dockrell, J.E. and Lindsay, G. (2004) *Whose Job Is It? Parents' Concerns about the Needs of their Children with Language Problems* *Journal of Special Education* Vol. 37, 2004

108 Dockrell, J.E., Lindsay, G., Letchford, B. and Mackie, C. (2006) *Educational Provision for Children with Specific Speech and Language Difficulties: perspectives of speech and language therapy service managers* *JLCD* July-August 2006, Vol. 41, No. 4, 423-440

109 Law, J. et al (2000) *Provision for Children with Speech and Language Needs in England and Wales: facilitating communication between education and health services* DfEE

110 Gascoigne, M. (2006) *Supporting Children with Speech, Language and Communication Needs within Integrated Children's Services* RCSLT Position Paper, RCSLT: London

111 <http://www.dfes.gov.uk/publications/childrensplan/>

112 *House of Commons Education and Skills Select Committee Report on SEN* (2006)

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Evidence identifies that collaboration is most effective when the following elements are in place:¹¹³

- Professionals involved have a clear understanding of each other's roles
- Therapists take account of educational context
- Teachers understand the importance of language to the whole curriculum
- Schools support therapists' involvement.

Evidence demonstrates that children have made gains with speech and language when:

- parents were informed and involved, which is supported by the Children's Plan¹¹⁴
- therapists and teachers were more satisfied about their knowledge base
- systems changed within the schools to reflect and support the collaboration.¹¹⁵

This collaborative approach needs careful structures and criteria in place to enable it to happen throughout a child's education across phases and key stages, regardless of where that might be.

However there is an argument that the ECM ethos of equipping learners for life in its broadest sense, appears to be at odds with the current emphasis at the primary stage on target setting and academic achievement in a narrow range of subjects.¹¹⁶ Effective collaboration can make a difference for children with SLCN. Systemic change would enable teachers, therapists and parents to be given the time to allow this to happen.

Workforce development

Workforce development is high on the government agenda; The ECM programme identifies the need for a skilled and confident workforce to achieve its aims of improved outcomes for all children.¹¹⁷ The Children's Plan identifies the workforce as key in delivering its aims¹¹⁸ and *Aiming High for Disabled Children* highlights the importance of good quality staff to support children and their families.¹¹⁹

Effective intervention means ensuring people who are working with children feel equipped to do so. Providing training so that the workforce is able to identify children with difficulties and work with relevant others to meet the needs of all children is essential. Studies have shown that although teachers are often aware of the importance of communication and concerned about levels of children's language, many express their anxiety and lack of knowledge in being able to support them. A recent investigation into levels of teacher knowledge about SLCN and development showed that over 60% lacked confidence in their ability to meet children's needs.¹²⁰

Concerns have been raised with regard to both initial teacher training and continuing professional development in enabling teachers to be able to meet the needs of children with SEN¹²¹ in an inclusive context. Teachers themselves have reported a lack of confidence both in assessing the spoken language of their pupils and in implementing strategies to support the development of communication skills, particularly when children have difficulties.¹²² Concern has also been expressed

¹¹³ Law, J. et al (2001) *Provision for Children with Speech and Language Needs in England and Wales: facilitating communication between education and health services* DfEE

¹¹⁴ <http://www.dfes.gov.uk/publications/childrensplan/>

¹¹⁵ Roulstone, S., Owen, R. and French, L. (2005) *Speech and Language Therapy and the Knowles Edge Standards Fund Project: An Evaluation of the Service Provided to a Cluster of Primary Schools* *British Journal of Special Education* v32 n2 p78-85 June 2005 Pages 8

¹¹⁶ Robinson, C. and Fielding, M. (2007) *Children and their Primary Schools: pupils' voices (Primary Review Research Survey 5/3)* Cambridge: University of Cambridge Faculty of Education

¹¹⁷ *Every Child Matters: change for children* (2004) HM Government

¹¹⁸ DCSF (2007) *The Children's Plan: Building Brighter Futures*

¹¹⁹ *Aiming High for Disabled Children: better support for families* (May 2007)

¹²⁰ Sadler, J. (2005) *Knowledge, Attitudes and Beliefs of the Mainstream Teachers of Children with a Pre-school Diagnosis of Speech/Language Impairment* *Child Language Teaching and Therapy* Volume 21, 2,

¹²¹ *Select Committee on Education and Skills Third Report 2006*

¹²² www.ican.org.uk/talkingpoint

over the growing number of teaching assistants working with children with SEN, without a similar increase in expertise.¹²³ This applies to training and qualifications for staff working with children with communication disabilities.¹²⁴

The Joint Professional Development Framework (JPDF); a framework for collaborative training has been available for a number of years, which has been used in joint training initiatives in areas across the UK.¹²⁵ There is evidence that training support staff and teachers in aspects of speech, language and communication can result in improved adult skill and enhanced pupil outcomes.¹²⁶ Training where different professionals learn together has been identified as the most effective for changing teacher behaviours and has the greatest impact on learners.¹²⁷

The Communication Trust¹²⁸ emphasises the importance of developing the workforce to develop and support communication for all children and young people.¹²⁹ The Trust has developed the Speech, Language and Communication Framework (SLCF), which is an extension of the JPDF. It is a competency based framework, enabling those working with children to identify the skills and knowledge they have and those which they need to develop in order to support the communication of all children, including those with SLCN. Staff can then find information on CPD opportunities to meet their needs. They have also developed Communication Help Point, a website to support the children's workforce in understanding SLCN.

A number of relevant resources are available to support staff in understanding speaking and listening skills, and implementing strategies within the classroom.¹³⁰ The Language Support model was developed as part of a major

research project.¹³¹ The newly developed Inclusion Development Programme supports professional development, in schools for children with SLCN.¹³² I CAN is also developing *Primary Talk* a programme supporting systemic change within schools to support the communication skills of all children; supporting those children with delayed language to 'catch up' and children with long-term communication needs to work to their potential.

It is clear that staff training and development need to be part of long-term strategic planning.¹³³ It is recognised also that developing the workforce would mean a radically increased investment in training so that outcomes are improved for children with SEN, including those with SLCN.¹³⁴

Communication supportive environments

It is argued that school is the best place to support school-aged children with SLCN.¹³⁵ The majority of children with SLCN are in mainstream schools,¹³⁶ but there is concern children's SEN are not always being met through this inclusive approach.^{137 138}

A strategic approach that a number of LAs and schools have adopted has been to raise knowledge and awareness of speech, language and communication difficulties amongst all staff and through this to create a learning environment and school ethos that is 'communication friendly'.¹³⁹ Some individual LAs have developed their own standards and processes and other publications contribute to this approach.¹⁴⁰ Many successful approaches include a 'package' of training for school staff with support in implementing a range of strategies.¹⁴¹

123 Inclusion: does it matter where pupils are taught? (2006) Ofsted

124 Mapping Qualifications and Training for the Children and Young peoples workforce short report 5 (2005) Sheffield Hallam University

125 I CAN (2001) Joint Professional Development Framework (JPDF)

126 Gardner, H. (2006) Training Others in the Art of Therapy for Speech Sound Disorders: An Interactional Approach *Child Language Teaching and Therapy* 22; 1

127 Cordingley, P. (2003) The impact of collaborative CPD on classroom teaching and learning

128 www.thecommunicationtrust.org.uk

129 *Speech, Language and Communication and the Children's Workforce* (2008) The Communication Trust/I CAN

130 www.ican.org.uk/talkingpoint

131 www.strath.ac.uk/eps/centresdivisions/slt/teachingresources/lsm/

132 www.standards.dfes.gov.uk/primary/features/inclusion/sen/idp

133 *Developing people to support learning: a skills strategy for the wider school workforce 2006-09* (2006) TDA

134 *House of Commons Education and Skills Select Committee Report on SEN* (2006)

135 Gascoigne, M. (2006) *Supporting Children with Speech, Language and Communication Needs within Integrated Children's Services* RCSLT Position Paper RCSLT: London

136 Lindsay et al (2005) Local Education Authorities' approaches to provision for children with specific speech and language difficulties in England and Wales *European Journal of Special Needs Education* 20:3 pp329-345

137 Lindsay, G. (2003) *Inclusive Education: a critical perspective* *British Journal of Special Education* 30, 3-12.

138 Lindsay, G. (2007) *The Effectiveness of Inclusive Education/Mainstreaming* *British Journal of Educational Psychology* (In Press)

139 *Speaking Out: Speech and Language Audit Tool and Framework* www.ican.org.uk/TalkingPoint/Themes/Assessment

140 Swindon LEA *Guidelines Child Language Therapy and Teaching* 22:1 p126 Jane Speake LDA, Ripley, Barrett and Fleming David Fulton, Jill McMinn Questions

141 Brown, E. and Harron, A. *A Practical Model for Linking Language and Literacy* I CAN Conference 2006

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General good practice strategies to support children with SLCN in 'communication supportive' environments may include:

- An audit of the environment^{142 143 144}
- Knowledge of language development, language levels of the children and the language demands in the environment¹⁴⁵
- Adapting adult language so it is not a barrier to learning or communication¹⁴⁶
- Facilitating opportunities for children to interact and use language in different situations, with different people at an appropriate level^{147 148 149}
- Creating an ethos where it is acceptable not to know and teaching children how to monitor their own understanding.¹⁵⁰ Research suggests that raising children's awareness of how to interact productively leads to more inclusive activity and to individual learning gains¹⁵¹
- Raising children's awareness of their strengths and needs.^{152 153} This is an important principle for children with SLCN
- Ensuring children can participate and be involved in decision making concerning them
- Careful planning and information sharing between staff at times of transition.

Specialist interventions

Creating a communication supportive environment is beneficial for all children. However, it is important that the environment and any indirect intervention by SLTs undergo careful evaluation to determine the benefits for children with SLCN.¹⁵⁴ In addition, it is important to acknowledge that there is a continued need for highly skilled direct interventions

delivered by appropriately experienced professionals, where necessary.¹⁵⁵

Children with SLCN are a complex and heterogeneous group and as such, there continues to be a need for research into a variety of effective language interventions in schools.¹⁵⁶

However, a number of specific interventions targeting different elements of speech, language and communication with primary aged children have provided evidence of effectiveness and examples include:

- school based interventions, which have facilitated changes in approaches used by teaching staff and in children's language^{157 158 159}
- phonological awareness training,¹⁶⁰ targeting the speech-processing deficit, to effect an efficient system-wide change¹⁶¹
- strategies for teaching receptive vocabulary¹⁶² word-finding training¹⁶³ and grammar¹⁶⁴
- developing narrative skills in children with delayed language,¹⁶⁵ teaching story grammar knowledge¹⁶⁶ and boosting story comprehension¹⁶⁷
- developing language repair skills,^{168 169} and conversational skills¹⁷⁰
- intervention for children with pragmatic language impairment^{171 172}
- teaching reading comprehension, for children with language difficulties¹⁷³
- developing communication skills with children excluded or at risk of exclusion.¹⁷⁴

142 www.ican.org.uk/TalkingPoint/Themes/Assessment

143 www.ican.org.uk/home/Training

144 *Primary National Strategy: Speaking, Listening, Learning: working with children who have special educational needs*

145 Martin, D. and Miller, C. (1999) *Language and the Curriculum* David Fulton Publishers

146 *ibid.*

147 www.inclusion.uwe.ac.uk/csie/charter.htm

148 *Primary National Strategy: Speaking, Listening, Learning: working with children who have special educational needs*

149 Howe, C. and Mercer, N. (2007) *Children's Social Development, Peer Interaction and Classroom Learning (Primary Review Research Survey 2/1b)* Cambridge: University of Cambridge Faculty of Education

150 Johnson, M. *Functional Language in the Classroom (Manchester Metropolitan University)*

151 Howe, C. and Mercer, N. (2007) *Children's Social Development, Peer Interaction and Classroom Learning (Primary Review Research Survey 2/1b)* Cambridge: University of Cambridge Faculty of Education

152 Goswami, U. and Bryant, P. (2007) *Children's Cognitive Development and Learning (Primary Review Research Survey 2/1a)* Cambridge: University of Cambridge Faculty of Education

153 Jones, D. (2007) *Speaking, listening, planning and assessing: the teacher's role in developing metacognitive awareness Speaking, Listening, Early Child Development and Care Volume 177, Issue 6 & 7 August 2007, pages 569–579*

154 Dockrell, J.E., Lindsay, G., Letchford, B. and Mackie, C. (2006) *Educational Provision for Children with Specific Speech and Language Difficulties: perspectives of speech and language therapy service managers IJLCD July–August 2006, Vol. 41, No. 4, 423–440*

155 Law, J., Lindsay, G., Peacey, N., Gascoigne, M., Soloff, N., Radford, J. and Band, S. (2002) *Consultation as a Model for Providing Speech and Language Therapy in Schools: a panacea or one step too far? CLTT 18, 145–163.*

156 Cirrin, F and Gillam, R (2008) *Language Intervention Practices for School-age children with spoken language impairments. Language, Speech and Hearing Services in Schools Jan 2008; 39, 1*

The large number of children with delayed language may benefit from some of these interventions; narrative approaches for example which have been evidenced as effective with this group of children as have some of the whole school approaches and there is evidence from small scale projects around the effectiveness of language group interventions.¹⁷⁵ There are a whole range of resources available to support teachers in working with this group of children, many available free of charge.

For further information on SLCN and available resources visit www.talkingpoint.org.uk.

Free resources for developing communication skills are available from www.tbetterworld.com.

Participation: the children's voice

All children have a right to express their views and take part in any decisions that involve them, for example, the SEN Code of Practice encourages children of all abilities to take part in planning and review meetings.¹⁷⁶ For children with SLCN, this may be more challenging, though strategies have been suggested for increasing children's participation in planning and reviewing therapy.¹⁷⁷

What children identify as important to them while they are at primary school needs to be considered. One study found that social activities were more important to the children with SEN than formal learning. They also found that relationships with other children were paramount and were key to whether children had a positive or negative experience at school generally.¹⁷⁸ Studies show that children in collaborative and mutually respectful environments are happier and that academic results improve.¹⁷⁹

These issues are no different for children with SLCN, though possibly more difficult to achieve. There is a role to be played in facilitating these relationships for children with SLCN and giving them strategies to develop and maintain their relationships.

- 157 Roulstone, S., Owen, R. and French, L. (2005) *Speech and Language Therapy and the Knowles Edge Standards Fund Project: An Evaluation of the Service Provided to a Cluster of Primary Schools* *British Journal of Special Education* 2005, 32, 2, June, 78-85
- 158 Wren, Y., Roulstone, S., Parkhouse, J. and Hall, B. (2001) *A model for a mainstream school-based speech and language therapy service* *Child Language Teaching & Therapy* Vol 17(2), Jun 2001. pp. 107-126
- 159 Boyle, J.E. and Forbes, J.A. (2007) *A randomised controlled trial and economic evaluation of direct versus indirect and individual versus group modes of speech and language therapy for children with primary language impairment* *Health Technology Assessment* 2007 Jul; 11(25):1-158.
- 160 Gillon, G.T. (2000) *The Efficacy of Phonological Awareness Intervention for Children with Spoken Language Impairment* *Language, Speech, and Hearing Services in Schools* 2000, 31, 2, Apr, 126-141
- 161 Crosbie, S., Holm, A. and Dodd, B. (2005) *Intervention for Children with Severe Speech Disorder: a comparison of two approaches* *IJLCD v40 n4 p467-491* Oct 2005 Pages: 25122 SEN Code of Practice, DfES, 2001
- 162 Parsons, S., Law, J. and Gascoigne, M. (2005) *Teaching Receptive Vocabulary to Children with Specific Language Impairment: A Curriculum-Based Approach* *Child Language Teaching and Therapy* 2005, 21, 1, Feb, 39-59
- 163 Best, W. (2005) *Investigation of a new intervention for children with word-finding problems* *IJLCD* 2005 Jul-Sep; 40(3):279-318
- 164 Ebbels, S. (2007) *Teaching grammar to school-aged children with specific language impairment using shape coding* *CLTT* 23,1 pp67-93
- 165 Davies, P., Davies, K. and Shanks, B. (2004) *Improving Narrative Skills in Young Children with Delayed Language Development* *Educational Review* Vol 56 No 3
- 166 Hayward, D. and Schneider, P. (2000) *Effectiveness of Teaching Story Grammar Knowledge to Pre-School Children with Language Impairment* *An Exploratory Study* *Child Language Teaching and Therapy* 2000, 16, 3, Oct, 255-284
- 167 Joffe, V. et al (2007) *Comprehensive problems in children with specific language impairments: does mental imagery training help?* *IJLCD* Nov-Dec 2007, Vol.42 No.6, 648-664
- 168 Hirschman, M. (2000) *Language repair via meta-linguistic means* *International Journal of Language & Communication Disorders* 2000 Apr-Jun 35(2):251-68
- 169 Merrison, S.A. and Merrison, A.J. (2005) *Repair in Speech and Language Therapy Interaction: investigating pragmatic language impairment of children* *Child Language Teaching and Therapy*, 21 (2), 191-211
- 170 Godfrey, J., Pring, T. and Gascoigne, M. *Developing Children's Conversational Skills in Mainstream Schools: an evaluation of group therapy* *CLTT* October 2005, vol. 21, no. 3, pp. 251-262(12)
- 171 Adams, Catherine; Baxendale, Janet; Lloyd, Julian; Aldred, Catherine (2005) *Pragmatic Language Impairment: Case Studies of Social and Pragmatic Language Therapy* *Child Language Teaching and Therapy* 2005, 21, 3, Oct, 227-250
- 172 Adams, Catherine; Lloyd, Julian; Aldred, Catherine; Baxendale, Janet (2006) *Exploring the effects of communication intervention for developmental pragmatic language impairments: A signal-generation study* *International Journal of Language & Communication Disorders* Vol 41(1), Jan-Feb 2006. pp. 41-65.
- 173 Takala, Marjatta *The Effects of Reciprocal Teaching on Reading Comprehension in Mainstream and Special (SLI) Education* *Scandinavian Journal of Educational Research* Volume 50, Number 5, November 2006, pp. 559-576(18)
- 174 Law, J. and Sivyer, S. (2003) *Promoting communication skills of primary school children excluded from school at risk of exclusion: an intervention study* *CLTT* Vol 19, No 1 175 www.talkingpoint.org.uk
- 176 DfES (2001) *SEN Code of Practice*
- 177 Owen, R., Hayett, L. and Roulstone, S. *Children's Views of Speech and Language Therapy in School: Consulting Children with Communication Difficulties* *Child Language Teaching and Therapy* Volume 20, Number 1, February 2004, pp. 55-73(19)
- 178 Maxwell, T. *Children's Views About School: Using Personal Construct Psychology in Practice with Children on the Special Needs Register* *Pastoral Care in Education* Volume 24, Number 1, March 2006, pp. 20-26 (7)
- 179 Mayall, B. (2007) *Children's Lives Outside School and Their Educational Impact* (Primary Review Research Survey 8/1) Cambridge: University of Cambridge Faculty of Education

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7. Summary

The evidence suggests that primary aged children with SLCN require:

- Professionals who work together and with parents, sharing knowledge and skills to effectively to support children and their families with an integrated approach
- A skilled and knowledgeable workforce. Professionals who know about speech, language and communication, learning, curriculum and the interaction between all of those elements, with an appreciation of the wider social context for children and their families
- Professionals to work together to create an environment that facilitates communication and learning and is adaptable to the needs of children in that environment
- A range of specialist, well evidenced interventions to be planned and delivered by experienced professionals.

Children with SLCN are at a major disadvantage compared to their peers in primary schools; they have to learn in an environment where the medium for learning is their major weakness. SLCN can present in different guises and therefore are not always easy to understand or to manage. However, the massive impact of SLCN on a child's life and development means we need to find a way of meeting their needs more effectively. Children are more likely to do well at school when the nature of their SLCN are recognised and understood.^{180 181} It has a major impact in the classroom on children's ability to think and learn; academic attainment is therefore affected as is behaviour and the ability to socialise and make friends. It is essential that greater knowledge and skills are developed in the primary school environment to support these children.

Collaborative working between professionals and parents is paramount to ensure children are able to access the curriculum and learn alongside their peers to prevent long-term difficulties.

¹⁸⁰ Dockrell, J., Lindsay, G., Palikara, O. and Cullen, M.A. (2007) *Raising the Achievements of Children and Young People with Specific Language and Communication Needs and Other Special Educational Needs through School, to Work and College Nottingham: DfES*

¹⁸¹ Dockrell, J., Lindsay, G., Mackie, C. and Connolly, V. (2007) *Constraints in the Production of Written Text in Children with Specific Language Impairments Exceptional Children 73, 147-164.*

I CAN Talk Series

I CAN Talk is a series of papers exploring contemporary issues in children's communication development and disability. *I CAN Talk* papers review current research and literature and offer practical evidence-based solutions to inform debate on speech and language and to support practitioners, parents and policy makers.

I CAN Talk Communication Disability and Literacy Difficulties Issue 1

I CAN Talk The Cost to the Nation of Children's Poor Communication Issue 2

I CAN Talk The Cost to the Nation of Children's Poor Communication (Scotland Edition) Issue 3

I CAN Talk Language and Social Exclusion Issue 4

I CAN Talk Speech, Language and Communication and the Children's Workforce Issue 5 (I CAN / The Communication Trust).

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COMMUNICATION IS FUNDAMENTAL **“...for learning and development**

Children and young people with a **communication disability** cannot **express** themselves, **understand** others or **build relationships** because of problems in **one or more** of these areas: ...understanding and finding the **right words**...**producing, ordering and discriminating** between speech **sounds**...**using rules** about how **words, phrases and sentences** are formed to **convey meaning**... **using and understanding language** in **different social contexts**
One in ten children and young people struggle with this **invisible disability**
Without the **right help**, at the **right time**, they will be **left out** and **left behind**”