

Tips for a communication supportive Primary School



Children with speech, language and communication needs (SLCN) are often helped by some small changes in the school environment – making their classroom what we call ‘communication supportive’. This makes it easier for them to understand what they are learning and gives them the best opportunity to get the most out of their lessons.

The following features are thought to be good practice for supporting children with SLCN.

- Visual support systems such as visual timetables, targets on the desk, targets shown on the whiteboard, prompt cards (for example a card, with a picture, to remind a child to listen for their name) and photos.
- A classroom environment that is not too cluttered and where equipment is clearly marked with a label saying what it is.
- Teaching that incorporates use of visual and tactile approaches including use of real objects, practical activities, pictures, video.
- Staff using non-verbal communication to support what they are saying, for example gesture, pointing – or maybe even signing.
- Careful seating arrangements that allow a child with SLCN to be near to the front, and facing the teacher, for example tables placed in a horseshoe shape or tables that can be easily moved around.
- Children given time to respond to allow time for thinking. Time for planning work is also allocated before children are required to begin writing, for example in literacy children are given extra time to think about the key things to include in a story such as the main characters, what is going to happen.
- Strategies are used to ensure a child is paying attention for example the teacher says their name before giving an instruction.
- Language is not too complicated and instructions are short and repeated for those who need it.
- Consistent vocabulary is used, where the same word is used all the time when teaching new subjects (for example take away is used, but not minus or subtract) and understanding is checked where necessary.

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- Opportunities for a child to work at their own level, following their own task or targets if needed. This might mean that a child works on slightly different work, at the right level for them, with some extra support from a teaching assistant.
- Additional resources are available if needed, for example IT software, alternative recording sheets with less information or where less writing is needed, work planning sheets.
- Teaching assistant has the necessary skills and knowledge to support children with SLCN. This means they will have received some training about support for pupils with this type of difficulty, and have been given information about SLCN in the classroom by a speech and language therapist.
- Evidence that teaching staff are aware of speech and language therapy (SLT) goals and these are incorporated into lessons wherever possible, for example science vocabulary that a child finds difficult is practised before the lesson and repeated as part of the activities during the lesson.

This information was taken from www.talkingpoint.org.uk

Do you have questions for a qualified speech and language therapist?

Call 020 7843 2544 to arrange a call back with an I CAN speech & language therapist, or email your questions to help@ican.org.uk

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