

Case study: Wallands County Primary School

Wallands County Primary School is the largest in Lewes, with two classes in each year and a nursery. It also has a dedicated Speech and Language Unit, which offers specialist provision for children in the western half of East Sussex, and all children in the unit have a statement of education need for severe speech and language difficulties. The unit is organised as two classes and has places for 16 pupils. Good communication is a priority for the school, with the unit part of its day-to-day life and was praised by Ofsted in 2008 as 'a good school with rising standards'.



All children at the school are assessed regularly throughout the year for their speech, language and literacy and this identifies any children who require extra support. Reception class children are assessed on entry using Language Link and older children are assessed using Speechlink. Both programmes identify children who need further investigation by a Speech and Language Therapist (SLT) and referrals are made by the school's SENCO.

Judges of this category were particularly impressed with their whole-school approach which makes use of the attached Speech and Language Unit to share expertise and understanding around speech, language and communication needs (SLCN). Children with SLCN are prioritised for early intervention and specific programmes of support are used with dedicated specialist teaching assistants and Individual Needs Assistants (INAs) to help boost their language skills. SLCN statemented children also get designated talking time with their INA.

Across both Key Stages, emphasis is placed on speaking and listening through activities such as 'show and tell', 'hobby talks', 'talking partners' and 'one-minute talking'. Topic vocabulary is taught in discrete groups where understanding is reviewed and there is ample opportunity for over-learning.

Teachers in the main school are supported by those in the Speech and Language Unit in learning to identify children with speech, language and communication needs. The school SENCO also liaises with Speech and Language Therapy Services and Educational Psychologists, as well as other agencies such as school nurses, Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) and children's services as necessary.

Teachers have found the impact of using the Speechlink and Language Link programmes to be significant. They found children benefitted from clearer speech and were therefore more confident in speaking out loud to an audience or in class. The school also runs a 'Buddy system' with Year 6 and Year 4 pupils helping children with SLCN if they feel lonely or need support. Parents and carers are also positive about their children's progress.

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