

Case study: Peacehaven Community School

Peacehaven Community School is a specialist science, maths and training school for pupils aged 11-16. It has a specialist facility for speech and language development and the Senior Management Team has prioritised speech, language and communication in the School Improvement Plan. The school describes itself as 'vibrant, supportive and dynamic' and encourages self-awareness and understanding of how people are motivated. This is to help prepare each pupil for the challenges ahead in their future life.



The school was praised by the award judges for the range of practices it uses to help children with speech, language and communication needs (SLCN). This includes supporting children socially by pairing Year 7 pupils from its speech and language facility with Year 11 pupils to create a community spirit. A specialist SLC teacher from the facility also works across the school to make sure speech and language features across the curriculum, and parents are offered training sessions and regular meetings with teachers to support SLC development at home.

Teachers and other school staff are kept up-to-date with issues around SLCN through continuous professional development, use an SLCN identification checklist and are fully informed of individual children's needs. They receive support from the Specialist SLC teacher working at the school and are skilled at setting targets with the pupils to help the children monitor and meet their own targets.

The school worked with I CAN on the *Secondary Talk* programme on teaching vocabulary and teachers used strategies such as visual support, mind mapping, paired discussions and structured games. An agreed list of Tier 2 words is taught across Key Stage 4 during enrichment sessions, supported by subject teachers, and student-designed symbols and definitions are displayed throughout the school. This focus on teaching vocabulary in subject lessons has produced a marked improvement in engagement and attainment; for instance in the science department, some students made an unprecedented 3 sub-levels of progress in a year.

Judges were also pleased to see that the school had evidence this was having a positive impact on pupils both in their SLC development and in their behaviour. During the *Secondary Talk* programme, there was a reduction of more than 50% in the number of behaviour incidents in pupils who attend the facility, which correlated with staff feedback of increased engagement of pupils in lessons and fewer behaviour incidents.

Provision for pupils with SLCN has improved substantially over the past year, leading to the school facility receiving specialist validation from I CAN, confirming the school's ability to meet the needs of the most complex students.

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