Beyond Measure

Using the reception baseline assessment to identify and support children with speech, language and communication needs – a guide for staff in schools

The Communication Trust
Every child understood

Contents

Introduction

The optional reception baseline accountability measure is being introduced in schools from September 2015. For schools that have elected to use the reception baseline assessment, all children entering reception will be assessed within the first half term. You can read more about the different reception baseline providers at www.thecommunicationtrust.org.uk/beyondmeasure

As well as providing a baseline for children's skills, The Communication Trust believes the baseline assessment process provides an opportunity for schools to ensure that children who have speech, language and communication needs (SLCN) are identified as early as possible, thus ensuring that the most appropriate support can be put in place and minimising the potential long term impact of a child's SLCN. The aim of this guidance is to support teaching staff to most effectively do this.

There is a choice of reception baseline providers and schools have been able to choose which assessment to use within their school. This guidance is purposefully general, to ensure that it is relevant to all schools, whichever assessment has been chosen. Using this guidance will support schools to:

↗ Use the reception baseline assessment process to begin to identify children with speech, language and communication needs

↗ Think about next steps for children where the assessment highlights concerns with speech, language and/or communication

↗ Consider the needs of children who already have identified speech, language and communication needs (SLCN) during the baseline assessment process.

This guidance also includes information about next steps for planning and support if the assessment does raise concerns about a child's speech, language and communication development, as well as considerations when using the reception baseline with children who speak English as an additional language (EAL).

Listed in the appendix are several resources that schools can access to develop their understanding and good practice around supporting all children's speech, language and communication development.

What are speech, language and communication needs (SLCN) and why is it important to spot any needs early?

Speech, language and communication skills follow an expected pattern of development. Many children develop their speech, language and communication skills as expected for their age. However, some children do not. These children can be described as having speech, language and communication needs, or SLCN. Children's SLCN can be very varied: some children may have a speech, language and/or communication delay, meaning that their skills are progressing along the typical developmental pattern, but are behind for their age. This type of SLCN can be transient, and when children's needs are identified early and the right support is put in place, children can 'catch up' with their peers[1] [2].

In some areas, particularly areas of disadvantage, up to 50% of children start school with delayed speech, language and communication.

Others may have a more long term or specific SLCN, where their skills are developing in a way that doesn't follow the typical stages of development and children are less likely to 'catch up'. These children require early identification of their needs, with the right support put in place to ensure that their speech, language and communication skills are optimised and the potential impacts of their difficulties are minimised.

1 The Communication Trust's 2012 Talk of the Town pilot project found a 15% increase in nursery-aged children's language levels nurseries following early identification and support of children's speech, language and communication skills
2 Lee, W. (2013). A Generation Adrift, The Communication Trust

10% of all children will have a long-term speech, language and communication need; that's equivalent to 2-3 children in every classroom.

It can be difficult to spot children who aren't developing their skills in the way that we would expect. There are an increasing number of children who are starting school without the skills they need for school; they are not 'school ready'[3]. Part of school readiness means having the speech, language and communication skills to cope with the demands of a school environment: being able to listen, to pay attention, to understand spoken language, to express your thoughts, feelings and ideas and to build friendships and social relationships.

Speech, language and communication skills are foundation skills for life. They form the basis of children's learning, literacy, social and emotional development. We know that there are links between language and educational attainment, mental health, social relationships and behaviour and that SLCN can have significant impacts on these areas of a child's development.

Early identification of speech, language and communication difficulties is a way of ensuring that children who are struggling with this area of their development receive the support that they require as early as possible, minimising the potential impact of their speech and language difficulties.

3 Ofsted report (2014) Are you ready? Good practice in school readiness

How can the reception baseline help me to identify children with SLCN?

In some cases, a child's SLCN may not be obvious. The reception baseline assessment provides an opportunity for you to uncover any needs that a child may have that may be hidden, or may have been labelled as something else. You can use the assessment results along with your additional observations and other information that you gather about a child to build a picture of their skills.

For example, a child might be displaying signs of listening and attention problems, difficulties playing, problems with settling, early literacy or numeracy difficulties or problems making friends. All of these may be signs that a child is struggling with their speech, language and/or communication development. The reception baseline process can be used alongside other formative assessments, to allow you to consider a child's skills in more detail to accurately identify areas where they might be struggling.

The reception baseline assessment, whichever provider your school has decided to sign up with, provides an opportunity for teaching staff working in reception classes to think about a child's speech, language and communication skills in a structured way. Even in good and outstanding schools, children's speech, language and communication needs are easily missed[4], so the reception baseline provides a strong opportunity to systematically consider speech, language and communication.

4 The Communication Trust's 2011 Talk of the Town pilot found that between 31% and 50% of children with SLCN were not being identified, despite a highly committed staff team

Whether your school is using an assessment that's a detailed 1:1 assessment, or whether it's an assessment with more of an observation and information gathering focus, completing a baseline measure is a way to enhance the observations that you're already doing. It also provides an opportunity to take a closer look at how children are progressing with the development of important skills that will act as a foundation for their future learning and wellbeing.

What might the indicators of SLCN look like in the assessment process?

Whichever assessment provider your school has chosen, the reception baseline has an element of adult directed tasks, activities or development statements that will allow you to make a decision around whether or not a child is demonstrating a particular skill. All baseline assessments are required to link to the learning and development requirements of the **communication and language**, **literacy and mathematics** areas of learning from the EYFS statutory framework. Of course, difficulties with any language or communication element of the baseline assessment may be an indicator that a child has SLCN, but it's essential to bear in mind that even during other sections of the assessment, there will be language elements embedded within the task which might impact on a child's performance, for example:

↗ **Mathematics** - many maths concepts are indeed language concepts, for example, 'big' or 'most'. Therefore, many mathematics tasks are, in fact tasks with a high language load. So, if children are struggling with these elements, then it may in fact suggest issues with language or vocabulary.

↗ **Literacy** – literacy tasks may also involve a heavy language load, for example, children may need to understand concepts such as 'first' and 'last' when isolating and identifying phonemes, or children may require a wide enough vocabulary to be able to distinguish real words from nonsense words.

↗ Literacy tasks also require children to demonstrate phonological awareness skills, which are closely linked to their speech and language development. Understanding rhymes, segmenting words, decoding, processing and producing certain speech sounds will be difficult for some children.

The information on the next few pages aims to highlight how speech, language and communication skills underpin the communication and language, literacy and mathematics areas of learning from the EYFS. We have focused here on these 3 areas to ensure that this guidance is relevant to all practitioners using any reception baseline assessment. However, we've also included some more general information, which can be related to any element of any assessment that you're using[5].

5 One of the criteria that all reception baseline providers must adhere to, is that "the clear majority of the content domain must be clearly linked to the learning and development requirements of the communication and language, literacy and mathematics areas of learning from the EYFS" (Standards Testing Agency).

Speech, language and communication and the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) areas of development

EYFS area of learning: Communication and Language		Aspect: Listening and Attention	
How is this skill linked with speech, language and communication?	**What might difficulties in this area mean for the child?**	**How can this element of the baseline help you identify SLCN? Look out for:**	**What the assessment process might not tell you – use further observations to look out for:**
Attention and listening skills are the foundation on which children develop their speech, language and communication skills. If a child does not have the ability to attend and listen to what is happening around them, this will impact on them being able to pick up essential speech, language and communication models from adults, peers and the world around them.	Difficulties with attention and listening will have an impact on a child's speech, language and communication development as well as their understanding and learning in the classroom.	During the assessment process, children with attention and listening difficulties will: • struggle with their concentration • be easily distracted • Have difficulty following adult directed tasks • maintain their attention better during self-led activities	Observe the child during different contexts to check out their concentration – how do they manage in different contexts and situations, for example, during whole class activities, small group work, individual activities and during self led play?

EYFS area of learning: Communication and Language			Aspect: Understanding
How is this skill linked with speech, language and communication?	**What might difficulties in this area mean for the child?**	**How can this element of the baseline help you identify SLCN? Look out for:**	**What the assessment process might <u>not</u> tell you – use further observations to look out for:**
Understanding language is very closely linked to attention and listening. Children need to be able to attend and listen before they can understand. In the development of any language, understanding precedes expressive language (talking). Where a child's language is developing typically, they will be able to understand more than they can say. It is only once children understand vocabulary, concepts and sentence structures that they are able to use these elements in their expressive language to use words and develop their own sentences and stories.	Difficulties with understanding language will mean that children struggle with learning new vocabulary, understanding new concepts or ideas and following instructions in class. This will then have a further impact on the child's expressive language development and learning.	Children with difficulties understanding language are likely to demonstrate incorrect or tentative responses to items where they're required to understand a verbal instruction, or a specific word or concept.	Look at how the child manages with following instructions in the classroom. Do they tend to do the wrong thing, or only part of what you've asked or do they need to rely on others to follow instructions? How do they cope with more complex questions or instructions? Do they understand familiar routines, but struggle with new tasks and instructions or a change in the typical routine?

EYFS area of learning: Communication and Language			Aspect: Speaking
How is this skill linked with speech, language and communication?	**What might difficulties in this area mean for the child?**	**How can this element of the baseline help you identify SLCN? Look out for:**	**What the assessment process might <u>not</u> tell you – use further observations to look out for:**
A child's spoken language development is supported by attention, listening and understanding skills. Speaking includes being able to use words, sentences and stories to be able to express your thoughts and ideas. The ability to do this involves the combination of several important, underlying language skills.	If the child struggles to formulate the required spoken response, this may indicate expressive language difficulties, which will impact on their ability to use language to express their thoughts, feelings and ideas. It will also impact on the child's literacy skills; children need to be able to use language themselves, before they can be expected to understand what they read, or to write down their ideas.	Children with spoken language difficulties may of course struggle when they're required to provide a spoken response.	Look in more detail at a child's use of vocabulary, their sentence structures and their grammar – is it what you'd expect for a typical 4 year old? Does it sound immature? Being able to tell a story is also a part of spoken language; how does the child manage with re-telling a familiar story, or being able to tell you about an event that has happened? Look out for children who struggle with this aspect of their talking.

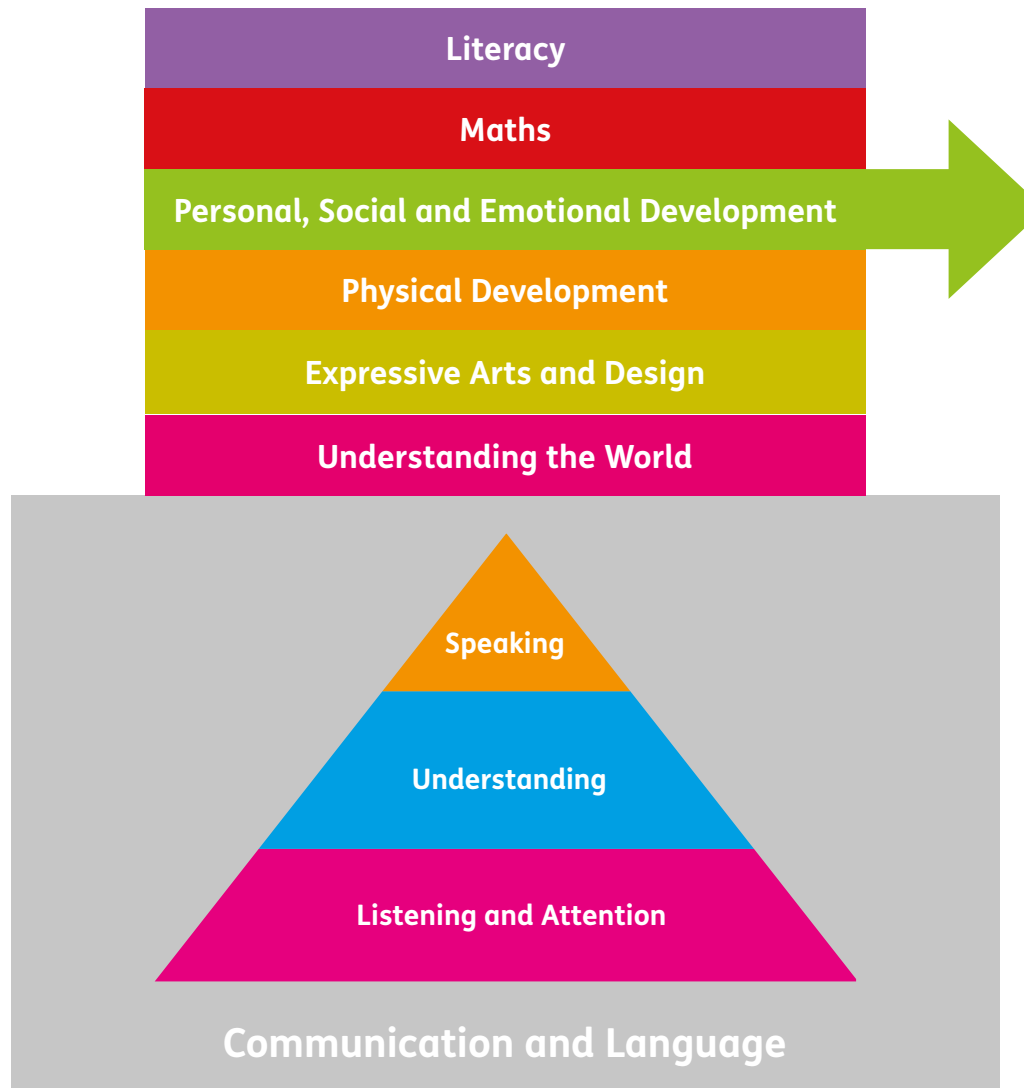| EYFS area of learning: Literacy			Aspect: Reading
How is this skill linked with speech, language and communication?	**What might difficulties in this area mean for the child?**	**How can this element of the baseline help you identify SLCN? Look out for:**	**What the assessment process might not tell you – use further observations to look out for:**
Reading requires children to have good phonological awareness skills; not only a knowledge of phonics, but also other skills such as rhyming and segmenting words. These skills are underpinned by a child's speech and language development and there is a strong link between speech sound development and phonics. Children also need to be able to understand language before they can understand what they have read; even children with good phonological awareness skills who are able to sound out and decode words may struggle with reading comprehension.	Children with speech sound difficulties will struggle with phonics and with grasping other essential early literacy skills, impacting on their literacy development. Children will need to have language skills such as understanding words and sentence structures in place before they are able to understand what they read.	A child with speech sound difficulties will have difficulties with producing, decoding, segmenting and processing the different sounds that they hear. They will also have difficulties with tasks requiring them to demonstrate skills, such as identifying rhymes and segmenting words.	Listen to the child's speech in different contexts, can other children and adults understand them? Find out if the child has a history of speech sound difficulties which might be impacting on their ability to process and manipulate sounds that they hear. Play around with sounds, rhymes, songs and poems - how does the child manage with these early literacy skills?

EYFS area of learning: Literacy			Aspect: Writing
How is this skill linked with speech, language and communication?	**What might difficulties in this area mean for the child?**	**How can this element of the baseline help you identify SLCN? Look out for:**	**What the assessment process might not tell you – use further observations to look out for:**
Children need to have their phonological awareness and language skills securely in place before they can develop their writing skills. They need to be able to understand and use words and sentences before they can write them down. Secure phonological awareness and language skills, such as vocabulary, grammar and sentence structure are important to support early writing skills.	A child may have difficulty with linking speech sounds (phonemes) to graphemes. Children who struggle with their talking are much more likely to have difficulties with their writing as their spoken language difficulties are likely to be reflected in their writing, for example, children with speech sound errors are likely to make the same errors in their written work.	If a child has difficulties with their writing, it would be important to consider if they have underlying speech sound difficulties, problems with phonological awareness skills or problems with understanding and using spoken language.	Listen to the child's speech in different contexts and think about how they're doing with their phonological awareness skills. Consider what the child's language development is like – might they be struggling with writing because of understanding or spoken language difficulties?

EYFS area of learning: Mathematics			Aspect: Numbers
How is this skill linked with speech, language and communication?	**What might difficulties in this area mean for the child?**	**How can this element of the baseline help you identify SLCN? Look out for:**	**What the assessment process might <u>not</u> tell you – use further observations to look out for:**
Children are required to be able to understand language concepts and vocabulary as well as numerical concepts as part of their maths early learning goals. Children will only be able to begin to develop the more complex vocabulary required for number tasks once they have developed a foundation of more basic, everyday vocabulary and are able to understand and retain new and more complex words and concepts.	A child struggling with understanding and using new vocabulary due to language difficulties will find maths tasks difficult. Children with speaking difficulties may understand maths concepts, but may struggle with using them correctly.	Number language may be difficult for the child and maths concepts such as 'same' or 'more' will be difficult for children with SLCN.	Look in more detail as to whether it is the language or the numerical aspects of a mathematical task that the child finds difficult. Can the child count and identify quantity, but struggle with tasks that need them to understand a language concept or use language to solve a problem?

EYFS area of learning: Mathematics			Aspect: Shape, space and measures
How is this skill linked with speech, language and communication?	**What might difficulties in this area mean for the child?**	**How can this element of the baseline help you identify SLCN? Look out for:**	**What the assessment process might <u>not</u> tell you – use further observations to look out for:**
Within this early learning goal, children are required to be able to understand and use vocabulary relating to shapes, positional vocabulary and time vocabulary, as well as to use their sequencing skills. These are all underpinned by a child's language.	Children with language difficulties might find it difficult to understand tasks involving this kind of vocabulary and may find it difficult to learn and retain new mathematical concepts.	A child who has difficulties with understanding language and remembering and using new vocabulary is likely to struggle with understanding and using specific maths concepts such as shapes, positional vocabulary, size and time concepts.	Does the child seem to understand the concepts in a different context? Try some tasks where the child is encouraged to show you their understanding of these concepts in a different way – maybe a hide and seek game, a size or time ordering activity or a construction or building game. It can be useful to use non-verbal activities to check how children how are doing with their understanding of shape, space and measure.

Communication and language skills act as the foundation for the development of other areas of learning:

Literacy	
Maths	
Personal, Social and Emotional Development	
Physical Development	
Expressive Arts and Design	
Understanding the World	

Communication and Language

- Speaking
- Understanding
- Listening and Attention

NB – there is a particularly strong relationship between speech, language and communication skills and personal, social and emotional development. If you're using a tool that includes the assessment of these skills, make sure you consider how any difficulties in this area might be due to underlying SLCN.

The reception baseline assessment within the wider assessment context

Even if a child is able to demonstrate the skill that they need during the assessment process or single observation judgment, it's important to remember that the baseline assessment is not a comprehensive assessment tool and may not always highlight the difficulties that a child may be having. Your general, everyday observations and formative assessment will be important to allow you to continue to monitor the child's speech and language skills. Difficulties with certain elements of communication, such as use of non-verbal communication skills, play, the ability to establish friendships, narrative and conversational skills may not be covered by the baseline assessment that you have chosen.

You may need to undertake some more detailed observations to build a more complete picture of a child's skills. It can be helpful to look at a child's skills across different contexts – for example, do you see differences when a child is in a 1:1 situation, or a small group, or with the whole class? Children might show quite different skills in different situations and with different people, which will tell you a lot about their speech, language and communication strengths and needs.

Next steps: Checking it out further and supporting speech, language and communication development in the classroom

If you have concerns about a child's speech, language and communication skills, here are some next steps that you might like to try, many of which you may already be aware of and use regularly. You might find the following resources helpful in checking out expected ages and stages for speech, language and communication development:

www.thecommunicationtrust.org.uk/universallyspeaking   www.talkingpoint.org.uk

Some more information around identifying and supporting children's speech, language and communication development can be found in the resources appendix at the end of this publication.

Area of concern	How to check it out	Some ways to support this skill within the classroom
Understanding of language	• How does the child manage with following instructions in class? • Are they able to understand difficult concepts or vocabulary in a different context? • Play around with longer and shorter instructions – are longer instructions too difficult for the child? • Compare your observations and assessment results with age expectations around understanding for the child's age.	• Give children time to think before responding to questions and instructions • Make sure you have a child's attention first by using their name to make sure that they're listening to you and understand that the instructions you're giving are for them, as well as other pupils in the class • Explain any difficult words, phrases or idioms • Ask children to repeat back instructions, to make sure that they understand • Try using pictures and gestures to reinforce what you're saying to support children's understanding • Encourage children to let you know if they haven't understood and develop a classroom culture of children asking questions and checking back.

Expressive language	• Does the child use more language in self directed play with peers where they may feel less pressure and be less anxious? • Does the child use the words, sentence structures and grammar that you would expect for their age? • Is the child able to tell you a story about something that has happened? • Compare your observations and assessment results with age expectations around expressive language for the child's age.	• If children tend to speak in a disorganised way, help them to structure and organise their thoughts and narrative by providing cues and asking questions to help them, E.g. 'what happened first?', 'then what did you do?', 'what happened after that?' • Practise organising language and sequencing by talking about everyday routines and sequences like getting ready for school, or making a sandwich • Teach narrative/sequencing vocabulary, like 'first', 'next', 'after that' etc • Build on what children say, follow their lead and extend what they say, by adding new vocabulary or building on the sentence structure that they've used • Provide clear models, showing children how to structure their sentences and narratives rather than correcting their attempts. Repeat back what children say, but in the correct way.
Speech sounds	• Is the child's speech clear? • How do they manage with producing individual phonemes? • How does the child cope with rhyming games or playing around with words and sounds? • Is there a difference between their ability to manipulate the sounds in real words and nonsense words? • Compare your observations and assessment results with age expectations around speech sound development.	• You may have to explain that you can't understand what the child is saying – if this happens, make it your fault, not theirs – 'silly me, I just can't understand what you're telling me! Can you help me by showing me?' • Focus on what children say, rather than how they're saying it • Build phonological awareness skills through activities such as listening out for rhymes and initial sounds • Provide clear models of speech – if a child mispronounces a sound or a word, repeat it back to them in the correct way don't criticise their production, but show them the correct way • In your speech, try emphasising sounds that are difficult for the child, so that they have an opportunity to hear the sound being used correctly • Slowing your own speech rate can help children to hear how to produce words clearly, especially longer words with lots of syllables. • Have fun with sounds – play around with rhyme, alliteration, nonsense words, songs and poems.

Social interaction	• How does the child manage in different contexts – small group work, adult led tasks, free play with peers? • What's the child's use of non-verbal communication like? How's their eye contact, their use of gesture, facial expressions and body language? • How are their conversations? Do they seem to understand the 'rules'? Are their contributions relevant? Do they prefer to speak about one particular topic? Can they take turns in a conversation? • Compare your observations and assessment results with age expectations around social interaction.	• Use visual timetables and prompts to help children understand routines and rules • Try adult facilitated free play where you support social interaction during a 'real' play activity – use explanations, discussions and models to support children's social interactions, for example, you might discuss how saying the wrong thing might make another person feel bad, or the effects of not following the rules during a game with friends • Encourage children to look for non-verbal clues to help them understand another person's thoughts and feelings, for example, recognising facial expressions • Talk openly about class rules and what they mean • Try to avoid ambiguous language, for example, instead of 'I'll be with you in a minute' try 'I'm just speaking to Miss Reed, then it'll be your turn' • Provide good models of talk and interaction, for example, how to negotiate the rules of a game, or join in a conversation without interrupting • Notice and praise when you see examples of positive social interaction in your classroom, such as sharing, taking turns or showing awareness of another child's feelings, and be clear and specific about the behaviour that you're praising • Develop opportunities in class for group talk and interaction to practise social skills • Use circle times as opportunities to support and discuss social skills and friendships • Teach and explain vocabulary used to describe emotions.

If you notice a child having difficulties with any area of their speech, language and communication development, it's important to begin the process of having conversations with the child's family members/carers and to follow the process in your school for raising concerns about a child's development. There's more information in the appendix about supporting children who aren't developing their speech, language and communication skills as you'd expect, as well as how to find speech and language specialists in your area.

A note on children with English as an additional language

Some children who are being asked to complete the reception baseline will possibly have only been exposed to English for a very short time by the time they are assessed using the baseline measure, which must be completed in English. Children who speak English as an additional language (EAL) should not automatically be considered as having SLCN; they are likely to be following typical developmental stages of learning English, but may have started at a later point. However, children with EAL are just as likely to have SLCN as any other child – where they struggle to develop skills in their home language as well. This presents a challenge in that it can be difficult to differentiate where a child has EAL and where SLCN may also be a factor. Some points to consider when completing the assessment with a child with EAL are noted on the next page.

↗ Speak to the child's family about how their home language is developing. If there are no concerns about the development of a child's first language, it is likely that the child will also learn English without any difficulties, but their development of English should continue to be monitored

↗ Try to gauge how much exposure the child has had to English prior to them starting in reception. Have they been attending an English speaking nursery? Do they have older siblings who speak English at home? Have they been exposed to English television, books and games?

↗ It can be typical for EAL children to go through a 'silent period' when they are first immersed in an English speaking education environment. If reception is the child's first experience of an English speaking environment, be aware of this silent period and ensure that the assessment is completed at the optimum time to gather as accurate a picture as possible

↗ Use visuals, such as pictures and gestures to help the child to understand the assessment tasks as best as they can

↗ Be aware of any aspects of the assessment that are based on cultural references, that may be unfamiliar to the child

↗ Be aware that any age norms provided with the assessment will be based on children with English as their first language. Therefore, the data for a child with EAL cannot be compared to the age norms provided and the information will need to be used in a more qualitative way to support your planning

↗ Although children who speak English as an additional language are not considered to have SLCN, the classroom strategies listed in the table above are good practice speech, language and communication strategies for all children and therefore are also helpful for children who are learning English as an additional language

↗ Make the assessment process fun! Children who are new to English may be more anxious about being assessed or observed Support the child with this by making the process fun and enjoyable.

Using the reception baseline with children who have identified SLCN – general principles

For some children, their difficulties will have been picked up before they start in reception, and therefore they'll be starting school with speech, language and communication needs that have already been identified. There are some important elements to consider when assessing a child with SLCN:

↗ Before completing the assessment, **gather as much information as you can** about the child's strengths and needs. Speak to parents or practitioners from previous settings about what may help the child during the assessment and use this information alongside your own knowledge of the child

↗ Where possible, **speak to other professionals who may be involved with the child**, such as their speech and language therapist to discuss the best way to approach the assessment process

↗ Think about when the best time may be to complete the **assessment** – both in terms of when is the best point during the first half term, and the best time of day to complete the assessment. Some assessment providers have included additional information to help with identifying the optimal time to complete the assessment to ensure the most accurate results for the child

↗ **Consider using a visual timetable, or visual supports** to help the child complete the assessment. Depending on the child's needs this might be building the assessment in to a daily visual timetable, or having a more detailed timetable for each part of the assessment

↗ **Provide children with clear information about what's expected** of them during the assessment process, **breaking down the assessment into chunks if needed**. This can be particularly helpful for children with social communication difficulties

↗ For children who struggle with concentration, it may be useful to **have small breaks** between different sections

↗ Allow extra time for the child to respond to any verbal, adult led instructions or tasks

↗ Ensure that you give children enough time to respond, either verbally or non-verbally to the direction given.

↗ If the child stammers, or their speech is unclear when they answer, **focus on what the child has said, and not how they've said it.**

↗ When completing phonological awareness or literacy based tasks with children with speech sound difficulties **it's important to bear in mind whether the child is demonstrating the skill required, but their speech sound difficulties are affecting their response** (for example, they may be able to isolate phonemes, but might struggle to produce the target sound correctly). Some children may even be able to let you know about any 'tricky sounds', or if the child is seeing a speech and language therapist, it will be useful to gain information about which sounds the child will find difficult to produce and the sort of sound substitutions a child might make

↗ Children with SLCN may be aware of their needs, or have a need that means that they will be anxious about the thought of a 'check' or an 'assessment'. Where possible, **try to ensure that the assessment is part of everyday activities, tasks or individual support**, to help to minimise a child's concerns and make the process as fun and enjoyable as possible.

To read some case studies from teachers who have used the reception baseline with children with SLCN, please go to: www.thecommunicationtrust.org.uk/beyondmeasure

Appendix

Using the reception baseline assessment to identify and support children with speech, language and communication needs - supporting resources

The resources outlined in this appendix are provided by The Communication Trust, a coalition of over 50 not-for-profit organisations with expertise in speech, language and communication. All of the resources below and much more information regarding how to support the speech, language and communication development of all children are available to download, for free from www.thecommunicationtrust.org.uk. Further resources that are available from our consortium organisations can be found here: www.thecommunicationtrust.org.uk/consortiumcatalogue

To support identification of speech, language and communication needs

Resource	Purpose	How identification resources link to the reception baseline assessment process
Universally Speaking (Ages 0-5, 5-11, 11-18): www.thecommunicationtrust.org.uk/universallyspeaking	Provides information to allow you to check if children are on the right track with their speech, language and communication development. Universally Speaking also includes ideas as to how to support speech, language and communication development at different ages.	If children are not achieving skills expected for their age in any area (not just communication and language), it may be because they don't have the speech, language and communication skills to enable to them to answer questions or understand what is expected of them. These resources can be used to complement your assessment process to help with some more in depth checking of how a child is doing with their speech, language and communication development, based on expectations for their age.
Early identification of SLCN in the classroom: www.thecommunicationtrust.org.uk/media/267020/strategies_for_every_classroom-_early_identification_of_slcn.pdf	An information resource for classroom based staff to support the early identification of speech, language and communication needs.	

Workforce development/CPD

Resource	Purpose	How workforce development resources link to the reception baseline assessment process
Misunderstood www.thecommunicationtrust.org.uk/media/3670/misunderstood_edition_2_final.pdf Don't Get Me Wrong www.thecommunicationtrust.org.uk/media/174/dontgetmewrong.pdf	CPD resource for teachers – explains what speech, language and communication needs are and information for how to support children with SLCN.	All education staff who work with children on a daily basis are in a prime position to be able to support children's speech, language and communication development. By learning more about speech, language and communication development, you'll be able to more effectively identify and support children where the assessment has indicated difficulties with this area of their development.
Speech, Language and Communication Framework (SLCF) www.communicationhelppoint.org.uk/	The SLCF can be used as a self evaluation tool for you to look at your skills and knowledge around speech, language and communication. Where there are any gaps in knowledge, the tool highlights suggestions for further suitable training.	
Online short course: Introducing supporting children's speech, language and communication www.thecommunicationtrust.org.uk/storyline/story.html	This is a non-accredited short course, specifically aimed at helping early years practitioners and teachers to develop their skills and knowledge around speech, language and communication and SLCN.	

Universal support for speech, language and communication

Resource	Purpose	How universal support for speech, language and communication links to the reception baseline assessment process
Creating a communication friendly classroom www.thecommunicationtrust.org.uk/media/253205/3_4_key_features_final_july_2014.pdf www.thecommunicationtrust.org.uk/resources/resources/resources-for-practitioners/communication-friendly-checklists.aspx www.thecommunicationtrust.org.uk/resources/resources/resources-for-practitioners/communication-supporting-classroom-observation-tool	These resources provide information and ideas to support you to develop a communication friendly classroom environment that will support all children with the development of their speech, language and communication skills.	Speech, language and communication skills underpin many other skills. By ensuring universal support for speech, language and communication skills, you're ensuring that all children have the opportunity to develop these important skills to the best of their ability, whatever the outcome of their assessment. Even children who have achieved within the normal limits during the assessment process, and where there are no concerns, developing a communication friendly classroom environment is good practice for all children.
Some helpful classroom strategies The 'think time' rule: www.thecommunicationtrust.org.uk/media/253202/3_1_think_time_rule_final_july_2014.pdf Classroom talk: www.thecommunicationtrust.org.uk/media/267029/strategies_for_every_classroom-_classroom_talk.pdf Listening: www.thecommunicationtrust.org.uk/media/267023/strategies_for_every_classroom-_listening.pdf Vocabulary: www.thecommunicationtrust.org.uk/media/267026/strategies_for_every_classroom-_vocabulary.pdf	These information resources provide some useful strategies to support speech, language and communication on an everyday basis within your classroom. They're based on making some small tweaks to your everyday practice that can make a big difference to children's speech, language and communication development.	
Engaging with parents and carers – talking top tips and talking homework www.thecommunicationtrust.org.uk/media/262300/npdw_toptips_pr.pdf www.thecommunicationtrust.org.uk/media/262309/npdw_homework_p.pdf	These resources can be helpful to share with parents to support them with helping their child's speech, language and communication development at home.	

Targeted support for speech, language and communication

Resource	Purpose	How targeted support for speech, language and communication links to the reception baseline assessment process
Listen up (0-5) www.thecommunicationtrust.org.uk/media/3163/postcards_pre_school_final.pdf Listen up (5-11) www.thecommunicationtrust.org.uk/media/3166/postcards_school_age_final.pdf	These classroom activities provide ideas for you to support the development of children's listening, understanding, play and interaction. They can also be useful to share with parents to develop these skills at home.	If the reception baseline process highlights concerns around a child's speech, language and communication skills, these resources are intended to support the development of these skills. The targeted resources may be particularly useful where children are falling slightly below expectations for their age and may benefit from some additional support, but not necessarily a specialist referral.
Communication Leaders 'Like2Talk' www.thecommunicationtrust.org.uk/communicationleaders	This resource is a peer mentoring approach to support children starting in their reception year. It's based on year 5 and 6 pupils supporting reception pupils, but the resource includes some games that will also work as teacher-led, classroom based language and communication activities.	
What Works www.thecommunicationtrust.org.uk/whatworks	What Works is a moderated, virtual library of evidenced interventions for supporting children's speech, language and communication development. It includes some evidenced, targeted interventions.	

Supporting children who require **specialist** speech, language and communication support

Resource	Purpose	How specialist support for speech, language and communication links to the reception baseline assessment process
Other Ways of Speaking www.thecommunicationtrust.org.uk/media/3414/other_ways_of_speaking_final.pdf	This is a useful resource to support you if you're working with children who have very limited speech or no speech at all.	Some children completing the baseline assessment will already have a known SLCN, or the assessment will highlight that a child has speech, language and communication needs that require a more specialist level of support.
Consortium catalogue www.thecommunicationtrust.org.uk/consortiumcatalogue	Many of The Communication Trust's member organisations have a more specialist focus. This resource can be helpful for finding some more specific information about supporting children with a range of different SLCN.	
Specialist referrals www.talkingpoint.org.uk/find-local-services www.rcslt.org/Finding_an_SLT	These websites include information to support you with making a referral for a more detailed assessment of a child's speech, language and communication skills by a speech and language professional.	

If you're interested in finding out more about spreading the word about the importance of speech, language and communication and spoken language throughout your school, why not sign up to some activities that will get the WHOLE school talking!:

No Pens Day Wednesday – a day dedicated to spoken language where pupils put down their pens and focus on speaking and listening:

www.thecommunicationtrust.org.uk/nopensdaywednesday

The Communication Commitment – A resource to support schools to develop a whole school approach to communication, through a simple, individualised action plan: www.thecommunicationtrust.org.uk/commitment