Transition to secondary school: supporting pupils with speech, language and communication needs

Report to The Communication Trust

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Endorsements

The National Association of Head Teachers (NAHT) warmly welcomes this report and the work of The Communication Trust. Speech, language and communication are fundamental to all areas of learning. The development of a conceptual framework for schools is very welcome. This report also outlines the resources that schools will need to support speech, language and communication for all children and in particular for those who find these skills difficult.
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1.0 Acknowledgements

We are grateful to all the children, parents and staff who took part in this consultation. Without exception the schools were keen to be involved and went to considerable time and trouble to assist with this consultation and to organise participants to take part in the process. They were unfailingly positive and constructive and we very much appreciate their support.

A full list of the schools and other staff who have helped with this project appear at the end of the report.

We would also like to express our thanks to staff at Afasic and I CAN for sharing their resources and ideas and for their helpful comments throughout the project. The Communication Trust commissioned this research.

2.0 Executive summary

The Communication Trust is a consortium of partner and stakeholder organisations with an interest in speech, language and communication. The purpose of the Trust is to raise awareness of the importance of speech, language and communication (SLC) across the children’s workforce and to enable practitioners to access the best training and expertise to support the communication needs of all children. When we use the term The Communication Trust we are referring to the core team and all of its partners.

The Communication Trust commissioned this report to clarify exactly what information mainstream teachers wanted and in what format to support children with speech, language and communication (SLCN). The project is funded by The Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) via The Communication Trust and is supported by the National Association of Head Teachers (NAHT). The Trust wanted to discover whether a resource could be identified that would support these pupils, particularly around the time of their transition from primary to secondary school. This paper reports the outcomes of that consultation.

2.1 A complex context

In order to set the context for the consultation and to understand the current agendas of secondary schools, the report first provides a brief overview of the complex context of secondary schools. Reviewing the current political context, we have noted a wide range of initiatives relevant to the consideration of the SLC skills in secondary schools. For example, the new secondary curriculum requires an increased emphasis on the functional application of core curriculum subjects. This requirement for increased functionality in turn places emphasis on the need for increasing reliance on SLC for all subject areas and the
need for pupils to apply their SLC skills to the whole subject range.

Secondary schools like other educational contexts view the inclusion of all children as a central aim, although schools vary in their interpretation and implementation of this agenda.

Training for teachers and support staff in school is changing too to reflect the changing educational context with both SLC elements being introduced to initial teacher training and greater training requirements for Special Educational Needs Co-ordinators (SENCOs). However, the pressure on schools to support existing staff to keep up with the many initiatives through training is considerable.

The introduction of resources to support SLCN in secondary schools is therefore timely. However, the placement of any new resource will need careful planning in order to maximise the impact amongst so many initiatives.

The process of consultation for this report included staff, families and children in secondary schools and other practitioners and managers associated with secondary education. It took place from March to July 2009. Participants were drawn from a wide geographical and social spread and took part in interviews and focus groups.

2.2 Overview of the findings

Transition is viewed as an ongoing process, throughout a child’s life. The transition from primary to secondary is broadly viewed as starting in Year 5 in primary and continuing well into secondary school – to at least Year 8. By Year 9 the focus of transition becomes preparation for life beyond secondary education. Transfer from primary to secondary school in the summer following Year 6 is a relatively small but important component of transition.

There are a number of existing resources which have been developed by SLCN specialists or by transition specialists to provide additional training for children in the process of transition. There are also a number of texts which provide information about SLCN in the secondary context. However, participants were not always aware of the breadth of resources in existence.

It is unlikely that any single product or resource will address the issue of supporting transition from primary to secondary. Despite the existence of some useful resources, there are gaps in provision. However, resources are needed at a number of different levels of complexity (in terms of the prior knowledge needed to access) and targeted at different staff in the secondary system, for example subject specialist versus learning support specialist.
There is an overwhelming need for the development of a conceptual model of SLC and SLCN that is appropriate to the education context and enables analysis of pupils’ difficulties in the context of the school and curriculum. This model could then inform the structure and terminology used in subsequent resources.

Whatever resource is developed it needs firm embedding in the subject specialisms of secondary education.

2.3 Resources to be developed
Four themes have emerged from the analysis of the interviews and focus groups. From these themes we have identified a number of resources that have potential to fulfil the desire of The Communication Trust; that is to have the potential to support staff in helping children with SLCN to make successful transitions from primary to secondary school. We have provided a brief summary of each theme and then the potential resources associated with that theme.

As indicated in the summary above, there is an overwhelming need for consistency and clarification in terms of the model being used to describe SLC and SLCN in secondary school.

1. An overarching model of SLC and SLCN that is relevant to the curriculum context and enables analysis of pupils’ difficulties in the context of the school and curriculum

2. Glossaries and definitions related to that model to provide clarity and consistency for subsequent resources

Theme 1: A need to raise awareness of both SLC more broadly and of SLCN in particular
There is increasing recognition of the importance of communication skills in secondary schools. There is also agreement that staff should have an understanding of these skill areas both in their students and in themselves. Participants showed an understanding of the sorts of issues that will be problematic for those with SLCN but there was a range of terminology in use and no common understanding of any particular model or classification system.

3. A series of marketing materials such as mouse mats, mugs, coasters that promote key communication strategies as regular reminders to people working in secondary contexts

4. Posters which make explicit the communication rules of a classroom to facilitate
understanding by all pupils, as well as those with SLCN, and to provide in situ reminders for staff

5. Video demonstrations of positive classroom and school communication strategies aimed at teachers and support staff. These could be made available through Teachers TV to be used in training sessions, and professional development programmes

6. Using the model developed above in (1), a checklist is needed to help teachers analyse a child’s SLCN in the context of the classroom

7. A database of SLCN and related strategies that can be embedded within the secondary schools information management systems

Theme 2: The need for a whole school approach
Explorations of how best to target resources suggested that there was a need for a whole school approach; that an emphasis on communication should be part of the school strategy, in order that it is prioritised by staff, and that training was needed for all members of staff.

8. An information leaflet for the senior management team which sets out the business case for prioritising SLC within the secondary context

9. A series of support materials about SLCN that can be used in assemblies and tutor periods.

10. The Afasic booklet ‘Is your school a communication friendly school?’, a version which is aimed at secondary schools.

Theme 3: A focus on specific subjects
As indicated above, there is recognition that all staff need an awareness of how to support children with SLCN and how to attend to SLC within the classroom. However, there was considerable evidence that resources targeted for particular subject areas would be beneficial. The importance of key subject vocabulary was also a recurring idea; the increased functional and applied component in the new curriculum is challenging subject teachers to pay more attention to SLC.

11. Advice about the nature of SLCN as it affects different subject areas. For example, a brief booklet or on-line resource that provides information about how SLCN are likely to impact on a student’s performance in science and what teacher strategies would be useful to support the student in science

12. An on-line resource which encourages the development and sharing of resources regarding the development of key word vocabulary. For example, if someone has developed a booklet for students to take home to share key vocabulary about
Year 8 science it would be useful to share this rather than others repeating the same process. There is also scope for materials for supporting key vocabulary acquisition to be produced as a separate resource

**Theme 4: About transition and transfer**

Similar feelings about transition were expressed by all the children and parents. Participants spoke of difficulties in identifying children with SLCN in preparation for the transfer. Some helpful and not so helpful practices were identified. Parents too had their own difficulties with the process of transition. Above all, the long term nature of transition for children with SLCN was emphasised.

13. A standard pro forma for the transfer of information about individual children from primary to secondary to ensure that children’s needs are identified prior to their attendance at secondary and that plans can be made to support the transfer and their ongoing transition into secondary school.

14. Secondary schools all have resources that they use to support the induction of Year 6 pupils into the secondary school. This good practice could be shared on a website.

15. Schools are starting to use mentors and buddies to support the transition process and training materials are available for those who take on a buddying role. Additional materials which specifically address issues surrounding the buddying of children with SLCN would support those older students undertaking this role.

16. As parents change systems they lack confidence and knowledge about the new and very different system in secondary. It is rarely made explicit to parents how to access support on an ongoing basis. Guides for parents need developing at an individual school basis but some good practice examples would be helpful to those schools considering developing this as a resource.

Finally we recommend that the process of consultation continues. It is crucial that any particular developments are carried out in consultation with school staff and that they emerge out of collaboration between those with expertise in both education and SLCN.
3.0 Aims of the Project

- To determine the most effective way to raise awareness of the importance of SLC in secondary schools
  - For all children
  - For children with SLCN, including those with specific language impairment (SLI)

- To identify what resources secondary schools need to support children’s communication development/meet their SLCN

- To identify if the resource should be targeted for all children and/or children with SLCN or SLI

- To identify how best to target resources in terms of:
  - Timing
  - Format
  - Place within the curriculum
  - Within the structure of the school – e.g. senior management, special educational needs (SEN), department team level, pastoral, etc.

- To identify what kind of resources are most practical and effective for secondary schools to use

3.1 Methods

The design has been predominantly qualitative in nature, using a case study methodology with individual interviews and focus groups as the main data collection techniques. Additional purposive interviews have taken place, following up emergent issues. Throughout, the process has been one of negotiation and adaptation according to schools’ organisational constraints.

3.1.1 Participants

In total we have interviewed 39 professionals, 8 parents and 100 children.
A focus group (n = 11 ) was held for speech and language therapists currently employed in a range of secondary settings by a range of employers and commissioners including NHS, Local Authority education departments, individual special and mainstream schools. Participants were drawn from a national geographical area.

We visited four comprehensive secondary schools and one primary school. The schools were in Birmingham, Bristol, Cornwall and London. The primary school was a feeder school for the London school. The secondary schools ranged in size from 740 to 1350 pupils. Two had a high percentage of ethnic minority pupils, with up to 40% EAL,
whilst the other two were primarily British white. One school had a significant minority of Gipsy Roma Travellers. Number of pupils with SEN with Statements or supported by School Action Plus ranged from 3.7% to 14.4%, and supported by School Action from 3.9% to 18.5%. The five plus A* to C GCSEs, including English and mathematics, ranged from 30% to 47% in 2008. Numbers of staff, pupils and parents that have participated are provided in Appendix I.

3.1.2 Interview guides
Topic guides were used for semi-structured interviews and focus groups and to guide the questions in the children's activities. A range of activities were used to structure discussions with the children. These guides are provided in Appendices II to V.

3.1.3 Data analysis
Debriefing sessions took place between the two researchers after each session. In these we identified emergent themes. These were used to guide subsequent coding of data. Focus groups and some individual interviews were transcribed. To save time, some individual interviews were listened to for the main themes and notes made of contributory evidence. Children's contributions were annotated and their tapes listened to for additional material.

Anne Ayre completed the detailed coding of data to identify the key themes. The two researchers reviewed these and discussed them in terms of existing resources and potential for the development of new resources.

3.1.4 Other activity
We have conducted reviews of government and other related websites in order to identify key policy drivers which could have potential to act as drivers in supporting the introduction of new resources. The consultation was also informed by a brief literature review of transition and transfer.

We have also collected details of resources already known within the sector – from participants, colleagues and searches.

4.0 Contextual complexity

‘A school is a complex organism. It is not just a building with people inside’
(Sarason, 1990, p.15)

Implementing change within a school requires a consideration of the various components of that organisation. Within a school, one would need to consider the context and culture of the particular school. This would include issues such as the
physical and organisational resources, scheduling patterns, demographic pressures, attitudes and beliefs towards schooling and change as well as the leadership style and internal relationships (Boyd, 1990). Similarities and differences between schools were in evidence in our interviews, for example in the approaches to inclusion. The complexity of secondary schools and the layers of influence on activity within the schools were apparent throughout the consultation (please note we are referring to all of the Communication Trust and partners).

However, before reporting on the specific findings from the interviews, it is useful to consider the various external influences and recent national initiatives aimed at secondary in order to consider how new resources from The Communication Trust might be targeted and structured.

4.1 Political context for secondary education
Following the publication of the Bercow Report\(^1\) the Government published their response and action plan for children with SLCN: Better Communication\(^2\). A series of Government initiatives alongside the appointment of a Communication Champion and the Communication Council ensures the profile of SLCN will continue to be raised among the service providers and the children’s workforce. The proposed National Year of Speech, Language and Communication in 2011 will also provide a motivating focus. Attainment targets continue to be a key driver for activity in secondary schools. The National Challenge requires at least 30% of pupils to gain five or more GCSEs at A* to C, including English and mathematics, by 2011.

The Report Card\(^3\), to be introduced from September 2011, is being designed to provide a clearer, more balanced and comprehensive account of each school’s performance and to complement rather than compete with Ofsted inspection reports. Broader than the Achievement and Attainment Tables it will replace, it will include scores on pupil attainment, progress and well-being; pupils’ and parents’ perceptions, and a score for Narrowing the Gaps in Pupil Performance. The majority of pupils with special educational needs (SEN) are among the lowest achievers and this category is likely to be used along with a measure of pupil and parent perception.

The new schools’ self-evaluation form (SEF), which aligns with Ofsted’s revised arrangements for inspection from September, 2009, has a greater emphasis on Every Child Matters (ECM), equality and diversity, disability and vulnerable groups.

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4.2 New secondary National Curriculum

The new National Curriculum for England at key stages 3 and 4\(^4\) provides schools with increased flexibility for programmes of study. The implementation began with Year 7 in 2008 and the revised attainment targets will be used for assessment from 2011. Throughout the new curriculum, there is an increasing requirement for effective communication skills. The curriculum places a particular new emphasis on the development of functional skills for life and work. It aims to help all learners achieve the five outcomes of Every Child Matters.

Effective communication skills are both a requirement and an aim of the curriculum which aims to enable young people to be flexible, work well in teams, solve problems and make decisions. Teachers are encouraged to use more dynamic and innovative teaching and learning approaches, choosing how learning is organised, where it takes place and who should lead it. The aim is for increased engagement with learning resulting in better progress and higher attainment. Guidance materials are to be provided to help teachers support the development of speech, language and communication skills.

The Bercow Report recommended that the DCSF prepared and disseminated widely examples illustrating the effective removal of barriers for pupils with SLCN. In Better Communication an identified action is for the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority to invite a representative of The Communication Trust to join its equality reference group in 2009. This will ensure support for the ongoing development of guidance and examples on teaching and learning using the secondary curriculum, which should in the future reflect the needs of pupils with SLCN.

The framework for personal, learning and thinking skills (PLTS)\(^5\) integrated with the functional skills of English, mathematics and ICT will cover the essential skills young people need to be confident and capable of success in further learning, life and work. The six PLTS skill groups are team working; independent enquiry; self-management; reflective learning; effective participation; creative thinking. PLTS and another recent initiative, the programme which promotes social and emotional aspects of learning (SEAL)\(^6\) are both aspects of the broader curriculum which require effective speech, language and communication skills.

Higher Standards, Better Schools for All\(^7\) focused on personalised learning as the best means to address the needs of every learner. Less prescribed content within the new

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\(^6\) SEAL information available at http://nationalstrategies.standards.dcsf.gov.uk/inclusion/behaviourattendanceandseal/secondaryseal

\(^7\) Higher standards, better schools for all: More choice for parents and pupils, DfES (2005).
curriculum enables teachers to have more flexibility to design learning experiences to meet individual needs.

### 4.3 Inclusion
The Special Educational Needs and Disability Act 2001 (SENDA) strengthened the rights of children to inclusive education in mainstream schools, and extended the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 to education and is supported by the current SEN Code of Practice (2001).

*Removing Barriers to Achievement* underpins the current SEN policy and proposed personalised learning for all children to make education more responsive to individual children’s diverse needs. Also to remove barriers to children’s achievement by developing teachers’ skills to meet the diverse range of needs and to focus effectively on children’s progress.

### 4.4 Inclusion Development Programme
The Inclusion Development Programme (IDP) is a four-year DCSF programme of continuing professional development for teachers, support staff and early years practitioners. It is also intended to be used with trainee teachers.

The IDP is designed to increase the confidence and expertise of mainstream practitioners in meeting the high incidence of SEN in mainstream settings and schools. The programme is being rolled out with a clear focus each year: dyslexia, speech, language and communication needs (2008), autistic spectrum disorders (ASD, 2009), behavioural, emotional and social difficulties (BESD, 2010), and cognition (2011). The IDP’s initial focus on SLCN was a conscious decision to reflect the fundamental importance of communication to progression and learning.

The IDP also aims to support the senior leadership team in schools to become more effective at strategic approaches to support and intervention. However, as yet, unlike SEAL the IDP appears to have a minimal presence within secondary settings.

### 4.5 Inclusion models
The most comprehensive model of inclusion incorporates behaviour support, English as an additional language (EAL), ethnic minority achievement (EMA), social inclusion, and SEN. Additional student welfare services such as a ‘health hut’ and counselling service may also be included. No school seems to have exactly the same model, even within the same local authority.

Some schools are truly inclusive with all pupils placed within mixed ability classes whilst

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8 Removing barriers to achievement: The government’s strategy for special educational needs, DfES (2004).
9 IDP information available at http://www.nationalstrategies.standards.dcsf.gov.uk/node/116691
10 IDP for Dyslexia and SLCN http://www.nationalstrategies.standards.dcsf.gov.uk/node/165381
others opt for a model where children with significant support needs are placed within a small support group.

### 5.0 Speech, language and communication in training

#### 5.1 Initial Teacher Training
The Training and Development Agency for schools (TDA) will continue to develop and roll out initial teacher training units on SEN which include coverage of SLCN with secondary units available from 2009.

#### 5.2 The National Award for Special Educational Needs Coordination
The National Award for Special Educational Needs Coordination, as part of the new Masters in Teaching and Learning (MTL), will be rolled out from January 2010. The MTL is a new Government funded professional qualification for teachers. It will deliver a practice-based programme that builds progressively on initial teacher training (ITT) and induction, and have immediate relevance to teaching and learning in the classroom.

This training recognises the key role of SENCOs in achieving the government’s vision set out in the 2020 Children and Young People’s Workforce Strategy. This is that all people in the workforce have the skills and knowledge necessary to help children and young people develop and succeed across all ECM outcomes.

SENCOs may head up all aspects of inclusion, and are increasingly becoming members of the senior management team. This new award and will strengthen their role and status within schools.

#### 5.3 Integrated Qualifications Framework
The Children’s Workforce Network is developing the Integrated Qualifications Framework (IQF)\(^1\) which will extend across all the different sector bodies and occupational groups who work with children. The government SLCN Better Communication action plan recommended that the Children’s Workforce Development Council ensure that speech, language and communication and SLCN are reflected in the Common Core of Skills and Knowledge for the Children’s Workforce.

The Speech, Language and Communication Framework (SLCF)\(^2\) provides defined competencies around speech, language and communication. The SLCF contributes to the Children’s Workforce Strategy and relates to the IQF.

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\(^{1}\) Available at [http://www.iqf.org.uk/](http://www.iqf.org.uk/)

\(^{2}\) Developed by The Communication Trust, it is an online audit tool available at [www.communicationhelppoint.org.uk](http://www.communicationhelppoint.org.uk).
6.0 Speech, language and communication in the secondary school context

A significant proportion of children and young people in both primary and secondary schools with SEN have SLCN as their primary need. Based on school census data from 2007, SLCN was the primary need of nearly 23% of children with special needs in primary school. In secondary schools, this reduced to just under 7% (Table 3). Interestingly the proportion of children whose primary difficulties were behavioural, emotional and social (EBD) rose from 18.4% in primary school to just under 30% in secondary. The proportion of children with specific learning difficulties (SpLD) increased from approximately 11% in primary to nearly 18% in secondary. Other categories of primary need showed no differences between primary and secondary schools.

6.1 Table 1: Primary needs of children in primary and secondary schools, school census data 2007

There is no longitudinal data to check how children’s needs are categorised as they move from primary to secondary. Therefore we cannot examine whether children with SLCN in primary school are being re-categorised as having EBD once they reach secondary or whether their needs are being declassified altogether. However, given the longitudinal research that suggests that children with SLCN are at risk for social and emotional difficulties (Clegg et al, 2005, Cohen et al 2000, Johnson et al 1999), there is speculation that this pattern of need reflects the changing presentation and perhaps perception of these children as they deal with the new demands of secondary education. Indeed this was a view expressed by a SEN manager in the Lindsay et al review (2008, p.29).
'There are some that have language difficulties that can be catered for in primary, but in the socially and linguistically complex environment of a secondary school can’t cope and show behaviour problems. These are categorised as EBD rather than SLCD’

The DCSF is considering the collection of information about the type of need of pupils at school action and the disability status of all pupils through the school census from 2011. This would allow pupils with lower levels of SLCN to be identified in education statistics for the first time.

Typically speech and language therapy services have not prioritised input to children at secondary schools both in the UK and abroad (Hollands et al, 2005) although this has begun to change since reviews have highlighted the lack of provision (Bercow 2008; Lindsay et al, 2008).

7.0 Transition and transfer

The words transition and transfer are used somewhat interchangeably, although they are differentiated, for example, by Demetriou et al (2000) who describes transfer as the process of moving from one school to another or from one stage of schooling to another, whereas transition is used to describe the process of moving from one year to another within a school. Others use transition as an overarching term to cover the range of developmental and systemic transitions encountered by children (Anderson, 2000). In this report, we similarly use ‘transition’ as an overarching term but do occasionally use ‘transfer’ to specify the moment of change from primary to secondary school which occurs in the summer following school Year 6.

The transition from primary to secondary school is recognised as challenging for all children and particularly problematic for some. Research suggests that factors which increase children’s risk for problematic transition include gender (girls are more vulnerable) behaviour problems or low academic achievement in primary school, socioeconomic status and race (Anderson, 2000). Children’s concerns about transition reported in the literature show recurring themes. Gray (2009) summarised these as concerns about personal adaptability, about peers and friendships, about new teachers and rules, about the size of the secondary school and getting lost, about coping with work and about moving around the new environment. These preliminary findings are from a systematic review of school experience and adolescent wellbeing which will focus on supportive schools, transfer from primary to secondary and on vulnerable groups. The review is due for completion in 2009.

Evangelou et al (2008) found that children with SEN did not experience a less successful transition than other children; although they experienced more bullying than other
children, they experienced greater curriculum continuity than their peers. This report notes the importance of good links between secondary schools and their feeder schools. Where children have more than one preference or their preferred school is not local to their primary school, then this limits the amount of prior liaison and the establishment of ongoing relationships between feeder and receiver schools. In the sample for this project, one school had received children from more than 40 primary schools whereas the intake for another was from less than 10.

Concern about children’s vulnerability at the time of transfer and evidence of the drop in performance that occurs as children transfer to secondary has given rise to a number of research projects and initiatives with the aim of improving children’s experience, to reduce discontinuity and fracture in the process (DCSF, 2008; Evangelou et al, 2008). Evangelou et al for example identified key features of a school and local authority system that would lead to successful transition. References included in this section provide a useful overview of the whole process of transition and John Gray’s systematic review will also be important foundation material for anyone considering the development of resources.

8.0 Findings from interviews and focus groups

A report from the therapists’ focus group is available in Appendix VI. The findings from the interviews and focus groups are presented in relation to four key themes that emerged from the consultation process. For each theme we present a summary of the key ideas within that theme followed by illustrative quotes showing the evidence from which this is derived. Each section is concluded with a summary of ideas for successful resources.

- A need to raise awareness of both SLC more broadly and SLCN in particular
- A need for a whole school approach
- A focus on specific subjects
- About transfer and transition

**Theme 1: A need to raise awareness of SLC more broadly and SLCN in particular**

Explorations of understanding of SLC and SLCN in the secondary context suggested recognition of the importance of communication skills and agreement that staff should have an understanding of these skill areas both in their students and in themselves. Participants showed an understanding of the sorts of issues that will be problematic for those with SLCN but there was a range of terminology in use and no common understanding of any particular model or classification system.
1.1.1 SLCN

*Everybody’s a special needs teacher now. SENCOS*

All teachers need to be aware to meet the needs of all children, including those with SLCN, within an inclusive school:

*Teachers are needing to know more about language development. In the past I think the specialists did that, like the special needs department ... and other people, just mainstream, just taught. But I think now more and more, all teachers and support assistants everybody working with students need to have some sort of training, professional development in order to help them get it right to develop the students.* **SUBJECT TEACHER**

They need sufficient knowledge and understanding to enable effective differentiation is essential with the new emphasis on personalised learning:

*It’s essential for everybody working with children. I mean it’s one thing going to teach a science lesson but if you’re going to differentiate fully you need to be aware.* **COMMUNICATION SUPPORT ADVISER**

Newly qualified teachers (NQTs) also need a ‘basic awareness of SLCN’:

*I’m still quite staggered by new entrants to the profession if you talk to them and try to delve back into their ITT how much they’ve looked at things like this there’s virtually nothing happening.* **COMMUNICATION SUPPORT ADVISER**

Equally experienced staff may have had little opportunity for training:

*This is a huge learning curve for me. Nobody has ever explained it to me. I’m just picking it up from reading and just being aware.* **SENIOR MANAGER**

1.1.2 SLCN terminology

There is little awareness of the SLCN acronym. When asked if they were familiar with this term or if any staff used it ‘No’ was the usual response and nor is it perceived as particularly helpful:

*To be honest it’s a bit of a mouthful...* **HEAD OF SUBJECT**

*Ironic really!* **SENIOR MANAGER**

Others were concerned that the acronym could be a potential hazard for NQTs in particular:
SLCN and SpLD – easily muddled up, both 4 letters. Senior Manager

The variation in the acronyms around speech and language is also seen as confusing:

SLCI. Speech, language and communication - what’s the ‘I’ stand for? Head of Subject

A range of terms, models and frameworks were explored with staff and the response to most was ‘too difficult’ and it ‘needs to be simple’:

Attention, listening skills, understanding of language, that’s good, make people think. Senior Manager

Modern languages teachers are comfortable with some terms: Listening skills, vocabulary, grammar, that’s all modern languages. I look at the others and I think English. Senior Manager

Clearly English subject staff would cope with technical speech and language terms whereas others see it as ‘difficult language and it’s mystifying’ and ‘would be quite stressed by it’:

They think we’re going into an expert area then. They sort of glaze over at that point… would send people right over the edge, to be quite honest. Senior Manager

Staff saw the value of focusing on communication rather than on a label:

If we got used to talking about people’s ability to communicate, not just because they are autistic, if that became a common conversation then we would be able to help each other and we’d be aware of it. Head of Subject

8.1.3 Recognition of the range of SLCN

It’s like saying ‘What’s your understanding of behaviour difficulties?’ because there’s such a range of them. Senior Manager

Speech and articulation difficulties, such as a ‘lisp’ or ‘stammer’ and some other difficulties are seen as obvious and straightforward:

EAL and children with hearing difficulties you can address that. That can be dealt with. Senior Manager

Equally language difficulties are not always recognised:

Often people think if a child can speak properly then they haven’t got these needs. Senior Manager
Links with literacy difficulties were highlighted:

‘they can decode but can they actually understand?’ There are a lot more learning difficulties associated with reading and writing and communication than just dyslexia. **SUBJECT TEACHER**

Many staff recognise the impact of the environment on speech and language development:

*Depends on the life they’ve led before whether they’ve been involved in lots of conversations or whether they’re watching the telly, that has a huge impact ... their education so far or the way they’ve been brought up.* **SENIOR MANAGER**

We actually see children who haven’t been played with, haven’t been talked with, haven’t had that communication with adults. **SENIOR MANAGER**

### 8.1.4 Identification of SLCN

There is evidence of a lack of awareness of language difficulties which are less visible:

*So well camouflaged, doesn’t stand out like some disabilities, so easy for these children just to sit at the back of the classroom.* **SENIOR MANAGER**

Difficulties with listening and attention are identified:

*Listening difficulties, either that or they switch off.* **SUBJECT TEACHER**

*Communication is a two way thing it’s not just about their ability to communicate with me it’s about them being switched to receive when I’m talking to them as well.* **SENIOR MANAGER**

Some children are identified as ‘not getting it’:

*I notice particularly with the Year 7s the ‘not getting it’ thing. And it’s very easy to get exasperated with them. You bend over backwards to explain it, and to model it and to show them a million ways round it and the hands still go up ‘I don’t get it.’ That’s what I think is a pure communication problem... It’s like there’s a gap it’s like I was speaking a foreign language.* **SENIOR MANAGER**

There is recognition that they may cover their lack of understanding in the whole class environment by doing something distracting:
Some of them don’t want to listen to you when you’re talking, they only really concentrate when you go and sit beside them and say ‘Right, this isn’t actually what I explained’, and you explain it again one to one...there’s somebody in my Keystage 4 group whatever instruction I give he’s fiddling with something. **SUBJECT TEACHER**

The complexity of literacy difficulties were highlighted:

*Even the ones that are reading well they might not understand what they are reading even though they are reading fluently and it’s hard to access those issues because they aren’t obvious.* **TEACHING ASSISTANT**

Others have difficulties expressing themselves, ‘can’t string a sentence together’, in spoken or written work:

*They can’t construct sentences on their own without any help.* **SUBJECT TEACHER**

Some children have difficulty with conversational rules:

*Communication to me also means their ability to have a conversation and to be able to sit there and not think that their opinion is the only one that could be.*** **HEAD OF SUBJECT**

They may have difficulty understanding humour and jokes:

*Whereas the rest of the group may be laughing because they’ve caught the joke, they’re just sitting there, and I’ve had actually had incidents where boys have stormed out of lessons, very, very upset because they didn’t like the what the teacher was saying and the way the teacher said it.*** **HEAD OF YEAR 7**

Their literal responses may be perceived as inappropriate:

*Oh we get kids ‘I wasn’t being rude I was just telling the truth’. And sometimes you think they are just swinging the lead. Or do they not understand in terms of correct social behaviour that was inappropriate.*** **SENIOR MANAGER**

Some children opting for compliance to hide their lack of understanding:

*We have got some glaringly obvious kids, then we’ve loads of them that have that kind of difficulty but they’re just compliant. And they just sit there and they smile, so everybody is perfectly happy except for the child.*** **SENIOR MANAGER**

*If you say ‘Do you know what to do’ they say ‘Yes’. The different question of ‘What is it
you’ve got to do’ brings no answer then because they have no idea what you’ve asked them to do, but they will be compliant and go ‘Yeah, yeah’. **Senior Manager**

However others may be disruptive in order to be excluded from a feared situation:

*The ones that can’t communicate that well, their other outlet is the behaviour side of it. So rather than join in, if they feel they can’t, then they’ll do that instead. X will do that if it’s reading, he’ll automatically be badly behaved so he’ll get sent out, so he won’t have to do it, because of the fear of reading aloud. It’s easier for him. He has a better feeling about being sent out cos he’s not behaved than having to read aloud. He hates reading. Subject Teacher*

Or to avoid a subject that has a focus on verbal communication:

*Could get into trouble, because in terms of their behaviour in school they may be trying to cover it up, because we had a boy a couple of years ago who had trouble in drama, and he continually got into trouble in drama, because just the thought of going in and having to do something and speak … and he was using the behaviour as an avoidance for speaking in drama. Senior Manager*

Often difficulties are apparent in the social context:

*In the social context because they’re not very good with language, not proficient with language, they may easily jump to wrong conclusions, or their behaviour is affected, or they answer in a certain way because they don’t have the language. Senior Manager*

Staff are aware that all young people are sensitive to social and peer pressures:

*They aren’t adults and they are not going to be able to communicate like an adult, and they have all sort of issues like ‘Am I going to sound stupid?’ and losing face and that kind of thing. Senior Manager*

### 8.1.5 Staff awareness of own speech, language and communication skills

Many teachers are aware of the impact of their own communication skills in the classroom:

*You see, I think this is good classroom practice all of it ‘Don’t use jargon, avoid idioms and sarcasm. Check…’ You know you’ve just got to say it in a million different ways, simply. Senior Manager*

They know that good practice, quality first teaching (QFT) benefits every child:
If we all just stopped, and gave people a couple more seconds, then every pupil would benefit. **Head of Subject**

However when juggling the demands of the classroom it is easy to forget:

If we were outstanding teachers every lesson, all day, then we would be doing this. But it’s constantly reminding us we need the communication skills as well. **Head of Subject**

There is concern about NQTs arriving from university whose ‘vocabulary and expectations around understanding are very high’ and who don’t recognise that some pupils have very limited vocabulary:

Even very ordinary things like, somebody said to me ‘What’s that?’ and I said ‘It’s cabbage?’ and they’d never heard of it, and carrot and strawberry. **Senior Manager**

### 8.1.6 Implications for resources

Interested staff will feel positive about a range of written information:

*This is a lovely document* [Afasic, 2009c][13] *and if I had it I would read it.* **Head of Subject**

*I think this would be a useful document* [Afasic, 2009b][14] *to have in a school but I would suspect that the way I would use it would be that I’d come across a specific issue and I would refer, I’d look at it like a reference book. I would expect this to have more in depth quality, maybe case studies and perhaps things that I could use from a teacher learning training point of view. This section looks good the way it breaks down the subtleties of reading, writing, vocabulary learning. Because one of my other hats I am in charge of teaching and learning.* **Senior Manager**

However to engage the majority of staff:

*I think it’s breaking things down so you put across the information. Simple, so it’s quick and easy to read. Things that you will remember, rather than lots of information and having to read through it each time.* **Senior Manager**

In the classroom there needs to be a constant reminder ‘in your face’:

...something that was one page, and on my wall, and every time I turned around and saw this ridiculous poster that made me think just stop and slow down. **Head of Subject**

Most importantly any information needs to be readily applicable:

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Has to be broken down into something accessible to subject staff because they want to know when they’re standing up in front of somebody what’s going to work. Senior Manager

Theme 2: The need for a whole school approach
Explorations of how to target resources suggested that there was a need for a whole school approach. An emphasis on communication needs to be part of the school strategy in order that it is prioritised by staff, and training was needed for all members of staff.

There’s a number of subjects, English and languages, that have an oral component, actually compulsory component, in the assessment. Senior Manager

I’m just doing speech assessment for my Year 9 English group, they’re having to give talks and I’m having to assess their ability to listen and speak and it’s really painful for some of them they can’t do it, and I realise that we need to do more of this because they can’t express themselves and they’re not good at listening. Senior Manager

8.2.1 School strategy
Children’s SLC development needs to be identified as a priority for improvement in the SEF in order for it to be embedded in policy and practice. To be effective there needs to be a strategy to create a school that supports the development of all children’s SLC. A focus on supporting children with SLCN could be embedded within this.

School improvement priorities are identified in the school’s SEF:

If it doesn’t get into priorities for school it doesn’t happen. Senior Manager

Attainment is undoubtedly the key driver:

Everything is driving us on to attainment standards: five A to C. I think here at this particular school we’re very focused on children’s individual needs and issues around that, and of course speech and language is slanted to five A to C and accessing the curriculum. I think that’s the only way, if it is to be pushed forward it has to be emphasised that they can’t access the curriculum unless they get these skills. The other side of it is the ECM issues, Every Child Matters, equality and diversity and these children are excluded by the nature of their disability. Senior Manager

However, the impact of SLCN goes beyond A - C attainment targets:

On a more important level it impacts on the life chances for that child, because
they’re then completely cut off from any possible development outcomes in choices of employment, careers... Senior Manager

Explicit links to the ECM agenda and other initiatives such as SEAL and PLTS can embed this strategy within policy and practice, and ultimately the curriculum and whole school environment.

8.2.2 The SEAL and IDP

‘SEAL’s good’ Senior Manager

SEAL has been embraced by the schools. Its success at least partially lies in its universality, the whole school approach. There is guidance on how pupils might practise or extend the skills learned both inside and outside school and suggestions as to how the skills might be consolidated and reinforced in all lessons. There are also suggestions for school leaders about how social and emotional skills development can be promoted through whole-school policy and practice.

IDP what’s that? Learning Support Assistant

Concerns were raised about combining dyslexia and SLCN in the IDP:

Do you think people just hear the dyslexia bit?... think it’s just dyslexia? Local Authority Adviser

The IDP’s web-based materials include teaching and learning resources; training materials; guidance on effective classroom strategies; models of good practice for multi-disciplinary teams; and information about sources of more specialist advice:

A brilliant idea! But for the average teacher to work through all of that (the audit, then the training) you’ve got to be dedicated, to want to do it in your holiday or at the weekend. You’re not going to be given school time to do it. Senior Manager

There is little evidence of take-up of the materials or of it becoming embedded in school strategy or whole school approach.

However the increased awareness of the ASD focused IDP materials (due to the higher profile of ASD) may raise awareness of the SLCN ones too. Although the more recent ASD materials are perceived to be more user-friendly and engaging.
8.2.3 Whole school training

Whole school training is essential – what happens if you meet someone in the corridor or cover a class? Senior Manager

I think that there’s so much that we have to be aware of, anything extra ... there isn’t time for it... and where do you put it in the staff training or professional development to bring it to the attention of everyone? Head of Year 7

Assemblies can be used to raise awareness about diversity and inclusion, including SLCN:

There’s an education issue. If there were resources that highlighted how prominent people in society, what they have to cope with, that we could use in assemblies just to raise awareness among other children. And I was trying to get somebody who could sign, just to show children in assembly. Senior Manager

They are seen as an effective way to indirectly target staff:

Don’t forget when we do assemblies all the teaching staff who teach those children, all the tutors in the one place, so you don’t just hit the children with that you hit the teachers as well. Senior Manager

…because there are so many demands for in-service training, that it’s very difficult to find the time... much more likely to do an indirect training by what you do with the children in assembly. Senior Manager

Another suggestion is a whole school study day, which schools use to successfully raise awareness about a range of other diversity issues such as the Gypsy Roma and Traveller community or the para-olympics.

8.2.4 Implications for resources

Schools need to be consulted to ensure resources are targeted appropriately:

Somebody sent the school huge numbers of things on knife crime recently. It wasn’t resources to use with children. Without any consultation somebody thought it was a good idea to do it that way. Senior Manager

High quality assembly presentations, with teacher’s notes and activities, are welcomed:

War Graves do things for Remembrance Sunday, you think ‘Wow! We can use that and we can use that’. Senior Manager
Materials that are flexible, such as DVDs supported by ‘linked worksheets for tutor time’.

We have collective worship, and then assemblies in tutor time, so that if the resources are adaptable for use in a large group but also adaptable for use with individuals and small groups of children, then the school could use it either way, because we do both. **Senior Manager**

... a lot of the classrooms have got smart boards so it could be interactive. **Senior Manager**

The inclusion of role models:

... if you got some people in like Gareth Gates and people like that, if people were prepared to talk about them [SLCN]. **Senior Manager**

Knowing who to target within the school is crucial to the effectiveness use of resources:

We often get boxes and boxes of stuff arriving because an initiative has happened and nobody knows where it’s going and what to do with it. **Senior Manager**

There is somebody in every school with responsibility for co-ordinating assemblies:

You send it to the assembly co-ordinator, and possibly with a copy to the SENCO, and then put it on Teachers TV. **Senior Manager**

Teachers TV, although apparently a bit ‘hit and miss’ is also seen as an obvious place to find useful resources:

So if I’m doing assembly, I’ve got an assembly theme. I would look on Teachers TV to see if there is an idea or a clip, or something to see how I could communicate that. **Senior Manager**

Provision of cover is perceived to be a potential barrier to out of school training:

But sending people out of school, I’m sorry to be really negative but the ‘rarely cover’ initiative, that’s being introduced will mean I can’t afford to send people out of school, it’s not going to happen. **Senior Manager**

**Theme 3: A focus on specific subjects**

Although excellent classroom practice was highlighted, that provided scaffolding to support the learning of all children:
Excellent use of smartboard, they use lots of visuals, spidergrams, post-it notes to organise ideas. Senior manager

As indicated above, there is recognition that all staff need an awareness of how to support children with SLCN and how to attend to SLC within the classroom. However, there was considerable evidence that resources targeted for particular subject areas would be beneficial.

The importance of key subject vocabulary was also a recurring idea; the increased functional and applied component in the new curriculum is challenging subject teachers to pay more attention to SLC.

Some people would say it’s nothing to do with them, I’m a secondary teacher, this is my subject area and this is what I’m here to teach, others are much more aware and therefore probably much more frustrated about what they can do. Local authority adviser

If you’ve got 25 kids in a class, you need 25 different worksheets in an ideal world. Subject teacher

Teachers need the difficulties of students highlighting for them in a way that has relevance to their subject area and with ideas that relate to teaching their subject:

With dyslexia we say these are the things they might find difficult and there’s a sort of a check list of what they might find difficult and then I’ve got strategies for reading writing, how do you then, got writing frameworks, mind maps things people those kind of things and people do use those easy... got to be very easy for them..if people think you’re going into expertise type of level they don’t feel it’s them, it’s us. Senior manager

8.3.1 Key word vocabulary
It would be nice to think that in terms of curriculum it was automatic that key vocabulary was always put up... and an understanding that teachers might need to explain the meaning and put it in context. Senior manager

However, many participants remarked on issues to do with student difficulties with vocabulary and particularly subject specialist vocabulary:

It’s the students who have very, very weak vocabulary skills actually I don’t think staff even realise they don’t know what they are talking about. And when you ask ‘What was happening there?’ etc they have no idea. Senior manager

It’s the students who actually don’t understand some of the vocab I think is where the
issue is. Some of the observations that I’ve done when I’m talking to staff is interesting - some of the very experienced staff give an instruction, immediately give a differentiated instruction and then they’ll say something, they’ll pull out a word that they’re thinking ‘Oh that’s really difficult’ and they’ll explain that word. **Senior Manager**

There were various examples of the impact, in science for example:

*We had one this week where it was a fair test in science and the child by the time I got to them, because it was a very needy class, was even thinking we were going to a fairground to do this test ‘Are we going out to do it?’*. Totally lost the plot on one word and because very often the word, like the ‘fair’, was attractive it completely took their attention. **Learning Support Assistant**

Another example in Religious Education demonstrates the impact, both immediate and potentially on attainment targets:

*I think the bigger picture for me is the communication needs, not so much the very clear articulation issues, but it’s those children who have got speech, language and communication needs, where they don’t understand language, they don’t understand key words, like the Sikhism. **Senior Manager**

They didn’t get the gist of what they were ‘seeking’. So worried they didn’t hear anything about Sikhs... came to me ‘We don’t understand this Miss. We’ve got to go on the internet and we don’t know what we’re looking for and we’ve got to seek it.’ And they’d completely got confused. **Learning Support Assistant**

*The language had gone over their head and the teacher had made assumptions about them understanding and that’s the picture that I’m worried about. We’ve got children who to all intents and purposes haven’t got communication issues, but actually their level and understanding and knowledge of words and the semantics of words, the meaning of words, and they’re reading text, they’re decoding, but they can’t understand they can’t read into it (but that goes again to parenting)... and that does impact on A to C targets because you’re not going reach those targets. **Senior Manager**

Key word vocabulary is more readily addressed in some subjects:

*For a lot of food you can actually have an item or a picture to go with it. Whereas in maths it’s actually a concept of learning as well as the work, so that must be really tricky. **Subject Teacher**

*Science, each lesson is taught from the front at the beginning... very easy to have*
key words you’re using that lesson and for equipment that lesson... English is quite different because it’s creative and every project is different for each child. LEARNING SUPPORT ASSISTANT

The amount of preparation involved in developing materials to support the learning of key words can be considerable. Some subject teachers are more willing to then engage with the support materials in class than others:

X found it really hard in geography with ‘erosion’ and ‘weathering’ and that sort of thing so we made up some little flash cards with the word and the meaning on back... Felt that they didn’t have time at the beginning of the lesson to pick out the words for her to have on the table. Obviously it wouldn’t work if she had all the cards. LEARNING SUPPORT ASSISTANT

8.3.2 SLC skills essential for core subjects
There is increasing requirement in Maths for pupils to analyse and understand text:

We rely on the children having better English skills than actually quite often they do, especially with function skills or this using and applying strand, which has got even bigger in maths now. It’s a bit of a daunting thing and I think every school now is suddenly panicking because if we were to give a student a functional skills paper somebody who has already got level 6 maths, give them a level 2 functional skills and they wouldn’t be able to access it. We’re asking a lot more of them without actually training them early enough so that they can get it.

The Maths paper now is 50% using and applying skills. So it’s 50% wordy questions, 50%. Not just ‘There’s a question, answer it’ or even a question with a story. It’s a whole page of data and then ‘Analyse’. What does analyse mean? HEAD OF SUBJECT

For subject staff linking core subject level information is increasingly important:

... Head of English Language is going to work on making sure that, using and applying strands of maths and the English, we link them up. Because a level 6 skill for maths is being able to devise a concise argument, that must be an English skill. If there was a child with language difficulties, for example, difficulty understanding or expressing themselves, that would probably come in certain sections of the Maths. Level 6 in all their number, their shape everything and then suddenly they are at level 3 in using and applying. HEAD OF SUBJECT

8.3.3 Cross curriculum focus on SLC
Good awareness of SLC in the classroom is seen as essential because ‘we’ve got PLTS
and we’ve SEAL and Enterprise and all those things’.

SEAL and PLTS require young people to interact with their peers. They need to work jointly, to co-operate to negotiate and to take turns as well as to articulate their thoughts and feelings effectively.

*There’s so much chatting and debating and listening to other people’s points of view.*

**Senior Manager**

Enterprise also requires students to generate ideas through discussion to reach a common understanding of what is required to resolve the problem or meet the need:

*A lot of the work we do as an Enterprise college involves children working in situations where they’re around tables and talking, and other peer situations.* **Senior Manager**

**8.3.4 Assessment**

The aim is to ensure assessment supports teaching and learning, and the new curriculum encourages a range of approaches to assessing learners’ knowledge, skills and understanding. The increased flexibility in the curriculum should provide teachers with more opportunities to focus on assessment for learning strategies and to provide greater support and increased challenge for those who need it.

Schools spend ‘a lot of time monitoring individuals and vulnerable groups’:

*Individual tracking sheets, all the vulnerable groups are tracked in terms of attainment... the travellers, the EAL, Action Plus, ethnic minority, gifted and talented, and that is part of us trying to do this personalised learning... very time consuming.* **Senior Manager**

The assessing pupils’ progress (APP) materials in the core subjects will continue to help teachers make judgements about their students’ progress. These are not yet available for the speaking and listening strands.

**8.3.5 Implications for resources**

Subject staff would like accessible materials:

*I prefer this one here* [Afasic 2009c]. *That’s heavy* [Afasic 2009b].

**TA (SLCN Responsibility)**

Ideally related to their subject: *If you could make it one page and maths specific*

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16 Afasic (2009b). *Including young people with speech, language and communication difficulties in secondary school.*
Something simple that would remind them of useful and appropriate strategies:

*This tick sheet is quite interesting – this I think is really useful, a checklist of what they need to do on a sheet of A4... they would read an A4 laminated sheet.* **Senior Manager**

Resources also need to be age appropriate:

*Finding things [resources] for secondary school is very difficult, luckily the ones [students] that come to me are quite immature.* **TA (SLCN Responsibility)**

**Topic 4: About transition and transfer**

Similar feelings about transition were expressed by all the children and parents. Participants spoke of difficulties in identifying children with SLCN in preparation for the transfer. Some helpful and not so helpful practices were identified. Parents noted things they were finding difficult about the transition process. Above all, the long term nature of transition for children with SLCN was emphasised.

**8.4.1 All children**

All children, irrespective of their special needs status, seem to have the same concerns at transfer to secondary school, typically feeling ‘scared, nervous and excited’:

*When I first came here I was excited and a bit worried about the size of the school and getting lost, extremely lost…* **Year 7**

*Nervous, about big people, about meeting new people.* **Year 8**

*The first couple of days I was really scared.* **Year 7**

Bullying is a concern for all children and especially for parents of children with SLCN or EAL:

*The bullies, how do you deal with that, if somebody is bullying you? And he said ‘Mama the teachers told us everything about that, I have to report it.’… But I was really worried, just because I know my son is shy, doesn’t talk even if is bullied he doesn’t talk. But it was really difficult for me.* **Parent of Year 7**

Parents aware of potential long term effects of bullying:

*I came to the head teacher, basically I wrote some letter to her, because it can’t happen. You see my brother was bullied, he’s older than me, he was bullied and he basically all his school life he’s been truanting, all his life. He didn’t get nothing out of it because he*
got no qualifications he couldn’t get a job. So it’s a knock on effect. Parent of Year 7
The timetable can be difficult to grasp and some ‘Still don’t know my timetable’ at the end of Year 7.

Transition from one familiar teacher to numerous at secondary is equally challenging for parents:

The only difference is that I knew all the teachers there, now I’m not familiar with the teachers. I think primary school was just near to where I live so I knew all the teachers I had a very good relationship with the teachers. But now at this school I can’t even point at one teacher’s name. Parent of Year 7

And for the children:

... in primary school they only had one teacher to teach them throughout the whole year, every day. This is where the interaction with so many different teachers, there’s Maths, English, they’ve got their own specialist views. I think sometimes they get different signals from different teachers. Some teachers listen to them and some don’t listen to them. They seem to rely on some teachers and some teachers they say they don’t listen to us. Parent of Year 7

One teacher every hour. Quite hard to know them. Year 8 pupil

I think it must be terrifying because coming from a small primary school where people are used to you, and you’re used to them, and then you come in and you’re in the unknown again and with all these different teachers in different rooms that you don’t know, and who could possibly ask you to answer questions out loud and read out loud. Must be absolutely terrifying. Senior manager

8.4.2 Children with SLCN
The identification of children with SLCN at primary is variable and so some children may not be reliably flagged up on transfer. However some children and young people may manage reasonably well in primary education, with their difficulties only becoming apparent when they reach the more challenging environments of secondary school:

You don’t get a huge number that we can immediately say there’s speech and language difficulties there... if they haven’t been identified it can take a while for it to become obvious and it’s usually through subject teachers highlighting issues. Head of Year 7

Being teased... children who have speech and language [needs] ...it’s easy for them to become victims, or then consequently bullies because then they could react the other
way, but I think they’re easy pickings possibly for other children because it’s obvious.

Senior manager

Initially the children with SLCN all ‘get confused’; however ‘teachers helped’:

A map we provided helped but some with speech and language difficulties is going to have a problem reading a map. Learning Support Assistant

8.4.3 Helpful and not so helpful

Teachers who work with children as they arrive in secondary can make a difference to how well children make the transition:

we actually put a lot of inexperienced staff to teach them because of thinking Year 7, they’re inexperienced staff but they can’t go wrong with Year 7 but you can... I think in many ways you have to hand pick the staff if you can because some staff are much better in dealing with these. Some of our male teachers can be quite sarcastic in the humour, and the older ones love it but for someone who’s 11 years old they don’t understand it and it can be quite upsetting for them. Head of Year 7

Children had clear views on what teachers did that was helpful or not. They described teachers as ‘safe’ and ‘kind to you’ and if ‘you ask him and he just tells you’ and they ‘explain it more thoroughly, more detail’. Whereas others:

When we have Mr X we put our hand up but he goes ‘Put your hand down I won’t answer questions yet’ and we put our hand up and he won’t come to us and we say his name and he gives a detention for it. Year 8 pupil

And he’s talking to you and looking over there and he shouts all the time and he picks on people. Year 8 pupil

The inconsistency of style among the teachers within a school can be an additional difficulty for children. For example:

In maths or history he asks you to work in silence and if you don’t know what to do you put your hand up and he says ‘Put your hand down’. Year 7 pupil

Our technology teacher, if you put your hand up or you answer a question wrong he says ‘That’s alright because you’re here to learn’. Year 7 pupil

A range of strategies used to support the children were talked about:
We focused on social skills, learning skills, teamwork, got them used to each other as a form group. **Head of Year 7**

Others were suggested:

*I think they do need pictures and they may be given pictures a lot in primary school to get them used to certain things. But often we can’t, we don’t, I’m not saying we can’t do, but often we don’t. Using the excuse it’s not suitable for all or we haven’t got time, whatever, whereas they’d really benefit. Actually I think most Year 7’s would benefit from seeing pictures on doors of what that subject area is. **Head of Year 7***

*What about somebody who’s in their last year that’s got a lot of free, not free time but not lesson time, that perhaps the new children that enter the school that are special needs can assign one student to the new student and they for the first 6 weeks, 8 weeks maybe, cos it takes a while with L, it doesn’t happen in 2 weeks, it will be a couple of months before he can gel with somebody just to be there for them. **Parent of Year 7***

Staff consider transition has gone well if:

*When they know that if there’s a problem they can come to you rather than go running home to their parents and expecting the parents to deal with it... When they’re confident enough to approach staff ... It’s not about the work it’s about how they feel. **Head of Year 7***

8.4.4 Transition for parents

Parents too noted issues that they have in adjusting to the differences once their child is in secondary school. They wanted the TAs to write:

*..their homework. For example: ‘This evening, they need to do... ’ in the diary, so the children can show us the diary and we think ‘right’ and they said ‘Do we really need to put all this in?’ and we tried to explain... all we need is the nuts and bolts just ‘Monday, PE kit, cookery lesson, he will require half pound flour’, and that basic sort of stuff. **Parent***

*The junior school you could go in at any time of day, or ring up, you could always see a member of staff if you felt there was a problem or your child had expressed that there was a problem. Obviously at secondary school you haven’t got that easiness to do that, so that I find frustrating. Because if I do find out something’s happened I can’t do anything about it, I have to phone, I have to make an appointment. And that doesn’t stop him being up all night, and then me being up all night. **Parent***
8.4.5 Transition is ongoing for children with SLCN
As indicated above children with SLCN have the same concerns as all children. However, how able they are to cope with and adapt to the secondary environment and how long they take to adjust will vary:

Our big issue was J getting lost and not being able to communicate with somebody to say where he is to. Parent

B spent until Christmas thinking that the only way you could buy dinner is if you had the right money and he couldn’t understand how you would know how much it was going to cost if you hadn’t got your food. So he didn’t have dinner until after Christmas. Parent

It is a big transition for any child let alone special needs. So they need to have the right support throughout their whole school life and obviously especially at major times like transition from primary to secondary... because if they’re unable to communicate, their confidence is knocked and they don’t understand what we’re trying to say to them about what a step it is going to secondary school. And that is where there is a big gap. They’re accepted that they’re special needs, accepted that they can go to this school or that school but there’s no provisions made purely for that transition time for that child. That’s what I feel is lacking. Parent

They can get fearful from it. Learning Support Assistant

The transition from school to college for young people with SLCN is also concern for parents:

We’re nervous, well I am, really nervous as anything for when he goes to college in September... He’s got strange faces again which again he’s going to have to get used to and he don’t open up as an 18 year old should. Parent

The inclusion team have made a communication passport for this young man to ease the transition:

It’s got their picture on the front, with their date of birth and inside. It’s got who they’re living with, who their favourite teachers was, what their favourite subject was, what do they do in their spare time, who their brothers and sisters are. It’s just basically what is wrong with them, like autism trait, behaviour problems, speech and language because if the child cannot express themselves of what they’re like, he just shows that. ...If a stranger comes up to him ...he’s a lot more at ease then cos they can look at it and go through and then they can ...and the way that Mrs B have done it, it’s fantastic, it really is. Parent
8.4.6 Implications for resources
Similar feelings about transition were expressed by all the children and parents and helpful and not so helpful practices were identified. As parents change systems they lack confidence and knowledge about the new and very different system in secondary and it is rarely made explicit to parents how to access support on an ongoing basis. Above all, the long term nature of transition for children with SLCN was emphasised.

9.0 Existing resources
Throughout the consultation we have gathered references and examples of existing resources which are aimed either at SLCN in secondary contexts or at materials developed to support transition. The Secondary Talk Project market research also covers similar ground although there are differences in emphasis and the two projects are not mutually exclusive in terms of the existing resources that have been identified.

Resources identified fell into three broad groups:

Materials for use directly with children
for example to help them develop specific skills (e.g. verbal reasoning) or to help secondary age children with SLCN cope with certain aspects of school life (e.g. bullying).

Transition programmes and materials
These are generally materials which provide a structure and support materials to induction-type courses to prepare children for transfer to secondary school. Some are directed at all children; others are for special needs and some are specifically aimed at children with SLCN.

Information sources about SLCN
These ranged in complexity and detail from broad simple texts which set out basic information for the non-specialist through to more dense specialist texts aimed at SLTs or specialist teachers.

We have also identified a number of relevant websites.

A complete list of the identified resources appears in appendix VII.
10.0 Recommendations for resources

This section will first of all provide some general remarks, based on participants’ data regarding the shape and content of future resources. Below that are our recommendations for the development of resources. Firstly we provide a table of resources that are related to the themes that have emerged from the data. Secondly, we relate our recommendations to a year by year process of transition.

Finally we make some recommendations regarding the process for development. Over and above the specific resources that we have identified, there is a overwhelming need for the development of a model of SLC and SLCN that is appropriate to the education context. Current usage of terminology is confused and lacks any coherence between the notions of impairment that are held by SLTs and the concepts of communication that is in use in the school and curriculum.

10.1 Some key comments from participants:

Essential criteria
Every week the goalposts change and there is a new thing to focus on so two things: 1. They don’t have time to keep reading and 2. They want a mini digest given to them on a plate that they can absorb quickly and move onto the next thing. SENIOR MANAGER

Things that are not going to change when the wind changes, or the government changes. SENIOR MANAGER

Written materials
Terms in there [Ripley and Barrett, 200817] are very difficult, this would be much easier for me to see and implement [Afasic 2009b18], but we couldn’t find any other book that did the age range. I want to know what they need and how we can help them, easy and accessible, that’s what we’ve been looking for... I can pick that up quickly and maybe remember a bit of it.

I like the cover [Afasic 2009c19] I would be inclined to read that because it’s not really thick and also it’s a page - each page is manageable

If you could make it one page and maths specific, even better.

And just the main points that would go for every subject would be suitable for every subject that would be really good. Because some teachers also teach more than one subject as well so that it would be handy to have it more concise.

Format options
A lot of the classrooms have got smart boards so it could be interactive

Something big and bold, something flashing on the wall

A4 laminated sheets

Content
Simple language

Strategies to use with children

Age appropriate

We used to have a list up in the classrooms with photos of famous people who were dyslexic as well as a motivator, which is quite a good idea.

A support network
For people like me who are trying to get TA’s people like A [TA with SLCN responsibility] who are working in this area, to turn to ... a network of people in mainstream schools, or a website. SENCO

‘Signposting to good practice’ and the opportunity to visit other schools:

I would be really interested in visiting other places and seeing what they’ve got. What their resources are, how they actually manage the time, how they withdraw the children, do they withdraw the children, you know that kind of more practical sense of the thing. SENIOR MANAGER

One person going out isn’t necessarily effective:

Also it doesn’t easily cascade, you send one person from school, and then the mechanism for cascading that down is not easy. SENCO

Information about third sector resources

What does Afasic stand for? SENIOR MANAGER
### 10.0 Recommendations for specific resources that could be developed

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Why is it necessary</th>
<th>What is it aiming to achieve</th>
<th>What will it look like</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Overarching model of SLC and SLCN</strong></td>
<td>Lack of understanding and coherence between existing terminology.</td>
<td>Model that is relevant to the curriculum context and enables analysis of pupils’ difficulties in the context of the school and curriculum.</td>
<td>Evidence-based. Developed through consultation with experts from education, linguistics, social psychology and speech and language therapy.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Glossaries and definitions</td>
<td>Lack of understanding and coherence between existing terminology.</td>
<td>Clarity and accessibility for future resources.</td>
<td>Emerging out of the research for the development of the model above.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Awareness raising

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Why is it necessary</th>
<th>What is it aiming to achieve</th>
<th>What will it look like</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Top tips</strong></td>
<td>Staff indicated that they are aware of good practice but would welcome little reminders that they would come across during a lesson or the course of the day. Gentle repetition of key messages would help to promote good practice.</td>
<td>Reminders about what is good teaching practice in terms of the use of language. Ongoing reminders of good practice for good communication for all staff.</td>
<td>Single statement messages used on a variety of everyday objects that could be distributed at conferences. For example, mouse mats, coasters, fridge magnets, stickers to put on whiteboards.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Resources for SLCN within the Secondary Context**
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Why is it necessary</th>
<th>What is it aiming to achieve</th>
<th>What will it look like</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Posters</td>
<td>Pupils with SLCN find it difficult to adjust to differences in the communication</td>
<td>To make explicit the communication rules of a classroom.</td>
<td>It may be that consultation with subject specialists will enable the development of ready-made posters that are relevant to a number of situations. Or it may be that it would be appropriate to hold a range on a website so that teachers could select ground rules that are appropriate to their subject in order to create posters that can be discussed with pupils and then displayed permanently in the classroom.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>rules associated with different teachers, different subjects.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Video demonstrations</td>
<td>People have different learning styles and access different kinds of information;</td>
<td>Provide insight into the impact of good vs bad communication strategies.</td>
<td>A series of short video demonstrations could be made available to include within training offered to school staff; these could be made available on Teachers TV or other related websites.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>visual information may be more useful to some than written information.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>For communication strategies, a role play demonstration may be a more accessible</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>way to deliver the message.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Alerts checklist</td>
<td>Teachers have only a broad concept of what counts as a SLC difficulty and how they</td>
<td>To provide teachers with a framework for analysing children’s SLC performance in the context of the classroom.</td>
<td>A checklist of skills, behaviours and attitudes that would alert staff to a child who is experiencing difficulties with SLC. This should be based on a curriculum model of SLC, using words that will be accessible to teachers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Name</td>
<td>Why is it necessary</td>
<td>What is it aiming to achieve</td>
<td>What will it look like</td>
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<tr>
<td>Information for SIMS (or equivalent) IT system</td>
<td>Teachers vary in how much knowledge they have about SLCN, disorder types or indeed, other types of special needs; similarly they vary in terms of how familiar they are with relevant strategies. Teachers need information about particular pupils in an easy to access format and place. They are unlikely to have the time to go and look up paper information, to search books for strategies.</td>
<td>Readily accessible information about particular disorders and general strategies for use in a classroom context.</td>
<td>A database which provides descriptions of the main types of special needs with related classroom strategies. Database should link to Information Management systems currently used in secondary schools such as SIMS. In the teacher’s on-line class register, any child’s special needs are listed against that child. A click on a link can take the teacher to a description of typical difficulties the child is likely to have. Another click would take them to a suggested list of helpful strategies.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Whole school approach**

<p>| Business case for head teachers, senior management teams and governors | A key driver of policy and practice in secondary schools is the National Challenge. Unless a new resource or initiative is linked into this agenda, it is unlikely to be prioritised by the school management. | Provide a rationale for prioritising SLC within a secondary context. Show the cost-effectiveness of prioritising SLC in secondary schools. | Uses data to show how it increases school grades. Shows the benefit to all children of developing good SLC in the school. Provides a flow chart linking good communication skills to success in examinations, employment, achievement and social inclusion. Small leaflet providing a ready-made ‘business case’ directed at the senior management in a school and at the governing body. |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Why is it necessary</th>
<th>What is it aiming to achieve</th>
<th>What will it look like</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Assembly series</td>
<td>Teachers have little time or funding to attend out of school training. In order to change the school culture into one which is communication friendly, the whole school needs to have a similar understanding of children’s needs – pupils, teachers and support staff.</td>
<td>To increase awareness of the needs and difficulties of those with SLCN. To raise awareness of general SLC issues, difference and diversity.</td>
<td>Materials for use in school assembly and in tutor group sessions Include inspirational and aspirational stories; provide role models of people with SLCN who have successful careers (e.g. in sport, media, world politics)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secondary version of communication friendly schools (Afasic resource)</td>
<td>The Afasic book had broad appeal to secondary staff because it is easy to read, attractive, clear style, useful basic information and useful strategies. There is a need for a general level text that has some broad strategies but does not overwhelm with detail.</td>
<td>To increase awareness of the needs and difficulties of those with SLCN. To raise awareness of general SLC issues, difference and diversity.</td>
<td>A basic text, accessible and attractive to read which provides basic principles about SLC and SLCN.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Subject focus**

<p>| Subject specialist resources | Subject specialist teachers are focused on their own subject area when looking for resources. Subject specialist teachers have little time, or motivation for studying broader topics. Subject specialist teachers would welcome strategies tailored to their specific subject teaching needs. | To support subject specialist teachers to deliver their subject to children with SLCN. | Something that provides a basic overview of the kinds of difficulties that will be experienced by a pupil with SLCN in each subject area, along with a series of strategies. For example, showing what difficulties a child with SLCN will experience with PE and some strategies for including such a child. |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Why is it necessary</th>
<th>What is it aiming to achieve</th>
<th>What will it look like</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>On-line resources for key word materials</td>
<td>Having a grasp of the key vocabulary of a subject is one of the key underpinning skills for a pupil. To develop materials for all subjects, for each year of the curriculum and all the related materials (for example, all the literature used in English) is a huge task. As materials are developed, they should be available on a central website for ease of sharing. Individual teachers have little time to sort this out for individual pupils – need a consensus based resource to draw on.</td>
<td>To support the teaching of key vocabulary for the whole range of subject areas.</td>
<td>For particular subjects, for particular year groups, within subject materials. Examples: flash cards that have the key words on one side and an explanation and/or picture on the other side. Booklets to support a particular English text which provide a breakdown of important vocabulary for the student to take home.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Name</td>
<td>Why is it necessary</td>
<td>What is it aiming to achieve</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Transition and transfer</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Standard pro forma for transfer of information from primary to secondary</td>
<td>Currently there is variable use of existing data (such as SATs and CAT); teachers use their own ways of checking children's skills as they start teaching them in secondary; information passed from primary is not always perceived to be useful by secondary schools. Many Heads of Year 7 visit primary schools to liaise regarding the children moving up. Some have developed their own sets of questions that they find helpful for establishing enough information about an incoming child to help them plan appropriately to meet the child's needs once they start secondary in the autumn.</td>
<td>To ensure that children's needs are identified prior to their attendance at secondary. To ensure that plans can be made to support the child with SLCN during the transfer and their ongoing transition into secondary education.</td>
<td>If this could be related to one of the information management systems this could then be uploaded ready for the child's teachers in secondary. Pro forma such as the one developed by Afasic in Redbridge were seen as useful by secondary staff.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>On-line resource of good practice examples of induction booklets, induction programmes, differentiations made for pupils with SLCN and other SEN</td>
<td>Most schools have developed materials that are given to every child. Most schools have induction programmes. Most schools differentiate these for children with SEN.</td>
<td>To share examples of good practice to facilitate further uptake of good practice.</td>
<td>On-line resource and reference list.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Name</td>
<td>Why is it necessary</td>
<td>What is it aiming to achieve</td>
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<tr>
<td>Training materials for buddy mentoring systems regarding supporting children with SLCN</td>
<td>If older peers are to be engaged and successful at peer mentoring and buddying programmes, they need appropriate training and ongoing support in order to benefit themselves.</td>
<td>To support the process of providing buddies and mentors for pupils with SLCN.</td>
<td>There are materials available to train older pupils as buddies. These need to be reviewed with a view to adapting them to include particular explanations and strategies that are appropriate to buddying children with SLCN.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guide for parents on support systems in secondary schools and how to access it</td>
<td>As parents change systems they lack confidence and knowledge about the new and very different system in secondary. It is rarely made explicit to parents how to access support on an ongoing basis – they have information perhaps about the induction process but if their child has problems after the first couple of weeks, they are not always very clear about who they speak to, how the system works for accessing support.</td>
<td>To enable parents to feel confident that they know how to access support if needed.</td>
<td>Schools will need to develop this for themselves as each school will have a different system. Good practice examples on a website might facilitate this. For example, this might include a flow chart of how special needs are identified, who are the responsible staff within a school and how concerns are dealt with on their school website. This might fit in with other induction resources rather than being a separate resource.</td>
</tr>
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</table>
### 12.0 Resources for a transition pathway

*Preparation of the child for transition and preparation of transition for the child*

**Speech and Language Therapist**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ideas for the transition pathway</th>
<th>Resources</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Year 5</strong></td>
<td><strong>Use of a pro forma such as that developed in Redbridge to describe the child’s difficulties and strategies is a useful mechanism for planning.</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• As part of the annual review, a child’s SLC needs in secondary school are identified and an IEP style plan is produced by the primary school to take forward. Many children with SLCN do not have a Statement of SEN or an annual review process. However, teachers and parents are considering which school will best suit the child</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• SENCO helps to identify an appropriate secondary school</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Identify the skills a child needs to have in place to make transition successful</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Visits to secondary schools to view and help decision making</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Alert parents to support agencies eg parent partnerships; third sector organisations</td>
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</table>

| **Year 6**                      | **Black Sheep Press materials such as ‘TalkingAbout Secondary’** |
| **Social:**                     | |
| • Reduce attachment /affection levels between staff and individual child | |
| • Plans for individual children to develop particular skills | |
| • Work on child’s reflectiveness and awareness of own behaviour | |
| • Raise awareness of child and family to the characteristics etc of the secondary school | |
| • Prepare the parent for child’s needs at secondary Institution: task plans | |
| • Increasing the level of school rules | |

<p>| <strong>Institutional:</strong>              | <strong>Induction booklets provided by secondary schools for children and for parents</strong> |
| <strong>task plans</strong>                  | |
| <strong>On-line chat and mentoring</strong>  | |
| <strong>(such as that provided by Birmingham)</strong> | |
| <strong>Moving on/resources</strong>         | |
| <strong>Cf materials from Coventry</strong>  | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ideas for the transition pathway</th>
<th>Resources</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Increase child’s self organisation – use of a homework planner, timetable</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Identify SLT provision and options</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Provide information for the receiving school and help them to prepare for receiving a child with SLCN – e.g. develop a communication friendly school, e.g. through providing training ELKAN secondary; Bristol @learning together’</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Invite SENCO from secondary to Y6 review</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Whole school Y6 approach to preparation</td>
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<table>
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<tr>
<th>Year 6 summer school</th>
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<tr>
<td>• Supporter taster days at the secondary school</td>
<td>• Transition ‘courses’; for example, the CAMHS service in Birmingham carry out an analysis of children’s needs and put in place individualised training to help develop the appropriate skills; Trafford SLTs have developed course materials for transition courses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Summer school intensive sessions</td>
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<table>
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<tr>
<th>Year 7</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Induction period with reduced number of staff; greater time to find the next classroom</td>
<td>• Materials to support buddies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Safe area for lunch break</td>
<td>• Information on database and linked to school information management system</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Buddy system</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Institutional:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Provide information about each child’s difficulty</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Key worker/member of staff for each child with SLCN/SEN</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Provide SLT consultation sessions/days that can be general or child specific to provide support strategies, problem solve.</td>
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</table>
13.0 Process for developing new resources

This final section makes some brief suggestions regarding the next actions.

13.1 Feedback and review
A copy of the draft report was sent to the participating schools, SLTs and other key participants, asking for their comments and feedback. Additional specialists in the field of secondary SLCN also reviewed the report at this stage.

13.2 Prioritisation
This process should in particular check the validity of our recommendations for resources and seek guidance regarding priorities for resource development. Wider discussion of the recommendations would also be wise in order to discern priorities. Consultation with the DCSF regarding their future plans would also inform the prioritisation process.

13.3 Iteration and consultation
We were alerted to a number of resources for which there had been little consultation and that had been delivered unannounced into schools with little accompanying guidance. We consider it vital that any future developments continue the consultation process in order to ensure that resources are most effectively targeted.

13.4 The right expertise
In order to develop resources that are maximally effective, it will be crucial to use a collaboration of SLC expertise and teaching/education expertise for future developments.

13.5 Coordination and dissemination
Another striking finding from the consultation was that participants were largely unaware of existing resources. This suggests that any new resources should carefully consider its dissemination strategy. There are existing online resources and it may be that some use could be made of these not only to publicise any new resource but also to help practitioners become aware of existing resources.

13.6 Implications for SLTs
We feel that the consultation process has highlighted factors which will be useful to SLTs practising in secondary schools. We feel that this would make a useful article for an SLT publication and for a seminar presentation.
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DFES (2005). Higher Standards, Better Schools for All. HMSO.


Lindsay, G., Desforges, M., Dockrell, J., Law, J., Peacey, N., & Beacham, J., (2008) *Effective and efficient use of resources in services for children and young people with speech, language and communication needs*. Research report DCSF-RW053

### Appendices

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Appendix</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Appendix I</td>
<td>No of participants</td>
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<tr>
<td>Appendix II – V</td>
<td>Topic guides</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appendix VI</td>
<td>Report on the SLT focus group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appendix VII</td>
<td>Existing Resources</td>
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<tr>
<td>Appendix VIII</td>
<td>Participants</td>
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</table>
### Appendix I: No of participants

**Table 1: Participating staff**

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<thead>
<tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Teaching assistants</td>
<td>7</td>
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<tr>
<td>Teachers</td>
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<tr>
<td>Senior managers</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other*</td>
<td>6</td>
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</table>

*5 LA officers (school improvement, partnership working, communication support) and 1 school governor

**Table 2: Participating pupils and parents**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Total interviewed</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Year 6*</td>
<td>23</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>60</td>
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<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>17</td>
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<td>9</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parents</td>
<td>14</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

*Incoming parents (i.e. currently Year 6 pupils) visiting the school for an induction course were asked to complete a questionnaire*
Appendix II: SLT Focus Group 7th May 2009

10.00 Brief Introductions – name, employer, location/context

10.10 Project Overview:
- Political context
- Challenges for schools
- Project outline
- Transition

10.25 Individual SLTs diagram/picture (flipchart paper/coloured pens):
- Me in relation to school/s – including my management structure and leadership/mentorship
  - Communication
  - Relationships
  - Roles
  - Location in school(s)

10.45 In 2 groups (SR/AA) explain/share/discuss pictures

11.15 Coffee

11.30 Two case examples:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SUCCESS</th>
<th>CHALLENGES/FAILURE</th>
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<td>... ...</td>
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Share and discuss in groups – identify key barriers and facilitators

12.30 Lunch

1.00 Ideas about what resource/s might have helped or prevented failure?
- Share existing resources:
  - Why are they helpful/unhelpful?
  - What makes them accessible/inaccessible?
  - Who are they aimed at?
  - Who actually uses them?
  - Do we know what staff and/or children think of them?
- New resources – where are the gaps? - brainstorm
Appendix III: Transition topic guide for parents

We’re interested in your children’s transition from primary to secondary school – how well prepared you and your children were for this move and what it was like. We are also interested to find out how well supported you feel your children’s speech and language development is in secondary school.

Can you tell us the age of your children, which year they are in and whether or not they have speech, language and communication needs? (What difficulties do your children have?).

- When did preparation for transition to secondary school begin for your children? – we can draw timeline to help this process as it happens.
- How involved were you in the process?
- How did you find the transition? What worked well?
- How well prepared do you think your children were for the transition to secondary school?
- How did your child find the transition? What worked well?
- From your point of view what would have been the ideal transition process for your child?
- What is it like now? With regard to speech and language development who supports your child best in school? – year tutor, SENCO, SLT etc
- In what ways is your relationship with the school different from primary school? How is it different?
- Who do you have the most contact with? How do you make contact? How helpful is this in supporting your child?
- Do you have or use any resources to help your child’s speech, language and communication development?
Appendix IV: Transition topic guide for young people

Can you remember when you were at primary school? Do you remember when you were getting ready to make the move to this school? We’re interested in what you remember about that – what you did and what helped and who helped you get ready for the move to your new school.

A range of activities were used to structure these questions. For example, pupils were asked to:

- Draw their primary schools and secondary school
- Fill in speech bubbles for advice they would give to children newly attending secondary school
- Put unhelpful teaching strategies onto stickers which were placed in a bin

• How did you learn about your new school? Did you look forward to moving to your new school? What sort of things did you look forward to? (Did you have any worries?)
• Did you visit it? What happened on your visit – where did you go, what did you do, who did you meet?
• When did you meet your new teachers – did you meet any of them before you started at this school?
• Is there anything else that would have helped make the move to your new school easier?
• What was it like when you first started here? What helped you settle in? Who helped you settle in?
• What lessons do you enjoy? Which subjects are difficult? What makes them difficult?
• Which lessons have a lot of talking in?
• Which lessons do you find it easy to understand what the teacher says? Is it easy to ask questions if you don’t understand? Which lessons have difficult words?
• How easy was it to get used to lots of different teachers? Who is it easy to talk to? Which teachers do you find easy to talk to? What makes them easy to talk to?
• Who helps you when you don’t understand your work? How do they help you?
• Who helps you best with new and difficult words? How do they help you?
• What about activities and clubs? What about break and lunchtimes?
Appendix V: Topic guide for teacher consultations

For use with either group or individual interviews.

a. Teacher’s role in relation to children with SLCN
   • What do you do?
   • What is your main/subsidiary role?

b. Teacher in relation to SLCN
   • What do you understand by SLCN?
   • What contact do you have with SLCN?
   • How does the school system supports children with SLCN?
   • Is there anything that would make it easier for you to work with children with SLCN?
   • How has your understanding of SLCN changed over the years?
   • What resources or products have helped that process?
   • What key questions did you have (or still have) when you first encountered children with SLCN?

b. Experiences of children with SLCN coming into secondary
   • Give an example of when its worked really well?
   • Give an example of when its been a problem?
   • What would have made it work better?
   • What sort of things went wrong and why do you think they happened?
   • How did you know there was a problem?

c. Mapping ideal transitions
   • What would the ideal transition look like?
   • What sorts of resources would you like in your ideal transition?
   • Which of those do you already have?
   • What are the gaps?

d. Examining existing resources
   • What do they think of these resources?
   • Where could they use them?
   • What are their pros and cons?
   • Do they fit onto their ideal transition process?
   • What are the gaps?

What would make you think that a child in your class has SLCN?
   • What would they be doing?
   • What would you do?
How/where does SLCN fit into the school – where do you see these children getting support (and you also). For example, is it part of SEN?

How different is it from children with dyslexia?:
- In terms of your understanding?
- What is available to support child?
- What is available to support you?
- Which is easier?

As a subject teacher how do you manage children with SLCN in your lessons?

Who do you think has responsibility to provide support for these children?

Would you know what changes within the mainstream classroom setting would help?

How easy is it for you, as a subject specialist, to include children with a wide range of specific needs within your lessons?

Have you heard of the IDP and SEAL – how do they impact on what happens in this school? Do you think that the management of children with SLCN link with these?
Appendix VI: Report on the SLT focus group

Speech and language therapists (SLT) were invited via the RCSLT special interest group e-mail group. We invited interested volunteers to contact us with details of their working context, their location, and number of years of experience in secondary education. In the end, all SLTs who had experience of working in the secondary context who volunteered were invited although not all were able to attend. The focus group was held for one day in I CAN premises and 11 SLTs attended. They were working in a range of mainstream, and special contexts, came from around the UK, including London, Surrey, Edinburgh, Leicestershire, Cambridgeshire, Bristol and Birmingham and were employed either independently by particular schools, by the NHS or by local authorities.

Activities undertaken in the focus group are described in the appendix.

Findings from the activities have been summarised under the following headings:

- Characteristics of successful transition
- Barriers and facilitators

We also discussed the ideal transition pathway. Data from this discussion has been used in the main report to demonstrate how resources might fit into the transition pathway. SLTs brought with them a considerable amount of useful information about resources they were currently using, either that they had identified or developed themselves.

**Characteristics of successful transition**

In the process of identifying the barriers and facilitators SLTs first identified how successful transition would be recognised. They defined this in terms of observable signs that a child had made the transition successfully from primary into secondary schooling and included social-behavioural signs and educational-performance signs. In addition, SLTs noted school and family actions that suggest that a child is being well supported through transition. It is also important to note at this point that SLTs saw transition as an extended process that lasts well beyond a 2-3 week ‘honeymoon’ period following arrival in the secondary school. This reflects the literature on transition which sees successful transition as setting the foundations of ongoing engagement in secondary schooling. Disruptions to transition are seen as the potential beginnings of progressive alienation and disengagement from secondary education (e.g., Anderson et al., 2000).

**Emotional adjustment**, including signs of happiness in school, good attendance, reportedly happy to come to school, reduction in anxiety following the immediate transition period.
Social inclusion included evidence that the child has made friends, is not isolated in the playground, is interacting and accompanied by friends as they move around the school.

Independence socially and educationally so that the young person moves around school, from lesson to lesson and to various activities independently, is able to raise their own need for help or lack of understanding in class and in school generally and is able to use social and educational strategies (e.g., asking for help, conversation starters, expressing lack of comprehension) independently and maintains all these if the level of support is reduced or withdrawn.

Educational achievements would be observed such that a child achieves targets from their IEP, completes homework, contributes appropriately in class.

Barriers to transition that were noted included:

- The knowledge, understanding and attitudes of those around the child who are responsible for providing support.
  - SLTs identified shortcomings in their own knowledge and understanding of the secondary school system and difficulties of getting to know all the individual variations within the different schools they visited. They also felt that school staff’s knowledge of child development and child language acquisition, the relationship between SLCN and literacy and in the secondary context meant that children with SLCN were less likely to have their needs appropriately acknowledged, identified or supported. This included a lack of understanding about SLTs’ role and how they could contribute. Attitudes towards the acquisition of new knowledge was identified as a barrier – SLTs perceive teachers to be unwilling to undertake training.

- TAs supporting children in class who are not informed by teachers in advance of the content/purpose of a lesson; teachers perceived as not able/willing to share information about teaching plans in advance.

- Some teachers do not appear to want to use information from other sources but prefer to make up their own minds about children.

- Variable teaching skills and methods.

- SLTs are perceived as a threat; they are always a guest in the classroom and perceived as non-teachers and without rights to comment on classroom practice.
• Resource issues
  - Teacher and SLT time was seen as a major barrier to successful transfer in terms of the numbers of children involved for any one teacher or SLT. SLTs commented that the process of trying to differentiate subjects for children required time to prepare individualised worksheets (for example containing symbols to assist a child’s understanding) or to identify core vocabulary that a child would need for particular subjects was problematic.
  
  - Lack of time for teacher – therapist discussions were identified as a barrier.

• Systemic barriers
  - Changes to the system of provision of teaching assistants (TAs) – a child who has been used to a single TA during primary school has to get used to a number of different TAs or a reduced amount of support. If the new system is introduced too quickly then this can cause problems of adjustment for a child who has become dependent on a particular method of support for learning.

  - SLTs perceive reluctance in secondary schools to the individualisation of learning or the provision or targeting of resources, where systems have to be the same for everyone.

  - SLTs moving from one school to another encounter differing systems with which they have to get to know in order to support children adequately e.g, transmission of information within schools; they point out that there is an assumption that you will understand the system as you visit a school, no-one takes you through the school system.

• Children’s preparedness for the transition
  - Where children have been receiving a considerable amount of support in primary, there is insufficient preparation (or even awareness) of how that provision will change at secondary and the likely impact that will have on the child.

  - Child moving towards independence and therefore not wanting attention drawn to difficulties, therefore doesn’t want support in the classroom.

**Factors which facilitated transition included:**

• Good communication and collaboration associated with positive attitudes

For example, primary and secondary schools working together, teachers swapping
lessons from the different contexts, mutual understanding of each others’ curriculum; ‘can-do’, open attitudes in the school; good communication between TAs, teachers; useful strategies for supporting children shared between relevant staff (accessible, shared, accessed);

• The adoption of universal good practice/strategies in schools that can be used by students as they need them but dropped when they no longer need support – but are there for everyone’s support; e.g., colour coding of rooms, floors, files for easy identification, understanding that good oracy is linked to improved outcomes for all children.

• Differentiation
  - Audio recordings of lesson notes for GCSE; subject vocabulary sets and some pre-teaching of this.
  - A key TA responsible for a particular child, with particular knowledge of that child’s goals/needs.
  - Structured introduction to the variety of secondary.
  - Safe room.

• Support for child
  - Safe rooms.
  - Buddy system.
Appendix VII: Existing resources

Materials for use directly with children
Deal, R. (1992). *Strength Cards*. Published by Innovative Resources


**Transition programmes and materials**


Moving On Up: *Surviving school transition*. Board game available from Speechmark Publishing Ltd.

*Moving on to High School*. From: Family Advice & Information Resource; The Information and Advice Service for People with Learning Disabilities in Edinburgh, 25-27 West Nicolson Street Edinburgh EH8 9DB.


Trafford Children and Young Peoples Service (CYPS) and the Speech and Language Therapy, Department Trafford-Primary Care Trust (PCT) www.cyps.org.uk. Booklet written by children about transition will be also available online at www.cyps.org.uk and www.traffordlearning.org:


**Information sources about SLCN (not exclusively secondary context)**;

Afasic (2009a). *An Indicators Checklist (for non-specialist staff)*.

Afasic (2009b). *Including young people with speech, language and communication difficulties in secondary school*.


BT Education. *How to focus on speaking and listening across the curriculum at KS3*. www.bt.com/education

Cross, M. (2004). *Children with emotional and behavioural difficulties and communication problems: there is always a reason*. JKP.


**Websites**

The following websites have a wide range of material, information, case examples, project report on transition, transfer, speech, language and communication, all aimed at teachers and schools.

**Becta** is the government agency leading the national drive to ensure the effective and innovative use of technology throughout learning. [http://lists.becta.or.uk/pipermail/senko-forum/2009-January/063719.html](http://lists.becta.or.uk/pipermail/senko-forum/2009-January/063719.html)

**BT Better World** website provides a range of free resources to help young people, teachers and parents with speaking and listening skills. [http://www.btbetterworld.com/](http://www.btbetterworld.com/)

**Dyslexia Scotland** has a range of guidance for teachers, in particular a series of guides which are specifically designed for the different subjects of the curriculum. [http://www.supportingdyslexicpupils.org.uk/](http://www.supportingdyslexicpupils.org.uk/)


**Teacher training resource bank** provides access to the research and evidence base informing teacher education. All materials are quality assured through a rigorous process of academic scrutiny and monitoring undertaken by a team of expert teacher educators. [http://www.ttrb.ac.uk/](http://www.ttrb.ac.uk/)

**Teachers TV** free video and educational resources for professional development. [http://www.teachers.tv/](http://www.teachers.tv/)

**What Works Well** is a searchable database (and one to which good examples can be added) of case studies which describe learning improvement. This is a DCSF site. [http://whatworkwell.standards.dcsf.gov.uk](http://whatworkwell.standards.dcsf.gov.uk)

Training materials and websites

**Elklan Speech & Language Support for 11-16s**
A course for those working with students with SLCN within secondary schools and specialist units.

Liz Elks and Henrietta Mclachlan, [www.elklan.co.uk](http://www.elklan.co.uk)

**Stammering Information Programme**
Funded by the DCSF, a resource to raise awareness across the educational workforce about the problems of pupils who stammer in schools. SENCOs, SLTs and other professionals will find it an invaluable tool in providing practical training sessions to support these pupils.

A DVD which contains:

- 2 films featuring children who stammer: a 10 minute version and a more in-depth 20 minute version
- Downloadable ‘Top Tips’ leaflet
- Downloadable information sheets with ideas on how to help and support those who stammer
- Suggestions in pdf documents.

**The Michael Palin Centre and NHS Islington.**
For more information email: stammering.information@islingtonpct.nhs.uk.

**Watch your language**
A staff development resource pack. Aimed to raise awareness and gain an understanding of SLC impairments among young people and how best to support them in community settings

Dr Amanda Kirby with Afasic

**Online training**
[www.onlineinset.net](http://www.onlineinset.net)
Jacqui Webber-Gant, Training@Onlineinset.net

Onlineinset.net limited is a non-profit making limited company working in partnership with subscribing organisations such as Local Authorities and schools. All participating organisations will have the opportunity to play a part in the further development of Onlineinset. Includes courses on Autistic Spectrum disorders and SLCN.
Appendix VIII: Participants

Participating schools
Staff, children and parents of:
Bedminster Down School, Bristol
Lordswood Boys’ School, Birmingham
Pool Business and Enterprise College, Cornwall
Stoke Newington School, London
Grasmere Primary School, London

Participating speech and language therapists
Chloe Bower
Olivia Brown
Leni Dunne
Gill Earl
Joyce Gallagher
Lesley Hemmings
Robyn Johnson
Selva Krishnan
Tricia Laing
Karen Powell
Angela Watson
**Speech, Language and Communication Framework (SLCF)**

The SLCF identifies the skills and knowledge necessary for the children’s workforce to support children’s communication effectively, including children who have speech, language and communication needs (SLCN).

The Framework aims to support managers in assessing the skills and knowledge of their staff and to identifying staff training and development programmes.

Please visit [www.communicationhelppoint.org.uk](http://www.communicationhelppoint.org.uk) to complete the online evaluation.