

HELP WITH SPEECH AND LANGUAGE IN THE CLASSROOM

The Link

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ENGLISH GRAMMAR**

— Professor David Crystal

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FRIENDLY SPACES™**

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Enter to win a copy of David Crystal's book

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Editor's Letter

Dear Reader,

Hopefully testing is complete, children know which secondary school they are going to, and plans for summer fairs, end of year productions and residential trips are underway. It's that time of year where the focus is on transition, whether it be to a new year group or a new school.

We have been busy exhibiting at conferences and exhibitions this term and on page 3 Stephen Parsons reviews one of our favourite events of the year by NAPLIC (The National Association of Professionals concerned with Language Impairment in Children).

Professor David Crystal has written a brilliant article about Grammar (something I know will have been at the forefront of every Year 6 teacher's mind recently) and describes how learning about and using new grammar can be fun. We have a copy of his book *'Language Play'* to give away in our prize draw. Inspired by his article, our resident HLTA, Claire Chambers, talks about

her experiences of working on grammar with children with SLCN and offers some ideas that she found successful.

Continuing the theme of language, Occupational Therapist Kim Griffin shares how we can all support children at home and in class with their language - using the senses in daily activities. Readers have the chance to win a copy of her book *'Sensory Group'*.

Elizabeth Jarman's passion is 'Effective Intervention Spaces'. She discusses how we should give just as much thought to **where** an intervention takes place as well as **what** the intervention will be and **when** it should take place.

Finally Infant Language Link won first prize for the best Primary Resource for leadership, management and assessment at this year's ERA awards - we are over the moon that both Infant and Junior Language Link have received this high commendation.

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NAPLIC 2019

A Review

by Stephen Parsons SLT, Chair, NAPLIC



Developmental Language Disorder (DLD) is a relatively new term, but it is very common with approximately two students in every mainstream classroom presenting with this condition. Most simply, DLD is trouble with understanding and/or talking. Recently the NAPLIC annual conference was held with the theme of ‘Growing Up with Developmental Language Disorder’. The idea was to explore how DLD changes and how we can provide support at different stages from early years, through primary and secondary education into young adulthood.

The day was opened by Juliet Wright, a young person with DLD, who very powerfully expressed the experience of being a young person with DLD. Her top tips included:

- Make lessons visual, calm and fun
- Keep language simple and flag up key words (ideally in advance)
- Remember it takes longer for me to remember
- Lessons are stressful and tiring, and so I need time for breaks
- Give me strategies to support me when the words just won't come.

Juliet struggles with language, but her needs have been identified and supported. Many others' needs are not identified. Maxine Winstanley from University of Manchester found in her research that 50% of first-time young offenders had previously unidentified DLD. This contrasted with young adults with identified DLD who had been well supported in school. They were less likely to exhibit risky behaviour or be in contact with the police. Take home message: young people with **unidentified** needs are at far more risk.

Anna Sowerbutts and Amanda Finer from Hackney outlined their programme, 'DLD and Me' to support children and young people understand their DLD diagnosis. The impact on students' self-awareness has been transformative. We look forward to this being published later in the year.

Melanie Rudkins and Marie Newton work together in the multi-disciplinary support service in Brighton and Hove. Their theme was collaboration: amongst professionals, but importantly with schools and families. Something that we at NAPLIC fully endorse.

Support for students with DLD at secondary level has often been a challenge, but Billie Lowe from City, University of London showed that a one hour INSET with secondary teachers can have a positive impact on how they teach vocabulary.

Data from a number of longitudinal studies was synthesised by Cristina McKean from Newcastle University into simple messages. Language needs that are identified at 4 years of age are very likely to persist, so intervention needs to start then.

There is a small group of children (about 4%) who emerge after 4 years of age.

The day ended with a focus on Early Years and the big surprise came from Danielle Matthews at University of Sheffield who showed that, whilst encouraging parents to respond to young babies' communication ('contingent talk') had a positive effect, the same was not true for shared book reading. Deborah Powers from the 'Time to Talk' initiative in Warwickshire outlined how her innovative service supports Early Years settings to provide quality support. Training had a great impact on staff and on the children they worked with.

NAPLIC is the national organisation for professionals who work with speech, language and communication needs (SLCN), and in particular Developmental Language Disorder. We are a committed bunch of volunteers who have been running for 35 years. Because we are volunteer run, we are able to be very cost-effective, with membership from £20 per year and conference from £99. Join us and support a better future for children and young people with DLD.

FIND OUT MORE:

To learn more about Developmental Language Disorder go to www.naplic.org.uk.

THE PLAYFUL STORY OF ENGLISH GRAMMAR

by David Crystal

What do you think grammar is all about? It usually brings to mind nouns and verbs, subjects and objects, and the like. Grammar for most people is solely a matter of being able to identify parts of speech (and maybe draw a circle around them) and to parse a sentence. It's a topic that is often felt to be dull, artificial, and purposeless. But it doesn't have to be. It can be made relevant, exciting, and fun.



Drive your grammar

If I went to a driving school, I would expect the instructor to point out the various parts of a car - the accelerator, brake pedal, and so on - in my initial lessons. I might be tested: 'Which is the brake pedal?', 'Which is the indicator?' I might be grilled on the Highway Code. If I answered all those questions correctly, I would be somewhat taken aback if I was then told: 'Right. You can drive now'.

Everyone knows that driving involves a great deal more, involving other skills, such as developing a sense of safe speed and a sensitivity to other road users. Above all, I need to answer the questions: Why do you want to drive? What do you want to use your car for? Where do you want to go in it? The thrill of driving comes partly from knowing that there are exciting places you can drive to.

I hope the analogy with grammar teaching is obvious. Traditional methods taught only the linguistic

equivalents of the brake pedal, and tested them. If we can do that, then we are told we have 'learned grammar'. But of course we have hardly begun. We need to know, to continue the metaphor, what we want to use grammar for, where the interesting grammatical roads are, where we want to drive our grammar to. That is where the excitement lies. And to illustrate how this is done, I will tell you a story.

Poppy's story

This is about Poppy, aged nearly ten, whom I met after giving a talk at an arts festival. I was sitting in a cafe area, and nearby was a teacher with a group of children who had come to a reading event put on by the festival. They were all clutching their favourite books. The teacher recognized me and invited me over to talk to the children 'about grammar'. I wondered what on earth I should do!

I asked one of them, Poppy, why she wanted to know about grammar. She was silent. So I asked her what

she wanted to do most of all in her English work. 'I want to write like Terry Pratchett', she said shyly, showing me her copy of *The Carpet People*. 'Would you like to do that now?' I asked her, and she nodded vigorously.

We had a look at his book. 'Do you know about adjectives and nouns?' I asked her. She certainly did. She'd been drawing circles around them for ages! And she gave me some examples. A round table. A red car. The other kids chipped in too, and we soon had a sentence with several adjectives before the noun.

I added one of my own. Would this be a good way to start a story? 'The old ruined house stood on the hillside'. They agreed it would. Then I asked Poppy: 'Which would be the better way to start the story: "The old ruined house stood on the hillside" or "The house, old, ruined, stood on the hillside"?' 'Ooh', she said, 'the second one'. 'Why?' I asked her. 'It sounds creepier', she said. And indeed, everyone who hears those two



BOOK GIVEAWAY

Enter our Prize Draw for the chance to win a copy of 'Language Play' by David Crystal.

'An innovative account of the neglected topic of ludic linguistics'

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sentences would affirm that putting the adjectives after the noun adds a note of atmosphere or drama that wasn't there before. All the children in the group agreed about that.

Now let's look at Terry's book', I said. And within a few pages we found 'He saw the gleam of 10,000 eyes, green, red, and white'. Poppy loved that sentence. 'Let's rewrite Terry, I suggested: "He saw the gleam of 1000 green, red, and white eyes".' 'It's not so creepy', she said. 'So', I suggested, 'if you want to write like Terry, this is one of the things you can do. Put your adjectives after the noun. Go on, try it'. And she did, straight away creating a splendidly creepy sentence with her eyes shining.

Learning about grammar, for Poppy, was beginning to be fun. Of course, the story doesn't stop there. Poppy has to learn not to overdo it. She mustn't put every adjective sequence in a story after the noun! There needs to be balance. But seeing the

potential of what English grammar allows you to do is the first step. And what Poppy learned about adjective position she could apply to every other feature of grammar in English.

Playing with language

Note that to achieve such an outcome, grammar has to be placed in a wider context. We've begun to talk about the *meaning* of sentences now, and their stylistic *effect*. In a word, we've begun to play with the language. Language *play* happens when we take the normal use of language and do something different with it. Poppy knew the rule about adjectives going before nouns in English - she'd begun to learn it before she was two. Now she was learning that you can play with the rule to make special effects.

Language play isn't just rhymes, riddles, jokes, and puns. It's one of the most basic functions of language. Everybody enjoys playing with language, in some shape or form. For some, it's crossword

puzzles; for others, it's Scrabble. Putting on silly voices is language play. So is inventing funny names for things. We see it in advertising, where the slogans might play with spelling: remember 'Beanz Means Heinz'? We see it in the writing of poets, novelists, and other authors. Some play mainly with vocabulary, some with punctuation, some with pronunciation, some with spelling, and some - as we've seen - with grammar.

It starts very early, with the playful manipulations we use in babytalk and games with infants such as 'round and round the garden'. It continues with nursery rhymes and the stories we tell with characters that have funny names. It develops in school with innumerable joke exchanges ('Knock, knock...'). And it never finishes. Whether it's Shakespeare or Joyce, Pratchett or Rowling, Pinter or Stoppard, there are always new horizons of linguistic originality to be explored and enjoyed. We are all Poppys, really.

SPOTLIGHT ON AUTISM AROUND THE WORLD:

Oasis School in Pakistan

by Scot Greathead, Consultant SLT

Have you ever wondered how overseas schools manage the SLCN needs of their students when they have no access to a speech and language therapy service and the resources available are limited to say the least? Scot Greathead SLT explains how a mother utilised the resources around her to develop the Oasis School in Pakistan.

In just 10 years, Oasis School has changed the landscape of Autism Education in Pakistan. A unique combination of relationships with Facebook, Pakistan's celebrities, and the founders of the SCERTS Model (<http://scerts.com>) and the TEACCH Framework (see strategies at www.autism.org.uk) has created a vision of a more inclusive society in Pakistan.

Changing perceptions of autism in Pakistan

The school was founded by the mother of an autistic boy and their first 'classroom' was in the back of an office with just two children! Over ten years it has flourished into a specially built school in Lahore with over 50 local teaching and therapeutic professionals, supporting 36 students (aged 4-22 years) and their families. Alongside evidence-based educational support, the school aims to change the way that the whole of Pakistan understands the challenges, values and abilities of autistic people. Recently, one of Lahore's most prestigious galleries hosted an exhibition of

Oasis students' artwork which was hugely successful. You can view the impressive 'autwork' on Instagram by finding the hashtag #AutArt.

What is the school like?

The school is a vibrant community of different professionals. The SCERTS Model and The TEACCH Framework have been hugely influential and the classrooms have visual supports that would be the envy of any classroom in the UK! It's not unusual to walk around the school and see students playing adapted PE games, whizzing around on Segways, making juices to share, completing maths assignments or making beautiful handmade paper notebooks.

A 'global family' of professionals

In Pakistan, there sadly is a shortage of teachers, SLTs, OTs and psychologists supporting autistic children. Oasis School has adopted a global view and has invited professionals from across the world to collaborate with them. They regularly hold online seminars with educational experts from

the UK and America and have partnered with Facebook's sister site 'Workplace' to link SLT students from the University of Greenwich with Oasis teachers. It's a true example of a transcontinental, 21st century partnership, collaborating online without ever meeting face to face! Teachers upload videos of children onto Workplace's secure platform and the UK team, 4,000 miles away, view and make recommendations on how communication and learning supports might be built into the activities. The relationship is mutually beneficial and both groups collaborate using The SCERTS Model to set and evaluate goals, whilst gaining rich insights into each other's culture.

What next...?

The future looks promising for the students at Oasis school... there are new partnerships in the pipeline to give them educational and employment opportunities beyond their school.

Read Scot's full article and interview with staff at speechandlanguage.info

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Effective Intervention Spaces

by Elizabeth Jarman



Much attention is paid to the type of intervention we provide for children in school. However, less attention is given to where this intervention takes place and whether this can affect the outcomes.

We asked **Elizabeth Jarman** to tell us how she creates **Communication Friendly Spaces™**.

After many years of working at The Basic Skills Agency, it became increasingly apparent to me that *where* an intervention took place, was just as important as *what* it was and *when* it happened.

The whole environment inside and out needs to be inclusive, responsive and meaningful. All too often however, children who receive extra support do so in inappropriate places; working in busy corridors, squeezing into uncomfortable spaces, crouching

in the corner of a classroom, none of which sets the scene to nurture effective communication and focus.

Shared communal spaces, the kind of places where you might be located with a child, are often 'dumping grounds' in schools. They regularly have no ownership and make ideal storage rather than learning spaces. They can become highways of noisy and distracting movement flow, often

busily decorated and cluttered. In short, the last place you'd choose to connect and concentrate in.

If you have no choice other than to be in this space, consider making adaptations.

Here are two key areas within the Communication Friendly Spaces Approach™ which you could explore as a starting point for a whole school review.



CONSIDER: WHAT CAN BE SEEN?

- Carry out an audit of the environment.* Locate spaces which offer the best conditions for learning. Use the most communication friendly area possible and view the space from the child's perspective.
- Reduce visual clutter. Review the number of posters, displays, brightly painted walls and hanging art work. I'm not saying get rid of everything but create a space where the intended focus is clear and children are able to tune in rather than being visually distracted.
- Screening can block out these distractions. Think about creating temporary or flexible screening; blankets or sheets covering chairs as a simple screen or ceiling fixtures which allow you to drop down camouflage netting for example.
- Could an area could be decorated in plain, neutral colours?* Calmer spaces can be created by using this colour palette.
- If you and the children can choose where you work together, ask them 'Where would you like to go today?' Allowing children to select the place that works best for them can transform engagement.
- Always have outside as an option; very often this is the most favoured environment for children and is typically less distracting.
- Think about outdoor seating that is comfortable for children and adults; position this carefully. Temporary pop-up structures work well outside and are quick to create and easy to store.
- If you have the budget, go for contained structures which are multi-purposed and weather proof. Great places to settle and talk.
- Of course, the learning environment does not have to be static and for many children this is hugely relevant in development terms. Combining communication interventions with movement is a great way of boosting concentration.

*Use the case studies and free research papers at www.elizabethjarman.com to help you.



© Elizabeth Jarman



CONSIDER: WHAT CAN BE HEARD?

Carry out a noise audit. Walk around your school on a typical day and tune in to sounds and noise levels. Each time you start work with a child, consciously alert yourself to the noise level and be aware of the impact it could have.

- Where are the quietest spaces in your environment? Maximise them.
- Noise levels may not be constant. Consider the timing of the session.
- Make sure that spaces that you create are not viewed as 'places to perform' for the children, but spaces that feel meaningful and connected. Personalise spaces with a basket of family photos, images of past activities to trigger positive recall, and magazines that feature the children's fascinations and interests.
- Don't try and replicate the classroom layout in hallways, corridors and cupboards. This may negatively impact on the child and their ability to relax into learning.
- Open and particularly hard surfaces bounce noise around, increasing its volume and capacity to disrupt. Soften your space with cushions, blankets, fleeces, bean bags, sofas and canopies to absorb noise and generally make the space more comfy.
- Define and make the intervention space smaller. For most, this can feel more secure.
- Make transportable spaces which can be set up in different places around your school, depending on the auditory challenge at that time. The same space could be set up countless times in different locations, offering familiarity and routine.



© Elizabeth Jarman

From One TA to Another

by Claire Chambers, former HLTA

'I DON'T GET IT!'

(Sounds familiar? Here are my tips for helping *all* children get to grips with grammar)

OK – so there are 70 different grammar terms in the National Curriculum up for grabs for a year 6 child to learn and use effectively in their writing and speaking. What's not to love? It couldn't be easier - just learn by rote what each term means and use it effectively in your writing!

Grammar isn't just learning terminology and then working out how to use it. As David Crystal says in his article, being taught how to do something doesn't mean that you instantly have the skills to be good at it.

For some children, grammar terms such as fronted adverbial, passive voice, gerund and intransitive verb will be learned and used confidently in their writing (often they will be using this type of language structure naturally in their speech, have been exposed to rich vocabulary and are keen readers.) For many pupils, the terms will be problematic to remember, and they will have to purposely revisit and amend their writing to include them.

For some it is not possible to manipulate their vocabulary to extend a sentence such as:

The cat sat on the mat.

To

Stretched out on the sumptuous shag pile, the ancient tabby feline purred contentedly.

Or is it? While learning the lingo might prove too challenging (and let's be honest we all struggle with

remembering the meaning of some of the terminology), all children, with support, can have fun manipulating vocabulary in order to create interesting, extended sentences.

Children love a good story and just like Poppy in David Crystal's article, children can hear the language that makes an engaging and exciting story when they read or are read to – it's just more difficult to try and recreate it.

How can we help?

- Don't get too hung up on the terminology and focus more on what makes things sound better
- Focus on key elements of the sentence: nouns, verbs and adjectives
- Shared reading with lots of discussion about the stylistic effect; 'What made that sentence scary?' 'Why was that funny/sad?'
- Peer support – let another child help. Used paired talk where children tell each other their ideas
- Model good speech rather than, for example, correcting tenses
- Prompt with questions 'What colour, shape, size? When did this happen?'

- Use a digital voice recorder to record the sentence to act as a prompt for the child
- Writing frames can be extremely useful for 'showing' a child where they can change their sentences
- Specific feedback – 'I really like this sentence, what else could be added here to tell us how the girl was feeling?'
- Write their sentence and highlight the word that makes it special
- Use colour coding to highlight different grammatical parts of the sentence. 'Language Link' and 'Language Through Colour' have lots of resources for this
- Model a sentence before and after and ask 'Which sentence sounded best and why?'
- Have a lucky dip bag of prompts to explore the senses e.g. colours (scraps of different coloured fabric), emotions cards, textured objects (smooth, rough, shiny etc)

Most of all allow plenty of time to enable the child to sequence and voice their thoughts without being rushed and praise every effort and success.



Ask a Therapist

by Shelley Parkin, Speech and Language Therapist

QUESTION:
How often should I carry out language groups?

This is a question I get asked many times, and I don't believe there is one right answer. Of course, it is common sense that the more we practise something, the better at it we become. Does this then mean that we should carry out language groups as often as possible? Not necessarily - there are other factors to consider.

In Reception class (P1), there is more flexibility and there is often 'free flow' for periods of the day where the children can choose what interests them either inside or outside of the classroom. Language groups can be carried out more frequently at this stage, as the children are not being pulled from other structured sessions and will benefit from regular opportunities to develop their spoken language skills. In some schools, this means running Reception language groups several times per week.

Once children begin their curriculum work from Year 1 (P2), there is often not the same level of flexibility for coming out of structured lessons. There needs to be a balance between making time for language interventions and making sure



the children do not miss valuable lesson time. Too few sessions and the impact may be lessened - too many, and the child is constantly playing catch up with the work they've missed. If you can manage two groups per week, and fit these into the school timetable, then this should have a positive impact on the children's outcomes.

Managing timetables is important. Can language groups take place during assembly time? Or perhaps during the afternoon when core subject teaching has finished? Working around your school's timetable without causing too much disruption to lessons is sometimes easier said than done! Taking children out for a large number of interventions can lead to them becoming fatigued with the learning and missing out on some lovely

enrichment activities. It also means these children may not be accessing enough of the class teacher's expertise as often as they could be. Yet, speech and language support is vital for so many children. Small group interventions to develop language skills can make a huge difference to children's confidence. Taking all these factors into account is not an easy task, and until there is more research to give us clearer direction, there is no 'one-size-fits-all' solution.

Many of these issues can be addressed by having a joint planning discussion between the class teacher, teaching assistant and SENCo. Together you can look at the needs of the child and the positive impact the language groups have on their education and well-being and strike the best balance.

Exploring language with your senses

by Kim Griffin, OT



As an occupational therapist (OT) I have used the senses in therapy sessions to enhance children's language development and understanding. Here are some of the ways the senses can be incorporated into daily life activities.

Learning language by **DOING**

Every action our body makes relies on our senses. Jumping relies on our vision, balance (vestibular) sense and our sense of body awareness (proprioception). Writing relies heavily on our touch, vision, and proprioceptive senses. It also requires our balance sense to help to keep us sitting upright. Talking wouldn't happen if we couldn't feel the movements our tongue and lips make and would be wasted if the listener couldn't hear what was being said. I would encourage you to include the physical action as much as possible when helping children to learn their verbs. Movement songs are another way to help to reinforce verbs. Doing the action with a physical item can also help, for example with drawing or cutting.

DESCRIBING using your senses

Sensory activities easily lend themselves to help with understanding adjectives. If you are painting, the paint might be *sticky*, *dry*, or *runny* - describe the colours you see. Adapt the texture or add scents or glitter to change the qualities of play dough. All of these sensory characteristics provide excellent opportunities for exploring adjectives with children. In addition, if the child is working on particular adjectives (e.g. *hot* and *cold*), match sensory items (e.g. ice and a heat pack) to demonstrate and reinforce these.

Extremes of Senses

Sometimes children need to experience how something feels in order to be able to adjust their behaviour. This is particularly true if they are being too fast or too

loud or too hard. It can be useful to explore very *fast*, very *slow* and somewhere in the middle in order for them to understand what you mean when you ask them to *slow down*. Explore volume with their voice, whistles and instruments so they understand what volume you are expecting them to use in different situations. If children are being too forceful it can help to *squeeze*, *push*, *pull*, *throw* items with a lot of force (*hard*) and then a small amount of force (*gentle*) to help them to make the links between the language adults are using and their own bodies.

Sensory PREPOSITIONS

For children who are learning prepositions such as '*in*', '*on*' and '*under*' with their SLT, we have seen faster progress when these terms are also used within their OT sessions. Tunnels, especially material ones, are a fantastic resource to help children to understand basic positional differences. E.g. Ask a child to go *under* the tunnel, *on* the tunnel and *in* the tunnel. Using movement with an object is a really clear way to reinforce the difference between the meanings of the different prepositions. The playground is also a brilliant space to practise these concepts. Using whole body movement really helps the children to understand the differences between prepositions. Once the child understands the terms in relation to their own body, you can start to use them in relation to their peers, toys or other objects.

Sensory language opportunities in the classroom

In the classroom and at home messy sensory play lends itself to

so many language opportunities- e.g. pasta; you can *stir* the pasta or *sprinkle* the pasta, you can talk about the texture and the noise raw pasta makes when dropped into a pan. Homemade playdough is great to *squeeze*, *squash*, *push* and *roll*. Messy play is a fun way to explore language concepts and can also be used to encourage joint attention. Adults supporting the child can vocalise what is happening e.g., "John is putting his hands under the pasta," or "Look everyone, Suzie is squashing the play dough."

Including sensory descriptions in your language doesn't need to stop with sensory play. There are many opportunities during a child's day where these can be included. When getting dressed you can describe the movements, e.g. *pushing* or *pulling*, *opening* and *closing* how fabric *feels* and how the clothes *look*. Meal times provide so many chances to talk about tastes, smells, colours, textures and temperatures. This includes snack time at school, especially with fruit. Peeling fruit provides great opportunities for using verbs. Or, if the adult is cutting up fruit, they can describe what they are doing as they go. Smells and flavours can be described. Textures and sounds can be discussed: "Is it crunchy?", or "Does it make a noise when you bite into it?"

In Conclusion

Using the senses can be an engaging way to help children to explore language concepts. This includes verbs, adjectives and prepositions. My challenge to you is to use children's senses to explore and expand on their language daily.

If you are looking for a sensory play option for children who avoid messy play, *Sensory Group Book 1* is a useful resource. This structured classroom programme is designed to support children with sensory sensitivities, such as those who avoid messy textures, dislike getting their hands dirty and/or dislike noises. It is also a good sensory based option for children who demonstrate poor joint attention and turn taking. It is suitable for children with diagnosis such as autism, Down's Syndrome or learning disabilities with a cognitive age of three to five years.

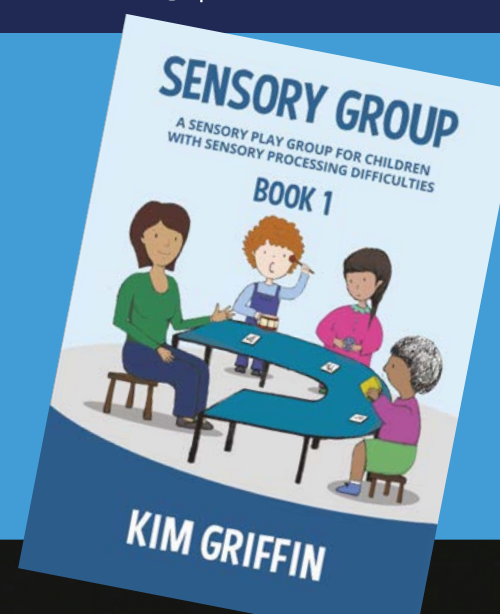
Sensory Group Book 1 contains twelve different sensory lists that can be run in 12-24 sessions. Additional resources include visuals of the sensory item and the action to support language development.

As a special offer for *The Link* readers GriffinOT is offering a 10% discount and free delivery on any purchases of *Sensory Group* made in the month of June. Please go to www.griffinot.com/SLJune.

PRIZE DRAW

We have a copy of *Sensory Group Book 1* to give away.

Email office2@speechlink.co.uk



Kim Griffin is a paediatric occupational therapist. Her company GriffinOT delivers affordable online sensory training and motor skill development programmes to schools, teachers and parents. For more information visit <https://www.GriffinOT.com/SL>

Language or Behaviour?

How do you know?



81%

OF CHILDREN WITH EMOTIONAL AND BEHAVIOURAL DIFFICULTIES HAVE UNDERLYING LANGUAGE PROBLEMS

ICAN Impact Report 2016/2017

THE CHALLENGE

Understanding and using language is fundamental to being included in today's service industry society, with access to the job market increasingly dependent on strong communication skills. Yet upwards of 10% of all children present with speech, language and communication needs (SLCN). This number rises sharply for young people growing up in areas of social deprivation with as many as 50% not having adequate communication skills to interact effectively with those around them.

As these young people progress through school, their language problems can be disguised as poor behaviour, weak literacy or learning difficulties. Sadly, the long-term impact of unaddressed language needs is far reaching; leaving students more at risk of exclusion from school, long term unemployment and a higher risk of falling into criminality.

With numbers increasing, school budgets under pressure and restricted access to support services, schools can feel overwhelmed by this challenge. The good news is that, with the right tools and guidance, schools will be empowered to support these pupils.

Much attention is paid to supporting children at school entry through early intervention programmes. However, many children's language difficulties can remain hidden until they begin their Junior education. As language demands increase with the curriculum, some higher level language difficulties become apparent, eg. making inferences, understanding idiomatic language and social understanding. Unless schools continue to monitor children's understanding through the junior and secondary years they run the risk of misidentification and lose valuable time that could be spent supporting the young person's underlying language needs.

Poor behaviour

"We don't have students with language difficulties, it's behaviour that concerns us."

Lack of resources

"Sadly, even when language needs are identified, in this climate we don't have the resources or expertise to support them."

No access to training

"Our Senior Leadership Team expects teachers to meet the needs of all students with SLCN but how can schools equip staff with these skills?"

THE SOLUTION

Junior Language Link

This award-winning online package combines a standardised assessment, targeted interventions with measured outcomes and resources for teachers and parents. It enables schools to identify and support effectively the language and communication needs of students aged 7 to 11 years, to boost attainment and improve life chances. The package also helps to prepare them for transition to secondary education.

STANDARDISED ASSESSMENT



The online standardised assessment helps schools identify where language difficulties are underpinning poor behaviour or under-achievement. Fun, quick and easily accessible, it screens children's understanding across key areas appropriate for their age. Instant results will identify who needs specialist support and recommend appropriate class and small group interventions so you can target help at the right level.

INTERVENTION



Junior Language Link provides planned and resourced interventions for a graduated approach to supporting children. Our whole class strategies allow the teacher to support the development of speech and language universally. Our fully resourced language groups allow support staff to provide targeted interventions.

HELP DESK AND TRAINING



Our dedicated and friendly Help Desk of Speech and Language Therapists, Teachers and Teaching Assistants is there to help, whether it is advice on how to find resources or what to do next.

We provide a range of training options for ALL teaching and support staff. In-package training leads staff through these powerful tools to get you up and running straight away. Our webinar sessions with Speech and Language Therapists allow staff to embed good practice throughout the school and make the most of the all the data the package provides.

Key Areas of Language:

Grammar

Verb Tenses
Negatives
Complex Sentences

Vocabulary

Concepts
Association

Meaning

Figurative Language
Narrative Inferences

Identify those with difficulty accessing the curriculum

Identify students at risk of social exclusion

LANGUAGE FOR ASSESSMENT GROUP RESOURCES

Students use their language skills to **examine, describe, investigate, evaluate** and **contrast** evidence to solve the mystery at Morley Manor!

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How do you know if a child is struggling with
LANGUAGE DIFFICULTIES OR POOR BEHAVIOUR?

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and support hidden language and communication
difficulties.

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- > Training
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* For all children and all computers

* RRP £425+VAT in the first year,
£275+VAT in following years

* Offer ends 31st October 2019

CASE STUDY



The Scarborough Pledge Initiative

BACKGROUND

In 2015, following an education summit, the Scarborough Pledge was created to improve the life chances, ambitions and outcomes for young people in the area. One of the projects to come out of this initiative was to develop a model of good practice in schools to support Speech and Language development.

Braeburn school is a two form entry school. Staff there have used Junior Language Link since it was introduced as a pilot project in 2016 as part of the Scarborough Pledge initiative.

To investigate the impact of Junior Language Link we analysed the assessment results over a two year period.

PARTICIPANTS

All children were included in the study who were assessed during 2017, took part in intervention and were then re-assessed in 2018. 44 pupils from years 3-6 fulfilled these criteria.

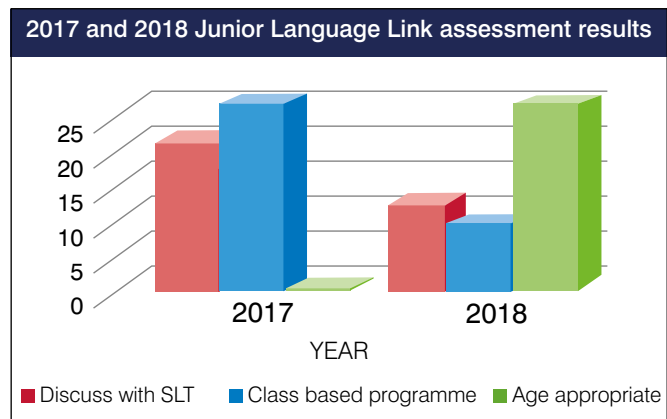
THE INTERVENTION

The children all took part in Junior Language Link intervention groups as recommended following the assessment. All the groups were run by teaching assistants. Each group ran for 8 x 30 min sessions. Some children attended a single group whereas others attended several groups between assessments. Each group had a slightly different focus but all were aimed at improving the children's listening and understanding of spoken language.

THE RESULTS

The results were overwhelmingly positive. At the beginning of the study 44 pupils were identified as needing support with 19 of them needing advice from an outside agency. At the second assessment 25 children no longer needed support and only 11 continued to need outside agency support.

Level of need	2017	2018
Age Appropriate	0	25
Discuss with SLT (Red)	19	11
Class based programme (Blue)	25	8
Total: Identified as needing support	44	19



We contacted Executive Head Teacher, Vicki Logan, to find out what she thought about the impact of using Junior Language Link.

“This initiative has had a very positive impact on the language and communication development of Braeburn children. Teachers report that children are more confident with their speaking and that listening capacity has also improved. Outcomes from the interventions demonstrate high levels of success and the numbers requiring ongoing support has declined. Reading results tripled for the end of KS2 from 2016 to 2018 which is excellent. In addition to this Early Years GLD outcomes improved by 50% from 2016 to 2018, another outcome to celebrate.”

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Making a difference

"A Year 5 girl went all the way through the school but without making the expected progress. No-one was sure why. We used the Junior Language Link assessment and she came out as significantly impaired - everyone was really surprised. She was struggling with the complexity of the language and was struggling to retain instructions. We completed a Listening group and a Concepts and Instructions group. She was assessed by the Speech and Language Therapist and has made good progress. It [the assessment and interventions] has boosted her self-esteem. Before she didn't know why she was finding it so hard compared to the others in the class: now she understands why it was so hard. She feels like she's being helped now and enjoys the interventions."

Aldermoor Farm School

"Helps to differentiate between a real concern and what's just 'nothing to worry about.' It can put parents' minds at rest."

Fleetdown Primary School

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Primary Resource for
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THE JUDGES SAID:

"Highly impressed – the platform not only offers opportunities to track and trace student progress, but also provides well-designed suggestions and strategies for teacher intervention."



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