



Overview

Many children start school working below Age related Expectation, without the necessary vocabulary to access the curriculum. At school entry many children only have basic everyday words and lack the more advanced vocabulary expected within the curriculum.

Speedwell Infant School takes a whole school approach to the teaching of vocabulary that starts when children enter Nursery. We recognise the importance of early language and vocabulary development. By starting early, children are given a greater chance to have the crucial words in place before the impacts of their poor vocabulary can be seen in all subjects of the curriculum.

An enriched language environment will contribute to word learning because it exposes children to a wide range of language experiences including vocabulary, however for children who are missing key concepts in particular this will not be enough.

Whole school approaches

In the Foundation Stage we plan from the Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Framework by providing daily opportunities to develop communication and language through listening, understanding and speaking.

Across Key Stage 1 Speaking and listening is planned from the National Curriculum, with opportunities for speaking, listening and vocabulary development woven throughout all subjects in the curriculum.

As a school we enhance our teaching of vocabulary by implementing the 'Word Aware' programme. Word Aware is a comprehensive and structured approach used throughout the school to promote vocabulary development in all children.

Children need twelve meaningful encounters of a word before they really know it. Word Aware promotes a method called STAR, which stands for Select, Teach, Activate and Review. This process ensures the children encounter the new words many times and in many different ways.

Teachers implement structured activities from 'Word Aware' that can be used across all parts of the curriculum. Everyone involved develops a common understanding and applies a consistent approach.

Principles of vocabulary teaching

- Build a strong foundation
- Make words a priority
- Use a range of methods
- Teach words in context
- Teach strategies
- Direct teaching

Words are identified from the 'topic'. Teachers decide which words are the most important and why? Words are then split into Anchor words (every day words), Goldilocks words (focus words they are likely to use again) and Step on words (topic related words)

These words are then directly taught through:

- Symbols
- Clap the syllables
- Say it
- Expand the meaning
- Do an action
- Sing a song
- Display the word

Verbal concepts are the words that shape how we think about the world. They are particularly important for children to make sense of the world and verbal concepts give children the means to talk about, interact and expand their understanding.

The school's DfE validated phonics programme - Essential Letters and Sounds also has a strong focus on vocabulary development built into the programme. This influenced the school's decision to adopt this programme to ensure opportunities for vocabulary development were also built into daily phonics teaching and learning linked to reading for understanding.

Targeted interventions

For children who are identified as needing additional support, targeted provision through interventions are planned. These interventions are prioritised in the Early Years Foundation Stage to ensure children have the skills to access the curriculum as soon as possible. The key interventions used are:

- Early Talk Boost
- Essential Letters and Sounds interventions
- Speech and language programs

Early Talk Boost includes standardised baseline and end of intervention assessments of children's communication and language skills to ensure the interventions make a positive difference to children's communication and language development to accelerate progress and help them 'catch up' with age related expectations.

Essential Letters and Sounds interventions are based on termly phonics assessments, identifying the specific need for the child.

Speech and language programmes are set by the local speech therapy service for individual children with specific identified needs and delivered by experienced staff in school. This forms part of the graduated response for these children.

Finally

We recognise that communication and vocabulary are essential to successful life long learning, and so make words count by exposing children to a rich, wide and appropriately demanding vocabulary. We prioritise and ensure that children know that both spoken and written words are important at Speedwell Infant School.