

Communication and language

“The development of children’s spoken language underpins all seven areas of learning and development. Children’s back-and-forth interactions from an early age form the foundations for language and cognitive development. The number and quality of the conversations they have with adults and peers throughout the day in a language-rich environment is crucial. By commenting on what children are interested in or doing, and echoing back what they say with new vocabulary added, practitioners will build children’s language effectively. Reading frequently to children, and engaging them actively in stories, non-fiction, rhymes and poems, and then providing them with extensive opportunities to use and embed new words in a range of contexts, will give children the opportunity to thrive. Through conversation, story-telling and role play, where children share their ideas with support and modelling from their teacher, and sensitive questioning that invites them to elaborate, children become comfortable using a rich range of vocabulary and language structures.” EYFS Statutory Framework 2021.

In Early Years we foster and capitalise on children’s instinctive need and desire to communicate by:

- Role modelling the qualities and characteristics of an exemplary communicator
- Immersing children in a rich environment of words, sounds, rhythm, verbal and non-verbal expression
- Engaging in conversation
- Provide genuine reasons, irresistible provocations and a real purpose to listen and talk
- Valuing the different ways and means that children use to communicate

INTENT: We want our children in Pre-School and Reception to be confident communicators who are able to talk about their feelings and activities. We want them to be able to hold a conversation, to retell stories and rhymes and to sing songs. Throughout EYFS, we want to guide our children towards becoming life-long learners who can realise their full potential.

IMPLEMENTATION: Communication and language is a fundamental core skill. It is the key to enabling children to achieve and provides the strong foundations for future learning. This is why it is the thread that runs through our curriculum. It is promoted through an language rich ethos environment in which adults narrate, ask questions, model thinking, provide a running commentary, repeat and extend language and give children reasons and desire to talk. At the planning stage new and ambitious vocabulary linked to the theme is identified and displayed within the environment as a visual prompt for adults and children. Careful consideration is given to how children develop listening, attention and understanding to improve speaking skills. Quality interactions with adults and peers are key to building on the children’s communication skills. Using ambitious vocabulary, alongside quality story texts, will develop the language. This happens in daily routines, small group storytelling time and through the children’s play. We use the ECAT and WellCOMM programmes resource to support those who are developmentally ‘not there yet’. As the children progress within the phase, they talk with adults and peers about new experiences, making links to previous learning and communicate to deepen existing friendships and language. During their reception year, children continue to meet new vocabulary through story times, key whole class texts and through their day-to-day learning and play.

IMPACT: We will monitor the impact to ensure children are ‘on track’ in the developmental age band 3 -4 years, are clear communicators, have extended their vocabulary and can clearly express their thoughts. Children in Reception will be confident to talk to adults and peers about their experiences, ideas and feelings using new and embedded vocabulary.