

Early Years Communication & Language Support

At Norris Bank Primary School, we use our observations and the children's profiles to closely monitor all the children and their development. If the staff feel that a child might benefit from some support with certain concepts or have any concerns regarding speech and language, we will work with parents and carers to build a picture of their communication both in and out of school.

There are two tools we use in Early Years.



WellComm

WellComm is a speech and language toolkit for children aged 6 months to 6 years. It helps practitioners to understand children's current level of speech and language and then provides a range of activities to help support their language development.

How does it work?

Speech development follows a pattern much like physical development. For example, a baby can't run without first learning to sit up, stand up and walk. It is the same with communication. For example, if a child doesn't understand the words ball, box or in, they will be unable to "put the ball in the box". Identifying a specific area that a child might need support in allows us to play games or do activities that help them master an idea or concept which will boost their speech and language development.

Our job is to make sure that your child leaves us equipped as well as possible for the next stage of their education and sometimes we use tools like WellComm to make sure that no milestones have been missed and that we are supporting each child to the best of our ability. We identify children during their first few weeks of school from our initial baseline observations who we feel may need additional support with their language. We want to make sure that we support any gaps in their understanding. We would also assess a child if we felt there was a communication need so that we know how we can best support them.

Our aim with all our children is that we help and support them to achieve their potential in all areas of development so that when they leave Reception to go to Year 1, they are ready for the next stage of their education.

A child will be assessed for around 10-15 minutes on their understanding of what is being said to them (receptive language) and also how they communicate verbally

(expressive language). Some of the assessment is completed through specific activities and some through our everyday observations. The needs of the child are taken into consideration and the toolkit may be completed over several stages.

What can I expect from school?

With parents and carers' permission, NBPS will use the toolkit to help give a clearer picture of which specific areas of communication need some support. The toolkit will be completed and follow up sessions will be delivered by our EYFS teaching staff. The outcomes are fed back to parents and carers. Together we will use the suggested easy and practical activities to support the child's development. Their progress will continue to be monitored, and support adjusted as appropriate.



SpeechLink

Speech link is a tool that gives Teachers and Teaching Assistants the ability to assess children's speech development. It will identify speech delays and recommend speech sound programmes where necessary. The SpeechLink Speech Screen will also identify children with more complex difficulties who require input from a Speech and Language Therapist.

What is the Speech Screen?

The computer-based screening test is suitable for children between 4 and 8 years of age and takes around 10 minutes to complete. The screen consists of 40 easy pictures. Your child will be asked to name each one and their responses will be coded into the computer by an adult. At the end of the screen the computer will recommend age-appropriate speech programmes with a suggested order of work. If your child has a more complex difficulty, then the screen will recommend discussion with your local Speech and Language Therapy service.

What happens next?

Following the screening we will download programmes and pictures from the website. We will provide you with a copy of the programme and some information sheets suggesting things you can do at home to support your child's speech development.

If the screen has recommended discussion with the local Speech and Language Therapy service, we will contact them to receive more advice. This may result in a referral to the local clinic. You will be asked for your permission for this to take place.

How can you help?

Research has shown that parents and carers can make a great difference to how quickly a child can learn new sounds. You can support your child and school by working with your child at home when possible. We want to work in partnership with you so that practice at home and school gives your child a strong, consistent approach.

What can I expect from school?

NBPS will use the toolkit to help give a clearer picture of the specific speech sounds that need some support. The screening will be completed and follow up sessions will be delivered by our EYFS teaching staff. When the screening has been completed, we will share the outcomes with parents and carers. Together we will use the suggested activities to support your child's development. Their progress will continue to be monitored, and support adjusted as appropriate.

You can find out more about the ages and stages of children's communication development from birth to 5 years in the [Universally Speaking](#) guidance developed by The Communication Trust.

If you would like any further information or have any questions, please feel free to email, addressed to Mrs Thomas at admin@norrisbank.org.uk.