

**Walton Lane Nursery School and Rocking Horse Club**  
**Communication and Language Curriculum**

“We communicate with others as a fundamental part of being human. Sharing our feelings, needs, reflections and ideas is a primary drive, but the ability to do so develops only in practice with others”

(Moylett and Stewart, 2019)

Children have been communicating since before they were born, responding to their mother’s voice in utero. It is interwoven in all aspects of home and nursery life and it is fundamental to all of their learning. At WLNSRHC we aim to support children to develop their communication in its many forms, to develop a broad vocabulary and to be competent and creative speakers and communicators.

### **Aims**

At WLNSRHC we aim that

- Children become confident communicators
- Children develop a broad vocabulary that reflects their home experiences, a multitude of planned nursery experiences, books and reading.
- Children are curious about language and are keen to learn new words
- Children enjoy playing with language, rhythm, rhyme and words
- Children are challenged to develop their communication and language skills based on practitioners’ formative assessments
- Children develop their attention so they engage fully in learning opportunities
- Children are respectful and interested listeners
- Children can communicate in a variety of situations with peers, key adults and visitors
- Children begin to develop their oracy skills in talking to an audience
- Children value and celebrate all forms of communication and languages e.g. English, children’s home languages, signing, SEND communication systems

### **Curriculum Intent, 0-2 year olds**

There are 2 strands to our communication and language curriculum

- Listening, Attention and Understanding
- Speaking

These strands are intertwined in the communication and language activities and experiences planned for the children

### Listening, Attention and Understanding

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| <p><b>Early Stages</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Children are startled by loud noises and sounds</li> <li>• Children watch adults face when they talk</li> <li>• Children respond to familiar voices</li> <li>• Children pay attention to and/or join in with songs and rhymes</li> <li>• Children enjoy moving to music or singing</li> <li>• Children watch and show an interest in what others are doing</li> <li>• Children are beginning to concentrate whilst playing with a toy or activity</li> <li>• Children are beginning to discover their exploratory impulse</li> <li>• Children respond to different emotions</li> <li>• Children respond to familiar voices</li> <li>• Children respond with sounds</li> <li>• Children respond to their own name</li> </ul>   |
| <p><b>Progression through the year</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Children sit and listen to stories for short periods</li> <li>• Children can concentrate on an activity for a short period of time</li> <li>• Children have a strong exploratory impulse</li> <li>• Children begin to understand routines</li> <li>• Children begin to understand single words in context</li> <li>• Children begin to understand Makaton signs</li> <li>• Children begin to follow simple instructions</li> </ul>  |
| <p><b>By the end of the 0-2 stage</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Children can sit for longer to listen to stories</li> <li>• Children enjoy looking at books independently</li> <li>• Children can follow simple instructions</li> <li>• Children join in with familiar sounds, words and phrases</li> <li>• Children respond and recognise familiar sounds</li> <li>• Children listen to stories with interest especially if the adult uses different tones</li> <li>• Children have a good understanding of routines</li> <li>• Children are able to understand two simple instructions</li> <li>• Children have a good understanding of Makaton signs and independently use simple every day signs</li> <li>• Children are beginning to understand more complex sentences</li> <li>• Children can identify objects when asked</li> </ul> |

Speaking**Early Stages**

- Children enjoy babbling
- Children can copy facial expressions
- Children are beginning to repeat some sounds
- Children are beginning to repeat some single words

**Progression through the year**

- Children are beginning to use single words
- Children can copy some sounds
- Children can have a conversation – babbling
- Children can use simple Makaton signs
- Children are using facial expressions
- Children can say clear single words
- Children use gestures to communicate
- Children can use their voice to make different pitches to sounds

**By the end of the 0-2 stage**

- Children are beginning to say two words together
- Children are beginning to join in with songs and rhymes
- Children are using a wider range of vocabulary – single words
- Children are using some Makaton signs
- Children are beginning to voice their needs
- Children are using sounds in their play
- Children are more confident to speak out
- Children use different pitches when talking

**Curriculum Intent, 2-3 year olds**

There are 2 strands to our communication and language curriculum

- Listening, Attention and Understanding
- Speaking

These strands are intertwined in the communication and language activities and experiences planned for the children

Listening, Attention and Understanding**Early Stages**

- Children engage in activities of their choice for short periods
- Children respond to their own name
- Children engage in nursery rhymes for short periods
- Children enjoy listening to stories on a 1-1 with the adult

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Children begin to understand some simple Makaton signs</li> <li>• Children use visual aids to understand routines</li> <li>• Children can understand single words in context</li> <li>• Children understand frequently used words</li> <li>• Children listen to simple instructions and may follow them.</li> </ul>   |
| <b>Progression through the year</b>  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Children engage in activities of their own choice for longer periods</li> <li>• Children engage in adult led activities for short periods</li> <li>• Children enjoy listening to stories in groups</li> <li>• Children begin to join in with repeated refrains</li> <li>• Children are using some Makaton signs</li> <li>• Children understand routines</li> <li>• Children understand simple instructions and can follow them through</li> <li>•</li> </ul>  |
| <b>By the end of Little Learners</b>   |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Children engage in adult led activities for longer periods</li> <li>• Children join in with repeated refrains</li> <li>• Children are active listeners</li> <li>• Children enjoy listening to longer stories</li> <li>• Children can pay attention to more than one thing at a time</li> <li>• Children are beginning to follow simple two step instructions</li> <li>• Children understand what different objects are used for</li> <li>• Children are able to follow some simple rules</li> <li>• Children listen to other people talking with interest but can easily be distracted</li> <li>• Children understand simple questioning</li> <li>• Children are beginning to understand 'why'</li> </ul> |

### Speaking

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| <b>Early Stages</b>   |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Children can say two words together</li> <li>• Children use gestures to communicate</li> <li>• Children are beginning to show interest in joining in with singing</li> </ul>   |
| <b>Progression through the year</b>   |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Children can say simple sentences</li> <li>• Children can hold a simple conversation but can jump from topic to topic</li> <li>• Children can become frustrated if they are not able to communicate clearly</li> <li>• Children are beginning to join in with simple nursery rhymes and songs</li> </ul> |
| <b>By the end of Little Learners</b>  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Children can hold a conversation</li> <li>• Children are beginning to talk about what they are doing</li> </ul>  |

- Children use age appropriate language, most words are spoken properly
- Children start to say how they are feeling, using words as well as actions
- Children are using a wider range of vocabulary
- Children can sing simple nursery rhymes and songs

### **Curriculum Intent, 3-4 year olds**

There are 3 strands to our communication and language curriculum

- Attention and listening
- Understanding
- Speaking

These strands are intertwined in the communication and language activities and experiences planned for the children

### **The importance of conversation in communication and language development**

Natural conversations and back and forth interactions focused on children's immediate experiences have been shown to be optimal for children's language development at all stages of their early years. It gives children the opportunity to practice their social interactions, communication and speech in a meaningful and motivating context. At WLNSRHC we believe that natural conversation has benefits beyond language development, it facilitates the children's holistic development and promotes shared, sustained thinking (learning conversations). We aim to provide children with frequent quality conversations with adults and peers throughout the day. We work with the understanding that every interaction is a teaching opportunity.

### **Attention and Listening**

#### **Early Stages**

- Children's attention is single channelled, focusing on their interest, and they need a multisensory approach to gain their attention e.g. a gentle touch to their arm and say their name
- Children will concentrate on an activity of their own choosing for 5 minutes
- Children will concentrate at an adult directed activity for 2 minutes
- Children may listen at group time but are not ready to join in yet
- Children will listen to another person when the subject is of interest to them
- Children listen to a short story, one to one, with an adult

#### **Progression through the year**

- Children can focus their attention, moving it from their current interest to something an adult or a peer suggests

- Children will concentrate at an activity of their own choosing for 10+ minutes
- Children will concentrate at an adult directed activity for 5-10 minutes
- Children begin to listen to another child's idea at group time
- Children begin to extend on another child's idea at group time
- Children will listen to a group story for 5-10 minutes

#### **By the end of nursery**

- Children's attention becomes 2 channelled, where they can carry out a task and listen to an instruction at the same time
- Children will concentrate at an activity of their choosing for an extended period of time
- Children will concentrate at an adult directed activity for over 10 minutes
- Children will contribute to group discussions, listening and responding to other children's ideas
- Children will demonstrate high levels of involvement at storytime

### Understanding

#### **Early Stages**

- Children may watch other children play before joining in and interacting with them
- Children may listen at group time but are not ready to join in yet
- Children can follow a simple instruction
- Children understand naming instructions and questions e.g. give me an apple, what is this?
- Children understand first and next in linguistic sequencing e.g. what do you want to play first/next?

#### **Progression through the year**

- Children can follow 2 part instructions
- Children understand who, what, where questions
- Children demonstrate an understanding of prepositions e.g. on, under, behind, next to
- Children begin to understand and talk about someone else's feelings e.g. characters in a story, their friend
- Children are able to predict what might happen next e.g. in their play, in a story
- Children understand first, then, next and last in linguistic sequencing
- Children begin to be able to describe a sequence to another person to complete a task

#### **By the end of nursery**

- Children can follow instructions that have more than 2 parts
- Children will contribute to group discussions, listening and responding to other children's ideas
- Children can listen to stories without pictures or props

## Speaking

### **Early Stages**

- Children use non-verbal communication to express their wants and needs e.g. pointing, facial expressions
- Children use simple sentences freely (4+ words)
- Children include the main elements in the sentence but some small grammatical words/details may be omitted
- Children use shortened versions e.g. don't, I'm, I've, Sally's, she's, they've
- Children use vocabulary based on their home experiences
- Children will talk about the activity they are engaged in, to themselves and then with a key adult
- Children are beginning to hold a conversation with another child during child led play
- Children will hold a short conversation with a key adult in nursery
- Children are confident to engage in conversations with key adults e.g. family, key person
- Children will take turns in conversations with adult support
- Children may listen at group time but are not ready to join in yet
- Children are beginning to contribute ideas at group time
- Children join in with action rhymes and simple nursery rhymes
- Children can name simple emotions

### **Progression through the year**

- Children use vocabulary that is influenced by stories and reading
- Children start using joining phrases e.g. 'Sally made a boat and I made a car'
- Children begin to use more connective words e.g. but, so, because, then
- Children use common irregular past tense e.g. 'he fell' rather than 'he falled'
- Children use common irregular nouns e.g. sheep rather than sheeps
- Children use 'I' rather than 'me'
- Children start using the passive voice e.g. the truck was pulled by the truck
- Children start embedding phrases in sentences e.g. the girl with the basket on her head is Handa
- Children use comparatives (comparing 2 objects or people e.g. bigger) and superlatives (the form of an adjective or adverb that describes the extreme extent e.g. biggest)
- Children begin to be able to talk about an activity or event they have been involved in
- Children will hold a conversation with other children during child led play, taking turns in the conversation
- Children verbalise narratives in their play
- Children will hold a conversation with an adult for 5-6 turns
- Children are confident to engage in conversations with most adults in nursery

and with visitors to nursery

- Children will join in at group time, verbalising their ideas or thoughts
- Children begin to develop the confidence to speak in front of a small audience e.g. recounting their news, talking about a drawing, reciting a nursery rhyme
- Children ask simple questions
- Children will join in with new nursery rhymes once they become familiar with them
- Children begin to name and describe more emotions
- Children begin to use Makaton e.g. good morning, good afternoon, please, thank you, naming food
- Children show an interest in languages other than English

### **By the end of nursery**

- Children use vocabulary that draws on their different experiences through nursery and through books
- Children use increasing complex sentences by embedding phrases and connectives
- Children start to use words that suggest connectivity at the beginning of a sentence e.g. actually, however, while
- Children will be able to talk about an activity they have been involved in, reflect on it and suggest how they could change it in future
- Children will hold a conversation with an adult for an extended period of time
- Children will hold an extended conversation with another child or small group of children
- Children will ask questions to gain information and find out about their world
- Children will contribute to group discussions, listening and responding to other children's ideas
- Children are increasingly confident to speak in front of a small audience which may include unfamiliar adults or visitors
- Children begin to be able to justify their predictions e.g. I think this will happen because
- Children begin to be able to describe how to solve a problem
- Children begin to understand why questions
- Children confidently join in with nursery rhymes, rhyming stories and stories with repeated refrains
- Children are able to name and describe several emotions e.g. happy, sad, angry, pleased, surprised
- Children use a range of Makaton signs relevant to nursery

### **Curriculum implementation**

We teach children and facilitate their communication and language development through carefully planned activities and environment and effective adult interactions

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in both. Planning for activities and the environment is based on assessments of children's levels of development and is differentiated for their more individualised needs.

At WLNSRHC we plan a communication friendly environment which motivates children to engage with communication and language through

- Minimising visual distractions by
  - the use of natural and calming colours, materials and resources
  - keeping the environment clutter free
- Minimising auditory distractions by
  - having quieter and noisier areas with careful planning of the position of areas
  - ensuring there is no unnecessary background noise e.g. music and ICT equipment is used for an educational purpose
- Defined play areas where children feel secure and relaxed
- Creation of snug, quiet areas for children to relax, have a conversation or share a book
- A range of resources that are appropriate to the developmental level of all children in the cohort and that are interesting and motivating for the children
- Resources are accessible to children and are labelled with text and photographs so children can select them independently and with ease
- Resources that promote oral storytelling e.g. puppets, props, role play
- Carefully selected books throughout the provision
- Use of visual prompts around the setting e.g. visual timetables
- Use of print throughout the environment which is read to the children and adults refer to in order to support learning e.g. labels, words in different scripts that reflect the children's cultures, challenge words, descriptive words, fiction books, factual books, nursery rhyme cards, catalogues, comics, magazine, IWB, tablets, PC
- Use of print throughout the environment that reflects the different languages of the children

At WLNSRHC we plan activities that motivate, support and challenge children's communication and language development

- Adults supporting children's immediate interests and learning and extending their knowledge and understanding through considered interactions
- Planning for children's individual learning needs in communication and language through the In The Moment Planning process

- Use of group time for CAL activities
- The use of group time for 'Letters and Sounds' activities
- Adults use natural conversations at all levels of children's development to encourage interactions, turn taking, attention and listening, understanding and speech and language development
- Adults use learning conversations (shared, sustained thinking) to build on children's thoughts and ideas and to extend their learning incrementally
- Planning for vocabulary development through
  - 'Word of the week'. Each group selects a word (tier 2) linked to their group time or story time focus, and is shared with home. Activities include the word rap.
  - Use of books
  - Identifying and using vocabulary specific to learning objectives of the continuous provision and enhancements e.g. vocab flower
  - Using a multisensory approach with real objects and actions, that introduces and consolidates children's knowledge and understanding of vocabulary
- Adults support children's vocabulary and language learning through
  - Modelling language and using language correctly
  - Using intonation in their speech to engage children and emphasise segments of speech and words
  - Following children's lead, so language initially is in the areas of children's interests
  - Listening to children
  - Naming objects in context e.g. during play
  - Narrating children's and their own actions
  - Giving children time to speak (10 second rule)
  - Giving children choices where they must name 1 of the choices e.g. would you like milk or water to drink?
  - Repeating children's language back to them correctly e.g. "tar" – "yes, a car"
  - Repeating children's language back to them in a different way e.g. "milk gone" – "yes, milk finished"
  - Repeating children's language back to them and extending e.g. "Yes, the milk is all gone. You've drunk it all"
  - Using quality questions e.g. open ended; avoiding multiple questions; using developmentally appropriate questions e.g. children's understanding of why question typically develops between ages 4½-6
  - Not using too many questions. Try to maintain the ratio of questions/directions to comments of 1:4
- Nursery rhymes which
  - Are fun, and often multisensory, so they encompass a variety of children's learning styles

- Stress specific parts of words, helping children learn the skills for segmenting words into syllables and phonemes
- Stress rhyming words which will support children's phonological awareness and development
- Use of storybags
- Helicopter stories, which enhance children's creativity and develops their story telling skills
- All children are assessed through Wellcomm leading to CAL groups for children requiring additional support e.g. Ginger Bear, Wellcomm (children with speech and language difficulties, children with SEND, children with EAL)
- Storytelling week
- Nursery rhyme week
- Inviting people in to tell stories e.g. local MP; children from local primary school; parents and grandparents, including storytelling in different languages.
- Adults draw children's attention to the visual prompts around nursery e.g. visual timetables, labels, challenge cards
- Makaton sign of the week

### **Curriculum impact**

The impact of the communication and language curriculum is assessed and monitored for individual children, key person groups and nursery cohorts.

- Practitioners assess children's learning dynamically and will respond in that moment to enhance the children's learning
  - They will adapt their interactions to support or challenge children' learning
  - They will add or direct children to resources that will develop or deepen the child's learning
- Practitioners will observe children during child led or adult directed activities and assess their level of development in communication and language. Assessments will be used to
  - Plan next steps for individual children
  - Plan activities that will further develop children' learning
  - Plan continuous provision and enhancements to continuous provision that will further develop children's learning
- Key Persons will record children's learning and share it with parents through the In The Moment Planning process, children's records and Target Tracker
- Children's communication and language assessments will be used
  - To identify learning needs of individual children, groups of children and cohorts of children
  - To plan learning for individual children and groups of children

- Children’s communication and language assessments will be used in conjunction with teaching and learning observations (by peers, team leaders, headteacher or external bodies)
  - To monitor the impact of key person’s teaching of communication and language
  - To monitor the impact of specific communication and language projects
  - To identify areas of CPD for individuals or groups of staff
  - To moderate communication and language assessments across staff
  - To plan future improvements to teaching of communication and language

### **Special Educational Needs and Disability**

We aim to cater for the individual learning needs of every child, recognising the need for specialised provision to ensure access to all aspects of communication and language. Many children with SEND attending WLNSRHC have speech and language difficulties. Activities and the environment for the children are planned using the Lancashire ATTP document; Lancashire SEN progression document and advice from external agencies e.g. SALT, Early Years Specialist Teachers. Specific targets are identified in children’s Targeted Learning Plans to develop their speech, language and communication.

Children with speech and language difficulties of SEND may work 1-1, in pairs or small groups with their key person and/or SEND support. They may also participate in the Ginger Bear and Wellcomm groups.

### **Early Years Pupil Premium**

Additional support is provided for children who are eligible for early years pupil premium. The support is based on the Education Endowment Fund assessment of the impact of different strategies in the early years. We focus on developing the children’s wellbeing and involvement to build resilience and self-regulation. Next we prioritise developing communication and language skills, once secure we focus on developing children’s literacy. The children will also be involved in experiences to develop their cultural capital e.g. forest school; visits to the library, shops, areas of local interest. The aim is to give the children a broader range of experiences to link to their learning, to talk about, to link to literature and to promote creativity.

### **Children with English as an Additional Language**

*“Speaking more than one language has lots of advantages for children”*

(Development Matters, 2021)

For children with EAL, as with all children, developing their speech, language and communication is a priority on which all other learning is built. The children are supported to develop their knowledge and use of English through sensitive play based activities using visual and physical cues.

- Children are assisted to understand the routines and activities within the setting through visual timetables, which remain consistent- for the majority- to provide security.
- Musical and rhyming activities are valuable for supporting language learning due to the rhythmic chanting and repeated refrains which support the children to articulate in an additional language.
- Books and literature are carefully selected that give visual cues, promote naming and that are rhythmic and repetitive.
- Makaton is used to promote children's learning as this enables the child to visualise the words used to communicate and supports their progress.
- Translation apps are used to promote communication and demonstrate the link between speech and writing.
- Children's languages and cultures are represented and multilingualism is celebrated in the environment and resources.
- Staff work closely with parents, using translators or apps to develop an understanding of the children's backgrounds and interests, which is implemented into children's specific targets.
- Staff encourage families to use their home language for linguistic as well as cultural reasons.
- Children are assessed at the beginning and end of the year according to DFE guidelines to how fluent their English is developing.

### References

Moylett, H. & Stewart, N. (2019) "*Editorial: Communication and Language*", Early education Journal, 87, p.3

Development Matters (2021)