



## SLD Department Visitor Information



The children in Wincheap Speech and Language Department are amazing! Many of them will have entered the SLD having struggled to access learning and wellbeing in their previous settings. Here in Wincheap SLD, the children respond well from their starting points, to the support, care and individual programmes put in place in relation to their individual needs that arise from a complex range of factors. The team is very proud to celebrate their individual achievements, with significant improvements in emotional wellbeing and communication being very marked.

Please read the following to find out about and understand a bit about how we deliver learning in the classrooms:

## Communication



The children are **amazing**, and always make significant progress in their communication and social interaction. Academic progress is usually in small sequential steps, and rates of progress are often variable, according to individual needs and challenges. We celebrate what the children *can* do and *learn* to do!

Children with speech and language disorders need to be taught the communication skills other children learn naturally. Early intervention in the form of collaborative specialised teaching and Speech and Language Therapy builds the best results. Our children regularly work one-to-one or in small group intervention sessions with a Speech and Language Therapist/Associate Practitioner, developing their skills through a range of techniques. Parents are always invited to attend a speech and language therapy session and parent workshops, and also to liaise with staff members as often as required

## Reading



We use a range of techniques to teach reading such as whole word sight reading as well as some phonics work – which can be particularly challenging for children with Speech and Language difficulties.

**Cued articulation is used alongside phonics-based teaching** to support teaching and learning as children may have difficulty isolating and reproducing sounds. In addition, many children **will find significant challenges with sequencing sounds**.

We also support the development of reading skills by using a range of symbols presented with words below when the focus is communication or comprehension; however if the focus is on using decoding skills to read, un-symbolised text will be used.

The texts used for teaching reading are differentiated to the abilities of the individual. The approach to developing comprehension is also differentiated, with many of our children finding it a challenge to infer from texts. Questions are targeted at the child's individual level of understanding (Language for Thinking level A, B, or C question words). Words such as who, what doing, where, when and why can prove particularly challenging for children with language difficulties.

## Writing



Writing puts an additional motor demand on our children and many of the children have fine motor, perceptual and spatial reasoning difficulties. **The capacity to remember letter formation and letter patterns**, is therefore also often affected. Practice in fine motor and perceptual skill development is carried out - for example working on keyboard skills, sensory circuits or Write From the Start

programme. As well as difficulties at single sound level and beyond, **many of our children do not have the internal model of standard grammatical structure that most of us absorb naturally and take for granted.** Use of the technology program 'Clicker' can help children access those missing structures and can also provide options with a predictive word processor.

## Differentiation



Differentiation may not always be obvious to visitors, but although resources may look similar, in many cases they are different eg. **a child may have more or less options** in a task, or a sentence building activity may be carried out using an **on screen model, an audio model or no model.**

- Because children need 1:1 at times, the others may be working on something independently while this happens. It will be something that they can manage on their own, and should not be viewed as lacking challenge. **Development of independence** is a positive opportunity.
- If children become reluctant to engage, there will always be a reason behind such behaviour and **failure to 'contain' a child's often complex emotions, could trigger a negative reaction** from which it may then take the child a long time to recover. Staff know each child well and will therefore employ professional integrity and sometimes tactical ignoring as appropriate, and will respect individual needs at all times.
- **Sometimes it is appropriate for the children to be doing the same task** - for example, if it is for initial assessment about understanding and ability with a particular concept. **They will have the opportunity to move onto an extension, or further practice** to consolidate, or they will receive **further support** if they have found it hard.
- The Jubilee Room, shared area and classroom may all be used during a lesson at different points. **Children may be able to concentrate better working away from a busy classroom environment.** This can include individuals or groups.
- **At times, children may need to be left to work independently.** They have worked on skills to let the adults know if they need support and will also aim to practise identifying what support they may need and be able to say why. This is all part of moving towards independent learning, and greater independence both in and out of school. **The processing of information** and responding to tasks for children with language and communication difficulties, can be especially challenging, and at times, they may need to carry out activities to enable them to have a 'brain break'. This may be a computer related task or, looking at a book, or simply relaxing and talking to a friend or trusted adult.
- **TAs spend time working on individual tasks with children** (EHC provision plan targets). They may also have to deal with any emotional difficulties as a priority. Children may need time- out to calm and refocus.

- A TA who is sitting beside a child during input will be ensuring **good listening skills and attention** are supported, and may be supervising the implementation of individual targets such as *showing* when the children do or don't understand – as well as listening to the input themselves.
- **Social skills are a focus** and therefore opportunities will be found to practise these in context, to allow generalisation of skills taught and to provide support in helping children to manage social situations and their feelings, and to express themselves as and when the need arises.

*"L had a good first week back, very tired by Friday. I was so delighted to see the children's assembly on Friday, and to hear L speak on stage in front of all the school, Just BRILLIANT! Thank you to all the staff, we really can see just how much L is already moving his development on in so many ways. His language is getting more discernible, I have heard him sing 'Happy Birthday', seen him stand on a stage and talk, and he has introduced himself as L—great steps forward.*

*Thank you"*

*"Everything the staff do in the unit (and the school), is for the children's benefit. My son can now have a conversation with me. He still has trouble with his words and their meanings, but it's still early days.*

*If it wasn't for the dedication from the team around him, I don't think he would be where he is today. I'm grateful he was able to be given a place here, as I know places are limited.*

*I am glad to say I'm a parent of a child that attends this school.*

*Thank you"*