



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 Infants 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 Foundation Stage we plan from the Early Years Foundation Stage Framework by providing daily opportunities to develop skills through listening, understanding and speaking.

Across Key Stage 1 Speaking and listening is planned from the National Curriculum and our Speedwell progression document. Vocabulary is woven throughout all subjects in the curriculum.

As a school we are enhancing the way we teach vocabulary by using some of the strategies and ideas from the 'Word Aware' program. Word Aware is a comprehensive and structured approach to use throughout the school to promote vocabulary 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'. We 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.

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. Three key interventions are used:

- Early Talk Boost
- Talking Tables
- Speech and language programs

Early Talk Boost and Talking Tables include 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.

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.