Including young people with speech and language impairments in secondary school

PART A
GUIDANCE FOR TEACHERS

Edinburgh City Council in collaboration with Afasic Scotland and supported by the Scottish Executive
THE PURPOSE OF THIS GUIDE

There are legal requirements\(^1\) on the education authority and its staff to ensure that all reasonable steps are taken to make the curriculum accessible and to remove barriers to learning for pupils with additional support needs.

In every secondary school, teachers work with pupils who have speech, language and communication difficulties recognising and supporting the pupils’ language and communication and associated learning difficulties. This Guide aims to support and extend effective practice, drawing upon experience in schools, the literature (see reference list in Appendices) and publications by Afasic.

The Guide focuses on pupils who have a specific difficulty with speech, language and communication. However, teachers of other pupils such as those with Moderate Learning Difficulties (MLD), English as an Additional Language (EAL), and pupils with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) may also benefit from some or all of the guidance offered here.

The Guide is in two parts:

Part A is intended for subject teachers and support for learning teachers in secondary schools, to alert them to the difficulties faced by some of their pupils, and to suggest ways of making the curriculum more accessible to them.

Part B provides a set of related materials for use by specialists delivering training within dedicated CPD time for groups of teachers in secondary schools.

How to use Part A

There are various ways in which Part A can be used, depending on the circumstances:

- Part A can be read by a teacher who finds him/herself for the first time with a pupil who has speech, language and/or communication difficulties. It will serve as an introduction to the difficulties the young person is likely to face and suggest ways of making the curriculum more accessible.

- If used in conjunction with a series of training sessions, participants can be supplied with copies of Part A, or relevant sections of it, and asked to read the relevant sections ahead of each session.

- Alternatively, the tutor can use material from Part A to inform the ‘taught’ part of a session, leaving participants to use Part A to revise and consolidate their understanding.

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How to use Part B

Part B is divided into 4 sessions. Each session is comprised of an introductory or review component (derived from Part A of the Guide) followed by workshop activities designed to promote discussion and shared understanding. Each session will take approximately 90 minutes.

All the workshop materials, including overhead transparencies, are included in Part B. The tutor should, of course, be familiar with the content of Part A.

At the end of each session, tutors are asked to distribute and collect feedback questionnaires. These will enable the tutor and/or the team organising the CPD to evaluate the usefulness of the materials and to make any appropriate amendments.

The materials can be presented either by a speech and language therapist or by a support for learning teacher with knowledge and experience of working with pupils who have language and communication difficulties. If delivered by a teacher, he/she should ideally have attended CPD led by a speech and language therapist on language and communication difficulties in secondary school aged pupils.

Word Bank

The Word Bank referred to is a piece of computer software designed to help pupils with vocabulary learning difficulties to acquire the large number of specialised words they will encounter in the secondary curriculum. Essentially, it is a database that allows subject teachers to input key vocabulary, definitions and pictures, and to print out selected content in a variety of formats. It is being developed and piloted in a few Edinburgh schools as this publication goes to print.
FOREWORD

These guidelines have been developed from work undertaken to help support the inclusion of children and young people with speech and language and communication difficulties in Edinburgh.

Following the initiative by the City of Edinburgh Council, Afasic Scotland, the voluntary organisation working in the field of speech and language impairments, secured support from the Scottish Executive to extend and pilot this development before ultimately making the guidelines available nationwide.

The development has been hall-marked by collaboration between the core group of Speech and Language Therapists who have worked in the schools and committed teachers who have contributed enthusiastically to the thinking and the outcomes. Together, they have informed the content and approach of these guidelines to offer practical professional development support.

The CPD component of these guidelines includes evaluation and feedback which will be invaluable in ensuring that we continue to reflect on how teachers and others working in schools can best be supported in working to meet the needs of all young people.

Acknowledgements

Many people have contributed to this Guide.

Special thanks are due to Dr. Marysia Nash, Specialist Speech and Language Therapist, Royal Hospital for Sick Children, Edinburgh, whose experience and expertise provided much of the content, and to Leila Mackie and Lesley Sargent, Speech and Language Therapists, who made significant contributions.

The sections on Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder and on Developmental Co-ordination disorder were provided by Dr. A.O’Hare, Consultant Paediatrician, Sue Dible, Clinical Specialist ASD Occupational Therapist, and Mandy Adamson, Senior Occupational Therapist, Edinburgh ASL Health Team, provided information about the Occupational Therapist’s role in secondary schools.

Discussions with support for learning and subject teachers, visits to schools with specialist resources across Scotland, and information and review provided by the members of the Secondary School Steering group, Visiting Teacher Support Service, Educational Psychology and parents from AFASIC Edinburgh have also informed the document. We are grateful to them all for their helpful comments and suggestions.

Editing was carried out by Hilary McColl who also prepared the document for publication.
PART A

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Books

Afasic Scotland (2002) Exploring Participation: Outcomes of Afasic’s enquiry into participation by children and young people with speech and language impairments in the process of decision-making concerning their education.


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REFERENCES

Articles


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References
REFERRAL FORM FOR SPEECH & LANGUAGE THERAPY ASSESSMENT

Name: ___________________________________________________
DOB: ___________________________________________________

Address: _______________________________________________________________________________________________

Post Code: _______________________________
Tel No: ______________________________

GP (Name and Address)
_____________________________________________________________________________________________________

HV/School Doctor: _____________________________________________
Tel No: ______________________________

Name of Parent/Carer:
_____________________________________________________________________________________________________

Professionals involved: _______________________________________
Tel No: ______________________________

_____________________________________________________________________________________________________

Tel No: ______________________________

School/Nursery/Playgroup: ________________________________
AM/PM

Main language spoken in the home: _____________________________
Interpreter required: YES/NO

BIRTH HISTORY AND GENERAL DEVELOPMENT:

DATE AND RESULT OF LAST HEARING TEST:

DESCRIPTION OF SPEECH/LANGUAGE/COMMUNICATION PROBLEM: (OR FEEDING DIFFICULTY):

Parental Views:

Please attach relevant reports, letters, assessment sheets etc.

Referred by: _____________________________________________
Date: ______________________________

Designation: ___________________________________________________________________________________________

Address: _______________________________________________________________________________________________

NB The Speech and Language Therapist can only accept referrals if consent has been obtained from the parent/carer.

Parental Consent ١ I confirm that parental consent has been given

Signature: __________________________________________________

Please use the back of this form to give additional information and RETURN to:

Speech & Language Therapy Department
18 Rillbank Terrace Edinburgh EH9 1LL
• keeping a personal word book organised and up to date
• checking with the subject teacher or the support for learning teacher that you have identified the most important words for direct teaching

As this publication goes to print a piece of computer software called The Word Bank is being developed and piloted in Edinburgh schools. It is designed to help pupils with vocabulary learning difficulties to acquire the large number of specialised words they will encounter in the secondary curriculum. Essentially, it is a database that allows subject teachers to input key vocabulary, definitions and pictures, and to print out selected content in a variety of formats.

In the absence of such software, however, teachers can still help pupils to build up a folder or notebook of key curriculum vocabulary and definitions, organised according to subject, which can be used to support vocabulary development at home or in school.

A word about idioms

Idioms such as ‘right up my street’, ‘you’ve got the wrong end of the stick’ are commonly used by teachers and in text. They may need their meanings explained and the young person helped to remember what they mean. They can perhaps be ‘collected’ in a section of the pupil’s personal word bank together with their meanings, so that this can be referred to as required.
Appendix 3

The vocabulary learning process and strategies to support learning

Many pupils with speech language and communication difficulties have poor vocabulary. These pupils understand and use far fewer words than they should for their age. This can have an effect on their understanding of what they hear and read, their ability to express their ideas and their capacity to learn all the specific subject words for the various areas of the curriculum.

The reason why they have poor vocabulary is often because they are not able to learn new vocabulary as easily and efficiently as their peers. Remember what it was like when you tried to learn the made-up words in Section 1. From your experience of trying to learn these new words problems might arise when the pupil has to learn:

- the pronunciation of the word, e.g. ‘photosynthesis’
- the meaning, e.g.……
- the correct association between the word and the meaning, e.g. that photosynthesis means X and not Y

Pupils with vocabulary learning difficulties need to expand their vocabulary overall and to learn the vocabulary which is central to success with the subjects they are studying. Learning and retaining core curriculum vocabulary is very important for subjects such as science, maths, geography, home economics etc. Vocabulary expansion is particularly important for English.

To help the pupil, an important first step is to identify the important words that they have to learn and keep a record of these in a format that is organised and easy to use. Try not to work on too many new words at once – prioritise where possible. When going over the words with the pupil it is important to:

- Make sure the pupil can repeat the word correctly (especially important for longer words). You may have to break the word into individual syllables for the young person to copy. It may help to encourage the young person to identify and remember familiar bits within unfamiliar words e.g. the pot in hippopotamus.
- Talk about the meaning- does it have similarities with other words that he is trying to learn? Compare and contrast words and their meanings.
- Can you group the words in any way that will make associations clearer?
- Visual strategies which give clues to the meaning may be particularly helpful, for example:
  – colouring the words on the basis of meaning (e.g. blue for all words relating to water)
  –writing the word in a way that makes the meaning obvious (graphics), for example, the word ‘convex’ written in that shape
  – making the layout of a vocabulary list give clues to the meaning
- Help the pupil to put the words into a sentence that shows he understands the meaning.

If the pupil you are working with has vocabulary problems then helping him learn and retain new vocabulary has to be an ongoing process. That means:
SECTION 1
Understanding the nature of speech, language and communication difficulties

Definition

Teachers will already be familiar with pupils whose language skills are less well developed that those of their peers for a variety of reasons. However, the literature recognises a group of pupils whose difficulties with language have generally been apparent since pre-school and whose language difficulties are considered to be specific. These children and young people may be described as having a ‘developmental language disorder’ or a ‘specific language impairment’, which Leonard (1998) defines as follows:

...children who show a significant limitation in language ability, yet the factors usually accompanying language learning problems – such as hearing impairment, low non-verbal intelligence test scores, and neurological damage – are not evident.²

Prevalence

The prevalence of speech and language impairment (SLI) is about 7%. SLI is more likely to be seen in males than in females, and children with SLI are more likely than other children to have parents and siblings with a history of language learning problems. There are areas of language that are especially difficult for children with SLI, but the heterogeneity of language profiles in this population is nevertheless considerable. Treatment improves these children’s language learning, but the deficits in language do not go away easily.³

Severity varies greatly from those who have very severe difficulties understanding and using language to those whose difficulties are more subtle but may still impact on their educational progress and social development.

The components of language

This section describes the four components of language and looks at the difficulties that pupils may experience. These components may be familiar but the way in which language acquisition may be disrupted in each of these components and the impact on a pupil’s ability to understand and express him herself using language may be less so.

We can understand the characteristics of speech, language and/or communication difficulties by making a distinction between the difficulties children and young people have in understanding spoken language (comprehension) and the problems they have in expressing their ideas orally (expression).

² Leonard (1998)
³ Ibid
Comprehension and expression depend on a set of components that interlink and impact on each other. They are represented in the diagram below.

Fig 1: Components of language and their relationship to comprehension and expression

1. speech sounds
2. vocabulary
3. grammar
4. pragmatics

expression
comprehension

Pupils may have difficulty with one or more of these components and the severity of difficulty they may have in each may also vary. Difficulties may predominantly affect expressive language, or both comprehension and expression. Thus different pupils with speech, language and communication difficulties may have very different profiles and their profiles may also change with age. The effect of spoken language difficulties on pupils' educational progress will be described later in this Guide.

1. Speech sounds

Speech sounds make up spoken words. Although this appears almost self evident, to understand language effectively we need to be able to discriminate between similar sounding words and identify word boundaries. When expressing ourselves we need to be able to pronounce the sounds in words accurately and in the right order.

A pupil with difficulties in this area may:

- have problems understanding because of difficulty discriminating sounds within words and/or identifying word boundaries. For example they may perceive words incorrectly, e.g. hear factory as 'fat tree' or coal as 'goal'.
- when expressing themselves, make mistakes in pronunciation that are similar to those made by a much younger child. Speech sound problems in secondary age pupils, however, are more likely to occur when pupils attempt to say longer, complex or unfamiliar words. Errors may occur when sounds are omitted or incorrectly sequenced within the word e.g. ‘porter’ for ‘reporter’, ‘satiskits’ for ‘statistics’.

NOTE: A small number of pupils with speech sound difficulties have Articulatory/Verbal Dyspraxia. This is an uncommon disorder but one in which pupils have particular difficulties with pronunciation. Despite their best efforts they may make several inaccurate attempts to say a word. It is a disorder which tends to persist and in severe cases a pupil with articulatory/verbal dyspraxia may need to use sign language or technology in order to communicate.

Appendix 2

ASL Supporting Learning Profile (for secondary pupils)

Speech and Language Therapy Section

Name: 
Date of Birth: 
Completed by: 
Date completed: 
Suggested SMART target (if appropriate): 
Nature of any difficulty 
Support strategies: 
Attention control/Listening skills: 
Understanding of language: 
Expressive language: 
2. Vocabulary

Vocabulary refers to our knowledge of the words that language is made up of. It is a very large component of language and one that generally continues to expand throughout our lives. It contributes greatly to our comprehension of what people say. Also well-developed accessible vocabulary knowledge helps us to express our ideas clearly, accurately and succinctly.

A pupil with difficulties in this area may:

- understand fewer words than they should for their age. Poorly developed vocabulary comprehension may not be immediately obvious but can have significant detrimental effects on a pupil’s understanding of what is being taught.
- have limited expressive vocabulary or have difficulty finding a particular word to convey his/her ideas. This problem is sometimes known as a word-finding difficulty (WFD). The characteristics of the language of pupils with WFD are presented in Table 1.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 1: Characteristics of word-finding difficulty</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Getting stuck for words – taking a long time to get out what they want to say.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Misnaming things – e.g. ‘lion’ for ‘tiger’, ‘pliers’ for ‘spanner’.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Pronouncing the word incorrectly e.g. ‘mapmin’ for ‘napkin’, ‘minotilers’ for ‘binoculars’. This may occur because, in the learning process, the pupil has stored an inaccurate form of the word in memory.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Talking around the word.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Overusing vague words such as ‘thingy’, ‘stuff’ and multipurpose verbs such as ‘got’ and ‘put’.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Lack of fluency when expressing ideas.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3. Grammar

Grammar specifies the rules for how words are put together into sentences. To understand language effectively we need to be familiar with how the use of verb tenses, pronouns, word order, word endings and sentence constructions convey meaning. In expressing our ideas we need to have a command of these grammatical aspects and produce language that is free of grammatical error. Normally, grammatical development continues into adolescence.

A pupil with difficulties in this area may:

- misunderstand verb tense forms. This makes it hard for them to determine when something is happening or has happened;
have difficulty working out who or what is being referred to when pronouns or other words are substituted for the noun or verb;

misunderstand complex grammatical constructions;

have difficulty using the complex sentences expected for their age and needed in order to express more complicated ideas;

omit parts of sentences, especially the small words such as ‘the’, ‘in’, ‘of’, ‘a’, ‘by’. E.g.: ‘I went cinema and seen Lord of Rings.’

use the wrong small words, e.g. ‘The cat was drawn at David.’

put words in the wrong order, e.g. ‘I don’t know where is it.

make persistent grammatical errors.

Some examples of expressive grammatical difficulties are given below.

Examples

The boy is saying whenever will the classes finished.

The granddad and the grandmother is doing the garden.

By the time I get my lunch the bell would be already gone.

The man is saying the cars can’t go because the peoples wants to.

from a 13 year old boy with expressive grammar difficulties

4. Pragmatics

Pragmatics refers to the skills that help us to communicate effectively in social situations. Pragmatic comprehension allows us to understand meaning as the other speaker intends it by interpreting the language used, in conjunction with non-verbal aspects of communication such as facial expression, tone of voice and the social context. Pragmatic comprehension also refers to our ability to understand figurative language such as idioms e.g. ‘pull your socks up.’

When we express ourselves, our pragmatic skills enable us to make adjustments to what we say and how we say it so that communication is socially appropriate. Pragmatic skills are very important in conversation and social interaction.

A pupil with difficulties in this area may:

• have problems ‘reading’ their listener’s interest level and emotional state conveyed through facial expression, body orientation, tone of voice;

• fail to understand differences between banter/friendly teasing and bullying;

• be poor at inferring meaning or reading between the lines;

• misunderstand non-literal language such as idioms (e.g. ‘pulling his hair out’);

• fail to appreciate indirect requests, e.g. ‘There are jotters to collect here’;

• not pick up on sarcasm;

Appendix 1

Formats for transferring information about speech / language and communication skills as a pupil starts secondary school

For pupils transferring from primary language class to mainstream secondary school

Information transferred to secondary school teaching staff is likely to be composed of:

1. **Full report**, which may be written jointly by SLT and Class Teacher, including the following information:

   - **Nature of difficulties**
     Information about the types of difficulties the young person has, including any diagnoses.

   - **Background Summary**
     Information about the young person’s language development and the support they have received.

   - **Ongoing Issues**
     Particular areas of continuing difficulty are described with practical strategies to help.
     This may be presented as an ASL/Supporting Learning Profile (see Appendix 2)

2. **Language Classes may also provide information written in conjunction with the pupil that provides teaching staff with a picture of the pupil’s insight into their own areas of difficulty, any strategies they employ, their expectations of high school, and general information about what they are like and what they are interested in.**

These documents can be circulated to teaching staff as appropriate.

For pupils transferring from a mainstream class to a mainstream secondary school

Pupils who are transferring from a mainstream class will not have received the same level of intensive input from the SLT service in their Primary 7 year as pupils who are transferring from a language class. However, their SLT will be able to provide information about their areas of difficulty and ideas for support strategies. This information may be presented using the ASL/Supporting Learning Profile (Appendix 2) and can be circulated to all subject teachers.
have problems adapting their style of speech to be appropriate for the person they are talking to and the situation they are in;
• use inappropriate gesture, facial expression, eye contact and tone of voice;
• have difficulty knowing when and how to start, take turns in and finish a conversation;
• assume knowledge their listener does not have or provide unnecessary information;
• have problems keeping to the point; they may go off on a tangent on a favourite topic, e.g. start speaking about trains when someone mentions school timetables.

Pragmatic difficulties also impact on social behaviour. Pupils with pragmatic difficulties find it hard to transfer past experience of social situations to new ones. This may be hard for other people to understand. Unless school staff and other pupils are aware of this and make accommodation, it can lead to significant difficulties in maintaining good relationships and a pupil’s progress in learning.

The longitudinal picture for spoken and written language

Spoken language
Research which studied children with speech and language difficulties at four years of age, at five and a half years\textsuperscript{4}, eight and a half years and again at 15-16 years\textsuperscript{5} shows that children whose problems were severe and persistent at five and a half years, had long term difficulties with all aspects of spoken language functioning at age 15–16 years. They also fell further and further behind their peer group in vocabulary growth over time.

Written language
Other research shows that:

• Pupils with language difficulties are at greater risk of literacy difficulties\textsuperscript{6}.

• Young people who had had severe and persistent spoken language difficulties at five and a half years had literacy skills that were significantly poorer than their peers, with difficulties evident in reading and spelling\textsuperscript{7}.

• Even pupils whose language difficulties appeared to ‘resolve’ by 5 and a half years had some difficulties at 15-16 years. When compared to age matched controls on tests of spoken language and literacy skills, these young people performed significantly less well than their peers on tests of literacy and phonological processing (i.e. the ability to discriminate, segment, blend and manipulate the sounds within words).

Thus problems with language do not just go away, but may change in presentation as a child grows older.

\textsuperscript{4} Bishop and Edmunson (1987)  
\textsuperscript{5} Stothard et al. (1998)  
\textsuperscript{6} Snowling et al 2000; Catts 1996; Freedman and Wilg 1995; Lewis and Freebairn 1992;  
\textsuperscript{7} Stothard et al. (1998)
Literacy difficulties in pupils with speech, language and communication difficulties

As reported on page 7, pupils with significant spoken language difficulties are quite likely to have problems with literacy. They may have problems with deciphering print (decoding) and with spelling and these difficulties may be underpinned by similar phonological processing problems to those at the core of dyslexia. Thus, some pupils with spoken language difficulties may have quite similar problems to those with dyslexia (and indeed benefit from some similar management). However pupils with language difficulties may have reading comprehension problems and difficulties with formulating language in addition to, or instead of, the more typically ‘dyslexic’ literacy problems.

The profile of difficulty an individual pupil experiences depends on the precise level of breakdown of their phonological processing skills, in interaction with their other language abilities.

The links between language and literacy are explored further in Section 2.

Disorders associated with speech, language and communication difficulties

1. Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)

Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) is one of the most common neuro-developmental disorders which may persist into adult life. It occurs more commonly in children with speech and language delay/disorder than in the general population. Children with ADHD will present as having developmentally inappropriate levels of distractability and impulsivity.

In fact, ADHD seldom exists as a discrete entity as the majority of children will have associated impairments and this might include a speech and language delay/disorder or developmental coordination disorder. The diagnosis of ADHD is clinical and should be undertaken by a child psychiatrist or a paediatrician familiar with neuro-developmental disorders. A number of helpful rating scales validated against normal behaviour can be employed and, with these, an input from educational staff and parents is usually sought. The aim in the management of ADHD is to reduce or minimise symptoms and to improve quality of life and learning. Support can take the form of school based or psycho-social interventions or, in some cases, medication.

2. Developmental Motor Coordination Disorder

Developmental Motor Coordination Disorder frequently accompanies speech and language delays and disorders. It is associated with delay in the normal acquisition of coordination and skilled movement. A diagnosis of developmental coordination disorder is made where the child has delayed fine and gross motor skills which are out of step with other aspects of the child’s development and interfere with their activities of daily
Table 12: Additional indications from observations of behaviour

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Behavioural problems</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Poor self esteem</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low motivation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anxious or depressed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Withdrawn, possibly due to social communication difficulties</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fidgety/restless/impulsive – may become associated with other pupils with similar behaviours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aggressive/oppositional – may be frustrated due to difficulties with communication</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Problems making and maintaining friendships</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reluctance to participate in group activities; inappropriate coping mechanisms e.g. bullying, clowning, copying, truancy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seen as odd by peers – may be rigid in following routines or rules; may be bullied, teased or laughed at</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Loner – doesn’t know how to go about mixing with peers</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Living and academic progress. It excludes coordination problems which arise from a neurological disorder or pervasive communication disorder (e.g. Autism).

As handwriting problems often accompany developmental coordination disorder, penmanship difficulties can compound the problems with spelling and written language that the child is already contending with. Assessment of developmental coordination disorder requires the involvement of a paediatrician with training in neuro-developmental diagnosis and a paediatric occupational therapist. Management is both supportive, to enable the child to accomplish activities (e.g. through the use of ICT), and therapeutic, to improve the child’s underlying coordination skills, but there is no evidence base at present for any pharmacological treatment.

3. Social, emotional and behavioural problems in pupils with speech, language and communication difficulties

Research\(^8\) indicates that pupils with language impairments are at a higher risk of developing secondary social and emotional difficulties. During adolescence a pupil may have increased awareness of their difficulties. They may, however, be unsure where exactly their difficulties lie and not fully understand why they experience such difficulties thus heightening their vulnerability to emotional and behavioural problems.

The following behaviours may be observed:
- low self-esteem
- withdrawal
- apparent boredom
- lack of self-confidence
- work avoidance
- truanting
- difficulty following rules and boundaries

There is general acceptance that responses such as these are understandable in an individual who has perhaps experienced considerable school failure, has an awareness of their own difficulties and who might be subject to the influences of the changing adolescent emotional state.

It may be that a pupil who is presenting with behavioural problems may also, in some instances, have an underlying specific language difficulty that has not been identified.

4. Other associated characteristics

The following characteristics can sometimes be identified in pupils with on-going language and communication problems: \(^9\)


\(^{9}\) Adapted from Ehren and Lenz (1989).
Motivational characteristics
- failure to see the relationship between effort and success
- difficulty in setting and achieving goals

Learning characteristics
- slower to process spoken language and formulate their own language
- limited auditory memory, making it difficult to retain verbal information
- problems with concrete thinking and abstract reasoning
- do not use effective or efficient study routines
- difficulty distinguishing the important from the unimportant
- problems integrating new information into what they know and transferring information to new situations
- lack of active learning and self-taught strategies to assist with learning

Organisational characteristics
- problems carrying out multiple tasks simultaneously, e.g. copying from the board and listening at the same time
- poor self-organisational skills – remembering what to take and where to be

Note: Not all students with language disorders will present the same difficulties or range of difficulties and all the problems displayed by these students may not be explained by the language disorder. However, difficulties in the areas described in pages 9 – 10 will have an impact on a pupil’s ability to cope with secondary school, both academically and socially.

Table 11: Indicators of possible speech, language and communication problems

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Problems with speaking, listening and the curriculum</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Concentration and attention problems</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slow to respond; problems processing information</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inappropriate responses to verbal instructions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seem unsure what to do, may ask again and again or may ‘switch off’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appears disinterested – finds it hard to keep up with the pace or to ask for help.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reluctant to speak</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Difficulty organising or conveying thoughts (spoken or written)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Problems providing verbal explanations and reasons or telling stories</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Difficulty participating in class discussion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Word finding difficulties (see Section1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Makes grammatical errors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Difficulty discussing abstract ideas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Takes things literally</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poor conversational skills – difficulty taking turns, keeping on topic, saying appropriate things</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poor at reading the situation –</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• doesn’t pick up on non-verbal cues such as facial expression and gesture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• butts into conversations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• doesn’t pick up when someone wants to finish a conversation etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• doesn’t pick up on emotional content of what people are saying</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trouble gaining information from books or spoken information</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Difficulty abstracting the main theme or idea</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Difficulty answering questions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Problems making inferences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Difficulty following the rules of the classroom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Homework often not completed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disorganised – forgets books, equipment, homework, school routines.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Adapted from Patchell and Hand (1993), Lee and Shapiro-Fine (1994) and presentation by Dr Amanda Kirby 2004
secondary school, that these pupils start to struggle academically. Again it may be the case that some of these pupils are identified as having generalised learning difficulties with no awareness of their more specific language difficulty.

- Some pupils may have had adequate pre-adolescent language skills but fail to develop the higher-level language skills that are normally acquired in adolescence. These pupils may also be regarded as having general learning difficulties as their school progress deteriorates in the secondary school setting, without an understanding that they have a specific difficulty with language.

It is therefore important to consider that pupils who are failing academically may have an underlying lack of language competence and may not be receiving support that properly addresses their needs and enables them to fulfil their potential.

Language difficulties in secondary school pupils

Indicators for teachers

No one sign is in itself sufficient or necessary to indicate a language problem. Most students with a language impairment have a cluster of indicators. Some students may show one behaviour in one context and another in a different time or place. Also, not all difficulties with schoolwork or behavioural problems are necessarily the result of a language disorder.

The characteristics of speech, language and communication difficulties and their impact on the curriculum have already been described. However the checklists in Tables 11 and 12 may help to identify pupils who may benefit from assessment by Speech and Language Therapy and advice/support if required.

Staff who are concerned about a pupil’s speech, language and/or communication and who wish a Speech and Language Therapist’s opinion should first discuss this with the pupil’s parents and with the pupil, taking account of any school or education authority policy on referral to other agencies.

The Speech and Language Therapy Service in Edinburgh will accept direct referral from education staff (or from parents) but it is helpful if the appropriate form is used and sent to the address given on it. An sample form is provided on page 51.
Continuing professional development (CPD)

Pupils with speech, language and communication difficulties will be most successfully included if all school staff, teaching and non-teaching, understand the nature of language and communication difficulties and the strategies that support learning in these pupils.

CPD opportunities should be provided for teachers and learning assistants. These may be provided within the school or through the education department. Staff may learn from the good practice within their own or in other schools through observation and/or shadowing. It may also be appropriate for staff to attend conferences.

Management staff in schools should consider the CPD needs of their staff and ensure that opportunities are kept available in the CPD programme within the school or that staff are given leave to attend relevant CPD. Within the education authority, CPD may be provided by SLTs but support for learning staff may initiate CPD based on their own or prepared material. (See Part B for staff development materials).

Opportunities to repeat and to gain further, more specialised training should be ongoing.

CPD for new staff and refresher sessions for existing staff should be provided where required.

Opportunities for joint professional development (e.g. Teachers and SLTs) should be encouraged.

Identifying pupils with speech, language and communication difficulties

In most cases, language difficulties have been identified pre-school or in primary. Support may have been provided, through a special language class placement, Outreach or Community SLT and specialised teaching or support for learning. The needs of children with more severe difficulties should continue to be recognised as they enter and progress through secondary school.

In addition to those pupils who are clearly recognised as language and communication impaired, Ehren and Lenz (1989) identify three other groups of pupils who have language difficulties in secondary schools:

- Some pupils have a history of language impairment that was identified pre-school. They have had intervention that may have helped but not ‘cured’ them. Their language difficulties however may be less evident as they get older. They have difficulty with schoolwork but the language impairment at the root of their problem is sometimes forgotten and their needs are viewed as being more generalised learning difficulties.
- Some pupils have language problems that manifested themselves in subtle ways when they were younger and were therefore not picked up at that time. It is only when curriculum demands require a greater degree of language competence, as in
Pupils with pragmatic language impairment, are likely to have problems forming relationships through their reduced capacity to understand the language of emotion, think in the abstract and share another’s perspective.

Social and emotional immaturity can add to any difficulties with social interaction and young people may become social isolated and vulnerable to teasing or bullying. Pupils with language and/or communication difficulties are also at risk of developing a negative view of themselves and poor self-esteem.

All pupils with social interaction and communication difficulties may require some degree of structured or informal social support to meet their communication needs. This support should be based on individual assessment of each pupil’s needs and can form part of an IEP where appropriate. Examples of support include the following:

Table 10: Strategies for supporting social interaction and inclusion

- A modified PSD curriculum to teach social and personal skills within a small group setting, with an emphasis on developing functional life skills.
- Provision of a ‘haven’ where pupils can choose to spend break times if accessing the main playground or dining hall is too socially challenging.
- Group support, for example through a lunch club, a social skills group, or other structured group activities.
- Peer support, for example through a buddy system using S6 pupils or perhaps class peers.
- Small group or one-to-one support, to address specific issues, such as bullying, through discussion or social stories.
- A named person to support the pupil as required, perhaps with designated time to discuss any problems.
- Having an option of moving between classes and in lunch and break times a couple of minutes early to reduce anxiety associated with busy corridors and long lunch queues, etc.
- Maintaining close links between school and home, perhaps through a home-school diary. A pupil’s needs may present differently at home and at school, and it is important that all those involved with the pupil are aware of issues that may impact on the pupil’s social and emotional well-being.

Staff with guidance responsibilities should be aware that a pupil with complex language and communication difficulties may be at risk of long term problems with self-esteem and mental health. Maintaining strong links with all the agencies involved with the pupil (e.g. social work, educational psychology, allied health professionals) is vital to ensure the pupil’s needs are adequately met.

SECTION 2

Learning needs, supports and strategies

General challenges of primary-secondary transition

School staff are well aware of the significant differences and the increased demands experienced when pupils move from primary to secondary school. Consequently many schools support this transition through, for example:

- meetings for teachers from the primary school, the new secondary school, parents and other professionals who are involved to discuss the transition, the pupil’s needs and suitable supports;
- open days for pupils and parents at the new secondary school;
- transition groups for more vulnerable pupils at the end of term or through the summer prior to starting at the new school;
- buddy systems – S6 pupils may support identified vulnerable S1 pupils as they start at their new secondary;
- opportunities for pupils and parents to meet with support for learning staff before starting school.

Pupils with speech, language and communication difficulties, however, will find the secondary school environment even more challenging than their typically developing peers. This section provides guidance on support arrangements that can help to address these needs.

In pages 23 to 36, the impact of speech, language and communication difficulties on the child’s academic progress and ability to cope socially will be described. Where possible, support strategies are also offered.

General strategies to support pupils with speech, language and communication difficulties

Primary school pupils with speech, language and communication difficulties may have experienced specialist educational provision, such as a language class; specialist outreach support for a mainstream school; additional in-school support; or more generic support for learning within class. A Speech and Language Therapist is usually involved if a pupil has significant difficulties, but a pupil may have been discharged from speech and language therapy because of non-attendance or because he/she was no longer benefiting from intervention.

Some pupils with social communication difficulties may have superficially good language skills, sufficient to enable them to cope with the primary curriculum. Support in the form of social communication groups may have been offered by speech and language therapy and/or visiting teaching services.
1. Managing a smooth transition

Many of the measures routinely provided by schools will be helpful in facilitating a smooth and informed transition to secondary school for pupils who have significant language and communication difficulties. Such measures should always include liaison between all staff involved at the primary stage, appropriate members of staff from the secondary school and parents. Up to date information/assessment should be available.

The following people may be involved

- Staff from the primary school
- Staff from the secondary school
- Speech and Language Therapist (SLT)
- Educational Psychologist
- Neighbourhood Support Coordinator
- Visiting Teacher (Support Service)
- Occupational Therapist (OT)
- Parents
- Pupil

The aim is of this liaison is to ensure that:

- the secondary school is fully aware of the pupil’s attainments and the nature and likely impact of their speech, language and communication difficulties on their academic and social progress;

- pupils’ needs are identified in the audit, to ensure appropriate levels of support;

- a realistic assessment is made of how much time a pupil will require to support and consolidate their learning. This may mean that the pupil’s curriculum is restricted by one or more subjects. Because of the demands inherent in learning a modern language, following consultation with the pupil and his/her parents the pupil may be withdrawn from this subject as a first choice. However some pupils find the early stages of modern language learning quite enjoyable and rewarding, and this may be the only experience of foreign culture that they ever receive. Careful consideration should therefore be given to the way in which the curriculum is restricted in the first instance. If at a later stage the subject becomes too onerous, the situation can be reviewed; (see also pages 18/19);

- the Speech and Language Therapist is involved in the transition process and provides a summary of the pupil’s language and/or communication difficulties. (Possible formats for transferring this information are included in Appendices 1 and 2);

- additional support for the transfer is provided for those pupils who require it. Some pupils (particularly those with social communication difficulties) may find the changes involved in transfer to secondary more stressful than their peers. They may benefit from individualised preparation for the transfer including:
  - pictures of teachers with their names;
  - a map of the school layout;
  - timetable provided earlier, with specific teaching about how to use it;
  - written descriptions of what will be expected / what will happen, etc. to support their understanding of what will happen when they arrive at the new school. This

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 9: New curriculum vocabulary and the pupil with language and communication difficulties: A special case for consolidation.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>FOcussed support to ensure that new words central to their understanding of specific subject areas is required.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The use of a word bank is recommended.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support staff in class should identify new vocabulary as it arises and additional opportunities (beyond those offered in class) to learn the pronunciation and meaning of these words should be provided in school and, if appropriate, at home.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning of cross curricular vocabulary may need to be specifically targeted.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vocabulary enrichment in English may be required.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Computer software such as Star Spell® and Cloze–Pro© may be helpful for vocabulary learning.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dictionaries available should be up-to-date and where possible have a restricted defining vocabulary so that pupils can understand the definitions. A Collins CoBuild Dictionary may be a particularly helpful resource.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>See also Appendix 3.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5. Social interaction and inclusion

Adolescent interaction and friendships make particularly high demands on social communication skills and pupils with language and communication difficulties may experience problems with the social demands of the classroom and break times.

Following teacher talk and pupil banter, switching between different ‘modes’ of address and teaching styles between classes, following a group discussion in social studies or a conversation in the dining hall; all these situations can pose problems for pupils with language and social communication difficulties.

Some pupils experience social problems as well as their difficulties with vocabulary and grammar. They may, for example, struggle to join in with a group discussion, either in class or at break times, and this can impact both on their learning opportunities and on their social inclusion. Other pupils have more specific difficulties with social interaction and may be referred to as having a pragmatic language impairment.

For further details about the resources mentioned in Table 9, see the Reference section.

Crystal (1987)
Reflection Point: vocabulary learning (cont.)

Task B Without looking back, complete the following grid:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name the vitamin found in mangoes which affects mood</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What substance found in muscles is necessary for dancing?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What is Tracopertass?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

If you got them all right well done! If not, what kinds of mistakes did you make? In this task, which mimics some of the vocabulary learning demands a pupil might encounter, there are three possible ways you could have gone wrong. You might have:

- had trouble remembering part or all of the words' pronunciations accurately (the words’ phonological forms);
- forgotten all or part of the meaning (the words’ semantics);
- wrongly associated word and meaning e.g. remembered ‘trincorp’ as a tear in your ligament.

Pupils with vocabulary learning difficulties might have difficulty with one or all of the above.

Strategies to support vocabulary learning

Strategies to help pupils with speech, language and communications difficulties can be found in Table 9 on the next page. Further strategies to support vocabulary learning are described in the Appendix 3.

may include information about transport, the daily timetable, teachers, what happens during break and lunch times, and so on;

- teaching some new vocabulary they will encounter (for example the subject names and an introduction to their content, staff and their roles, areas in the school);;
- In some cases video and video conferencing may be used to familiarise a pupil with their new school. Videos can be viewed often and may have subtitles;

- pupils are involved and their views taken into account

In 2000, legislation was introduced requiring education authorities to have due regard to the views of a child or young person in decisions that significantly affect them. Age and maturity must be taken into consideration and a language impairment will have implications for how the child/young person is supported to express their views. An investigation into the extent of participation by young people carried out by Afasic Scotland in 2002 with the support of the Scottish Executive noted that even where young people were involved, they were unclear as to the purpose of their participation must be meaningful if it is to be helpful.

- parents are involved in and fully informed about the transition process

Orr13 highlights the need for parents to be clear about the purpose of the provision and the operational guidelines that determine school practice. They must also be confident in robust interagency working that is characterised by effective liaison and a clear understanding of the associated professional roles;

The Code of Practice for the Additional Support for Learning Act14 provides detailed information regarding arrangements for supporting pupils with additional support needs in their transition from primary to secondary school and any other school change.

2. Communication and collaboration

Good communication and time for collaboration and liaison are central to the pupil’s successful inclusion. Parents need a channel of communication with staff and staff with parents because the pupils themselves may not understand or pass on information effectively. Parents can become stressed and feel powerless, yet a brief chat, note or email can often sort things out.

Teachers need time to work collaboratively with their colleagues and with other services such as speech and language therapy. Such time should be identified and protected for this purpose. In particular:

- Pupil information should be distributed to relevant teaching staff

Information will have been shared between primary and secondary before the pupil starts in S1. It is important that this information is appropriately summarised in a format that makes it easy for all school staff to understand the pupil’s language/communication difficulties and the likely impact on their learning. Possible formats for this information are presented in Appendices 1 and 2. Care should be taken that this information is

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10 Hayman, K (2005)
11 Standards in Scotland’s Schools Etc. Act 2000
13 Orr, M (2000)
14 SEED Code of Practice for the Additional Support for Learning Act (2005)
shared and, if appropriate, updated from year to year as pupils progress up the school. It may be helpful to have a named person who has the responsibility to ensure that this takes place.

- An early review of a pupil’s progress with parents, staff and the pupil should be arranged after the pupil has settled but before the end of the first term. This informal review allows concerns to be aired and emerging problems to be dealt with before they impact on the pupil’s progress and self-esteem.

- A system to enable ready communication between child, parents, and school should be set up. This might include identifying a key member of staff (usually from Support for Learning) with whom parents can readily communicate information or concerns and vice versa. It may also be helpful to set up a home-school diary system as a means by which parents can communicate small pieces of information informally with staff.

- Robust systems to exchange information between staff should be set up and times should be available for staff to collaborate. Miller and Roux (1997) state that “in a secondary school it is unrealistic to expect regular meetings between all staff but efficient and reliable methods for the exchange of information can be developed”.

- Systems should be established for the dissemination of information about curriculum and policies within schools and with visiting specialists. This is particularly important when SLTs are visitors to schools and may not receive information through the normal school channels. Where an SLT visits the school, time should be allocated for liaison.

It is important to identify key people to ensure that information on each pupil is effectively disseminated. Communication and collaboration between colleagues is particularly important for the planning and management of Individualised Educational Programmes and in managing differentiated work for pupils. Time has to be built into the timetable for brainstorming and discussion and for distributing the information generated from these activities. Parents, pupils and support staff will be key participants in such discussions and it will be necessary for all to be informed of outcomes.

Reporting systems should allow a pupil’s progress to be carefully monitored so that problem areas can be identified and appropriate support offered.

Where learning assistants support pupils in a number of subjects there is a need to ensure that information about a pupil’s performance is available to all those working with the pupil so that appropriate consolidation can be offered. An example of one such reporting system is shown on the next page.

4. Vocabulary Learning

The secondary school curriculum makes heavy demands on a pupil’s ability to acquire new vocabulary. Estimates suggest that between the ages of 7 and 16 years, typically developing pupils learn an average of 3000 new words a year. In secondary schools much new vocabulary is curriculum related. Vocabulary learning demands are as follows:

- All subjects require pupils to acquire significant amounts of new vocabulary with some, for example science and geography, making particularly heavy demands on pupils’ ability to learn terminology. In English there is also curriculum specific vocabulary but, in addition, pupils need to acquire a rich and varied vocabulary for expressing ideas, thoughts and feelings. Social Subjects and RME introduce abstract concepts which require new vocabulary.

- The meaning of some words varies depending on the subject or context. For example ‘solution’ may mean an answer to a problem or a liquid in which something has been dissolved. The pupil therefore needs to appreciate that words can have more than one meaning.

- Pupils also need to learn generalise meanings of words learned in one subject in order to be able to transfer them to another. For example the word ‘temperature’ occurs in geography, science, home economics, etc.

- Exposure to some new words, however, may be quite limited and in some cases not more than incidental.

- Many pupils with speech, language and communication difficulties have limited vocabulary development and continue to learn new words more slowly than their peers. This means that their understanding of a subject may be patchy and confused. They may therefore require special measures to support them in learning curriculum vocabulary in order to understand teaching and convey their knowledge.

In the reflection point below you are invited to consider the possible sources of word learning difficulty that a pupil with language difficulties may experience.

Reflection Point: Vocabulary learning – a complex task.

Task A Take a few minutes to read these made-up words and their meanings, and try to memorise them:

| Blesnicarpe | A substance found in muscles which is necessary for dancing |
| Tracopertass | A condition which affects people who don’t eat enough protein |
| Scagescallen | A vitamin found in mangoes which affects mood |
| Fincorp | A sudden increase in body temperature caused by excessive laughing |
| Despalannon | A tear in a ligament caused by tree-climbing |

Table 8: Strategies for supporting written language.22

- Mind mapping may help pupils generate and organise ideas. Some computer software such as Kidspiration® or Inspiration® may be useful. Pupils may require training in the use of these programs.
- Teach relevant vocabulary.
- A narrative structure/writing frame may help. Some computer software may be appropriate (e.g. Draft:Builder®), or written questions may be provided to support narrative in Write:OutLoud®.
- When the focus is on content, reduce other demands such as spelling. (Computer software such as Co:Writer® used with Write:OutLoud® may help with this).
- If a pupil makes consistent grammatical errors, encourage proof reading but provide the pupil with clues as to the errors to look out for.

Supporting literacy: general points

Measures additional to those mentioned above should be implemented in class as appropriate. The Secondary Handbook on supporting pupils with Dyslexia23 includes many useful suggestions. Routinely provide good quality class notes, particularly if in-class support is not available for any reason. Note taking is potentially problematic in pupils with speech, language and communication difficulties for a variety of reasons. These include problems understanding the content, remembering what has been said and the demands of writing it down in well formulated and correctly spelled language.

PLEASE NOTE

While we have separated reading from writing and discussed the problems that pupils with speech, language and communication difficulties may face in each, in reality many tasks in secondary school require both reading and writing. Thus tasks such as comparing two opinions/accounts/sources, summarising a novel, reading a text and presenting an opinion require many if not all of the literacy skills described. Pupils with speech, language and communication difficulties may have problems with every level of a task. If decoding and spelling difficulties are part of the profile, reading and scripting support within class will ameliorate some of the problems. However this in itself will not be sufficient to overcome problems at other levels in the process such as reading comprehension and problems formulating and organising written language.

Example

- A Learning Assistant (LA) is supporting pupils in class and he/she monitors how particular pupils are coping with a subject.
- The LA keeps a diary for each period in which any issues relating to the pupil/pupils are recorded.
- The diary is passed to a Support for Learning teacher (SfL) who takes action as appropriate.
- The LA also speaks directly to the SfL teacher if there is a more major issue.
- LAs may also monitor social issues at transition times.
- The SfL teacher monitors issues to identify themes which may then be taken up with subject teams/departments, as required.

3. The Curriculum

Curriculum differentiation and modification should take account of the particular needs of pupils with speech, language and communication difficulties. It is important at all stages to ensure the greatest opportunities for success by balancing the pupil’s entitlement to a broad curriculum with the need to find time to consolidate learning.

This section lists some of the points which may need to be considered.

General support provision

- Time should be allocated to address specific language skills necessary for accessing the curriculum and to develop/consolidate learning. For example, pupils may need to practise particular skills such as paraphrasing and structuring written material.
- Subject knowledge and understanding should be fostered and consolidated in Support for Learning time. Key points from subjects can be reviewed prior to the next lesson and pre-tutoring, where this is practical, can be invaluable.
- Selected core curriculum vocabulary should be regularly checked and reinforced if a pupil has poor vocabulary development. See Table 9, page 35, and the specific strategies outlined in Appendix 3.
- The time needed to check pupils’ understanding and consolidate their learning should not be underestimated. Sufficient time should be allocated for carrying this out in the Support for Learning base and should be regularly reviewed.

22 For further details about the resources mentioned in Table 8, see the Reference section.

23 Dodds and Thomson (2002)
• An Individualised Education Programme (IEP) should include specific objectives and strategies designed to facilitate access to the curriculum or to assist with social development. IEPs should be devised collaboratively between the support teacher, the subject teacher and, if possible, the speech and language therapist.

• Pupils may need more time in the Support for Learning base as they go through secondary school, particularly as they work towards exams and language demands within the curriculum increase.

• Pupils with speech, language and communication difficulties may also tire more easily and may need short periods within base time to relax/rest.

• Time should be allocated to address literacy difficulties. Language impaired pupils with literacy difficulties will benefit from a regular support aimed at improving their reading and spelling during Support for Learning time. Some pupils may need a programme with considerable structure and a focus on the phonological aspects of literacy.

• Opportunities to address literacy difficulties should continue throughout the pupil’s school career as progress can be made even in older pupils. Liaison with SLT (if available) may be helpful in addressing literacy difficulties in pupils with speech, language and communication difficulties particularly if the pupil is not making expected progress.

• Approaches to literacy difficulties of a dyslexic nature are described in Dodds and Thomson. However, the broader range of literacy difficulties experienced by pupils with language and communication difficulties (referred to on pages 7-8 and 26 to 32) may require an additional focus on reading comprehension and on the ability to formulate written language. Strategies are described on pages 29 – 32 of this Guide.

ICT support

• Pupils may benefit from supported or independent work using a laptop computer with specialist software (e.g. Kidspiration/Inspiration, Co-Writer and Write:Outloud, Cloze–Pro) to assist writing content and vocabulary learning from first year.

• Care should be taken when selecting specialist software because language and literacy difficulties may impact on a pupil’s ability to use it effectively.

• When considering software, consultation with the authority’s ICT specialists for additional support for learning is recommended, preferably in collaboration with a SLT, if available.

Subject choice

• Pupils should be helped to make informed subject choices. Pupils’ interests are very important; however, they may need to be advised about subjects where they can expect to find particularly high language demands.

The following example demonstrates how an S1 pupil’s difficulties with the grammatical aspects of spoken language impact on his written language.

Example

Then I went out of my room and tryid to put the lights back on but I couldn’t then I herd the door banging then I went to the kitchen and got a knife because to preced my self.

Pupil aged 13:10 years with expressive grammar difficulties

(d) Spelling

Pupils with speech and language difficulties are more likely than other pupils to have difficulties with spelling because of weaknesses in processing speech sounds (phonological processing). This makes it harder for them to identify all the sounds in words accurately enough to at least attempt a spelling which is recognisable as the target word (phonetic spelling). See some examples below.

Examples

The grid below demonstrates how speech/processing difficulties affected spelling for a 14-year-old boy.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Target word</th>
<th>Spelling attempt</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>puppy</td>
<td>pumpa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>trumpet</td>
<td>trumpit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>traffic</td>
<td>travit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>membership</td>
<td>meninship</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>adventure</td>
<td>avenger</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>finger</td>
<td>figer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>polish</td>
<td>polis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>carpet</td>
<td>Crpit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>instructed</td>
<td>instrat</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 7: Strategies for supporting reading comprehension

- Ensure that the pupil has support to read the text if required.
- Encourage the pupil to read any questions before reading a passage.
- After an initial reading highlight key words/phrases using a highlighter pen.
- Identify, or ask the pupil to identify any words he does not understand.
- Encourage the pupil to try to work out from the context what a particular word or phrase means.
- Explain any words, turns of phrase or idioms which are not understood and provide a written glossary for critical ones.
- Be aware of complex grammar which may pose problems and simplify or rephrase if necessary.
- Be aware when inference is required and help pupil to consider implicit information and make this explicit.
- Provide words that have been omitted for grammatical style (ellipsis).
- Ensure pupils understand what words that stand for other words are referring to (e.g. pronouns). For an example of how this may work in text see Reflection Point: Grammar, p 28.
- Note recurring difficulties to inform Support for Learning.
- If possible, select reading comprehension materials to work on in Support for Learning time that focus on the identified areas of difficulty. Liaison with Speech and Language Therapist may be helpful.

(c) Producing written text

Pupils are frequently required to present their knowledge in writing. Unfortunately the pupils’ written language may reflect all the problems with vocabulary, grammar and pragmatics they also experience when they express themselves orally. For example, pupils may have difficulty:

- finding the required words (vocabulary);
- constructing correct and appropriately complex sentences (grammar);
- retaining the sentence in their memory while writing it down;
- sequencing the information in order to produce a narrative or chunk of information;
- knowing how much to tell the reader;
- adopting the correct style of language.

- When discussing subject choices with a pupil and his/her parent(s) any additional demands (such as visual or motor skills) that may be an associated area of difficulty in some pupils should also be considered.
- Learning another language makes rather special and different learning demands. In the early stages learning a modern language can be a rewarding experience for pupils with speech, language and communication difficulties, and the value of intercultural activity for personal and social development should not be underestimated. However, because of the special learning demands, success within a second language should be closely monitored. If this is problematic or causing undue frustration for the pupil, a decision needs to be made about whether it is appropriate to continue. Some advantages and disadvantages are set out in Table 2, overleaf.

Table 2: Modern language learning (some pros and cons)

| + | Fewer new meanings have to be acquired. The pupil is usually learning a new word for an item which already exists in his/her ‘mental dictionary’. Every-day topics allow pupils to ‘re-visit’ some aspects of life, social skills, etc. perhaps in a more age-related way. Self-esteem: for the first time in many years, the pupils will be at the same level as others in the class – and may progress quite well in the highly structured format of the early stages |
| - | The pronunciation is different. The language usually includes unfamiliar speech sounds in new combinations. This may make learning the phonological forms of words even more difficult. Many new words may be introduced at once making heavy demands on the pupil’s ability to remember associations between the words and their meanings. |

Alternative arrangements for assessments and examinations

- Pupils with language difficulties may be eligible for alternative assessment arrangements, including amendments to standard assessment arrangements and/or course requirements. These apply to all qualifications administered by the Scottish Qualification Authority (SQA) and to internal as well as external assessment. They may be available to candidates who would otherwise be unable to demonstrate attainment because of a physical or learning disability or a sensory impairment. Guidelines on alternative assessment arrangements are provided by the Scottish Qualifications Authority and by the City of Edinburgh Council.
- Appropriate arrangements for assessments and exams should be identified at an early stage and applied for in good time.

16McColl (2000) explains the substantial benefits that foreign language work has to offer students with special educational needs and offers practical advice on lesson planning and course design. See also Martin & Miller (1999).
• Arrangements for external examinations and internal assessments should be similar.
• Wherever possible, support arrangements should be introduced and embedded within day to day support for learning well in advance of the assessment.

Pupil participation in decision-making and in the review process

Like all young people, pupils with speech, language and communication difficulties are entitled to be consulted in all matters concerning their education, but they may need more support than other pupils in order to ensure that they understand the issues, can make informed choices and can communicate their views effectively.

The views of pupils with speech, language and communication difficulties should also be taken into consideration in review meetings, IEP meetings and future needs assessments.

Participating in a formal meeting can be a very daunting experience for a young person who may not really understand what is going on and/or have difficulty expressing themselves. It is therefore helpful to allow pupils the opportunity to go over the format with a sympathetic adult so that they understand the purpose and the content of the meeting and have a chance to consider and prepare their own contribution. Alternative methods of participation, such as providing a contribution to be read at the meeting on their behalf, may be more appropriate for some pupils.

4. Staff roles in supporting pupils

Pupils with language and communication difficulties will usually need some level of support to access the work of the class and for other more general issues. This support is important because the pupils themselves may lack the skills to identify their difficulties or the confidence to seek the help they require (particularly if they are having frequent difficulties).

In-class support may be provided by members of the school staff – for example, the subject teachers, a support for learning teacher (SfL), a learning assistant (LA) – or by visiting specialists – for example, a speech and language therapist (SLT), an occupational therapist (OT). In some secondary schools with Enhanced Provision the SLT may be part of the school team, in other schools the SLT visits on a regular basis, as required. The roles of school staff in relation to pupils with speech, language and communication difficulties are outlined in Table 3a. Further information about the role of visiting specialists can be found in Table 3b.

In secondary schools, paediatric occupational therapists play a key role in providing specialised evaluations of adolescents. Emphasis is on the impact any identified difficulties may have on the young person’s occupational performance. Wherever possible OTs work in partnership with the young person, parents/carers and education staff to develop the implementation of strategies and/or supports in order to help them maximise their full potential both within and outwith the school setting. The young person may be seen at home, in school or in other environments.

In this Reflection Point, the text and associated task show how the ability to make inferences, another aspect of pragmatic understanding, can be important when understanding a chunk of text.

Reflection Point: pragmatics (ii)

Read the passage and complete the task:

What was life like in Ferme Toun?
The houses the peasants lived in were called long houses. They were often built from felled trees and they had thatched roofs. The floors of the houses were just hardened earth and the furniture was made from wood. There was no chimney and smoke escaped from a hole in the roof. The cooking was done on an open fire in a circle of stones. Windows were just small holes in the walls and doors were made of wicker covered in animal skins. Beds were boxlike and had mattresses of straw, heather and bracken. A low wall separated the family home from the barn or byre where the animals slept in the winter.

Task
Write a detailed paragraph describing what you think would be unpleasant about living in a serf’s cottage. Include as much detail as you can.

What implicit information did you have to access in order to complete the task? If a pupil has difficulty with inference (as many with language difficulties do) he/she will struggle with this task.

Strategies for supporting reading

Within subject classes reading support and scribing should be provided as required. Many pupils with language and communication difficulties have literacy difficulties and require support to read and write text. Staff supporting pupils should also be aware when a pupil’s difficulties involve reading comprehension difficulties as well as problems deciphering the print and when they have problems formulating written language as well as spelling difficulties. The verbal memory difficulties that some pupils experience may mean that they have difficulty retaining what has just been read to them. Reading in shorter chunks or increased repetition may be helpful. Table 7, overleaf, provides possible strategies for supporting reading comprehension.

17 The Children in Scotland guide Your Future Needs Assessment is a helpful resource for pupils involved in Future Needs meetings.

21 Some of these suggestions are derived from unpublished material commissioned by AFASIC
In the next Reflection Point, note the important role understanding grammar can play when understanding a chunk of text:

Reflection Point: grammar

Read the passage and answer the question.

When the buffalo had been brought back to the camp, the parts which were good to eat raw, like the kidneys, the liver and the brain, were cut out first by the women. The flesh was boiled or roasted before eating. Anything left over was sliced into thin strips and smoked or dried in the sun. This “jerky” as it was called, would keep for a long time and would help to feed the tribe during the cold winter months.

Question
What is “jerky”?

Note how your understanding of ‘jerky’ depends on understanding that the phrase ‘anything left over’ refers to all the things that have not been mentioned before. If a pupil is unable to understand how this grammatical construction operates in the text he/she will have great difficulty with the question.

In the following Reflection Point, note how pragmatic understanding can be required when understanding a chunk of text.

Reflection Point: Pragmatics (i)

Read the passage and answer the question.

In the morning I took a nearly empty hover ferry to Capri, a mountainous outcrop of green 10 miles away off the western tip of the Sorrentine Peninsula. ………. I got a room in the Hotel Capri. “Great name! How long did it take you to come up with it?” I asked the manager, but he just gave me a look of studied disdain that European hotel managers reserve for American tourists and other insects.

Adapted from Bryson, B. (1991). Neither here nor there.

Question
Did Bill Bryson really think the Hotel Capri was a great name?

How were you able to make that judgment? How would you describe that comment? Being able to answer these questions relies on your pragmatic comprehension. If a pupil fails to understand sarcasm, for example, he would misunderstand some of the content of this passage.
In schools with Enhanced Provision where a SLT is part of the team, the SLT….

• carries out specialised assessment of speech, language and communication skills
• liaises with SfL teachers, subject teachers, LAs and other support staff regarding areas of difficulty and suitable support strategies
• differentiates the curriculum from a linguistic angle in consultation with other staff, e.g. subject teachers and SfL teacher.
• works with individuals or groups, perhaps jointly with SfL teacher or subject teachers
• contributes to IEPs in collaboration with SfL teacher and other staff
• provides CPD to teaching staff
• as required, links in with pupil’s home, providing advice and strategies where appropriate
• contributes to the school’s quality improvement planning

and may also...

• contribute to PSD, delivering or advising re: social communication skills groups

Table 3b: Roles and responsibilities of visiting specialists dealing with pupils who have speech, language and communication difficulties

In secondary schools where there is a visiting SLT, the SLT ….

• carries out specialised assessment of speech, language and communication skills
• liaises with SfL teachers, subject teachers, learning assistants and other support staff regarding areas of difficulty and suitable support strategies
• provides ASN Supporting Learning Profiles (see Appendix 2)
• as required, links in with pupil’s home, providing advice and strategies where appropriate

and may also...

• work with individual pupils
• contribute to IEPs in collaboration with SfL teacher and other staff
• provide an ASL/Supporting Learning Profile
• by targeting specific subjects/areas of difficulty only

OT evaluation may include assessment of ...

• self care skills – for example dressing
• motor skills – for example gross and fine motor skills
• self esteem
• perceptual skills – for example memory, figure ground
• planning and organization skills
• sensory processing – how a child interprets/responds to sensory information, for example, touch, sound and vision

OTs work ...

• in collaboration with others to differentiate the curriculum
• with individuals or groups
• in liaison with subject teachers, learning assistants, and other allied health professionals and support staff
• by providing information and/or advice for teachers
• by contributing to the development of IEPs and target setting and, if appropriate, Coordinated Support Plans (CSP)
• by providing an ASL/Supporting Learning Profile
• by targeting specific subjects/areas of difficulty only

(b) Reading Comprehension

Vocabulary, Grammar and Pragmatics in Reading Comprehension

As the range of written vocabulary increases and the texts pupils are expected to read become more linguistically demanding, pupils with language difficulties are at risk of reading comprehension problems, even if they have no problem reading the individual words. This is due to the combined contribution of vocabulary, grammar and pragmatic language skills to the understanding of a chunk of text. In the reflection point below, note the important role vocabulary knowledge plays when understanding a chunk of text.

Reflection Point: vocabulary

Read the passage and answer the questions in the box.

If they didn’t want to ghoom there was no choice but to give the man the chimmage.

After an exciting afternoon they emerged and were delighted to find a shebeen.

When they went in there was no spaneria talking about their exploits.

Questions

1. What were the people doing?
2. Where did they go first?
3. What did they do in the evening?
4. Who with?

Could you answer the questions? Reflect on the contribution of the four unfamiliar words to your overall understanding. This gives you a sense of the impact a lack of vocabulary knowledge can have on reading comprehension.
3. Reading and writing

The difficulties pupils have with written language were referred to on pages 7-8. A clearer understanding of how their language difficulties impact on their access to the curriculum is apparent if we consider the way in which spoken and written language difficulties interact. In Table 6, the crosses indicate where spoken language difficulties may make a significant impact on success with written language.

Subsequent sections take each of the elements of Table 6 and look more closely at how difficulties with the different components of language (speech, grammar, vocabulary and pragmatics) impact on different aspects of reading and writing (decoding, reading comprehension, producing written text and spelling).

### Table 6: The impact of spoken language difficulties on reading and writing

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(a) Decoding Words

Speech sounds and decoding words
Pupils with speech and language difficulties may have difficulty with phonological processing which will have an impact on their ability to sound out and read individual words. In this way, some pupils with speech and language impairment will have similar difficulties to pupils with dyslexia.

Vocabulary and grammar and decoding words
Children with good spoken language skills are able to use their knowledge of sentences and words to help them make predictions about what words in a text might be. Their knowledge of vocabulary in particular may help them to correct any inaccurate attempts at sounding out unfamiliar words. A pupil with language difficulties will be limited in his/her ability to use such clues to help predict words, due to limited vocabulary or grammatical knowledge.

In the Reflection Point which follows, we present an example of the interaction between vocabulary and decoding.

### Specific problems – specific strategies

This section of the Guide will describe the impact of spoken language difficulties on the pupil’s progress in school. The potential difficulties are identified together with suggested strategies for support.

1. Listening and understanding

Most teaching is language-based. Consequently pupils spend a large part of their day gathering information from teacher talk and demonstration, and from written materials. Teacher often begin by giving an explanation of what will be covered in the lesson and perhaps recapping a previous lesson. Throughout lessons, teachers frequently give verbal reminders and further information.

Compared with the language of everyday conversation, the spoken language of teaching is typically more complex, technical, and more densely packed with information about topics that are unfamiliar to the pupil.

In addition, teachers have different styles of presentation and different ways of interacting with pupils. Approximately 10 to 20% of teachers’ sentences contain non-literal language, including idioms/figures of speech. Teachers also use different levels of language complexity and variable amounts of demonstration/concrete materials. The secondary curriculum is full of new curriculum vocabulary.

Pupils with receptive language difficulties will find it much more difficult to learn new subject related information and skills because:

- their tendency to have poor attention and listening skills (which may in fact result partly from poor comprehension) compounds their poor understanding. Pupils with receptive language difficulties may ‘switch off’ from verbal information when they do not understand and fail to listen adequately to teacher explanation and class discussion;
- they may not understand or can’t process the grammar and vocabulary quickly enough; even one or two unfamiliar words can have a negative impact on the ability to understand the overall meaning;
- their reduced verbal memory makes it difficult to take in and remember larger stretches of spoken information;
- they may not understand non-literal language – idioms, metaphors, indirect requests and rhetorical questions;
- they may not interpret the teacher’s tone of voice (indicating humour, sarcasm or annoyance) correctly;
- they may not pick up on implicit information.

Audio visual materials are increasingly used as a teaching tool. These can have high language demands. Pupils with language and communication difficulties can have as much difficulty acquiring information from tapes and video as they do in following complex class discussion or teacher talk. Table 4 suggests a range of strategies which can assist listening and understanding in class.

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20 Rinaldi, W (2000)
Table 4: Strategies to support listening and understanding of teacher talk.

Teachers should, where possible and appropriate, modify their language to accommodate the needs of pupils with language difficulties. These pupils may be particularly poor listeners and the rate and complexity of spoken language in class can compromise understanding. To include a pupil with language difficulties, teachers need to monitor the child’s listening and understanding and modify their own language to assist comprehension. Possible modifications to assist pupils with language difficulties include:

Class management and delivery
• Seat the pupil where he/she can see and hear clearly.
• Orientate the pupil so that he/she knows what subject he/she is in and generally what the lesson is about before beginning teaching.
• Remind pupils of existing knowledge and personal experience related to the topic.
• Explicitly direct the pupil’s attention when necessary.
• Give a clear signal that you are going to talk about something important.
• Use picture material, visual cues and gestures to break up speech.
• Vary your intonation to highlight key words.
• Give instructions in the order they need to be done.
• Introduce and summarise.

Request feedback
This can be illuminating and may be done routinely for all pupils.
• Ask pupils if they can follow the content and speed.
• Ask pupils anonymously to write down what the point of the lesson was and hand it in.
• Ask pupils for one thing they didn’t understand in a lesson or exercise.
• Ask what was easy and what was hard.

If there are problems with speed or content, try one of the following:
• Repeat the instruction.
• Restate, emphasising key points.
• Slow the rate of presentation.
• Use shorter units of explanation.
• Allow pupils time to process, organise and structure a response.
• Limit the amount of material.
• Encourage and reward pupils for seeking clarification.
• Highlight less common idioms and explain their meaning.

Adapted from Patchell and Hand (1993)

Table 5: Strategies for supporting talking and responding

Try to create opportunities for pupils with language/communication difficulties to respond where possible and include them in talking activities as a matter of course but...

• Bear in mind that the pupil may not have the requisite vocabulary or may lack confidence in speaking in front of his/her peers and avoid putting them under pressure.

• Check that the pupil understands the type of response expected and provide a model, practical illustration or example, where possible. Repeat or reframe the question or instruction if necessary.

• Allow a bit more time for pupils to respond verbally in class because a pupil with language difficulties may need more time to process information and formulate a response.

• Encourage discussion and presentation time in small groups, as this can be less threatening for pupils with language and communication difficulties than presenting to the whole class.

• Provide a framework that the pupil can use in their response. For example, write the key vocabulary or the beginning of the sentence on the board for individual pupils. Forced alternatives (i.e. the correct plus an alternative response) may be offered and the pupil asked to choose.

2. Talking and responding

Pupils are often required to present information in written or sometimes spoken form. The amount of speaking a pupil is expected to do in different subjects varies. In all classes, however, pupils may be expected to provide verbal explanations or justifications, propose ideas and request permission.

Pupils may also be expected to interact with their peers, to work jointly and they need to cooperate, negotiate and take turns.

During some classes (e.g. Personal and Social Development, English and Religious & Moral Education) pupils may be expected to participate in group discussion about complex issues such as beliefs, bullying, sexuality or child abuse, and to give and consider others’ opinions and perspectives. The language used may include metaphorical or non-literal language such as ‘personal search’, ‘cost of beliefs’, as well as new vocabulary.

All these tasks are potentially challenging for the pupil with language and communication difficulties and their success may be compromised by comprehension difficulties, problems in expressing themselves and/or any difficulties they have with social communication, as described in Section 1. Table 5 lists a range of possible strategies for supporting talking and responding in class.
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• by providing information and/or advice for teachers
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• by providing an ASL/Supporting Learning Profile
• by targeting specific subjects/areas of difficulty only

Reflection Point

Read the sentences below and consider the questions which follow.

1. High in the tree the trackers were disturbed to see a very large boa
2. The boy had great difficulty with articulating his central... and tended to produce these as laterals.

Questions

1. Were you able to decipher the word written in symbols in example 1?
2. Were you able to do the same for example 2?
3. If you managed the first but not the second, why was this?
4. If you found number 2 difficult, this gives you an indication of the task facing a pupil with both vocabulary deficits and poor decoding skills.

(b) Reading Comprehension

Vocabulary, Grammar and Pragmatics in Reading Comprehension

As the range of written vocabulary increases and the texts pupils are expected to read become more linguistically demanding, pupils with language difficulties are at risk of reading comprehension problems, even if they have no problem reading the individual words. This is due to the combined contribution of vocabulary, grammar and pragmatic language skills to the understanding of a chunk of text. In the reflection point below, note the important role vocabulary knowledge plays when understanding a chunk of text.

Reflection Point: vocabulary

Read the passage and answer the questions in the box.

If they didn't want to ghoom there was no choice but to give the man the chimmage. After an exciting afternoon they emerged and were delighted to find a shebeen. When they went in there was no spaneria talking about their exploits.

Questions

1. What were the people doing?
2. Where did they go first?
3. What did they do in the evening?
4. Who with?

Could you answer the questions? Reflect on the contribution of the four unfamiliar words to your overall understanding. This gives you a sense of the impact a lack of vocabulary knowledge can have on reading comprehension.
In the next Reflection Point, note the important role understanding grammar can play when understanding a chunk of text:

Reflection Point: grammar

Read the passage and answer the question.

When the buffalo had been brought back to the camp, the parts which were good to eat raw, like the kidneys, the liver and the brain, were cut out first by the women. The flesh was boiled or roasted before eating. Anything left over was sliced into thin strips and smoked or dried in the sun. This “jerky” as it was called, would keep for a long time and would help to feed the tribe during the cold winter months.

Question
What is “jerky”?

Note how your understanding of ‘jerky’ depends on understanding that the phrase ‘anything left over’ refers to all the things that have not been mentioned before. If a pupil is unable to understand how this grammatical construction operates in the text he/she will have great difficulty with the question.

In the following Reflection Point, note how pragmatic understanding can be required when understanding a chunk of text.

Reflection Point: Pragmatics (i)

Read the passage and answer the question.

In the morning I took a nearly empty hover ferry to Capri, a mountainous outcrop of green 10 miles away off the western tip of the Sorrentine Peninsula. ........... I got a room in the Hotel Capri. “Great name! How long did it take you to come up with it?” I asked the manager, but he just gave me a look of studied disdain that European hotel managers reserve for American tourists and other insects.

Adapted from Bryson, B. (1991). Neither here nor there.

Question
Did Bill Bryson really think the Hotel Capri was a great name?

How were you able to make that judgment? How would you describe that comment? Being able to answer these questions relies on your pragmatic comprehension. If a pupil fails to understand sarcasm, for example, he would misunderstand some of the content of this passage.

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Table 3a: Roles and responsibilities of staff in secondary schools dealing with pupils who have speech, language and communication difficulties

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Role of Staff</th>
<th>Responsibilities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The teacher responsible for guidance...</td>
<td>• is an important constant in pupils’ lives; • is responsible for the overall development of pupils for their pastoral care and emotional support. May be responsible for the PSD; • is aware of the difficulties and strengths of individual pupils and liaises between staff and pupils acting as advocate as required; • links with SfL staff and with psychological services and SLT; • ensures that school-home information is understood, delivered appropriately and acted on; • may play a key role in annual reviews.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The subject teacher ...</td>
<td>• responds to the wide range of needs in a secondary school class; • differentiates teaching materials, methods and learning outcomes (if necessary in collaboration with support staff); • for pupils with language and communication difficulties, gives particular attention to vocabulary, pupils’ skills and recording methods, both in school and through homework; • provides information for SfL e.g. prior notice of work coming up to allow preparation; • may provide summaries of work to assist in consolidation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The support for learning teacher (SfL) ...</td>
<td>• provides additional support in class; • differentiates the curriculum in collaboration with other staff; • may work with individuals or groups; • acts as a resource to pupils in class helping them to understand their own difficulties; • liaises with subject teachers, LAs, SLTs and other support staff; • draws up IEPs in collaboration with other staff.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The learning assistant (LA) ...</td>
<td>• provides additional support in class; • may work with individuals or groups; • liaises with SfL teacher and other support staff as appropriate.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The SfL teacher and LA may also ...</td>
<td>• help the student to listen when an important piece of information is given; • gather summaries of main lesson points for revision in SfL base time; • differentiate further, by breaking work down into smaller steps or by clarifying language or instructions; • read a text to a pupil; • explain words in text; • link new words and concepts to those the pupil already knows to help retention; • modify notes or texts; • note down words and ideas that may cause difficulty, in order to check these out later; • give concrete analogies and relate ideas to the pupils own experience; • duplicate notes.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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Information in Table 3a is adapted from Miller and Roux (1997), supplemented by unpublished material from Afasic.
• Arrangements for external examinations and internal assessments should be similar.

• Wherever possible, support arrangements should be introduced and embedded within day to day support for learning well in advance of the assessment.

Pupil participation in decision-making and in the review process

Like all young people, pupils with speech, language and communication difficulties are entitled to be consulted in all matters concerning their education, but they may need more support than other pupils in order to ensure that they understand the issues, can make informed choices and can communicate their views effectively.

The views of pupils with speech, language and communication difficulties should also be taken into consideration in review meetings, IEP meetings and future needs assessments.

Participating in a formal meeting can be a very daunting experience for a young person who may not really understand what is going on and/or have difficulty expressing themselves. It is therefore helpful to allow pupils the opportunity to go over the format with a sympathetic adult so that they understand the purpose and the content of the meeting and have a chance to consider and prepare their own contribution. Alternative methods of participation, such as providing a contribution to be read at the meeting on their behalf, may be more appropriate for some pupils.

In class support may be provided by members of the school staff – for example, the subject teachers, a support for learning teacher (SfL), a learning assistant (LA) – or by visiting specialists – for example, a speech and language therapist (SLT), an occupational therapist (OT). In some secondary schools with Enhanced Provision the SLT may be part of the school team, in other schools the SLT visits on a regular basis, as required. The roles of school staff in relation to pupils with speech, language and communication difficulties are outlined in Table 3a. Further information about the role of visiting specialists can be found in Table 3b.

In secondary schools, paediatric occupational therapists play a key role in providing specialised evaluations of adolescents. Emphasis is on the impact any identified difficulties may have on the young person’s occupational performance. Wherever possible OTs work in partnership with the young person, parents/carers and education staff to develop the implementation of strategies and/or supports in order to help them maximise their full potential both within and outwith the school setting. The young person may be seen at home, in school or in other environments.

17 The Children in Scotland guide Your Future Needs Assessment is a helpful resource for pupils involved in Future Needs meetings.

In this Reflection Point, the text and associated task show how the ability to make inferences, another aspect of pragmatic understanding, can be important when understanding a chunk of text.

Reflection Point: pragmatics (ii)

Read the passage and complete the task:

What was life like in Ferme Toun?
The houses the peasants lived in were called long houses. They were often built from felled trees and they had thatched roofs. The floors of the houses were just hardened earth and the furniture was made from wood. There was no chimney and smoke escaped from a hole in the roof. The cooking was done on an open fire in a circle of stones. Windows were just small holes in the walls and doors were made of wicker covered in animal skins. Beds were boxlike and had mattresses of straw, heather and bracken. A low wall separated the family home from the barn or byre where the animals slept in the winter.

Task
Write a detailed paragraph describing what you think would be unpleasant about living in a serf’s cottage. Include as much detail as you can.

What implicit information did you have to access in order to complete the task? If a pupil has difficulty with inference (as many with language difficulties do) he/she will struggle with this task.

Strategies for supporting reading

Within subject classes reading support and scribing should be provided as required. Many pupils with language and communication difficulties have literacy difficulties and require support to read and write text. Staff supporting pupils should also be aware when a pupil’s difficulties involve reading comprehension difficulties as well as problems deciphering the print and when they have problems formulating written language as well as spelling difficulties. The verbal memory difficulties that some pupils experience may mean that they have difficulty retaining what has just been read to them. Reading in shorter chunks or increased repetition may be helpful. Table 7, overleaf, provides possible strategies for supporting reading comprehension.

21 Some of these suggestions are derived from unpublished material commissioned by AFASIC.
Table 7: Strategies for supporting reading comprehension

- Ensure that the pupil has support to read the text if required.
- Encourage the pupil to read any questions before reading a passage.
- After an initial reading highlight key words/phrases using a highlighter pen.
- Identify, or ask the pupil to identify any words he does not understand.
- Encourage the pupil to try to work out from the context what a particular word or phrase means.
- Explain any words, turns of phrase or idioms which are not understood and provide a written glossary for critical ones.
- Be aware of complex grammar which may pose problems and simplify or rephrase if necessary.
- Be aware when inference is required and help pupil to consider implicit information and make this explicit.
- Provide words that have been omitted for grammatical style (ellipsis).
- Ensure pupils understand what words that stand for other words are referring to (e.g. pronouns). For an example of how this may work in text see Reflection Point: Grammar, p 28.
- Note recurring difficulties to inform Support for Learning.
- If possible, select reading comprehension materials to work on in Support for Learning time that focus on the identified areas of difficulty. Liaison with Speech and Language Therapist may be helpful.

(c) Producing written text

Pupils are frequently required to present their knowledge in writing. Unfortunately the pupils’ written language may reflect all the problems with vocabulary, grammar and pragmatics they also experience when they express themselves orally. For example, pupils may have difficulty:

- finding the required words (vocabulary);
- constructing correct and appropriately complex sentences (grammar);
- retaining the sentence in their memory while writing it down;
- sequencing the information in order to produce a narrative or chunk of information;
- knowing how much to tell the reader;
- adopting the correct style of language.

- When discussing subject choices with a pupil and his/her parent(s) any additional demands (such as visual or motor skills) that may be an associated area of difficulty in some pupils should also be considered.
- Learning another language makes rather special and different learning demands. In the early stages learning a modern language can be a rewarding experience for pupils with speech, language and communication difficulties, and the value of intercultural activity for personal and social development should not be underestimated. However, because of the special learning demands, success within a second language should be closely monitored. If this is problematic or causing undue frustration for the pupil, a decision needs to be made about whether it is appropriate to continue. Some advantages and disadvantages are set out in Table 2, overleaf.

Table 2: Modern language learning (some pros and cons)

| + | Fewer new meanings have to be acquired. The pupil is usually learning a new word for an item which already exists in his/her ‘mental dictionary’. Every-day topics allow pupils to ‘re-visit’ some aspects of life, social skills, etc. perhaps in a more age-related way. Self-esteem: for the first time in many years, the pupils will be at the same level as others in the class – and may progress quite well in the highly structured format of the early stages |
| - | The pronunciation is different. The language usually includes unfamiliar speech sounds in new combinations. This may make learning the phonological forms of words even more difficult. Many new words may be introduced at once making heavy demands on the pupil’s ability to remember associations between the words and their meanings. |

Alternative arrangements for assessments and examinations

- Pupils with language difficulties may be eligible for alternative assessment arrangements, including amendments to standard assessment arrangements and/or course requirements. These apply to all qualifications administered by the Scottish Qualification Authority (SQA) and to internal as well as external assessment. They may be available to candidates who would otherwise be unable to demonstrate attainment because of a physical or learning disability or a sensory impairment. Guidelines on alternative assessment arrangements are provided by the Scottish Qualifications Authority and by the City of Edinburgh Council.
- Appropriate arrangements for assessments and exams should be identified at an early stage and applied for in good time.

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16 McCol (2000) explains the substantial benefits that foreign language work has to offer students with special educational needs and offers practical advice on lesson planning and course design. See also Martin & Miller (1999)
• An Individualised Education Programme (IEP) should include specific objectives and strategies designed to facilitate access the curriculum or to assist with social development. IEPs should be devised collaboratively between the support teacher, the subject teacher and, if possible, the speech and language therapist.

• Pupils may need more time in the Support for Learning base as they go through secondary school, particularly as they work towards exams and language demands within the curriculum increase.

• Pupils with speech, language and communication difficulties may also tire more easily and may need short periods within base time to relax/rest.

• Time should be allocated to address literacy difficulties. Language impaired pupils with literacy difficulties will benefit from a regular support aimed at improving their reading and spelling during Support for Learning time. Some pupils may need a programme with considerable structure and a focus on the phonological aspects of literacy.

• Opportunities to address literacy difficulties should continue throughout the pupil’s school career as progress can be made even in older pupils. Liaison with SLT (if available) may be helpful in addressing literacy difficulties in pupils with speech, language and communication difficulties particularly if the pupil is not making expected progress.

• Approaches to literacy difficulties of a dyslexic nature are described in Dodds and Thomson. However, the broader range of literacy difficulties experienced by pupils with language and communication difficulties (referred to on pages 7-8 and 26 to 32) may require an additional focus on reading comprehension and on the ability to formulate written language. Strategies are described on pages 29 – 32 of this Guide.

ICT support

• Pupils may benefit from supported or independent work using a laptop computer with specialist software (e.g. Kidspiration/Inspiration, Co-Writer and Write:Outloud, Cloze–Pro) to assist writing content and vocabulary learning from first year.

• Care should be taken when selecting specialist software because language and literacy difficulties may impact on a pupil’s ability to use it effectively.

• When considering software, consultation with the authority’s ICT specialists for additional support for learning is recommended, preferably in collaboration with a SLT, if available.

Subject choice

• Pupils should be helped to make informed subject choices. Pupils’ interests are very important; however, they may need to be advised about subjects where they can expect to find particularly high language demands.

The following example demonstrates how an S1 pupil’s difficulties with the grammatical aspects of spoken language impact on his written language.

Example

Then I went out of my room and tryid to put the lights back on but I couldn’t then I herd the door banging then I went to the kitchen and got a knife because to prected my self.

Pupil aged 13:10 years with expressive grammar difficulties

(d) Spelling

Pupils with speech and language difficulties are more likely than other pupils to have difficulties with spelling because of weaknesses in processing speech sounds (phonological processing). This makes it harder for them to identify all the sounds in words accurately enough to at least attempt a spelling which is recognisable as the target word (phonetic spelling). See some examples below.

Examples

The grid below demonstrates how speech/processing difficulties affected spelling for a 14-year-old boy.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Target word</th>
<th>Spelling attempt</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>puppy</td>
<td>pumpa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>trumpet</td>
<td>trumpit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>traffic</td>
<td>travit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>membership</td>
<td>meninship</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>adventure</td>
<td>avenchter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>finger</td>
<td>figer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>polish</td>
<td>polis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>carpet</td>
<td>Crpit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>instructed</td>
<td>instrat</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 8: Strategies for supporting written language.  

- Mind mapping may help pupils generate and organise ideas. Some computer software such as Kidspiration® or Inspiration® may be useful. Pupils may require training in the use of these programs.
- Teach relevant vocabulary.
- A narrative structure/writing frame may help. Some computer software may be appropriate (e.g. Draft:Builder®), or written questions may be provided to support narrative in Write:OutLoud®.
- When the focus is on content, reduce other demands such as spelling. (Computer software such as Co:Writer® used with Write:OutLoud® may help with this).  
- If a pupil makes consistent grammatical errors, encourage proof reading but provide the pupil with clues as to the errors to look out for.

Supporting literacy: general points

Measures additional to those mentioned above should be implemented in class as appropriate. The Secondary Handbook on supporting pupils with Dyslexia23 includes many useful suggestions.

Routinely provide good quality class notes, particularly if in-class support is not available for any reason. Note taking is potentially problematic in pupils with speech, language and communication difficulties for a variety of reasons. These include problems understanding the content, remembering what has been said and the demands of writing it down in well formulated and correctly spelled language.

PLEASE NOTE

While we have separated reading from writing and discussed the problems that pupils with speech, language and communication difficulties may face in each, in reality many tasks in secondary school require both reading and writing. Thus tasks such as comparing two opinions/accounts/sources, summarising a novel, reading a text and presenting an opinion require many if not all of the literacy skills described. Pupils with speech, language and communication difficulties may have problems with every level of a task. If decoding and spelling difficulties are part of the profile, reading and scribbling support within class will ameliorate some of the problems. However this in itself will not be sufficient to overcome problems at other levels in the process such as reading comprehension and problems formulating and organising written language.

22 For further details about the resources mentioned in Table 8, see the Reference section.
23 Dodds and Thomson (2002)

Example

- A Learning Assistant (LA) is supporting pupils in class and he/she monitors how particular pupils are coping with a subject.
- The LA keeps a diary for each period in which any issues relating to the pupil/pupils are recorded.
- The diary is passed to a Support for Learning teacher (SfL) who takes action as appropriate.
- The LA also speaks directly to the SfL teacher if there is a more major issue.
- LAs may also monitor social issues at transition times.
- The SfL teacher monitors issues to identify themes which may then be taken up with subject teams/departments, as required.

3. The Curriculum

Curriculum differentiation and modification should take account of the particular needs of pupils with speech, language and communication difficulties. It is important at all stages to ensure the greatest opportunities for success by balancing the pupil’s entitlement to a broad curriculum with the need to find time to consolidate learning.

This section lists some of the points which may need to be considered.

General support provision

- Time should be allocated to address specific language skills necessary for accessing the curriculum and to develop/consolidate learning. For example, pupils may need to practise particular skills such as paraphrasing and structuring written material.
- Subject knowledge and understanding should be fostered and consolidated in Support for Learning time. Key points from subjects can be reviewed prior to the next lesson and pre-tutoring, where this is practical, can be invaluable.
- Selected core curriculum vocabulary should be regularly checked and reinforced if a pupil has poor vocabulary development. See Table 9, page 35, and the specific strategies outlined in Appendix 3.
- The time needed to check pupils’ understanding and consolidate their learning should not be underestimated. Sufficient time should be allocated for carrying this out in the Support for Learning base and should be regularly reviewed.
shared and, if appropriate, updated from year to year as pupils progress up the school. It may be helpful to have a named person who has the responsibility to ensure that this takes place.

- An early review of a pupil’s progress with parents, staff and the pupil should be arranged after the pupil has settled but before the end of the first term. This informal review allows concerns to be aired and emerging problems to be dealt with before they impact on the pupil’s progress and self-esteem.

- A system to enable ready communication between child, parents, and school should be set up. This might include identifying a key member of staff (usually from Support for Learning) with whom parents can readily communicate information or concerns and vice versa. It may also be helpful to set up a home-school diary system as a means by which parents can communicate small pieces of information informally with staff.

- Robust systems to exchange information between staff should be set up and times should be available for staff to collaborate. Miller and Roux (1997) state that “in a secondary school it is unrealistic to expect regular meetings between all staff but efficient and reliable methods for the exchange of information can be developed”.

- Systems should be established for the dissemination of information about curriculum and policies within schools and with visiting specialists. This is particularly important when SLTs are visitors to schools and may not receive information through the normal school channels. Where an SLT visits the school, time should be allocated for liaison.

It is important to identify key people to ensure that information on each pupil is effectively disseminated. Communication and collaboration between colleagues is particularly important for the planning and management of Individualised Educational Programmes and in managing differentiated work for pupils. Time has to be built into the timetable for brainstorming and discussion and for distributing the information generated from these activities. Parents, pupils and support staff will be key participants in such discussions and it will be necessary for all to be informed of outcomes.

Reporting systems should allow a pupil’s progress to be carefully monitored so that problem areas can be identified and appropriate support offered.

Where learning assistants support pupils in a number of subjects there is a need to ensure that information about a pupil’s performance is available to all those working with the pupil so that appropriate consolidation can be offered. An example of one such reporting system is shown on the next page.

4. Vocabulary Learning

The secondary school curriculum makes heavy demands on a pupil’s ability to acquire new vocabulary. Estimates suggest that between the ages of 7 and 16 years, typically developing pupils learn an average of 3000 new words a year. In secondary schools much new vocabulary is curriculum related. Vocabulary learning demands are as follows:

- All subjects require pupils to acquire significant amounts of new vocabulary with some, for example science and geography, making particularly heavy demands on pupils’ ability to learn terminology. In English there is also curriculum specific vocabulary but, in addition, pupils need to acquire a rich and varied vocabulary for expressing ideas, thoughts and feelings. Social Subjects and RME introduce abstract concepts which require new vocabulary.

- The meaning of some words varies depending on the subject or context. For example ‘solution’ may mean an answer to a problem or a liquid in which something has been dissolved. The pupil therefore needs to appreciate that words can have more than one meaning.

- Pupils also need to learn generalise meanings of words learned in one subject in order to be able to transfer them to another. For example the word ‘temperature’ occurs in geography, science, home economics, etc.

- Exposure to some new words, however, may be quite limited and in some cases no more than incidental.

- Many pupils with speech, language and communication difficulties have limited vocabulary development and continue to learn new words more slowly than their peers. This means that their understanding of a subject may be patchy and confused. They may therefore require special measures to support them in learning curriculum vocabulary in order to understand teaching and convey their knowledge.

In the reflection point below you are invited to consider the possible sources of word learning difficulty that a pupil with language difficulties may experience.

Reflection Point: Vocabulary learning – a complex task.

Task A Take a few minutes to read these made-up words and their meanings, and try to memorise them:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Word</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Blesnicarpe</td>
<td>A substance found in muscles which is necessary for dancing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tracoperfass</td>
<td>A condition which affects people who don’t eat enough protein</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scagescallen</td>
<td>A vitamin found in mangoes which affects mood</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fincorp</td>
<td>A sudden increase in body temperature caused by excessive laughing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Despalannon</td>
<td>A tear in a ligament caused by tree-climbing</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Reflection Point: vocabulary learning (cont.)

Task B Without looking back, complete the following grid:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name the vitamin found in mangoes which affects mood</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What substance found in muscles is necessary for dancing?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What is Tracopertass?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

If you got them all right well done! If not, what kinds of mistakes did you make? In this task, which mimics some of the vocabulary learning demands a pupil might encounter, there are three possible ways you could have gone wrong. You might have:

- had trouble remembering part or all of the words’ pronunciations accurately (the words’ phonological forms);
- forgotten all or part of the meaning (the words’ semantics);
- wrongly associated word and meaning e.g. remembered ‘trincorp’ as a tear in your ligament.

Pupils with vocabulary learning difficulties might have difficulty with one or all of the above.

Strategies to support vocabulary learning

Strategies to help pupils with speech, language and communications difficulties can be found in Table 9 on the next page. Further strategies to support vocabulary learning are described in the Appendix 3.

The Code of Practice for the Additional Support for Learning Act\(^\text{14}\) provides detailed information regarding arrangements for supporting pupils with additional support needs in their transition from primary to secondary school and any other school change.

2. Communication and collaboration

Good communication and time for collaboration and liaison are central to the pupil’s successful inclusion. Parents need a channel of communication with staff and staff with parents because the pupils themselves may not understand or pass on information effectively. Parents can become stressed and feel powerless, yet a brief chat, note or email can often sort things out.

Teachers need time to work collaboratively with their colleagues and with other services such as speech and language therapy. Such time should be identified and protected for this purpose. In particular:

- **Pupil information should be distributed to relevant teaching staff**
  Information will have been shared between primary and secondary before the pupil starts in S1. It is important that this information is appropriately summarised in a format that makes it easy for all school staff to understand the pupil’s language/communication difficulties and the likely impact on their learning. Possible formats for this information are presented in Appendices 1 and 2. Care should be taken that this information is\(^1\)

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\(^{10}\) Hayman, K (2005)  
\(^{11}\) Standards in Scotland’s Schools Etc. Act 2000  
\(^{12}\) Exploring Participation, p. 37, Afasic Scotland 2002  
\(^{13}\) Orr, M (2000)  
\(^{14}\) SEED Code of Practice for the Additional Support for Learning Act (2005)
1. Managing a smooth transition

Many of the measures routinely provided by schools will be helpful in facilitating a smooth and informed transition to secondary school for pupils who have significant language and communication difficulties. Such measures should always include liaison between all staff involved at the primary stage, appropriate members of staff from the secondary school and parents. Up to date information/assessment should be available.

The following people may be involved

- Staff from the primary school
- Staff from the secondary school
- Speech and Language Therapist (SLT)
- Educational Psychologist
- Neighbourhood Support Coordinator
- Visiting Teacher (Support Service)
- Occupational Therapist (OT)
- Parents
- Pupil

The aim is of this liaison is to ensure that:

- the secondary school is fully aware of the pupil’s attainments and the nature and likely impact of their speech, language and communication difficulties on their academic and social progress;
- pupils’ needs are identified in the audit, to ensure appropriate levels of support;
- a realistic assessment is made of how much time a pupil will require to support and consolidate their learning. This may mean that the pupil’s curriculum is restricted by one or more subjects. Because of the demands inherent in learning a modern language, following consultation with the pupil and his/her parents the pupil may be withdrawn from this subject as a first choice. However some pupils find the early stages of modern language learning quite enjoyable and rewarding, and this may be the only experience of foreign culture that they ever receive. Careful consideration should therefore be given to the way in which the curriculum is restricted in the first instance. If at a later stage the subject becomes too onerous, the situation can be reviewed; (see also pages 18/19);
- the Speech and Language Therapist is involved in the transition process and provides a summary of the pupil’s language and/or communication difficulties. (Possible formats for transferring this information are included in Appendices 1 and 2);
- additional support for the transfer is provided for those pupils who require it. Some pupils (particularly those with social communication difficulties) may find the changes involved in transfer to secondary more stressful than their peers. They may benefit from individualised preparation for the transfer including:
  - pictures of teachers with their names;
  - a map of the school layout;
  - timetable provided earlier, with specific teaching about how to use it;
  - written descriptions of what will be expected / what will happen, etc. to support their understanding of what will happen when they arrive at the new school. This

Table 9: New curriculum vocabulary and the pupil with language and communication difficulties: A special case for consolidation.

- Focussed support to ensure that new words central to their understanding of specific subject areas is required.
- The use of a word bank is recommended.
- Support staff in class should identify new vocabulary as it arises and additional opportunities (beyond those offered in class) to learn the pronunciation and meaning of these words should be provided in school and, if appropriate, at home.
- Learning of cross curricular vocabulary may need to be specifically targeted.
- Vocabulary enrichment in English may be required.
- Computer software such as Star Spell© and Cloze–Pro© may be helpful for vocabulary learning.
- Dictionaries available should be up-to-date and where possible have a restricted defining vocabulary so that pupils can understand the definitions. A Collins CoBuild Dictionary may be a particularly helpful resource.
- See also Appendix 3.

5. Social interaction and inclusion

Adolescent interaction and friendships make particularly high demands on social communication skills and pupils with language and communication difficulties may experience problems with the social demands of the classroom and break times.

Following teacher talk and pupil banter, switching between different ‘modes’ of address and teaching styles between classes, following a group discussion in social studies or a conversation in the dining hall; all these situations can pose problems for pupils with language and social communication difficulties.

Some pupils experience social problems as well as their difficulties with vocabulary and grammar. They may, for example, struggle to join in with a group discussion, either in class or at break times, and this can impact both on their learning opportunities and on their social inclusion. Other pupils have more specific difficulties with social interaction and may be referred to as having a pragmatic language impairment.

For further details about the resources mentioned in Table 9, see the Reference section.

Crystal (1987)
Pupils with pragmatic language impairment, are likely to have problems forming relationships through their reduced capacity to understand the language of emotion, think in the abstract and share another's perspective.

Social and emotional immaturity can add to any difficulties with social interaction and young people may become social isolated and vulnerable to teasing or bullying. Pupils with language and/or communication difficulties are also at risk of developing a negative view of themselves and poor self-esteem.

All pupils with social interaction and communication difficulties may require some degree of structured or informal social support to meet their communication needs. This support should be based on individual assessment of each pupil’s needs and can form part of an IEP where appropriate. Examples of support include the following:

Table 10: Strategies for supporting social interaction and inclusion

- A modified PSD curriculum to teach social and personal skills within a small group setting, with an emphasis on developing functional life skills.
- Provision of a ‘haven’ where pupils can choose to spend break times if accessing the main playground or dining hall is too socially challenging.
- Group support, for example through a lunch club, a social skills group, or other structured group activities.
- Peer support, for example through a buddy system using S6 pupils or perhaps class peers.
- Small group or one-to-one support, to address specific issues, such as bullying, through discussion or social stories.
- A named person to support the pupil as required, perhaps with designated time to discuss any problems.
- Having an option of moving between classes and in lunch and break times a couple of minutes early to reduce anxiety associated with busy corridors and long lunch queues, etc.
- Maintaining close links between school and home, perhaps through a home-school diary. A pupil’s needs may present differently at home and at school, and it is important that all those involved with the pupil are aware of issues that may impact on the pupil’s social and emotional well-being.

Staff with guidance responsibilities should be aware that a pupil with complex language and communication difficulties may be at risk of long term problems with self-esteem and mental health. Maintaining strong links with all the agencies involved with the pupil (e.g. social work, educational psychology, allied health professionals) is vital to ensure the pupil’s needs are adequately met.

SECTION 2

Learning needs, supports and strategies

General challenges of primary-secondary transition

School staff are well aware of the significant differences and the increased demands experienced when pupils move from primary to secondary school. Consequently many schools support this transition through, for example:

- meetings for teachers from the primary school, the new secondary school, parents and other professionals who are involved to discuss the transition, the pupil’s needs and suitable supports;
- open days for pupils and parents at the new secondary school;
- transition groups for more vulnerable pupils at the end of term or through the summer prior to starting at the new school;
- buddy systems – S6 pupils may support identified vulnerable S1 pupils as they start at their new secondary;
- opportunities for pupils and parents to meet with support for learning staff before starting school.

Pupils with speech, language and communication difficulties, however, will find the secondary school environment even more challenging than their typically developing peers. This section provides guidance on support arrangements that can help to address these needs.

In pages 23 to 36, the impact of speech, language and communication difficulties on the child’s academic progress and ability to cope socially will be described. Where possible, support strategies are also offered.

General strategies to support pupils with speech, language and communication difficulties

Primary school pupils with speech, language and communication difficulties may have experienced specialist educational provision, such as a language class; specialist outreach support for a mainstream school; additional in-school support; or more generic support for learning within class. A Speech and Language Therapist is usually involved if a pupil has significant difficulties, but a pupil may have been discharged from speech and language therapy because of non-attendance or because he/she was no longer benefiting from intervention.

Some pupils with social communication difficulties may have superficially good language skills, sufficient to enable them to cope with the primary curriculum. Support in the form of social communication groups may have been offered by speech and language therapy and/or visiting teaching services.
Continuing professional development (CPD)

Pupils with speech, language and communication difficulties will be most successfully included if all school staff, teaching and non-teaching, understand the nature of language and communication difficulties and the strategies that support learning in these pupils.

CPD opportunities should be provided for teachers and learning assistants. These may be provided within the school or through the education department. Staff may learn from the good practice within their own or in other schools through observation and/or shadowing. It may also be appropriate for staff to attend conferences.

Management staff in schools should consider the CPD needs of their staff and ensure that opportunities are kept available in the CPD programme within the school or that staff are given leave to attend relevant CPD. Within the education authority, CPD may be provided by SLTs but support for learning staff may initiate CPD based on their own or prepared material. (See Part B for staff development materials).

Opportunities to repeat and to gain further, more specialised training should be ongoing.

CPD for new staff and refresher sessions for existing staff should be provided where required.

Opportunities for joint professional development (e.g. Teachers and SLTs) should be encouraged.

Identifying pupils with speech, language and communication difficulties

In most cases, language difficulties have been identified pre-school or in primary. Support may have been provided, through a special language class placement, Outreach or Community SLT and specialised teaching or support for learning. The needs of children with more severe difficulties should continue to be recognised as they enter and progress through secondary school.

In addition to those pupils who are clearly recognised as language and communication impaired, Ehren and Lenz (1989) identify three other groups of pupils who have language difficulties in secondary schools:

- Some pupils have a history of language impairment that was identified pre-school. They have had intervention that may have helped but not ‘cured’ them. Their language difficulties however may be less evident as they get older. They have difficulty with schoolwork but the language impairment at the root of their problem is sometimes forgotten and their needs are viewed as being more generalised learning difficulties.

- Some pupils have language problems that manifested themselves in subtle ways when they were younger and were therefore not picked up at that time. It is only when curriculum demands require a greater degree of language competence, as in
secondary school, that these pupils start to struggle academically. Again it may be the case that some of these pupils are identified as having generalised learning difficulties with no awareness of their more specific language difficulty.

- Some pupils may have had adequate pre-adolescent language skills but fail to develop the higher-level language skills that are normally acquired in adolescence. These pupils may also be regarded as having general learning difficulties as their school progress deteriorates in the secondary school setting, without an understanding that they have a specific difficulty with language.

It is therefore important to consider that pupils who are failing academically may have an underlying lack of language competence and may not be receiving support that properly addresses their needs and enables them to fulfil their potential.

Language difficulties in secondary school pupils
Indicators for teachers

No one sign is in itself sufficient or necessary to indicate a language problem. Most students with a language impairment have a cluster of indicators. Some students may show one behaviour in one context and another in a different time or place. Also, not all difficulties with schoolwork or behavioural problems are necessarily the result of a language disorder.

The characteristics of speech, language and communication difficulties and their impact on the curriculum have already been described. However the checklists in Tables 11 and 12 may help to identify pupils who may benefit from assessment by Speech and Language Therapy and advice/support if required.

Staff who are concerned about a pupil’s speech, language and/or communication and who wish a Speech and Language Therapist’s opinion should first discuss this with the pupil’s parents and with the pupil, taking account of any school or education authority policy on referral to other agencies.

The Speech and Language Therapy Service in Edinburgh will accept direct referral from education staff (or from parents) but it is helpful if the appropriate form is used and sent to the address given on it. An sample form is provided on page 51.
Motivational characteristics
- failure to see the relationship between effort and success
- difficulty in setting and achieving goals

Learning characteristics
- slower to process spoken language and formulate their own language
- limited auditory memory, making it difficult to retain verbal information
- problems with concrete thinking and abstract reasoning
- do not use effective or efficient study routines
- difficulty distinguishing the important from the unimportant
- problems integrating new information into what they know and transferring information to new situations
- lack of active learning and self-taught strategies to assist with learning

Organisational characteristics
- problems carrying out multiple tasks simultaneously, e.g. copying from the board and listening at the same time
- poor self-organisational skills – remembering what to take and where to be

Note: Not all students with language disorders will present the same difficulties or range of difficulties and all the problems displayed by these students may not be explained by the language disorder. However, difficulties in the areas described in pages 9 – 10 will have an impact on a pupil’s ability to cope with secondary school, both academically and socially.

Table 11: Indicators of possible speech, language and communication problems

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Problems with speaking, listening and the curriculum</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Concentration and attention problems</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slow to respond; problems processing information</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inappropriate responses to verbal instructions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seems unsure what to do, may ask again and again or may ‘switch off’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appears disinterested – finds it hard to keep up with the pace or to ask for help.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reluctant to speak</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Difficulty organising or conveying thoughts (spoken or written)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Problems providing verbal explanations and reasons or telling stories</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Difficulty participating in class discussion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Word finding difficulties (see Section1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Makes grammatical errors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Difficulty discussing abstract ideas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Takes things literally</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poor conversational skills– difficulty taking turns, keeping on topic, saying appropriate things</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poor at reading the situation –</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• doesn’t pick up on non-verbal cues such as facial expression and gesture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• butts into conversations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• doesn’t pick up on when someone wants to finish a conversation etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• doesn’t pick up on emotional content of what people are saying</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trouble gaining information from books or spoken information</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Difficulty abstracting the main theme or idea</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Difficulty answering questions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Problems making inferences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Difficulty following the rules of the classroom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Homework often not completed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disorganised – forgets books, equipment, homework, school routines.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

27 Adapted from Patchell and Hand (1993), Lee and Shapiro-Fine (1994) and presentation by Dr Amanda Kirby 2004
Table 12: Additional indications from observations of behaviour

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Behavioural problems</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Poor self esteem</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low motivation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anxious or depressed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Withdrawn, possibly due to social communication difficulties</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fidgety/restless/impulsive – may become associated with other pupils with similar behaviours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aggressive/oppositional – may be frustrated due to difficulties with communication</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Problems making and maintaining friendships</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reluctance to participate in group activities; inappropriate coping mechanisms e.g. bullying, clowning, copying, truancy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seen as odd by peers – may be rigid in following routines or rules; may be bullied, teased or laughed at</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Loner – doesn’t know how to go about mixing with peers</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As handwriting problems often accompany developmental coordination disorder, penmanship difficulties can compound the problems with spelling and written language that the child is already contending with. Assessment of developmental coordination disorder requires the involvement of a paediatrician with training in neuro-developmental diagnosis and a paediatric occupational therapist. Management is both supportive, to enable the child to accomplish activities (e.g. through the use of ICT), and therapeutic, to improve the child’s underlying coordination skills, but there is no evidence base at present for any pharmacological treatment.

3. Social, emotional and behavioural problems in pupils with speech, language and communication difficulties

Research indicates that pupils with language impairments are at a higher risk of developing secondary social and emotional difficulties. During adolescence a pupil may have increased awareness of their difficulties. They may, however, be unsure where exactly their difficulties lie and not fully understand why they experience such difficulties thus heightening their vulnerability to emotional and behavioural problems.

The following behaviours may be observed:

- low self-esteem
- withdrawal
- apparent boredom
- lack of self-confidence
- work avoidance
- truanting
- difficulty following rules and boundaries

There is general acceptance that responses such as these are understandable in an individual who has perhaps experienced considerable school failure, has an awareness of their own difficulties and who might be subject to the influences of the changing adolescent emotional state.

It may be that a pupil who is presenting with behavioural problems may also, in some instances, have an underlying specific language difficulty that has not been identified.

4. Other associated characteristics

The following characteristics can sometimes be identified in pupils with on-going language and communication problems:

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9 Adapted from Ehren and Lenz (1989).
Literacy difficulties in pupils with speech, language and communication difficulties

As reported on page 7, pupils with significant spoken language difficulties are quite likely to have problems with literacy. They may have problems with deciphering print (decoding) and with spelling and these difficulties may be underpinned by similar phonological processing problems to those at the core of dyslexia. Thus, some pupils with spoken language difficulties may have quite similar problems to those with dyslexia (and indeed benefit from some similar management). However pupils with language difficulties may have reading comprehension problems and difficulties with formulating language in addition to, or instead of, the more typically ‘dyslexic’ literacy problems.

The profile of difficulty an individual pupil experiences depends on the precise level of breakdown of their phonological processing skills, in interaction with their other language abilities.

The links between language and literacy are explored further in Section 2.

Disorders associated with speech, language and communication difficulties

1. Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)

Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) is one of the most common neuro-developmental disorders which may persist into adult life. It occurs more commonly in children with speech and language delay/disorder than in the general population. Children with ADHD will present as having developmentally inappropriate levels of distractability and impulsivity.

In fact, ADHD seldom exists as a discrete entity as the majority of children will have associated impairments and this might include a speech and language delay/disorder or developmental coordination disorder. The diagnosis of ADHD is clinical and should be undertaken by a child psychiatrist or a paediatrician familiar with neuro-developmental disorders. A number of helpful rating scales validated against normal behaviour can be employed and, with these, an input from educational staff and parents is usually sought. The aim in the management of ADHD is to reduce or minimise symptoms and to improve quality of life and learning. Support can take the form of school based or psycho-social interventions or, in some cases, medication.

2. Developmental Motor Coordination Disorder

Developmental Motor Coordination Disorder frequently accompanies speech and language delays and disorders. It is associated with delay in the normal acquisition of coordination and skilled movement. A diagnosis of developmental coordination disorder is made where the child has delayed fine and gross motor skills which are out of step with other aspects of the child’s development and interfere with their activities of daily
have problems adapting their style of speech to be appropriate for the person they are talking to and the situation they are in;
• use inappropriate gesture, facial expression, eye contact and tone of voice;
• have difficulty knowing when and how to start, take turns in and finish a conversation;
• assume knowledge their listener does not have or provide unnecessary information;
• have problems keeping to the point; they may go off on a tangent on a favourite topic, e.g. start speaking about trains when someone mentions school timetables.

Pragmatic difficulties also impact on social behaviour. Pupils with pragmatic difficulties find it hard to transfer past experience of social situations to new ones. This may be hard for other people to understand. Unless school staff and other pupils are aware of this and make accommodation, it can lead to significant difficulties in maintaining good relationships and a pupil’s progress in learning.

The longitudinal picture for spoken and written language

Spoken language
Research which studied children with speech and language difficulties at four years of age, at five and a half years, eight and a half years and again at 15-16 years shows that children whose problems were severe and persistent at five and a half years, had long term difficulties with all aspects of spoken language functioning at age 15–16 years. They also fell further and further behind their peer group in vocabulary growth over time.

Written language
Other research shows that:
• Pupils with language difficulties are at greater risk of literacy difficulties.
• Young people who had had severe and persistent spoken language difficulties at five and a half years had literacy skills that were significantly poorer than their peers, with difficulties evident in reading and spelling.
• Even pupils whose language difficulties appeared to ‘resolve’ by 5 and a half years had some difficulties at 15-16 years. When compared to age matched controls on tests of spoken language and literacy skills, these young people performed significantly less well than their peers on tests of literacy and phonological processing (i.e. the ability to discriminate, segment, blend and manipulate the sounds within words).

Thus problems with language do not just go away, but may change in presentation as a child grows older.

4 Bishop and Edmunson (1987)
5 Stothard et al. (1998)
6 Snowling et al 2000; Catts 1996; Freedman and Wiig 1995; Lewis and Freebairn 1992;
7 Stothard et al. (1998)
• have difficulty working out who or what is being referred to when pronouns or other words are substituted for the noun or verb;
• misunderstand complex grammatical constructions;
• have difficulty using the complex sentences expected for their age and needed in order to express more complicated ideas;
• omit parts of sentences, especially the small words such as ‘the’, ‘in’, ‘of’, ‘a’, ‘by’. E.g.: ‘I went cinema and seen Lord of Rings.’
• use the wrong small words, e.g. ‘The cat was drawn at David.’
• put words in the wrong order, e.g. ‘I don’t know where is it.
• make persistent grammatical errors.

Some examples of expressive grammatical difficulties are given below.

Examples
The boy is saying whenever will the classes finished.
The granddad and the grandmother is doing the garden.
By the time I get my lunch the bell would be already gone.
The man is saying the cars can’t go because the peoples wants to.

from a 13 year old boy with expressive grammar difficulties

4. Pragmatics
Pragmatics refers to the skills that help us to communicate effectively in social situations. Pragmatic comprehension allows us to understand meaning as the other speaker intends it by interpreting the language used, in conjunction with non-verbal aspects of communication such as facial expression, tone of voice and the social context. Pragmatic comprehension also refers to our ability to understand figurative language such as idioms e.g. ‘pull your socks up.’

When we express ourselves, our pragmatic skills enable us to make adjustments to what we say and how we say it so that communication is socially appropriate. Pragmatic skills are very important in conversation and social interaction.

A pupil with difficulties in this area may:
• have problems ‘reading’ their listener’s interest level and emotional state conveyed through facial expression, body orientation, tone of voice;
• fail to understand differences between banter/friendly teasing and bullying;
• be poor at inferring meaning or reading between the lines;
• misunderstand non-literal language such as idioms (e.g. ‘pulling his hair out’);
• fail to appreciate indirect requests, e.g. ‘There are jotters to collect here’;
• not pick up on sarcasm;

Appendix 1
Formats for transferring information about speech / language and communication skills as a pupil starts secondary school

For pupils transferring from primary language class to mainstream secondary school
Information transferred to secondary school teaching staff is likely to be composed of:

1. Full report, which may be written jointly by SLT and Class Teacher, including the following information:
   • Nature of difficulties
     Information about the types of difficulties the young person has, including any diagnoses.
   • Background Summary
     Information about the young person’s language development and the support they have received.
   • Ongoing Issues
     Particular areas of continuing difficulty are described with practical strategies to help.
     This may be presented as an ASL/Supporting Learning Profile (see Appendix 2)

2. Language Classes may also provide information written in conjunction with the pupil that provides teaching staff with a picture of the pupil’s insight into their own areas of difficulty, any strategies they employ, their expectations of high school, and general information about what they are like and what they are interested in.

These documents can be circulated to teaching staff as appropriate.

For pupils transferring from a mainstream class to a mainstream secondary school
Pupils who are transferring from a mainstream class will not have received the same level of intensive input from the SLT service in their Primary 7 year as pupils who are transferring from a language class. However, their SLT will be able to provide information about their areas of difficulty and ideas for support strategies. This information may be presented using the ASL/Supporting Learning Profile (Appendix 2) and can be circulated to all subject teachers.
2. Vocabulary

Vocabulary refers to our knowledge of the words that language is made up of. It is a very large component of language and one that generally continues to expand throughout our lives. It contributes greatly to our comprehension of what people say. Also well-developed accessible vocabulary knowledge helps us to express our ideas clearly, accurately and succinctly.

A pupil with difficulties in this area may:

- understand fewer words than they should for their age. Poorly developed vocabulary comprehension may not be immediately obvious but can have significant detrimental effects on a pupil’s understanding of what is being taught.
- have limited expressive vocabulary or have difficulty finding a particular word to convey his/her ideas. This problem is sometimes known as a word-finding difficulty (WFD). The characteristics of the language of pupils with WFD are presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Characteristics of word-finding difficulty

- Getting stuck for words – taking a long time to get out what they want to say.
- Misnaming things – e.g. ‘lion’ for ‘tiger’, ‘pliers’ for ‘spanner’.
- Pronouncing the word incorrectly e.g. ‘mapmin’ for ‘napkin’, ‘minotilers’ for ‘binoculars’. This may occur because, in the learning process, the pupil has stored an inaccurate form of the word in memory.
- Talking around the word.
- Overusing vague words such as ‘thingy’, ‘stuff’ and multipurpose verbs such as ‘got’ and ‘put’.
- Lack of fluency when expressing ideas.

3. Grammar

Grammar specifies the rules for how words are put together into sentences. To understand language effectively we need to be familiar with how the use of verb tenses, pronouns, word order, word endings and sentence constructions convey meaning. In expressing our ideas we need to have a command of these grammatical aspects and produce language that is free of grammatical error. Normally, grammatical development continues into adolescence.

A pupil with difficulties in this area may:

- misunderstand verb tense forms. This makes it hard for them to determine when something is happening or has happened;
Comprehension and expression depend on a set of components that interlink and impact on each other. They are represented in the diagram below.

Fig 1: Components of language and their relationship to comprehension and expression

1. Speech sounds
2. Vocabulary
3. Grammar
4. Pragmatics

Pupils may have difficulty with one or more of these components and the severity of difficulty they may have in each may also vary. Difficulties may predominantly affect expressive language, or both comprehension and expression. Thus different pupils with speech, language and communication difficulties may have very different profiles and their profiles may also change with age. The effect of spoken language difficulties on pupils' educational progress will be described later in this Guide.

1. Speech sounds

Speech sounds make up spoken words. Although this appears almost self evident, to understand language effectively we need to be able to discriminate between similar sounding words and identify word boundaries. When expressing ourselves we need to be able to pronounce the sounds in words accurately and in the right order.

A pupil with difficulties in this area may:

- have problems understanding because of difficulty discriminating sounds within words and/or identifying word boundaries. For example they may perceive words incorrectly, e.g. hear factory as ‘fat tree’ or coal as ‘goal’.
- when expressing themselves, make mistakes in pronunciation that are similar to those made by a much younger child. Speech sound problems in secondary age pupils, however, are more likely to occur when pupils attempt to say longer complex or unfamiliar words. Errors may occur when sounds are omitted or incorrectly sequenced within the word e.g. ‘porter’ for ‘reporter’, ‘satiskits’ for ‘statistics’.

NOTE: A small number of pupils with speech sound difficulties have Articulatory/Verbal Dyspraxia. This is an uncommon disorder but one in which pupils have particular difficulties with pronunciation. Despite their best efforts they may make several inaccurate attempts to say a word. It is a disorder which tends to persist and in severe cases a pupil with articulatory/verbal dyspraxia may need to use sign language or technology in order to communicate.
SECTION 1

Understanding the nature of speech, language and communication difficulties

Definition

Teachers will already be familiar with pupils whose language skills are less well developed that those of their peers for a variety of reasons. However, the literature recognises a group of pupils whose difficulties with language have generally been apparent since pre-school and whose language difficulties are considered to be specific. These children and young people may be described as having a ‘developmental language disorder’ or a ‘specific language impairment’, which Leonard (1998) defines as follows:

...children who show a significant limitation in language ability, yet the factors usually accompanying language learning problems – such as hearing impairment, low non-verbal intelligence test scores, and neurological damage – are not evident.²

Prevalence

The prevalence of speech and language impairment (SLI) is about 7%. SLI is more likely to be seen in males than in females, and children with SLI are more likely than other children to have parents and siblings with a history of language learning problems. There are areas of language that are especially difficult for children with SLI, but the heterogeneity of language profiles in this population is nevertheless considerable. Treatment improves these children’s language learning, but the deficits in language do not go away easily.³

Severity varies greatly from those who have very severe difficulties understanding and using language to those whose difficulties are more subtle but may still impact on their educational progress and social development.

The components of language

This section describes the four components of language and looks at the difficulties that pupils may experience. These components may be familiar but the way in which language acquisition may be disrupted in each of these components and the impact on a pupil’s ability to understand and express him/her self using language may be less so.

We can understand the characteristics of speech, language and/or communication difficulties by making a distinction between the difficulties children and young people have in understanding spoken language (comprehension) and the problems they have in expressing their ideas orally (expression).

² Leonard (1998)
³ ibid
Appendix 3

The vocabulary learning process and strategies to support learning

Many pupils with speech language and communication difficulties have poor vocabulary. These pupils understand and use far fewer words than they should for their age. This can have an effect on their understanding of what they hear and read, their ability to express their ideas and their capacity to learn all the specific subject words for the various areas of the curriculum.

The reason why they have poor vocabulary is often because they are not able to learn new vocabulary as easily and efficiently as their peers. Remember what it was like when you tried to learn the made-up words in Section 1. From your experience of trying to learn these new words problems might arise when the pupil has to learn:

- the pronunciation of the word, e.g. ‘photosynthesis’
- the meaning, e.g. ……
- the correct association between the word and the meaning, e.g. that photosynthesis means X and not Y

Pupils with vocabulary learning difficulties need to expand their vocabulary overall and to learn the vocabulary which is central to success with the subjects they are studying. Learning and retaining core curriculum vocabulary is very important for subjects such as science, maths, geography, home economics etc. Vocabulary expansion is particularly important for English.

To help the pupil, an important first step is to identify the important words that they have to learn and keep a record of these in a format that is organised and easy to use. Try not to work on too many new words at once – prioritise where possible. When going over the words with the pupil it is important to:

- Make sure the pupil can repeat the word correctly (especially important for longer words). You may have to break the word into individual syllables for the young person to copy. It may help to encourage the young person to identify and remember familiar bits within unfamiliar words e.g. the pot in hippopotamus.
- Talk about the meaning- does it have similarities with other words that he is trying to learn? Compare and contrast words and their meanings.
- Can you group the words in any way that will make associations clearer?
- Visual strategies which give clues to the meaning may be particularly helpful, for example:
  - colouring the words on the basis of meaning (e.g. blue for all words relating to water)
  - writing the word in a way that makes the meaning obvious (graphics), for example, the word ‘convex’ written in that shape
  - making the layout of a vocabulary list give clues to the meaning
- Help the pupil to put the words into a sentence that shows he understands the meaning.

If the pupil you are working with has vocabulary problems then helping him learn and retain new vocabulary has to be an ongoing process. That means:
• keeping a personal word book organised and up to date
• checking with the subject teacher or the support for learning teacher that you have identified the most important words for direct teaching

As this publication goes to print a piece of computer software called The Word Bank is being developed and piloted in Edinburgh schools. It is designed to help pupils with vocabulary learning difficulties to acquire the large number of specialised words they will encounter in the secondary curriculum. Essentially, it is a database that allows subject teachers to input key vocabulary, definitions and pictures, and to print out selected content in a variety of formats.

In the absence of such software, however, teachers can still help pupils to build up a folder or notebook of key curriculum vocabulary and definitions, organised according to subject, which can be used to support vocabulary development at home or in school.

A word about idioms

Idioms such as ‘right up my street’, ‘you’ve got the wrong end of the stick’ are commonly used by teachers and in text. They may need their meanings explained and the young person helped to remember what they mean. They can perhaps be ‘collected’ in a section of the pupil’s personal word bank together with their meanings, so that this can be referred to as required.
**REFERRAL FORM FOR SPEECH & LANGUAGE THERAPY ASSESSMENT**

| Name: _______________________________________________________ | DOB: _______________________________ |
| Address: ______________________________________________________________________________________________ | ___________________________________ |
| Post Code: ________________ | Tel No: ______________________________ |
| GP (Name and Address) | ______________________________________________________________________________________________ |
| HV/School Doctor: _____________________________________________ | Tel No: ______________________________ |
| Name of Parent/Carer: | ______________________________________________________________________________________________ |
| Professionals involved: | ______________________________ Tel No: ______________________________ |
| | ______________________________ Tel No: ______________________________ |
| School/Nursery/Playgroup: | ______________________________ AM/PM |
| Main language spoken in the home: | Interpreter required: YES/NO |

**BIRTH HISTORY AND GENERAL DEVELOPMENT:**

**DATE AND RESULT OF LAST HEARING TEST:**

**DESCRIPTION OF SPEECH/LANGUAGE/COMMUNICATION PROBLEM: (OR FEEDING DIFFICULTY):**

**Parental Views:**

Please attach relevant reports, letters, assessment sheets etc.

**Referred by:** ________________________________________________ Date: ________________________________

**Designation:** ___________________________________________________________________________________________

**Address:** ______________________________________________________________________________________________

**NB** The Speech and Language Therapist can only accept referrals if consent has been obtained from the parent/carer.

I confirm that parental consent has been given  
Signature: ________________________________

Please use the back of this form to give additional information and RETURN to:

Speech & Language Therapy Department
18 Rillbank Terrace Edinburgh EH9 1LL
REFERENCES

Articles


SECTION 2: Learning needs, supports and strategies

General challenges of primary-secondary transition

General strategies to support pupils with speech, language and communication difficulties

1. Managing a smooth transition
2. Communication and collaboration
3. The curriculum
4. Staff roles in supporting pupils

Specific problems – specific strategies:

1. Listening and understanding
2. Talking and responding
3. Reading and writing
4. Vocabulary learning
5. Social interaction and inclusion

Continuing professional development

Identifying pupils with speech, language and communication difficulties

Language difficulties in secondary school pupils: Indicators for teachers

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Appendix 2 ASL Supporting Learning Profile (for secondary pupils)

Appendix 3 The vocabulary learning process and strategies to support learning

Appendix 4 Example of referral form for speech and language therapy assessment

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Conference Proceedings

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http://www.talkingpoint.org.uk
http://www.scotland.gov.uk

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Draft:Builder, Co:Writer and Write:OutLoud are registered trademarks of Don Johnston, Ltd. http://www.donjohnston.co.uk
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There are several CoBuild Products at the above site. Teachers will find the CoBuild Advanced Learners dictionary a useful reference when supporting vocabulary development or creating teaching materials. The Compact dictionary may be more manageable for pupils. Definitions are written in full sentences in simple, natural English. (Bear in mind that for pupils to benefit from use of any dictionary they need to have acquired the requisite reading and dictionary skills.)

FOREWORD

These guidelines have been developed from work undertaken to help support the inclusion of children and young people with speech and language and communication difficulties in Edinburgh.

Following the initiative by the City of Edinburgh Council, Afasic Scotland, the voluntary organisation working in the field of speech and language impairments, secured support from the Scottish Executive to extend and pilot this development before ultimately making the guidelines available nationwide.

The development has been hall-marked by collaboration between the core group of Speech and Language Therapists who have worked in the schools and committed teachers who have contributed enthusiastically to the thinking and the outcomes. Together, they have informed the content and approach of these guidelines to offer practical professional development support.

The CPD component of these guidelines includes evaluation and feedback which will be invaluable in ensuring that we continue to reflect on how teachers and others working in schools can best be supported in working to meet the needs of all young people.

Acknowledgements

Many people have contributed to this Guide.

Special thanks are due to Dr. Marysia Nash, Specialist Speech and Language Therapist, Royal Hospital for Sick Children, Edinburgh, whose experience and expertise provided much of the content, and to Leila Mackie and Lesley Sargent, Speech and Language Therapists, who made significant contributions.

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Discussions with support for learning and subject teachers, visits to schools with specialist resources across Scotland, and information and review provided by the members of the Secondary School Steering group, Visiting Teacher Support Service, Educational Psychology and parents from AFASIC Edinburgh have also informed the document. We are grateful to them all for their helpful comments and suggestions.

Editing was carried out by Hilary McColl who also prepared the document for publication.

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How to use Part B

Part B is divided into 4 sessions. Each session is comprised of an introductory or review component (derived from Part A of the Guide) followed by workshop activities designed to promote discussion and shared understanding. Each session will take approximately 90 minutes.

All the workshop materials, including overhead transparencies, are included in Part B. The tutor should, of course, be familiar with the content of Part A.

At the end of each session, tutors are asked to distribute and collect feedback questionnaires. These will enable the tutor and/or the team organising the CPD to evaluate the usefulness of the materials and to make any appropriate amendments.

The materials can be presented either by a speech and language therapist or by a support for learning teacher with knowledge and experience of working with pupils who have language and communication difficulties. If delivered by a teacher, he/she should ideally have attended CPD led by a speech and language therapist on language and communication difficulties in secondary school aged pupils.

Word Bank

The Word Bank referred to is a piece of computer software designed to help pupils with vocabulary learning difficulties to acquire the large number of specialised words they will encounter in the secondary curriculum. Essentially, it is a database that allows subject teachers to input key vocabulary, definitions and pictures, and to print out selected content in a variety of formats. It is being developed and piloted in a few Edinburgh schools as this publication goes to print.
THE PURPOSE OF THIS GUIDE

There are legal requirements on the education authority and its staff to ensure that all reasonable steps are taken to make the curriculum accessible and to remove barriers to learning for pupils with additional support needs.

In every secondary school, teachers work with pupils who have speech, language and communication difficulties recognising and supporting the pupils’ language and communication and associated learning difficulties. This Guide aims to support and extend effective practice, drawing upon experience in schools, the literature (see reference list in Appendices) and publications by Afasic.

The Guide focuses on pupils who have a specific difficulty with speech, language and communication. However, teachers of other pupils such as those with Moderate Learning Difficulties (MLD), English as an Additional Language (EAL), and pupils with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) may also benefit from some or all of the guidance offered here.

The Guide is in two parts:

Part A is intended for subject teachers and support for learning teachers in secondary schools, to alert them to the difficulties faced by some of their pupils, and to suggest ways of making the curriculum more accessible to them.

Part B provides a set of related materials for use by specialists delivering training within dedicated CPD time for groups of teachers in secondary schools.

How to use Part A

There are various ways in which Part A can be used, depending on the circumstances:

- Part A can be read by a teacher who finds him/herself for the first time with a pupil who has speech, language and/or communication difficulties. It will serve as an introduction to the difficulties the young person is likely to face and suggest ways of making the curriculum more accessible.
- If used in conjunction with a series of training sessions, participants can be supplied with copies of Part A, or relevant sections of it, and asked to read the relevant sections ahead of each session.
- Alternatively, the tutor can use material from Part A to inform the ‘taught’ part of a session, leaving participants to use Part A to revise and consolidate their understanding.

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