

Supporting Spoken Language in the Classroom

Case Studies from Schools in Bristol



Authors

Dr Ioanna Bakopoulou

SSLiC Bristol Programme Lead
School of Education
University of Bristol

Dr Yvonne Wren

SSLiC Bristol Programme Co-Lead
Bristol Dental School
University of Bristol

Anne-Marie Cray

SSLiC Facilitator
School of Education
University of Bristol

Schools

Two Mile Hill Primary School

Joe Napier and Jonny Mercer

Evergreen Primary Academy

Emma Wheeldon, Deborah Barkham and
Vicky Counsell

Minerva Primary Academy

Alyson Marlor, Kate Moreton and Jennifer Harvey

Acknowledgements

The authors would like to thank all the pupils and teaching staff who have contributed their time and support to the case studies described in this report. This project would not have been possible without support and funding from the University of Bristol's ESRC Impact Acceleration Award.

Contents

- 1. Introduction 4
- 1.1 What is SSLiC? 4
- 1.2 Raising attainment for children with language difficulties? 5
- 2. Case Studies 6
- Two Mile Hill Primary School 6
- Evergreen Primary Academy 13
- Minerva Primary Academy 18
- 3. Conclusion 22



1. Introduction

1.1 What is SSLiC?

Supporting Spoken Language in the Classroom (SSLiC) is a knowledge exchange programme¹ that ultimately aims to improve communication and learning outcomes for all children. It seeks to achieve this aim by providing a forum for knowledge exchange between practitioners and researchers. There is a wealth of research in the area of speech, language and communication needs (SLCN), although there are still gaps in our understanding of how to apply this in practice in schools and the best ways to support school practitioners to embed communication in their school's policy and practice. If we as practitioners and researchers wish to see greater improvements in outcomes for all children starting in school and beyond, it is critical that we come together, over a sustained period of time, to investigate how the evidence base related to communication and oral language that does exist might be applied to a particular setting and then how this collective knowledge might be used to inform the wider community of 'what works' in schools for children.

To support this process the SSLiC programme has identified five evidence-informed domains around which schools can focus professional development and learning:

- Language Leadership
- Staff Professional Development and Learning
- Communication Supporting Classrooms
- Identifying and Supporting Speech, Language and Communication Needs
- Working with Others.

This report describes the activities, outcomes and learning from 3 schools in Bristol across the 2019-20 and 2020-2021 academic years. Each school had access to research findings, a school self-assessment audit tool, an evidence-based classroom observation tool and received regular support from a facilitator with research and school practitioner backgrounds. All participants had the opportunity to share and evaluate their findings at the end of the two years, the results of which have been published as case studies in this report.

¹ The SSLiC Programme was developed as part of a series of knowledge exchange programmes at the Centre for Inclusive Education, UCL <https://www.ucl.ac.uk/ioe/departments-and-centres/centres/ucl-centre-inclusive-education>

1.2 Raising attainment for children with language difficulties?

Raising attainment for all children is at the heart of education and research has shown how language difficulties may be correlated with future academic performance². When considering academic attainment, research literature has pointed to children with language difficulties attaining less well in national tests than their typically developing peers (TDP), both at the end of Key Stage 2³ and end of Key Stage 4^{4,5}. Moreover, research into skills which are arguably necessary for classroom learning has shown some of the difficulties children with SCLN may have in acquiring those skills. Children with language difficulties, for example, have been shown to have difficulties with acquiring literacy skills⁶, writing difficulties⁷, difficulties with numeracy⁸, working memory⁹ and executive functioning skills¹⁰. Moreover, we know that there is a relationship between language difficulties and problems with behaviour, and the difficulties that children with SCLN experience with their social and emotional skills^{11,12,13}.

This is pertinent as research suggests that attainment is linked to positive social and emotional wellbeing¹⁴. The relationship between language and attainment is a complex one. SSLiC aims to foster a good language learning environment, and so provide support for literacy, support for learning and ultimately promote positive academic outcomes. Further, creating effective language learning school environments can prepare children for the more challenging demands placed on oral language as they proceed through school, and can reduce the number of children experiencing SCLN.

-
- 2 Snowling, M. J., Hulme, C., Bailey, A. M., Stothard, S. E., & Lindsay, G. (2011). Better Communication Research Project: language and literacy attainment of pupils during early years and through KS2: does teacher assessment at five provide a valid measure of children's current and future educational attainments?
 - 3 Conti-Ramsden, G., Botting, N., Knox, E., & Simkin, Z. (2002). Different school placements following language unit attendance: Which factors affect language outcome? *International Journal of Language and Communication Disorders*, 37(2), 185-195.
 - 4 Dockrell, J., Lindsay, G., & Palikara, O. (2011). Explaining the academic achievement at school leaving for pupils with a history of language impairment: Previous academic achievement and literacy skills. *Child Language Teaching and Therapy*, 27(2), 223-237.
 - 5 Durkin, K., Simkin, Z., Knox, E., & Conti-Ramsden, G. (2009). Specific language impairment and school outcomes. II: Educational context, student satisfaction, and post-compulsory progress. *International Journal of Language and Communication Disorders*, 44(1), 36-55
 - 6 Stothard, S. E., Snowling, M. J., Bishop, D., Chipchase, B. B., & Kaplan, C. A. (1998). Language-Impaired Preschoolers: A Follow-Up Into Adolescence. *Journal of Speech, Language, and Hearing Research*, 41(2), 407-418.
 - 7 Dockrell, J., Ricketts, J., Charman, T., & Lindsay, G. (2014). Exploring writing products in students with language impairments and autism spectrum disorders. *Learning and Instruction*, 32, 81-90.
 - 8 Harrison, L. J., McLeod, S., Berthelsen, D., & Walker, S. (2009). Literacy, numeracy, and learning in school-aged children identified as having speech and language impairment in early childhood. *International Journal of Speech and Language Pathology*, 11(5), 392-403.
 - 9 Baddeley, A. (2003). Working memory and language: An overview. *Journal of Communication Disorders*, 36(3), 189-208.
 - 10 Henry, L. A., Messer, D. J., & Nash, G. (2012). Executive functioning in children with specific language impairment. *Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry*, 53(1), 37-45.
 - 11 Bakopoulou, I., & Dockrell, J. E. (2016). The role of social cognition and prosocial behaviour in relation to the socio-emotional functioning of primary aged children with specific language impairment. *Research in Developmental Disabilities*, 49, 354-370.
 - 12 Yew, S. G. K., & O'Kearney, R. (2013). Emotional and behavioural outcomes later in childhood and adolescence for children with specific language impairments: meta analyses of controlled prospective studies. *Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry*, 54(5), 516-524
 - 13 Conti-Ramsden, G., & Botting, N. (2008). Emotional health in adolescents with and without a history of specific language impairment (SLI). *Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry and Allied Disciplines*, 49(5), 516-525
 - 14 Gutman, L. M., & Vorhaus, J. (2012). The impact of pupil behaviour and wellbeing on educational outcomes. Department for Education, London.

2. Case Studies

Two Mile Hill Primary School

Developing a consistent, whole-school approach of language learning

Research Team and Setting

Zoe Napier, SENDCo,
Deputy Head Teacher, Pupil Premium Lead,
Two Mile Hill Primary

Jonny Mercer, Oracy Lead,
Two Mile Hill Primary

Emma Fenton, Teaching Assistant
(Language and Communication),
Two Mile Hill Primary

Anne-Marie Cray, SSLiC Bristol Facilitator,
School of Education, University of Bristol

Dr Ioanna Bakopoulou, SSLiC Bristol
Programme Lead,
School of Education, University of Bristol

Background

Two Mile Hill Primary school is located in Kingswood, East Bristol. The school has a diverse community and a high number of children with English as an Additional Language. There are 31 different languages spoken by children attending the school.

School staff at Two Mile Hill Primary express concerns about low levels of language at school entry. In total, 33% of the current Reception children have been assessed as being below the expected standard in the area of Communication and Language of the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Profile Assessments, a figure also highlighted within government statistics as the most prevalent area of SEND in mainstream primary schools¹⁵.

Furthermore, in Reception 43% of students in receipt of Pupil Premium score below the expected standard in the area of Communication and Language in EYFS Profile Assessments. Research has repeatedly pointed to a disproportionate number of children in socially disadvantaged areas experiencing language difficulties, which can be up to 50% at school entry¹⁶. In fact, research exploring the abilities of children entering nursery in socially disadvantaged areas found similar prevalence despite other cognitive abilities being within the average range¹⁷. However, there are also large number of children in areas of social disadvantage who do not experience difficulties in the area of language and communication¹⁸.

15 Department for Education. (2017). Statistical First Release: Special Educational Needs in England. DfE, London

16 Law, J., Lindsay, G., Peacey, P., Gascoigne M., Soloff, N., Radford, J., Band, S., and Fitzgerald, L. (2000) Provision for children's speech and language needs in England and Wales: facilitating communication between education and health services. DfES research report 23.

17 Locke, A., Ginsborg, J., & Peers, I. (2002). Development and disadvantage: implications for the early years and beyond. *International Journal of Language & Communication Disorders*, 37(1), 3-15.

18 Law, J., Todd, L., Clark, J., Mroz, M., & Carr, J. (2013). Early language delays in the UK. Save the Children, London

Overall, school staff at Two Mile Hill Primary also identified that Communication and Interaction is the most prevalent area of SEND in the school, accounting for the primary need in 40% of pupils and secondary need in 23% of pupils across all ages. Research has shown how language difficulties are correlated with future academic performance¹⁹ and points to children with language difficulties attaining less well in national tests than their typically developing peers (TDP), both at the end of Key Stage 2²⁰ and end of Key Stage 4^{21, 22}. Moreover, research into skills which are arguably necessary for classroom learning has shown some of the difficulties children with SLCN may have in acquiring those skills. Children with language difficulties, for example, have been shown to have difficulties acquiring literacy skills²³, writing skills²⁴, numeracy skills²⁵, working memory²⁶ and executive functioning skills²⁷.

Given the large number of children at school identified with SLCN or as having low language levels, a priority area of focus for the SSLiC Bristol Programme at Two Mile Hill Primary was to promote high quality teaching to develop the language and communication skills of all children through the development of strong language learning environments, which research^{28, 29} suggests can prepare children for the more challenging demands placed on oracy as they proceed through school but also reduce the numbers of children identified as experiencing SLCN.

A key focus for the school was to increase the skills of staff in identifying and assessing communication needs and overall raising staff's awareness of the importance of oracy. A relative large number of Newly Qualified Teachers worked for the school which made a focus on professional development imperative. Research points to teachers' varying levels of experience when it comes to identification of speaking and listening skills with recent studies reporting on teachers feeling unprepared and lacking the skill and confidence in supporting children's language needs³⁰. Therefore, the ultimate aim of the SSLiC Two Mile Hill project was to ensure that all children's difficulties with speech and language are identified early and catered for, since early identification appears to be key for ensuring successful outcomes for children with SLCN as it allows for timely intervention³¹.

A related area identified as priority for the school was the need for a whole school, consistent approach for all teaching staff to explicitly teach speaking and listening skills. Raising the profile of spoken language and embedding a culture where all teaching staff are responsible to consistently teach, develop and provide opportunities for students to practise language skills was a significant step to whole school improvement.

-
- 19 Snowling, M. J., Hulme, C., Bailey, A. M., Stothard, S. E., & Lindsay, G. (2011). Better Communication Research Project: language and literacy attainment of pupils during early years and through KS2: does teacher assessment at five provide a valid measure of children's current and future educational attainments?
 - 20 Conti-Ramsden, G., Botting, N., Knox, E., & Simkin, Z. (2002). Different school placements following language unit attendance: Which factors affect language outcome? *International Journal of Language and Communication Disorders*, 37(2), 185-195.
 - 21 Dockrell, J., Lindsay, G., & Palikara, O. (2011). Explaining the academic achievement at school leaving for pupils with a history of language impairment: Previous academic achievement and literacy skills. *Child Language Teaching and Therapy*, 27(2), 223-237.
 - 22 Durkin, K., Simkin, Z., Knox, E., & Conti-Ramsden, G. (2009). Specific language impairment and school outcomes. II: Educational context, student satisfaction, and post-compulsory progress. *International Journal of Language and Communication Disorders*, 44(1), 36-55.
 - 23 Stothard, S. E., Snowling, M. J., Bishop, D., Chipchase, B. B., & Kaplan, C. A. (1998). Language-Impaired Preschoolers: A Follow-Up Into Adolescence. *Journal of Speech, Language, and Hearing Research*, 41(2), 407-418.
 - 24 Dockrell, J., Ricketts, J., Charman, T., & Lindsay, G. (2014). Exploring writing products in students with language impairments and autism spectrum disorders. *Learning and Instruction*, 32, 81-90.
 - 25 Harrison, L. J., McLeod, S., Berthelsen, D., & Walker, S. (2009). Literacy, numeracy, and learning in school-aged children identified as having speech and language impairment in early childhood. *International Journal of Speech and Language Pathology*, 11(5), 392-403.
 - 26 Baddeley, A. (2003). Working memory and language: An overview. *Journal of Communication Disorders*, 36(3), 189-208
 - 27 Henry, L. A., Messer, D. J., & Nash, G. (2012). Executive functioning in children with specific language impairment. *Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry*, 53(1), 37-45
 - 28 Dockrell, J.E., Lindsay, G., Roulstone, S., & Law, J. (2014). Supporting children with speech, language and communication needs: An overview of the results of the Better Communication Research Programme. *International Journal of Language and Communication Disorders*, 49, 43-57
 - 29 Dockrell, J.E., Bakopoulou, I., Law, J., Spencer, S., & Lindsay, G. (2015). Capturing communication supporting classrooms: The development of a tool and feasibility study. *Child Language Teaching and Therapy*, 31(3), 271-286.
 - 30 Dockrell, J.E., Howell, P., Leung, D., & Fugard, A.J. (2017). Children with speech, language and communication needs in England: Challenges in practice. *Frontiers in Education*, 2, 35.
 - 31 Snowling, M.J., Adams, J.W., Bishop, D.V., & Stothard, S.E. (2001). Educational attainments of school leavers with a preschool history of speech-language impairments. *International Journal of Language and Communication Disorders*, 36(2), 173-183

Finally, the school community of Two Mile Hill recognised that, by promoting joined up working between the school and families, a shared understanding of the child's needs can be established and further opportunities for language learning can be developed across the different environments. The role that the home environment can play in supporting children's language has been highlighted repeatedly in research³² and, therefore, Zoe, Jonny and Emma decided that this needs to be a priority of work for the SSLiC Two Mile Hill project.

What was done?

In order to support change across the school, a Communication Team was set up with representation from the school's SENCo and key staff members across the two Key Stages. Analysis of the SSLiC Self-Assessment School Audit identified that the school had a number of well-developed practices in the domain of Language Leadership and Identifying and Supporting SLCN. Zoe and Jonny also spent time observing classes across the school during November 2019, using the Communication Supporting Classrooms Observation Tool (CSCOT)³³ to profile classroom environments. The purpose of the observations was to understand how oracy was promoted, supported and directly targeted across all ages within the school. Following analysis of the CSCOTs, the Communication Team identified many strengths in all three domains. The CSCOTs, for example, identified strengths in the Language Learning Environments provided in classrooms as well as a variety of Language Learning Interaction techniques frequently used by school staff when talking with children. However, areas for development were also identified and actions were decided upon and included:

Creating a shared philosophy of language learning and promoting the importance of oral language with parents and the wider school community

The Two Mile Hill Communication Team developed a philosophy of language learning which they believe influences the choices school staff make in structuring the physical environment of the classroom, and in the way they design language learning opportunities and interact with children³⁴. The philosophy of language learning is suggested in research³⁵ to support Communication Teams into taking a principled approach to creating communication supporting environments and creating a clear vision for change. This included the reasons why oral language is important and acknowledged how the adults have a strong role in supporting and developing this.

The philosophy of language learning was shared with all school staff and parents as well as some key stakeholders. Oracy is on the School Improvement Plan, so all stakeholders are aware and engaged in the process of developing oracy across the school.

Creating communication supporting environments

The Two Mile Hill Communication Team observed a number of classrooms across the school and fed back to the class teachers about areas of strength as well as areas for development. In terms of the first dimension, the Communication Team felt that most classrooms provide a good *Language Learning Environment*. Most classrooms created strong communication spaces, offered good transitions, and had specific book areas and literacy areas that were clearly labelled and defined. A focus of the work in this domain was to introduce interactive displays where children are invited to add to the display during periods of study, an area which has been highlighted as important by research^{36, 37, 38}.

32 Tabors, P. O., Snow, C. E., & Dickinson, D. K. (2001). Homes and schools together: Supporting language and literacy development.

33 Dockrell, J.E., Bakopoulou, I., Law, J., Spencer, S., & Lindsay, G. (2012). Communication Supporting Classroom Observation Tool. Freely available from: https://www.thecommunicationtrust.org.uk/media/93866/tct_bcrp_csc_final.pdf.

34 Justice, L.M. (2004). Creating language-rich preschool classroom environments. *Teaching Exceptional Children*, 36-44

35 Kotter, J.P. (2012). *Leading Change*, Harvard Business Review Press, Boston, Mass.

36 Siraj-Blatchford, I., Sylva, K., Muttock, S., Gilden, R., & Bell, D. (2002). *Researching effective pedagogy in the early years*. London: DFES.

37 Harms, T., Clifford, R. M., & Cryer, D. (1996). *Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale - Revised (ECERS-R)*. London: Teachers College Press.

38 Sylva, K, Siraj-Blatchford, I., Taggart, B. (2006). *Assessing Quality in the Early Years: Early Childhood Environmental Rating Scale – Extension (ECERS-E)*. Stoke-on Trent, UK and Sterling, USA: Trentham Books.



In terms of the work undertaken to strengthen *Language Learning Opportunities* provided in the classrooms, results of the CSCOTs demonstrated students have opportunities to engage in structured conversations with adults. However, the Two Mile Hill Communication Team identified a need to develop opportunities within the school day for students to engage with peers in structured conversation. Research points to the importance of children being given prompts and support by adults to engage in specific conversation about a topic with peers^{39,40,41}.

Finally, following analysis of the last dimension of the CSCOTs, the Two Mile Hill Communication Team concluded that school staff used many of the *Language Learning Interaction* techniques shown to support language learning such as use of child's name, getting down to child's level, natural gestures/signing and imitation of child speech.

However, the Communication Team felt improvements in this domain could be made by supporting school staff to use more advanced Language Learning Interaction techniques, such as praising listening skills, praising non-verbal skills, offering choices, highlighting the differences between lexical items and syntactic structures, and adults providing commentary.

Developing a whole-school, consistent approach in teaching and practising oracy skills

The Communication Team identified that students need to be explicitly taught oracy skills and given opportunity to practise and develop these skills. They also identified the importance of developing consistency in how language is used to convey understanding and aid discussion. In doing that, the Communication Team decided to focus on key words which would be clearly displayed and explicitly referred to during lessons: Describe, Explain and Justify.

39 Mashburn, A. J., Justice, L. M., Downer, J. T., & Pianta, R. C. (2009). Peer effects on children's language achievement during pre-kindergarten. *Child Development*, 80(3), 686-702.

40 Justice, L.M., Petscher, Y., Schatschneider, C., & Mashburn, A. (2011). Peer effects in Preschool Classrooms: Is Children's Language Growth Associated with Their Classmates' Skills? *Child Development*, 82(6), 1768-1777.

41 Chapman, R. S. (2000). Children's language learning: An interactionist perspective. *Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry*, 41, 33-54.

What were the findings and outcomes of the project?

The Communication Team organised two professional development sessions with a direct focus on language and communication for all school staff, including teachers and teaching assistants. One session was run by the Communication Team and one was run by the Speech and Language Therapy Service. The CPD sessions included training on creating communication supporting classrooms, with a particular focus on the areas highlighted for development following classroom observations.

Following on from the training and feedback based on the CSCOTs, the teachers chose certain actions and set personal targets they would all aim to complete to support oral language in their classroom. Staff have been regularly reviewing the effectiveness of targeted oracy activities and have made classroom adaptations.

The plan is to use CSCOT as a peer review tool in the future.

In addition to the classroom modifications that resulted from professional development sessions, there has been a clear move across all year groups to a consistent approach in explicit teaching of language skills. For example, each classroom in the school had the three key terms (Describe, Explain, Justify) clearly displayed and teachers were referring to/gesturing towards/modelling them during teacher input and in class discussion. Staff have also modified planning and are embedding explicit teaching of oracy into their weekly plans with at least one activity per week absolutely focused on communication and interaction. This was especially evident in the Year 5 group. Also, each Year group team used the Oracy Framework to set targets for their year group which would be developed across the year.



Furthermore, the Communication Team have delivered a workshop to parents to share information about the importance of oral language and to explain the work undertaken in the school. The workshop provided opportunities to support parents with implementing language learning strategies and raising the importance of providing language learning opportunities at home. Alongside this, a parent survey was conducted looking at the frequency and value of communication at home. The Communication Team also trialled a Student Oracy Bingo with two year groups, which aimed to promote oracy and positive communication at home.

A key action that relates to the consistent approach to oracy teaching has been the implementation of 'No Pens Day' at school, with a clear focus on discussion, evaluation and exploration through speech. Based on student and staff feedback, the Two Mile Hill Communication Team decided to have No Pens Day each term as the students really engaged, were able to reflect on skills learned and implement them in their classroom learning.

Moving forward, the Two Mile Hill Communication Team plan to develop a consistent approach to oracy across the school by mapping what has worked well and continue reviewing their SSLiC Action plan for the next school year. One exciting idea they are considering is to encourage older students to become more involved with developing and promoting oracy, becoming involved in mentoring roles and acting as communication buddies for younger students.

Key Learning

There have been many challenges to the implementation of the SSLiC Programme in Two Mile Hill Primary, the most significant of them relate to the Covid-19 pandemic and the subsequent school closures. Plans to repeat the classroom observations using the CSCOTs had to be cancelled, as was the plan to assess students' progress in the area of Communication and Language using the EYFS end of year assessment data. Lack of evaluation data has affected the Communication Team's ability to assess the overall impact of the SSLiC Two Mile Hill project

However, there were also a number of successes from this project, particularly in relation to staff professional development. For example, it was described how the project had provided an opportunity for staff to work together on making whole-school change, and noted the benefits of staff working collaboratively in this way. There was also a strong sense that including all staff in developing the philosophy of language learning and setting their own professional targets helped a sense of ownership of a common goal across the school and encouraged positive engagement.

Finally, a key important learning point from the SSLiC Two Mile Hill Project was that support for language often feels slotted into the day-to-day school tasks because it is not assessed beyond the early years. In order for this to change, the importance of communication needs to be championed throughout the school and actions related to the improvement of communication outcomes for children need to be prioritised and used consistently as part of the school's ongoing school improvement plan^{42, 43}. It's only in that way that policy and practice that reflects the importance of communication can be truly embedded within the school and beyond the early years.

42 Justice, L.M. (2004). Creating language-rich preschool classroom environments. *Teaching Exceptional Children*, 36-44.

43 Kotter, J.P. (2012). *Leading Change*. Harvard Business Review Press, Boston, Mass.



Evergreen Primary Academy

Regular monitoring and evaluating teaching practice and profiling classroom environments

Research Team and Setting

Emma Wheeldon, Teacher,
Evergreen Primary Academy

Deborah Barkham, SENCo,
Evergreen Primary Academy

Vicky Counsell, Headteacher,
Evergreen Primary Academy

Anne-Marie Cray, SSLiC Bristol Facilitator,
University of Bristol

Dr Ioanna Bakopoulou, SSLiC Bristol
Programme Lead, School of Education,
University of Bristol

Background

Evergreen Primary Academy is a school with a very high percentage of children who speak English as an additional language (EAL). For the school, improving communication and talk in the classroom was needed to raise pupil attainment and outcomes, and to build pupils' sense of self and voice. Oracy was identified as an area for improvement by the School Leadership Team, and a consistent whole school approach was needed to raise the profile of oracy across all year groups.

A key aim of the Evergreen Primary Academy's Communication Team was to raise the profile of oral language across the school and establish high expectations of oracy with all staff. The importance of the adult role is well documented in research^{44, 45} although there are also concerns expressed by educational professionals related to them feeling unprepared and lacking the skill and confidence in identifying⁴⁶ and supporting children's language skills⁴⁷. A key area of work therefore for the Evergreen Primary Academy Communication Team was to support staff's professional development in the area of language and communication.

Analysis from the initial SSLiC Self-Assessment Audit identified that the school had a number of well-developed practices, and results from the Communication Supporting Classroom Observation Tool (CSCOT)⁴⁸ identified many strengths in the Communication Supporting Classroom Domain. For example, the CSCOT identified that within the Language Learning Environment, there were some well-developed learning areas in the Foundation Stage classrooms. However, results from the CSCOT also identified many areas for improvement, particularly in the way classroom displays and topic work are organised to promote discussion and aid talk. Visuals are thought to be a key component of a language rich classroom

44 Hoff, E. (2003). The specificity of environmental influence: Socioeconomic status affects early vocabulary development via maternal speech. *Child Development*, 74, 1368-1378.

45 Desforges, C., & Abouchar, A. (2003). The impact of parental involvement, parental support and family education on pupil achievement and adjustment: a literature review. DfES, Nottingham

46 Dockrell, J.E., & Hurry, J. (2018). The identification of speech and language problems in elementary school: Diagnosis and co-occurring needs. *Research in Developmental Disabilities*, 81, 52-64

47 Dockrell, J.E., Howell, P., Leung, D., & Fugard, A.J. (2017). Children with speech, language and communication needs in England: challenges for practice. *Frontiers in Education*, 2, 35

48 Dockrell, J.E., Bakopoulou, I., Law, J., Spencer, S., & Lindsay, G. (2012). Communication Supporting Classroom Observation Tool. Freely available from: https://www.thecommunicationtrust.org.uk/media/93866/tct_bcrp_csc_final.pdf.

environment⁴⁹ and visual support, for example using pictures, and clear classroom displays, has been found to be effective when verbal language alone is insufficient⁵⁰.

Further, there were a number of items within the Communication Supporting Classroom Domain of the SSLiC Self-Assessment Audit which showed areas for improvement. In particular, Emma and Deborah noted that there were few observed instances of opportunities for children and adults to talk with each other, and when talk did take place, improvements in the quality of the talk could be made. Research suggests that a key theoretical underpinning of language acquisition is the role that socially meaningful interactions play in supporting early language development, and that adults in schools have a key role in scaffolding classroom interactions⁵¹. Further, research has shown that the ways adults talk with children can enhance children's expressive and receptive language skills⁵². For example, interactions which include modelling of target words, expanding the utterance, and recasting are thought to lead to faster language acquisition⁵³ and competence in the use of strategies such as extending, labelling and scripting are fundamental to providing high quality verbal input. However, it is also recognised that these techniques are often used less frequently in classrooms than would be hoped⁵⁴.

In addition, a teacher survey conducted before the start of SSLiC Bristol identified that children working in groups and the use of trios (working in groups of three) as an area where teachers felt more support was needed. However, research has shown the impact that structured opportunities to talk to peers^{55,56} can have in the classroom and the Communication Team felt that this could be improved. An important priority for the Communication Team was for the children to be able to talk successfully and talk about their learning. The Communication Team wanted to focus on structuring children's talk and to encourage them become better at expressing their opinion, debating as well as taking turns to speak.

Finally, the project aimed to raise the awareness of parents of the importance of oracy and the work the school is doing, as well as provide strategies for home. Much research has identified the role that the home environment can play in supporting children's language⁵⁷. Whilst the differences in the number of the words spoken in households with different socioeconomic backgrounds is well cited⁵⁸, research suggests that it is the quality of the spoken input rather than the quantity which is important in supporting children's language growth⁵⁹, and the communication environment at home is a stronger predictor of language development than socioeconomic status⁶⁰.

-
- 49 Justice, L. M. (2004). Creating language-rich preschool classroom environments. *Teaching Exceptional Children*, 37(2), 36-44
- 50 Wellington, W., & Stackhouse, J. (2011). Using visual support for language and learning in children with SLCN: A training programme for teachers and teaching assistants. *Child Language Teaching and Therapy*, 27(2), 183-201.
- 51 Law, J., Charlton, J., Dockrell, J., Gascoigne, M., McKean, C., & Theakston, A. (2017). *Early Language Development: Needs, provision, and intervention for preschool children from socio-economically disadvantage backgrounds*. Institute of Education, London.
- 52 Dickinson, D. K., Hofer, K. G., Barnes, E. M., & Grifenhagen, J. F. (2014). Examining teachers' language in Head Start classrooms from a Systemic Linguistics Approach. *Early Childhood Research Quarterly*, 29(3), 231-244.
- 53 Chapman, R. S. (2000). Children's language learning: An interactionist perspective. *The Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry and Allied Disciplines*, 41(1), 33-54
- 54 Girolametto, L., Weitzman, E., & Greenberg, J. (2003). Training day care staff to facilitate children's language. *American Journal of Speech-Language Pathology*, 12(3), 299-311.
- 55 Mashburn, A. J., Justice, L. M., Downer, J. T., & Pianta, R. C. (2009). Peer effects on children's language achievement during pre-kindergarten. *Child Development*, 80(3), 686-702.
- 56 Justice, L.M., Petscher, Y., Schatschneider, C., & Mashburn, A. (2011). Peer effects in Preschool Classrooms: Is Children's Language Growth Associated with Their Classmates' Skills? *Child Development*, 82(6), 1768-1777.
- 57 Tabors, P. O., Snow, C. E., & Dickinson, D. K. (2001). *Homes and schools together: Supporting language and literacy development*
- 58 Hart, B., & Risley, T. R. (1995). *Meaningful differences in the everyday experience of young American children*. Paul H. Brookes Publishing.
- 59 Rowe, M. L. (2012). A longitudinal investigation of the role of quantity and quality of child directed speech in vocabulary development. *Child development*, 83(5), 1762-1774.
- 60 Roulstone, S., Law, J., Rush, R., Clegg, J., & Peters, T. (2011). Investigating the role of language in children's early educational outcomes

What was done?

At the heart of this project was the desire to implement whole-school change and there was a clear process planned in order to lay strong foundations for this change to take place. Emma and Deborah identified the strengths within the school system, particularly how the school's climate was conducive to supporting change as well as having oracy as an already established school priority. In order to support change across the school, a Communication Team with representation from Senior Leadership Team was established and led by Emma and Deborah, through which a number of actions were carried out.

Promoting awareness of the importance of oral language amongst all staff

An initial professional development session with the staff at Evergreen Primary Academy was carried out by the Communication Team in October 2019 in order to promote the awareness of the importance of oracy and raise the profile of SSLiC as a whole-school universal intervention approach. Other professional development sessions have been scheduled in the duration of the two academic years the project has lasted. During the last professional development session, teachers were asked to evaluate themselves and reflect on the way their own classes are structured. Teachers were also encouraged to reflect on their personal professional development targets for improving oracy in the class. A final professional development session is planned for the end of this academic year to reflect on the impact the project has had on peers.

Regular monitoring and evaluating teaching practice and profiling classroom environments

Based on the CSCOT, the Communication Team has developed their own Oracy Monitoring Checklist, which includes areas such as: Pupil Talk; Teacher Talk and Pedagogy; Classroom Environment and Resources; and Oracy in Maths. The Oracy Monitoring Checklist has been shared with all teaching staff in an effort to make explicit the expectations of good teaching practice and support high-quality teaching. Teachers have been using the Oracy Monitoring Checklist

(and subsequent Teacher Reflection Sheets) themselves as a means of reviewing and reflecting on their practice.

Alongside the development of a school Oracy Monitoring Checklist, monitoring activities, such as regular Learning Walks, are carried out in school with the help of the Senior Leadership Team. The aim of the Learning Walks is to profile classroom environments and update resources that children could use to support their spoken interactions. Another crucial element of the Learning Walks is for the Communication Team to provide teachers with regular feedback about good areas of practice observed as well as areas for further development.

Creating communication friendly learning classroom environments

The Communication Team introduced tabletop areas for each topic across the year groups, with the use of vocabulary and objects to promote discussion as well as high-quality texts. Sentence stems are also displayed near the whiteboard to further support spoken interactions. In addition to this, the Communication Team established consistent displays across the school alongside a clear 'Key Vocabulary' section which is regularly updated. Consistency across the whole school has been a great focus for the Communication Team when thinking about classroom and school displays to aid children's transition between and across different school environments.

Increasing opportunities within the classroom for spoken interactions

Related to a focus on creating strong communication classroom environments has been a focus on improving the quality of language interactions between adults and children. All teachers are supported to use high quality interaction techniques with children, with the support of the Language Learning Interactions section of the CSCOT. A greater focus has been given to new teaching staff in Year 1 and Year 4 with more regular monitoring opportunities in place to ensure teachers' understanding of interaction techniques and use of resources available.

Supporting children's structured conversations with peers

The Communication Team focused on supporting children's structured conversations with peers and ensuring that all children have opportunities to practise key oracy skills. This is achieved in different ways: all teaching staff were expected to give children sufficient time during core subjects to talk and converse in pairs and provided them with sentence stems during pair work. This aimed to help children with their ability to debate, agree and disagree with one another, give their opinion, and help them to encourage their peers' ability to speak in the group.

Promoting awareness of the importance of oral language amongst parents and the wider school community

Finally, the Communication Team continued to raise the profile of oracy with parents and the wider school community by ensuring that parents are familiar with the school focus on oral language. At the beginning of the project in 2019, the Communication Team arranged a parent coffee morning to discuss what the school was doing in order to support children's spoken language and to provide parents with some strategies that they could adopt at home. During this academic year (2020/2021), teachers have used the school's online platform (DoJo) and Picture News to encourage appropriate conversation in class and at home and to ensure pupils feel they can voice their opinions and thoughts about the world around them. Parents have also been given access to strategies that support language learning through the school's online platform during the national lockdown.

Finally, actions and progress related to the project are fed back to the school's Academy Council ensuring that the school community is aware of the work being done, further promoting oral language as a key school priority.

What were the findings and outcomes of the project?

The main outcome of the project is the successful implementation of increased opportunities for high quality spoken interactions which has occurred across the whole school and become embedded within teacher practice. As a result of the project, staff at Evergreen Primary Academy are building in vocabulary into their displays and teaching the vocabulary to their pupils more regularly in order to encourage spoken language in the classroom.

There is also an increased awareness of oracy amongst staff as a priority and oracy is regularly discussed in professional development meetings and across subject areas. Teaching staff feel that they have developed their awareness in developing and supporting spoken language in the classroom. By regularly reflecting on the strategies they use to interact with children, teaching staff report increased confidence in planning for talk opportunities and ensuring talk and discussion is at the forefront of lesson planning.

Furthermore, children have improved their ability to communicate effectively with their classmates. They demonstrated better use of vocabulary and taking turns with one another to speak in group situations through the use of sentence stems. A focus on interactions with others whereby there was an expectation of talk, opportunities for the talk to be extended and an awareness from the children that they would be given support with their talk. There is evidence within teachers' planning that there are now structured opportunities for talk within all core lessons and there is a greater staff awareness of the importance of structuring talk time along with greater awareness of strategies to scaffold and extend the talk. Further, not only do children have more opportunities to talk, the enhanced language rich learning environment and additional resources within the classroom has resulted in children having concrete tools they can use, and they know how these tools can be used to support their talk.



The project clearly had a positive impact on Evergreen Primary Academy and consequently the Communication Team have established a plan to incorporate some of the aspects they learnt throughout this experience moving forward. The school will continue to focus on the use of sentence stems and key vocabulary wherever possible across all year groups. The school will also continue to prioritise having a whole school expectation of oracy being explicitly noticed and praised in pupils. As noted above, consistency is a key factor in promoting spoken language in the classroom, and the team will continue to increase consistency in the classroom environment across the school through the use of displays and tabletop areas. Finally, monitoring activities will continue to be carried out in the next academic year in order to ensure successful strategies identified this year are continuing to be used by all staff. Finally, the Communication Team is planning more CPD sessions for all staff to embed current practice.

Key Learning

Whilst this project has faced some serious challenges, such as the school closures resulting from the Covid-19 pandemic, it has demonstrated a number of important factors which need to be prioritised if a whole school language intervention approach is to continue.

The SSLiC Evergreen Primary Academy Project has demonstrated that adopting a systematic and thorough approach which could be embedded in every day classroom practice is key when the aim is to effect whole-school changes and support staff's professional development. Developing children's oral language will continue to be in Evergreen Primary Academy's School Improvement Plan, demonstrating the importance attached to oral language. Underpinning the project has been the process of using a robust and repeatable audit and observation tool (both CSCOT and the school developed checklist) as a means of staff professional development with a focus on regular opportunities to provide constructive peer feedback to identify areas for personal and school development and address these in everyday teaching practice. Oracy remains a priority for Senior Leadership Team and is on the Academy's School Improvement Plan, the challenge will be implementing this in time of such uncertainty and change for schools across the country, and continuing to recognise how important oral language is as a means of recovering from the Covid-19 pandemic.

Minerva Primary Academy

Focusing on staff professional development and learning in the area of language and communication

Research Team and Setting

Alyson Marlor, Early Language Acquisition and Reading Intervention Teacher, Minerva Primary Academy

Kate Moreton, Oracy Lead, Minerva Primary Academy

Jennifer Harvey, Headteacher, Minerva Primary Academy

Anne-Marie Cray, SSLiC Bristol Facilitator, School of Education, University of Bristol

Dr Ioanna Bakopoulou, SSLiC Bristol Programme Lead, School of Education, University of Bristol

Background

Minerva Primary Academy is a two-form entry school in East Bristol. In 2018, a new 'state of the art' building was created on the existing school site, and there were a lot of subsequent staffing changes as they transitioned to the new school.

Alyson and Donna completed the SSLiC Self-Assessment School Audit and discussed it with the Senior Leadership Team of the school. An analysis of the SSLiC Self-Assessment School Audit revealed that most domains were being developed already. For example, all teaching staff and assistants demonstrate an understanding of language development and how SLCN can be supported. A number of core teaching staff have also had access to further training and professional development focusing on communication. However, there was an acknowledgement that staff are not always able to cascade knowledge and skills gained on to other members of staff and there are not regular mentoring opportunities and peer observation in place to support good quality practice in relation to children's language and communication. In addition, there was no system in place to ensure staff knowledge was updated systemically or that new members of staff were able to have access to training and professional development in relation to language and communication. Consequently, this meant that the staff knowledge and skills profile was varied and inconsistent. A common theme throughout research is one of school professionals not feeling adequately skilled and lacking the knowledge and understanding in order to meet children's language needs^{61,62}. Many teachers report that they rely on 'hands on' experience in order to increase their competence in this area⁶³.

61 Dockrell, J.E., Howell, P., Leung, D., & Fugard, A.J. (2017). Children with speech, language and communication needs in England: challenges for practice. *Frontiers in Education*, 2, 35.

62 Dockrell, J. E., & Hurry, J. (2018). The identification of speech and language problems in elementary school: Diagnosis and co-occurring needs. *Research in Developmental Disabilities*, 81, 52-64.

63 Sadler, J. (2005). Knowledge, attitudes and beliefs of the mainstream teachers of children with a preschool diagnosis of speech/language impairment. *Child Language Teaching and Therapy*, 21 (2), 147-163.

Related to this, the Minerva Primary Academy Communication Team acknowledged that school staff regularly move around year groups and are given different roles and areas of teaching to focus on. Staff changes impacts on their ability to effectively cascade knowledge on to others but also apply skills learnt after undertaking professional development. A first goal therefore for the Minerva Primary Academy Communication Team was to undertake a review of professional development and training undertaken by all school staff wishing to understand the levels of skill, knowledge and confidence in supporting children's language and communication development, among new and current staff members.

Research has highlighted the benefits of moving away from models of professional development for school professionals which rely on courses and workshop events, towards more individual-focused, school- and practitioner-led approaches^{64,65}, but also using observational learning⁶⁶ and feedback^{67,68} to effect changes to teaching practice and support practitioners in developing ways of talking with children to enhance their oral language.

A critical focus for the Minerva Primary Academy Communication Team was to avoid the 'one fits all' nature of some professional development courses and make any training or professional development pertinent to individuals. The Communication Team hoped to develop a sustainable induction package for new members of staff to enable them to understand, appreciate and achieve quality language use. In addition, a goal of the Communication Team was to develop an ongoing package of professional development for all current staff to update their skills and knowledge on evidence-based ways to support spoken language in the classroom.

What was done?

A Minerva Primary Academy Communication Team was set up to work on the following targets:

Creating a philosophy of language learning and promoting the importance of oral language across the school community

The Minerva Primary Academy Communication Team conducted observations using the CSCOT⁶⁹ in EYFS and Years 1 and 2. The results of these observations formed the basis of a written philosophy of language learning which they believe influences the choices school staff make in structuring the physical environment of the classroom, designing language learning opportunities and interacting with children⁷⁰. The philosophy of language learning is suggested in research⁷¹ to support Communication Teams into taking a principled approach to creating communication supporting environments and creating a clear vision for change across whole school settings. The Minerva Primary Academy philosophy of language learning included the reasons why oral language is important and acknowledge the role of adults in supporting and developing this.

The philosophy of language learning was then shared with all school staff and the wider school community and was added on the school's website. The aim of the Minerva Primary Academy Communication Team was to raise the awareness of the importance of spoken language and to make that philosophy run through everything that happens at Minerva Primary Academy '*like the writing in a stick of rock*'.

64 Knight, P., & Trowler, P. (2001). Departmental leadership in higher education. McGraw-Hill Education, UK

65 Harland, J., & Kinder, K. (1997). Teachers' continuing professional development: Framing a model of outcomes. *British Journal of In-Service Education*, 23(1), 71-84

66 Ezell, H.K., & Justice, L.M. (2000). Increasing print focus of adult-child shared book reading through observational learning. *American Journal of Speech Language Pathology*, 12(3), 299-311.

67 Myers, D.M., Simonsen, B., & Sugai, G. (2011). Increasing teachers' use of praise with a response-to-intervention approach. *Education and Treatment of Children*, 34(1), 35-59.

68 Codding, R.S., Feinberg, A.B., Dunn, E.K., & pace, G.M. (2005). Effects of immediate performance feedback on implementation of behaviour support plans. *Journal of Applied Behavior Analysis*, 38(2), 205-219.

69 Dockrell, J.E., Bakopoulou, I., Law, J., Spencer, S., & Lindsay, G. (2012). Communication Supporting Classroom Observation Tool. Freely available from: https://www.thecommunicationtrust.org.uk/media/93866/tct_bcrp_csc_final.pdf

70 Justice, L.M. (2004). Creating language-rich preschool classroom environments. *Teaching Exceptional Children*, 36-44.

71 Kotter, JP. (2012). *Leading Change*, Harvard Business Review Press, Boston, Mass.

Focusing on staff professional development and learning in the area of language and communication

As mentioned above, at the beginning of the Minerva Primary Academy SSLiC Programme, all staff in the Early Years and KS1 were asked to carry out individual observations of their classroom environments using the CSCOT. The results of the observations were subsequently shared with the whole school at a staff INSET day. Following that, an aim was set for all teaching staff to complete the Speech, Language and Communication Framework (SLCF) at a universal level⁷². The SLCF is a free professional development tool, accessible to all, which sets out the key skills needed to support speech, language and communication development of all children and young people. It is a self-assessment tool which enables individuals to map out their skills, knowledge and confidence in supporting the development of these essential skills in the children and young people they work with. The SLCF provides users with a personalized analysis of their current confidence levels and offers suggestions for next steps in continuing professional development (CPD) including training courses, reading and resources. In addition, at the Universal level, there are opportunities for practitioners to develop their learning through short interactive online activities.

Following completion of the SLCF self-evaluation, findings were analysed and training materials were gathered aimed firstly at the areas in which the school learning profile appeared to be the weakest. Following on from this, all areas of the SLCF school learning profile were focused on in turn.

Further on, the Minerva Primary Academy Communication Team developed a resource bank with dedicated folders on the school's shared drive containing relevant resources and research literature. The Minerva Primary Academy Communication Team subsequently created a bank of videos showing examples of teachers and teaching assistants working with children on

activities supporting language skills, to use as exemplars for staff professional development. The aim was for all staff to be directed to this training package as part of their continuous professional development and individual professional targets.

What were the findings and outcomes of the project?

A fundamental outcome of the SSLiC Minerva Primary Academy Project is strong evidence of all school staff recognising the importance of and sharing the same vision for the development of children's language and communication. Creating a philosophy for language learning that is shared across all teaching staff and the school community has meant that actions related to the improvement of communication outcomes for children are clearer and can be prioritized as part of the school's ongoing school improvement plan^{73,74}.

Another important outcome of the SSLiC Minerva Primary Academy Project relates to the completion of the SLCF which has resulted in a clearer understanding of teaching staff's current skills and knowledge as well as areas of strength that could be cascaded across the school and utilized accordingly. More importantly, completion of the SLCF has enabled the Minerva Primary Academy Communication Team to identify teaching staff's areas for professional development in the area of language and communication. Although there are significant challenges that relate to the time needed for all teaching staff to complete the SLCF, having a clear profile of staff's strengths and areas for professional development is an undeniable positive outcome that allows the school's Senior Leadership Team to make informed decisions about where the focus of future continuous professional development ought to be.

In that way, teaching staff can be supported in a systematic way to develop their skills and knowledge, therefore feeling empowered to enhance their pupils' oral language skills and addressing a common concern raised by

72 <https://www.slcframework.org.uk/the-slcf-levels/universal-level/>

73 Justice, L.M. (2004). Creating language-rich preschool classroom environments. *Teaching Exceptional Children*, 36-44.

74 Kotter, J.P. (2012). *Leading Change*. Harvard Business Review Press, Boston, Mass.

educational professionals in their ability to identify⁷⁵ and support language learning needs^{76, 77}.

Finally, the Minerva Primary Academy Communication Team have developed a clear plan for meeting professional development needs of individual staff that includes a clear plan for induction training for new members of staff joining the school. Research has pointed to the implementation of a whole school approach to supporting SLCN being well regarded by teaching staff⁷⁸. However, the need to allow teaching staff sufficient time to engage with training and undertake professional development activities was identified as a key learning point moving forward by the Minerva Primary Academy Communication Team.

The challenges presented by the Covid-19 pandemic and the subsequent school closures have meant that the Minerva Primary Academy Communication Team was unable to fully evaluate the impact of the project. However, as the school has moved their professional development efforts from single training events to systematic, continued support for development, the plan is to evaluate future impact by conducting regular classroom observations using the CSCOT. Studies have shown that observation tools can be used to provide a framework to structure feedback and encourage discussion about classroom practice^{79, 80}. Observational learning (and discussion around these observations^{81, 82, 83}) can support practitioners in developing ways of talking with children to enhance the children's oral language and has been reported to result in changes to teaching practice.

Key Learning

The SSLiC Minerva Primary Academy Project has demonstrated that adopting a systematic and thorough approach to staff professional development is key to effect whole school changes. Underpinning the project has been the process of using a robust professional development tool (SLCF) and an evidence-based repeatable observation tool (CSCOT) as a means of staff professional development with a focus on identifying areas for personal and school development and opportunities to address these in everyday teaching practice. This has been a time-consuming process for school staff at Minerva Primary Academy, but one that has been identified as successful in supporting professional development. The challenge now will be how to maintain the process and sustain the improvements over time in a continuous cycle of regularly monitoring and reviewing professional development and providing appropriate support to all staff as they move forward.

-
- 75 Dockrell, J.E., & Hurry, J. (2018). The identification of speech and language problems in elementary school: Diagnosis and co-occurring needs. *Research in Developmental Disabilities*.
- 76 Dockrell, J.E., Howell, P., Leung, D., & Fugard, A.J. (2017). Children with speech, language and communication needs in England: challenges for practice. *Frontiers in Education*, 2, 35.
- 77 Marshall, J., Ralph, S., & Palmer, S. (2002). 'I wasn't trained to work with them': mainstream teachers' attitudes to children with speech and language difficulties. *International Journal of Inclusive Education*, 6, 199-215.
- 78 Leyden, J., Stackhouse, J., & Szczerbinski, M. (2011). Implementing a whole school approach to support speech, language and communication: Perceptions of key staff. *Child Language Teaching and Therapy*, 27(2), 203-222.
- 79 Dockrell, J., Bakopoulou, I., Law, J., Spencer, S., & Lindsay, G. (2012). Developing a communication supporting classroom observation tool. London: Department for Education. [https://www.education.gov.uk/publications/standard/publicationDetail/Page1/DFE RR247- BCRP7](https://www.education.gov.uk/publications/standard/publicationDetail/Page1/DFE%20RR247-%20BCRP7)
- 80 Dockrell, J., Bakopoulou, I., Law, J., Spencer, S., & Lindsay, G. (2015). Capturing communication supporting classrooms: The development of a tool and feasibility study. *Child Language Teaching and Therapy*, 31(3), 1-16.
- 81 Rathel, J. M., Drasgow, E., & Christle, C. C. (2008). Effects of supervisor performance feedback on increasing preservice teachers' positive communication behaviors with students with emotional and behavioral disorders. *Journal of Emotional and Behavioral Disorders*, 16(2), 67-77.
- 82 Coddling, R. S., Feinberg, A. B., Dunn, E. K., & Pace, G. M. (2005). Effects of immediate performance feedback on implementation of behavior support plans. *Journal of Applied Behavior Analysis*, 38(2), 205-219.
- 83 Myers, D. M., Simonsen, B., & Sugai, G. (2011). Increasing teachers' use of praise with a response-to-intervention approach. *Education and treatment of children*, 34(1), 35-59.



3. Conclusion

The participants in the SSLiC programme implemented a variety of changes in their schools at pupil, practitioner and school levels. At the pupil level, initiatives included a more tailored and individualised support of identified SLCN. At practitioner and school levels, some of the participants used the SSLiC programme as a springboard in their school to enhance staff understanding of language development, further support professional development and effect systemic school changes in assessing and identifying language needs as well as working collaboratively with parents and external professionals.

Ultimately, all participants reported that they used the SSLiC programme to raise the profile of the importance of oral language for children's educational attainment. One of the aims of the SSLiC programme is to continue to support developments in practice after the programme has ended through ongoing review of the self-assessment audit and action plan. All of the schools in the SSLiC programme have continued with their focus on the projects described in this publication and in doing so are ensuring that their work contributes to the wider evidence base for supporting pupils with SLCN.

Supporting Spoken Language in the Classroom (SSLiC) is a knowledge exchange programme that aims to support the development of practice in schools and to expand the evidence base to ultimately improve outcomes for children with speech, language and communication needs.

For further information on the programme please contact:

School of Education

University of Bristol
35 Berkeley Square
Bristol BS8 1JA

Centre for Inclusive Education

UCL Institute of Education
Bedford Way
London WC1H 0AL