Netherton Park

Nursery School

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Communication and Language Policy

Reviewed: December 2025	**Next review date:** September 2029

Related policies/documents:

- Birth To 5 Matters
- Curriculum overview
- Early Talk Boost
- Wellcomm Speech and Language Screening Toolkit
- Expressive Arts and Design Policy
- Language and Communication Charter
- Learning Aspirations
- Makaton Resources
- Literacy Policy
- SEND Policy
- Vocabulary Bank

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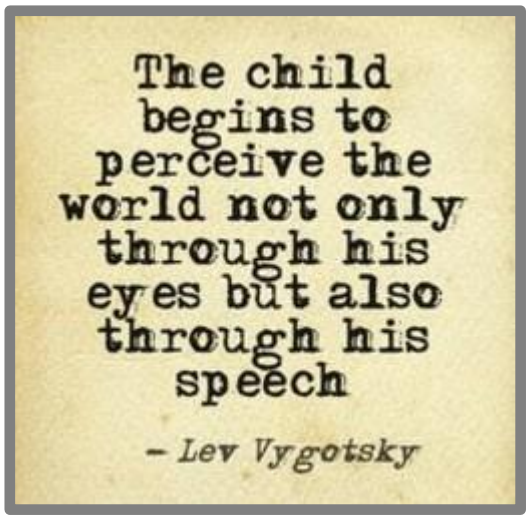
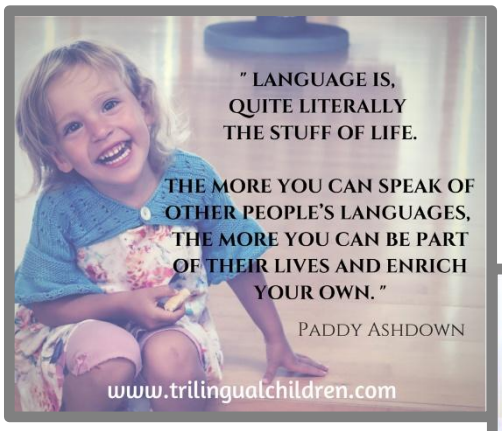
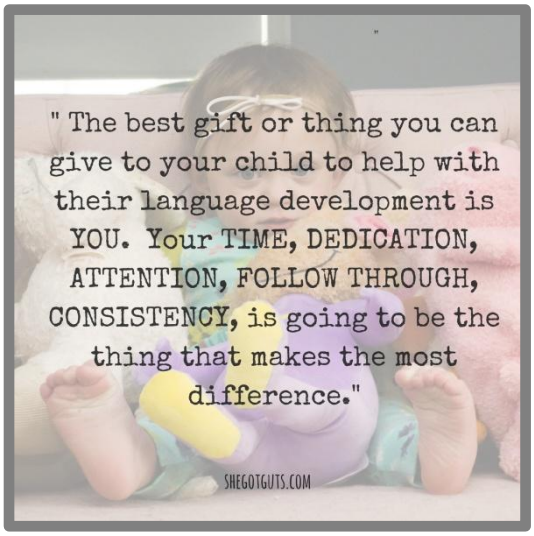
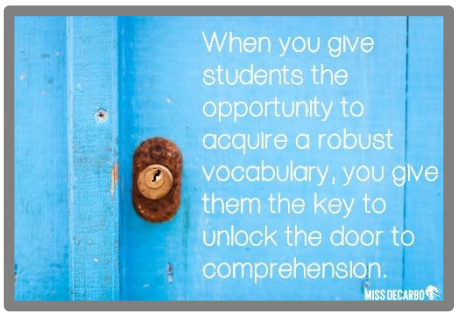

The child begins to perceive the world not only through his eyes but also through his speech
- Lev Vygotsky

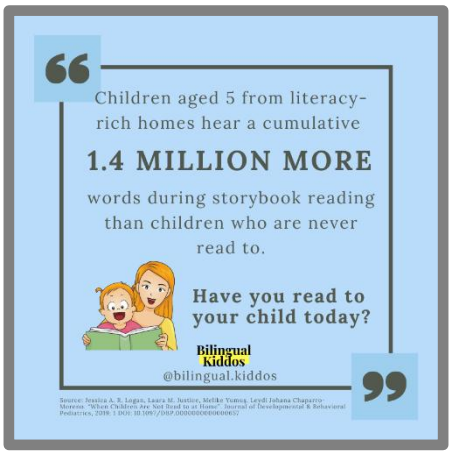

" LANGUAGE IS, QUITE LITERALLY THE STUFF OF LIFE.
THE MORE YOU CAN SPEAK OF OTHER PEOPLE'S LANGUAGES, THE MORE YOU CAN BE PART OF THEIR LIVES AND ENRICH YOUR OWN."
PADDY ASHDOWN
www.trilingualchildren.com

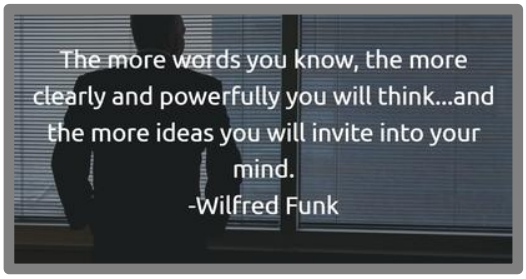
TALKING TO INFANTS AND TODDLERS ABOUT THE REAL THINGS THEY'RE DOING IS THE MOST POWERFUL, NATURAL WAY FOR THEM TO LEARN LANGUAGE

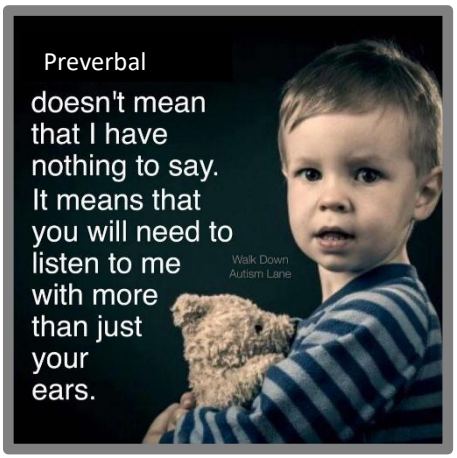

" The best gift or thing you can give to your child to help with their language development is YOU. Your TIME, DEDICATION, ATTENTION, FOLLOW THROUGH, CONSISTENCY, is going to be the thing that makes the most difference."
SHEGOTGUTS.COM

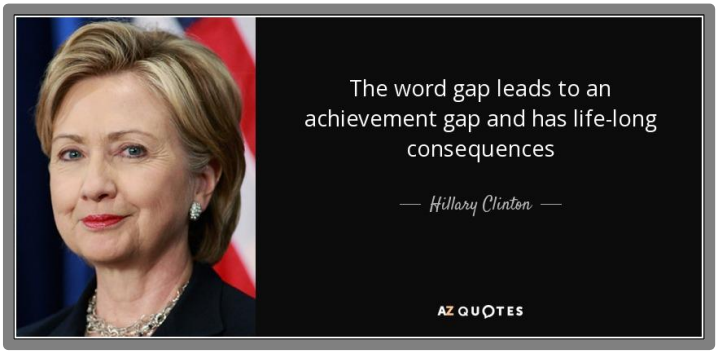
"Everything you say to your child is absorbed, catalogued and remembered."
- Maria Montessori

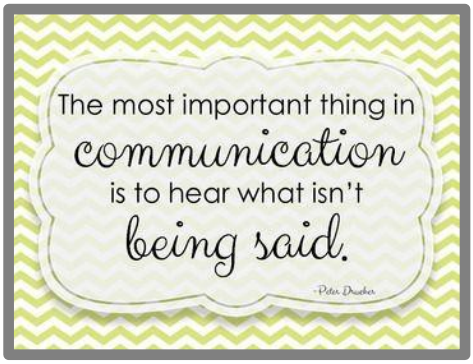

When you give students the opportunity to acquire a robust vocabulary, you give them the key to unlock the door to comprehension.
MISS DECARBO


Children aged 5 from literacy-rich homes hear a cumulative
1.4 MILLION MORE
words during storybook reading than children who are never read to.
Have you read to your child today?
Bilingual Kiddos
@bilingual.kiddos


The more words you know, the more clearly and powerfully you will think...and the more ideas you will invite into your mind.
-Wilfred Funk


Preverbal
doesn't mean that I have nothing to say. It means that you will need to listen to me with more than just your ears.
Walk Down Autism Lane


The word gap leads to an achievement gap and has life-long consequences
— Hillary Clinton —
AZ QUOTES


The most important thing in communication is to hear what isn't being said.
-Peter Drucker

"The word gap leads to an achievement gap and has life-long consequences."

Hilary Clinton

Intent

All staff at Netherton Park Nursery School are very aware that a child's early communication and language skills are the most important factor in enabling them to succeed in their primary education and later in life. We know how vital our roles are in modelling effective communication and language skills for our young children. Therefore, at our Nursery School we aim to provide high-quality interactions, where adults take time to listen to children's thoughts, feelings and ideas, where children feel valued, confident to speak and communicate when they want and need to. We strive to provide opportunities for children to experience a vocabulary rich environment whereby new words and language are taught daily. In the short time we have with our children, we work constantly to support them to become the best communicators possible.

Communication, Language and Literacy is integral throughout our Nursery provision and is embedded through an imaginative, stimulating approach that strives to promote creative thinkers and confident communicators.

We believe that language unlocks learning!

Implementation

At Netherton Park Nursery School, the daily routine provides lots of opportunities to develop speech and language skills. The small group, adult lead activities are planned by staff to provide a focused time in which new vocabulary is modelled alongside new skills. All staff talk to children and provide activities that both support and challenge what they are thinking and observing. Children are given time to develop their independent thinking skills by 'planning' their own learning and activities. Conflict resolution technique is vital in discussing and promoting feelings as well as problem solving.

Listening and Attention

To become effective communicators children, need to develop good listening and attention skills. These are supported throughout each session but more specifically during daily story sessions and Literacy focussed group times. Children take part in short games or engaging activities that encourage them to tune into environmental and instrumental sounds. Further activities may be based on body percussion or hearing rhyming words.

Wellcomm Speech and Language Screening Toolkit

All pupils are screened using the Wellcomm screening toolkit. This is carried out at as part of the exit assessment process in Acorn and Saplings and then on entry to Acorn, Saplings, Oak and Sycamore for any new pupils. Pupils are then rescreened as needed mid-year and on exit. Referrals to Speech and Language Therapy (SALT) are made where needed for pupils who are Red or Purple. Staff are trained to support pupils' specific speech and language needs through the delivery of SALT targets and specific intervention work.

Practitioners are highly trained with a range of strategies to support children's speech, language and communication. All staff have had extensive training to carry out Wellcomm screening and to then identify follow up interventions. This includes the use of visuals and Makaton both used alongside the spoken language. We offer a Total Communication Environment and have been recognised by the Local authority as a Wellcomm Champion setting.

Interventions

Staff use Wellcomm assessment data and observations to plan specific and focussed interventions to support children's communication, language, listening and attention skills. Specific planning boxes have been developed that enable staff to target identified gaps in pupils' skills and focus teaching to individuals and groups.

'Early Talk Boost' is used as a specific intervention (8 weeks) for children in Oak Room. This includes sessions for parents/carers on developing knowledge and skills to support their child's development of skills at home.

Use of stories and rhymes

Stories are highly valued at Netherton Park Nursery school, adult led sessions are based on a theme that links to the core texts. Alongside these stories are read regularly to groups so that all children have an opportunity to hear and further develop their vocabulary. Our staff are also very experienced in asking questions to check understanding and teach key story language e.g. characters, title, author.

Singing and learning rhymes

Singing and rhymes are another valuable resource that provides further opportunity to support vocabulary development and understanding. The repetitiveness and rhythm of songs support vocabulary development. Core rhymes and poems have been identified to support children's skills and understanding or rhythm and rhyme as well as supporting with developing their language and vocabulary.

Adults Role

Children deserve adults who…

- Talk…talk often, but also take the time to really listen
- Comment rather than ask questions
- Introduce and model using new vocabulary linked to theme and activities
- Sing a range of nursery rhymes and songs—allowing the children to join in with words and actions. Supporting them to learn all the words
- Share high-quality books, daily
- Use eye contact and think of their positioning, allowing the child to see their facial expressions
- Point out objects in books…encouraging the child to repeat words or sounds
- Support children to join in with repeated refrains in well-known stories
- Invite children to use their imagination to make up a story for books that have no words
- Tell familiar and traditional stories to the children
- Support children to retell familiar and traditional stories
- Use puppets and props in a variety of ways, such as retelling a familiar story
- Point out words in the surrounding environment
- Provide a range of experiences that encourage the children to talk and develop their language skills
- Recognise that children learn in different ways erg visual, auditory etc and provide stimulating experiences that reflect this
- Use a child's method of communication for example Makaton
- Use a range of intensive interactions such as symbols and objects of reference
- Reflect on the diversity of our school and have a knowledge of and value the languages spoken by children and families. We celebrate multilingualism and bilingualism and recognise that there are great benefits to children who learn more than one language.

Our practitioners are highly skilled in supporting children's language development, they ensure all children are immersed in a language rich curriculum where the opportunities to speak and share ideas are irresistible. High-quality interactions take place between adults and children every day. Through pre-planned and in the moment planning, practitioners build on and follow the child's lead for learning and introduce language and vocabulary which is slightly above the child's ability level. (Zone of proximal development). This ensures that consistent progress can be made.

Speech and Language Charter

This was developed by all staff as their commitment to supporting children's language development.

Vocabulary Bank

This was developed by HB and contributed to by all staff.

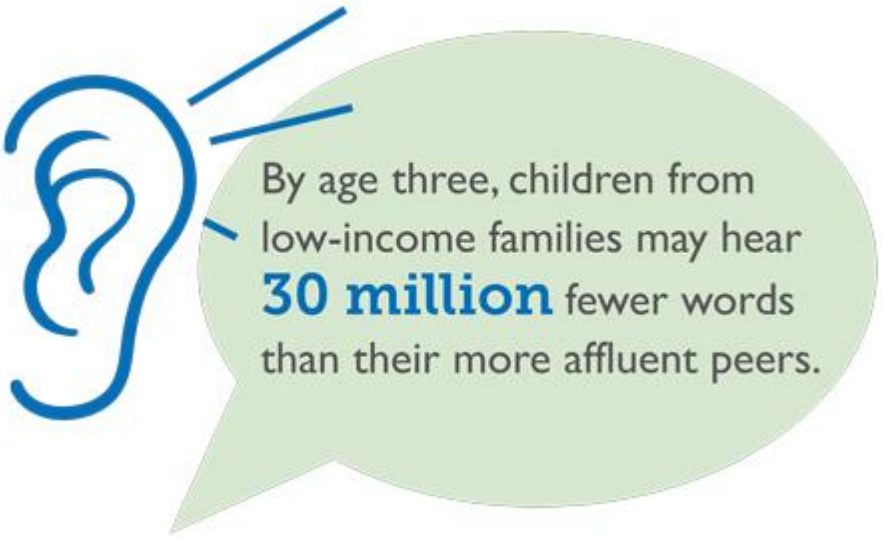
Learning Environments

- We aim to create a communicative atmosphere i.e. a relaxed, safe and friendly environment with lots of opportunity to talk
- We create opportunities for communication and talk i.e. quiet areas, cosy comfortable places
- We use visual displays (objects and pictures) that can be used to support understanding and promote clear and consistent routines
- We use signs, symbols and visual timetables to support communication
- We aim to keep noise levels low for example inside voices, soft furnishings and noisy distractions kept to a minimum
- Children can choose between playing indoors and outdoors for as much of the day as possible. Wherever possible, activities and experiences encourage children to make choices and decisions.
- The outdoor environment provides support for communication by offering space, making it possible to make loud noises and big movements, making children's excitement and exuberance manageable.
- Spaces in the environment are planned to promote communication and language. Change needs to be minimal
- The spaces we create support our continuous provision. Resources, materials are enhanced to encourage new language
- Vocabulary is everywhere. Words taken from the Vocabulary Bank are displayed in each area for example sand, water, playdough, home corner etc for practitioners to refer to and use in their everyday interactions. They are also a point of interest to children who show interest in the written word.
- The environment reflects the diversity of our school through display, books and resources. This highlights the value we place on the range of languages spoken by children and families.

Parent/Carer support

We offer a range of support to parents/carers to enable them to gain the knowledge and skills to fully support their child. 'Talking Together' workshop is delivered each spring term to the parents and carers of specifically identified children. Tips and advice are added to the school website to aid parents in supporting their children at home.

Vocabulary that is being focussed on in is added to half termly Tapestry observations to enable this to be shared with parents/carers to use at home too.

Impact

- Children's speaking and listening attainment will improve and they will become confident and effective communicators.
- Practitioners will be more aware and more easily be able to identify children with a Speech, Language and Communication need.
- Identified children will receive support from SALT and all Nursery School staff.
- Practitioners will value bilingual and multilingual children and see the benefit of this whilst offering support where needed.
- Children's communication will be aided by the use of signing. Pre-Verbal children will be able to attempt communication.
- Practitioners will be more aware of and be able to model a rich vocabulary with the children.
- Children will leave Netherton Park having experienced a wide range of words.
- Gaps in children's vocabulary will be identified and opportunities put in place.
- Practitioners will gain knowledge on the use of a range of interventions and be confident in using them to support children.
- Parents/carers will be more knowledgeable of the importance of Language and Communication and will have access to information and advice on how to support their child. This in turn should have a positive impact on the children's Communication and Language skills.