

How to positively improve communication and social behaviours for verbal children with speech and language barriers.

For each class to develop their own use of the tower hamlet language frames that established baseline expectation for talk within the classroom for 2018/19. This will scaffold and upskill children and young people to socially communicate on their own and be understood by each other therefore become more independent in their education journey at Abbey School and in the wider community.



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Introduction

Project

Insert an overview of why you chose the project- link this to the SIP:

PSHCE is at the heart of the curriculum at Abbey School, to empower children to learn in a safe, happy and resilient manner. They are encouraged to be inquisitive about the world around them and shape their skills for their chosen role for their future. Up skilling and empowering our children to independently communicate successfully to those around them which in turn creates strong social communication foundations for their desired future. Through the use of the Tower Hamlet: progression in language structures allows you to plan for scenarios around the language functions children need to use in order to learn in different age groups. The document enables adults to plan for children's academic language development alongside the content of the curriculum, comment on how pupils gain confidence and use academic language in context, making accelerated progress towards, and exceeding national expectations.

Where this research project fits into the SIP 2017-18.

Improvement Priority	What it looks like for Abbey School	How RP would feed into the objectives
Improvement Priority 1 Quality of Teaching, Learning and Assessment	All staff delivering a robust vehicle of delivering speech and language ongoing intervention	1.1, 1.2, 1.4, 1.5
Improvement Priority 2 Leadership and Management	For all pupils to have a voice throughout school heard by all.	2.1, 2.2, 2.3, 2.4, 2.5
Improvement Priority 3 Outcomes for pupils	Ensure the outcomes of pupils are relevant and personalised.	3.1, 3.2
Improvement Priority 4 Behaviour and safety	That the whole school community shares an active responsibility to empower Student voice and it impacts all children.	4.1,4,3,4,4



Summary of the Project

What was your initial plan? What did you do each term? Did your project change from your original idea?

Term 1

I first looked at why a project such as was needed within school. An approach was needed to enable children to get their thoughts and feelings understood in a coherent way. To be able to ask and answer questions from adults and each other, understand and use social cues effectively.

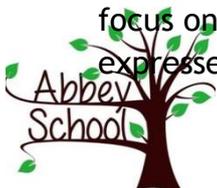
I initially visited Fox Hill Primary school, a mainstream primary school with a SEN, integrated resource facility. Here they used Communicate In Print, key words to prompt children about their phrases they wanted to say or ask about. I then went and visited Brantwood specialist school to observe the surroundings as well as pupil and adult interactions. At this establishment I could see the vast use of vocational activities that enabled pupils a stage to practise, trial and improve their communication skills with each other in a non-threatening and positively reinforcing way. There was very little adult interaction other than to show a pupil the skill required for their current task ie clay modelling, silk painting, planting flowers and then the pupils were left to continue their task together. As the pupils are KS3 age range and most pupils evidently had a developed maturity.

Term 1 developments:

A clear focus was on the pedagogical development of the classroom and teaching areas. We initially looked at classroom ethos and expectations the class adults had. We then developed the use of pictorial images as key word prompts for children to use to communicate, ie 'toilet' 'drink' 'tissue'. For other we developed simple sentence starters such as 'can I' 'I want' or even just 2 word phrases 'toilet please' for those who needed that. We then did a lot of our learning through highly motivational craft activities that engaged most pupils and allowed them to practise speaking and listening scenarios with typical sentence starters and responses.

Term 2 developments:

Through the use of the simple sentence starters the expectation for the children to speak in minimum 3 word sentences, not only key words. We also continued a daily focus on social scenarios and responses with different pupil's points of views expressed in simple sentences structured around our feelings and emotions using



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feeling face cards. This was a very powerful tool as it allowed the pupils to hear their peer's points of view in that specific scenario. Adults facilitating children to kindly agreeing or disagreeing what they want or don't want. This approach resulted in less body grabbing of other children, less grabbing of other children's glasses and less restraining/ escorting by adults. A theory could be that this approach allowed alleviated some level of frustration or anxiety as part of being unable to communicate their thoughts and feelings. This approach also allowed the children to develop more independence from the need of adults. The project was shared with Bring and Brag and was developed alongside the PSHE project of Jayne Leversidge within L4 with similar success.

Term 3 developments:

At the end of term 2 I had been meeting with Jan Ridgeway and the English lead about Speech and Language development within the school. Here Laura reintroduced me to the Tower Hamlets progression of language structures. As a class we were now ready to develop our vocabulary within our sentences that should have an impact across the curricular. The publication includes 12 commonly-used language functions with suggested language structures. These were chosen because children experience difficulties with developing the academic language these require. These are cross-curricular and not subject-specific.

The language structures had a huge impact on the whole class before the end of term 2. We used a lot of questioning with scaffolds that modelled the vocabulary needed within the response within our lessons. This was for the children to use the information they already knew and past experiences to support their answer. To further support them, the adults, when needed re modelled the initial stage of their response and prompted the children to repeat, when explaining. This enabled the children to deepen understanding and acceptance of each other's opinion and accept that not everyone thinks the same way and that's ok. The clear expectation was also set for how the children could ask a question or give a response.

Language conversation cues: we focused on the similar scenarios that happened daily that caused some children distress. We used a thermometer image and all the children completed the numbered ladders 1-5. 1 being what makes them happy and green to 5 being what makes them unhappy, angry and red. Each child wrote or illustrated what makes them feel this way. Some included actions by their peers. We shared these together and discussed in a P4C format. The children could then relate to each other's feelings as they could explain what makes them feel red and could empathise with that feeling of what makes their peer feel the same way, although the cause may be very different.

We have since used this idea of feeling red when some children may cause other children to feel 'red' from something they are doing. Instead we are prompting

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them with a conversation cues to ask or say when they first walk up to or see other peers.

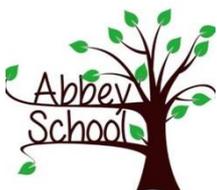
The benefits of this project have been shared with L5 and U2. The classes have adapted the use of the language structures as their children appropriate to their classes and have seen effective social skill development or within writing. L5 and U2 have used to improve the quality of talk by each other by extending or justifying their answer/ comment with evidence within cross curricular learning

What will be the first recommendation for practice across school and why?

- **Become familiar with the Tower Hamlet: progression in language structures document.**
- **Assess your class' speech and language need-** It may only be subtle. Decide the most suitable area of the 12 language functions and age range for your class.
- **Visuals** - display sentence structures enabling children to use them as a point of reference during talk.
- **Modelling** - deciding which sentence structure to use based on the context. Model the language you expect.

Development of expectations

- **Improving the quality of talk** - encourage/ expect responses that build on those of others, e.g. 'I agree with because'
- **Partner and group talk** - expect children to use sentence structures from previous lessons together with the given sentence structures, encourage them to question each other and develop each other's responses across the curricular.



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How the project has impacted on practice:

The project has allowed me to:

- Identify the key learning objective
- Establish the key skills to be developed
- Decide on what the children need to say in order to learn, explore, explain and define the new skill or learning.
- What have they used previously that they can apply to this?
- Clarify what the class staff need to model
- Provide opportunities for the children to use the new language successfully.



Next Steps

Insert the next steps for the project; it may be that this is to see the recommendations take place or it may also be that the next steps be the focus of your new project related to the SIP.

The next steps for this project is to see that the recommendations are seen and used by Abbey staff appropriate to their class.



References

Progression in Language Structures: Tower Hamlets EMA Team in collaboration with Tower Hamlets teachers

