



Language Development Policy

MISSION STATEMENT

We believe that childhood is a time for play and through play we discover the excitement of learning, the rewards of achievement and we acquire our life skills.

Banbridge Nursery School, with its bright colourful, noisy, well-planned, busy environment, encourages the children in the development of skills, attitudes and understanding that will help them to live full satisfying lives and become confident, useful, active members of a diverse, constantly changing society.

INTRODUCTION

“Language development is crucial to living and learning and is concerned with more than the growth of vocabulary. Language is used to communicate with others, to share feelings, to give and obtain information, and to understand ideas and develop thoughts.”

Curricular Guidance for Pre-School Education; p.22

Speech and Language development can be broken down into 5 key areas, all of which need to be explicitly developed with our children. These are...

- ❖ Attention and listening
- ❖ Receptive language
- ❖ Expressive language
- ❖ Social communication
- ❖ Phonological awareness

Early language development is much more than the acquisition of words. It includes *non-verbal* as well as *verbal communication*, e.g. gestures, signs, body language, tone and volume. Speech, language and communication are also about the *written word and multi-media communications*. Essentially, it usually involves other people so children must learn to *attend and listen* effectively to promote their ability to interact, question, answer, argue, debate, agree, follow and give directions and instructions.

Rationale

It is widely agreed that early language development is critical for future learning and school readiness. Speech, language and communication skills are vital for all children. Without being able to talk to, and understand other people we can't do things like:

- Communicate with our families.
- Buy things at the shops.
- Watch television.
- Build relationships.
- Socialise.
- Learn.
- Go to work.

Fortunately, most do learn to communicate quite easily, developing communication skills from birth. Children rely on speech, language and communication to be able to learn at school and play with their friends.

Children need to:

- Learn to understand words, sentences and conversations. This is often called 'receptive language'.
- Learn how to talk using words and sentences. This is often called 'expressive language'.
- Know how to use their language socially. For example, listening as well as talking, or talking to a teacher differently than to a friend. This is often called 'pragmatic language'.
- Say speech sounds correctly so they can be understood by others.

Children begin to understand words before they can say them. They then learn how to say these words and how to put them together to make sentences.

Children develop speech, language and communication skills at different rates. Some develop quickly, while others may take longer.

More than ever before, today's children are and continue to be required to have developed highly effective methods of communicating if they are to fulfil their potential.

Our Aim...

To inspire and enable learners to be confident communicators and to function effectively as members of society.

Objectives...

- To integrate language throughout our curriculum and setting to support the acquisition of early mathematical skills; aid physical development and personal, social and emotional development; promote knowledge of the world around us and participation in the arts.
- To ensure our children are listened to and learn to listen effectively to others.
- To identify and teach the skills necessary in order for our pupils to become competent and confident in language, literacy and communication.
- To provide enjoyable independent and collaborative learning experiences which help to bridge and build upon the children's speech, language and communication skills at home, at school and in the community.
- To enable and encourage children to identify and investigate language, literacy and communication that surrounds them in their everyday lives.
- To enable and encourage all children to autonomously use a variety of equipment and resources to support their independent early language, literacy and communication learning.
- To encourage all children to develop a positive attitude to speech, language and communication through indoor and outdoor play, storytelling, nursery rhymes, music, songs and role play.
- To support parents' ability to nurture excellent speech, language and communication skills by increasing their knowledge of the processes involved in effective communication and sharing ideas and resources to enable them to continue to help their children to become confident communicators.
- To encourage staff members to increase their language, literacy and communication knowledge and understanding in order to enhance their teaching.
- To support and encourage continuous professional development for all staff members.

Learning Outcomes

Knowledge & Understanding	Attitudes	Skills
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<p><i>Children will begin to...</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understand how talk works • Understand, use and respond to non-verbal methods of communication • Understand and use an increasing vocabulary • Develop an awareness that books contain valuable information • Understand sentence structure • Listen and respond appropriately to stories • Speak appropriately in different situations • Begin to show some early awareness of rhyme and syllabification • Develop an early awareness of print in the environment • Identify some familiar letters, words and numerals 	<p><i>Children will ...</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enjoy experimenting with sounds and words when exploring their language • Enjoy books and handle them correctly • Speak with clarity and confidence to a range of audiences • Increase the range of vocabulary they understand and use • Listen to and value what others have to say • Be curious and ask questions • Enjoy using their imagination 	<p><i>Children will...</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop the ability to listen, attend, remember and respond to stories, rhymes, sounds, songs and music • Differentiate between different sounds and images • Engage in role play using suitable language • Express thoughts, feelings, ideas and needs with clarity and confidence • Be able to initiate and sustain a conversation • Follow and give instructions • Develop thinking and reasoning skills • Demonstrate early reading behaviours • Create pictures and marks to convey meaning • Recognise the difference between drawing and writing • Recognise their Christian name
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Planning

Effective planning which reflects the levels of development, needs and interests of our children is essential for promoting learning in the early years. In Banbridge Nursery School we have developed and continue to monitor, evaluate and review long, medium and short term plans which incorporate language development. Clear language learning outcomes for activities are identified on our short term plans and through meticulous self-evaluation, these are subject to continuous improvement. Teachers will also plan for specific speech and language development activities during Quiet Room time and through the use of Circle Time.

Progression is planned for and implemented by providing more challenging tasks and using a variety of resources and equipment with increasing levels of skill and complexity.

Opportunities for speech, language and communication development are created by the adults and children in all areas of our school, indoors and out, and resources which can be accessed by the children are provided in all areas.

Assessment and Record Keeping

Assessment of learning is based on day-to-day observations of, and interactions with, children in a range of situations. The children's assessment records will include observations relating to the development of their speech, language and communication skills.

The information gathered informs planning for future learning and skill progression. It is also used to keep parents informed about their child's/children's strengths and areas for development and how each individual can best be supported at home as well as in school. The value we place upon the sharing of this information with parents, reflects our commitment to the development of excellent home/school working partnerships.

Equal Opportunities

The staff at Banbridge Nursery School are committed to ensuring that every child will have regular and equal access to a broad and balanced speech, language and communication experience across the whole curriculum.

Children for whom English is as an additional language will receive appropriate support in the acquisition of the skills they will require to become effective and confident communicators. Support from external agencies will be sought as deemed appropriate. The school environment will reflect the range of languages and cultures of the families in our school community through, for example, multi-lingual signs, books and pictures and posters.

Provision for Children with SEN

All children will have opportunities to access early language development according to their needs. Their individual needs will be assessed continuously through observation which will inform target setting for Individual Education Plans for those children who are identified as needing additional support and placed on the SEN register. These plans will be implemented, monitored, evaluated and reviewed on a monthly cycle. Parents of children placed on the SEN register meet with the class teacher and/or SENco at the very outset of this process and through formal monthly meetings are encouraged to become highly involved in the implementation and review of the IEPs.

Support from outside agencies, e.g. Speech and Language Therapists; advisory teachers from the SELB Language and Communication team; Educational Psychology, will be sought as appropriate.

Health and Safety

In order to ensure that Banbridge Nursery School provides a safe and stimulating environment in which to explore, discover and learn, staff ensure that equipment and resources are reviewed continuously for health and safety appropriateness.

Parental Involvement

Banbridge Nursery School is committed to developing effective working partnerships between home and school. Research shows us that our children will achieve more when parents, teachers, Nursery School staff and children all work together using a consistent approach to meet agreed goals.

At Banbridge Nursery School we demonstrate our commitment to developing and continuously improving our links with families through...

- Interactive displays of routines and children's work throughout the school. These will support the children's acquisition of speech, language and communication skills.
- Regular information sheets and newsletters inform parents about topics and activities being explored in school.
- Leaflets detailing expected learning outcomes for children's language development will be distributed to each family at the start of each new term.
- Parents are invited to help with various trips and visits throughout the school year. These provide extremely rich opportunities for language development.
- Parents are invited to sign up to provide support as a 'classroom helper' where they will provide support to the teachers and Nursery Assistants in the various learning activities in both the indoor and outdoor classroom.
- Parents are invited to dine with the child on at least one occasion throughout the school year.
- Parent information meetings are offered during the school year and some of these may identify language development as their focus.
- The children's progress and interest in early language development will be shared with parents formally on three occasions throughout the year and also on an ad hoc basis.

Policy Review

Implementation of this policy will be monitored by the Principal. This policy will be formally evaluated and reviewed as necessary in the light of any directive from the SELB or the Department of Education.