

Dear Parent/Carer,

We are writing to tell you about support for speech, language and communication at our school. With support from our NHS Speech and Language Therapy team, we are working to establish the Balanced System® to provide a whole school approach to speech, language and communication. This means that all students may encounter our NHS Speech and Language Therapy team within their classroom or around school.

You may have already read about some planned activities in the newsletter from our therapy team. We aim to offer the following training to all staff over the next few months:

- Cued Articulation
- The use of Visuals to Support Communication
- Sensory Processing impacting Activities of Daily Living and Communication
- Colourful Semantics
- Speech Sound Awareness
- DIR Floortime
- Parent Child Interaction (PCI) – Developing Communication Through Play

Of course, parents are also welcome to attend the workshops (please note these will take place at Orchards or virtually on Teams) by emailing [medch.orchards@nhs.net](mailto:medch.orchards@nhs.net) to book a place.

If your child is not receiving services from the NHS Speech and Language Therapy team currently and you have any questions or concerns, please speak with your child's teacher.

For more information about the Balanced System® at Meadowfield school, please see the enclosed leaflet for details and the link to the Balanced School System website.

We want to ensure that supporting and developing communication is a school priority, worked on throughout the child's day. We believe that this approach will better support parents, develop staff expertise and most importantly ensure that each pupil receives the support they require to meet their communication goals.

Yours sincerely

Angela Howe, Principal

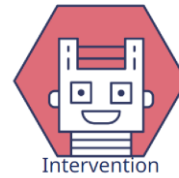
Sarah Black, Lead for Children's Therapy

### The Balanced System for SLCN at Meadowfield School

At Meadowfield School, we are using the Balanced System® Framework to support us to develop provision for speech, language and communication needs.

The Balanced System® Framework is organised into five strands (shown below) and across three levels (universal, targeted and specialist). At Meadowfield School we want to ensure outcomes are met in each of the five strand areas at universal, targeted and specialist levels.

#### Five Strands



- **Family Support:** Parents have the confidence, knowledge and skills to support their role as a key communicative partner for their child.
- **Environment:** Environments are enhanced to support children to understand and express themselves effectively.
- **Workforce:** The workforce is confident and competent to support children with speech, language and communication needs.
- **Identification:** Speech, language and communication needs are identified early and effectively.
- **Intervention:** Children receive support to help them make progress in their speech, language and communication.

Our NHS Speech and Language Therapy team are working with us to develop our provision for speech, language and communication across these five strands at universal, targeted and specialist levels.

**Universal** provisions support **all** pupils within the school to develop their speech, language and communication skills. At Meadowfield School this might include:

- Ensuring pupils have access to a 'total communication' approach which may include: signing, visual support, verbal communication, communication and vocabulary books and objects of reference.
- Ensuring that classrooms and common areas are arranged so they encourage communication and interaction.
- Ensuring staff can confidently assess when further support and advice is needed requiring a child's speech and language development.

**Targeted** provisions support pupils with an identified speech, language or communication need who require more focused support. Targeted provisions may be delivered by school staff who have received specific training as well as by speech and language therapists where appropriate. At Meadowfield School this might include:

- Therapy programmes and approaches delivered by trained staff such as: Picture Exchange Communication System (PECS), Intensive Interaction, Adult Child Interaction, Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC), Language Intervention Groups, Social Communication Groups and Speech Intervention.
- Classroom observations of children by speech and language therapist to identify appropriate support and interventions.
- Teacher meetings to review and plan pupils' interventions and targeted support.

**Specialist** provisions are either to support more complicated speech, language and communication needs or to provide more specialist information and help. Some pupils and their families will need specialist level support as well as targeted and universal levels for them to make the progress they wish to make with speech, language and communication. Specialist level may not be needed all the time and may be helpful at certain points on a child or young person's journey. At Meadowfield School this might include:

- Assessment of pupils by a speech and language therapist to identify support required.
- Individualised time-limited intervention to address specific area of need. For example, work to implement a functional communication system, or programme to address speech sound difficulties etc. Children receiving this level of support will have involvement with a speech and language therapist, but parents and school staff will have an essential role in implementing plans.

If you would like to find out more about the Balanced System®, please visit [The Balanced System® speech, language and communication pathway](#).