



ASHGATE NURSERY SCHOOL

COMMUNICATION AND LANGUAGE POLICY STATEMENT

At Ashgate Nursery School we aim to enable children to develop as confident and capable communicators. Communication and language is a prime area of the EYFS as it enables children to access a broad curriculum to a much deeper level.

“Children are born ready, able and eager to learn. They actively reach out to interact with other people and in the world around them.”

Development Matters in the EYFS 2012.

We support children’s learning and development towards the **Early Learning Goal** – ‘communication and language development involves giving children opportunities to experience a rich language environment; to develop their confidence and skills in expressing themselves; and to speak and listen in a range of situations’.

Providing a language rich environment

Continuous provision is carefully planned to support children’s language and communication development. A wide range of activities are available that encourage children to talk about what they are doing and to ask questions. These include small world play, role play, construction play, sensory/malleable activities and creative activities, both inside and outside.

The adult role in these activities is to support children’s language by introducing and modelling appropriate vocabulary, describing what they and children are doing asking questions, modelling good conversational language, encouraging children to talk about what they are doing and thinking, giving children time to think and speak. It is important that adults allow the children to lead the play and talk and should tune into the child and follow their lead.

Enhanced provision is offered through additional planned activities to enrich the children’s experiences and opportunities for language development. These interesting and exciting experiences all enhance children’s motivation to talk so are provided on a regular basis. These include baking, walks around the neighbourhood, celebrations of festivals, and visitors to nursery. Every child has the opportunity for five sessions at our Forest School. This experience always encourages language and communication development as it gives them confidence and motivation to talk in a new and interesting environment.

The importance of cooperative play

We believe group activities are a powerful means for children to develop their language and communication skills. Activities that encourage children to play and work together in cooperation encourage children to talk about what they are doing, negotiate, ask questions, speak clearly to be understood, listen and respond to others. This is particularly evident in role play so the nursery has a permanent well-resourced home corner that is large enough for a group of children to play in and for adults to join in and well as provided props for other imaginative play activities.

Small group times encourage children's speaking and listening skills supported by an adult. A 'talking teddy' is used to encourage turn taking in talking and support less confident children. A review time at the end of sessions encourages children to think and talk about what they have done today. Adults will prompt speech through sensitive questioning and by giving a child time to respond.

Phase 1 Letters and Sounds activities are introduced at small group times to support listening and aural discrimination.

Singing

We believe that singing regularly helps children to develop their vocabulary and confidence. Children with limited language often enjoy joining in singing sessions. The structure of songs and rhymes and their regular repetition gives the child confidence to join in and to hear their own voice. So we have daily singing sessions which are planned to introduce new simple songs gradually and give plenty of opportunities for repetition.

Developing children's confidence to communicate

On entry to nursery we look at all children's wellbeing and involvement as this is an important indicator of how confident and secure a child feels which affects their ability to communicate freely. Every child has a key person whose role is to develop close and trusting relationship with the child so they have someone they feel secure with to talk to.

We provide communication friendly spaces both indoors and outdoors that encourage children to talk to adults and each other in cosy quieter areas. We aim to keep the nursery environment quiet with limited distractions that foster listening and attention.

If children have limited language skills we use signs, symbols and photographs to support them to communicate confidently. With each new intake of children photographs of activities areas are shared so children feel secure in understanding the different areas of the nursery and what they are called. They can then use these photographs to communicate where they wish to play if needed.

Vocabulary development

If a child presents with little spoken language a vocabulary screen assessment is carried out to assess the level of vocabulary they have and whether a more systematic introduction of vocabulary is needed.

All staff make sure they name objects and toys and avoid empty words such as 'it' and 'that' when referring to things. Signing is used to support this.

When new activities are introduced staff make sure the children have the appropriate vocabulary they need.

Listening to stories and sharing books is a powerful way of increasing a child's vocabulary so a daily story session is held for all children and adults regularly share books in the book corner. A weekly book library is available for all families to encourage sharing books at home.

Assessments

Children's language development is closely assessed as it is so important in underpinning the rest of the curriculum. On entry all children are assessed using the Every Child a Talker (ECAT) assessment. Each term a speech sample is recorded for each child and children's language is recorded in their learning journey observations.

After half a term their language profile is drawn up across 5 areas of language development. If any concerns are shown a WellComm assessment is carried out which identifies where a child is in their language development and what they need next. If concerns persist after additional support had been provided a referral to speech and language therapist is discussed with parents. All children continue to be assessed termly against the EYFS Development Matters to monitor progress.

June 2015