**Talk Boost KS1and OFSTED**

**What is Talk Boost KS1?**

is a targeted and evidence-based intervention, which supports children in Reception and KS1 to make significant progress with their language and communication skills.

Delivered by teachers, teaching assistants and volunteers, is provided three times a week to small groups of children that have been identified that need help with their language and communication skills.

Each session includes activities that cover the key elements of language:

* Attention and Listening
* Vocabulary
* Building Sentences
* Telling Stories
* Conversations

In total, 120 activities are delivered over 10 weeks. Small group work is enhanced by whole class activities that the teacher delivers each week to ensure a focus on language permeates the wider classroom. The programme aims to engage parents and carers in supporting language activities through a , which the learners take home for parents and carers to work through.

**What does TBKS1 aim to do?**

TBKS1 is built on a foundation of evidence-based practice and aims to:

* support children with language below the average for their age to narrow the gap with their peers
* address all elements of language and communication:
  + appropriate to this age group
  + through an evidence-informed programme of activities
* provide a programme that is simple to understand and use and which can be delivered by trained school support staffed volunteers
* support teachers to identify children that need help with their language and communication
* Support teachers to identify those with more significant difficulties who may not have been identified previously but who may need more specialist support from a speech and language therapist
* support teachers to embed speaking and listening into whole-class activities.

**Why the need for Talk Boost KS1?**

In some parts of the UK, particularly socially deprived areas, upwards of 50% of children are starting school with language skills that are under-developed for their age. This hampers children’s ability to learn, achieve and make friends. It significantly impacts on their literacy and numeracy development. Many of these children have the potential to ‘catch up’ but only if they receive timely intervention and support.

* The Communication Trust’s Talk of the Town project highlighted that over 50% of children starting primary school in the Manchester Federation of Schools are in need of extra support to help them with their speech, language and communication skills, which supported previous research highlighting a similar figure. Despite a strong commitment in the Federation to speaking and listening, assessment of older children throughout the Federation identified continued high levels of SLCN.
* Vocabulary at age 5 is a very strong predictor of the qualifications achieved at school leaving age and beyond (Feinstein and Duckworth, 2006).
* The gap in reading age of children with poor language skills widens significantly with age – from a few months at five years old to a gap of five years di rence by the time they are 14.
* Vocabulary at age 5 has been found to be the best predictor (from a range of measures at age 5 and 10) of whether children who experienced social deprivation in childhood were able to ‘buck the trend’ and escape poverty in later adult life (Blanden, 2006).
* A child’s background is very influential in their language development. A study of children in a Sheffield nursery school showed a link between social disadvantage and language delay (Locke et al 2002). One of the most worrying findings of a study which followed these children into primary school was that without intervention, this delay seemed to persist (Leyden 2007) and for some children, get worse (Locke and Ginsborg 2003).

**OFSTED and Talk Boost KS1**

For the first time ever, Ofsted will be evaluating standards in communication and focusing on how schools narrow the gap between children with the lowest and highest attainment.

Talk Boost KS1 will help schools meet these standards.

As an intervention programme, Talk Boost KS1 can assist primary schools to:

* increase the achievement of learners
* improve the quality of teaching
* develop pupils’ behaviour for learning
* contribute to the judgment of leadership and management in the school

1. Talk Boost KS1can help schools raise KS1 achievement by:

* Identifying vulnerable learners
* Providing a structured evidence- based programme that accelerates children’s progress in language and communication
* Supporting the foundation language skills that lead to phonics
* Increasing classroom participation by improving skills in vocabulary, narrative, sentence building and conversation

1. Talk Boost KS1 builds the quality of teaching by providing classroom staff with practical activities that children enjoy.
2. Talk Boost KS1 can improve behaviour for learning by developing children's attention and listening skills and confidence in communicating.
3. Talk Boost KS1 aids leadership and management with its progression tool developed by The Communication Trust. This helps schools identify children who need additional support and informs target setting.
4. Talk Boost KS1 also provides guidance for successful engagement with parents.

**Who has developed Talk boost KS1**

Talk Boost KS1 was developed by I CAN and The Communication Trust – leaders in the field of speech, language and communication and was supported by the Every Child a Chance Trust. The programme was designed, developed and evaluated through an initial trial of 140 children across 12 primary schools. A randomised control trial showed that the children taking part in the 10 week intervention made an average of 18 months progress compared with just 6 months progress made by the control group.

Feedback from teachers and teaching assistants has been positive, recognising changes in children’s language, social interaction, confidence, engagement and readiness to learn within the classroom.

Subsequently, the programme has been rolled out through a national pilot across four regions, with over 350 children taking part in the intervention during the first year. Academic support has determined that once again, children have made statistically significant progress across all measures of language as a result of Talk Boost KS1.

Other outcomes of the programme were that it enabled identification of children with more significant speech, language and communication needs who needed more specialist support.

Talk Boost KS1 can be purchased on its own, or as part of a wider programme A Chance to Talk. A Chance to Talk is designed to improve primary school pupils’ speech, language and communication through whole school approaches, targeted interventions and specialist support across Waves 1, 2 and 3.

**Why Focus on Language and communication?**

Language development is accepted as being critical to learning, cognitive development1 and literacy2. In the classroom, spoken language is the primary medium through which teachers teach and children learn3.

It is expected that, when a child starts primary school, they will be able to understand much of what is said, express themselves clearly, share their feelings and make their needs known. This level of proficiency in speech, language and communication is critical to the development of a child’s cognitive, social and emotional wellbeing.4 5

Children starting school with speech, language and communication needs (SLCN) may struggle with any aspect of speech, language and communication. A child who struggles to speak will often struggle to read and write67.This issue can be compounded if children are taught reading and written language before their spoken language skills are developed enough to access this teaching.8

National Ofsted reports have highlighted the importance of speaking and listening in the most successful schools9 and communication across the curriculum is highlighted in the Ofsted framework for inspection.10 Children with SLCN can become withdrawn or present with challenging behaviour within the primary school environment.11 Many children with SLCN can be withdrawn socially; they play alone more and are less liked by others in their class.12 Others display significant behavioural difficulties

**Why a targeted intervention?**

In parts of the UK, particularly in areas of social disadvantage, upwards of 50 per cent of children enter school with speech, language and communication needs (SLCN).13 Some of these children are unable to speak in sentences, understand simple instructions, or listen or join in with conversations either socially or during school tasks. Teaching staff expressed similar concerns; that around half of children start school with inadequate language skills.14 Many of these children do not have an underlying impairment and have the potential to catch up but often will not do so without support.

**What Teachers Say about Talk Boost KS1**

Talk Boost KS1 is great for all those children in the middle – the ones that wouldn’t qualify for specialist help, but aren’t thriving at school because of a speech and language problem and/or a confidence problem. **Denise ONeil, Learning Support Assistant Dover Road Primary, Gravesham**

Healey Primary is a school that serves a mixed community – our catchment area includes a council estate as well as more affluent areas. Most of our pupils are White British, though we are getting an increasing number of children with English as an Additional Language through the doors.

I’m one of two Teaching Assistants involved in running the sessions with year 1 and year 2 children. We both feel the 10 weeks of support is making a massive difference – there are vast improvements in children’s listening skills, their ability to sit and concentrate in class, their vocabulary, the way they tell stories and even the way they relate to each other.

Things as simple as making eye contact with the person you’re speaking to – it might not sound like much but it makes a big difference to the quality of children’s interactions. The children see the Talk Boost activities as games – they jump up as soon as the name of their group is called, it isn’t hard to persuade them to get involved! Having delivered it a few times now I have some favourite activities I look forward to doing – children always enjoy the yellow ball activity where they each have to add to a list of adjectives to describe the ball.

Another game they always enjoy is the special person game, where one child goes out and the rest of the group each have to think of a reason why their classmate is special that they share when they are brought back into the room. We definitely want to carry on with Talk Boost KS1 because it benefits the individual child so much.

**Susan Bray, Higher Level Teaching Assistant, Healey Primary, Rochdale**

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