Why is a focus on spoken language so important?

Good spoken language skills are important for **all** pupils to achieve their very best, not just those who have already been identified as struggling. Spoken language skills are associated with:

- Academic success and attainment
- Literacy outcomes
- Numeracy outcomes
- Positive social relationships
- Friendships
- Behaviour
- Emotional development
- Employability and later life chances

What impact can communication difficulties have?

According to 2014 Department for Education statistics, only 51% of pupils with SLCN achieve the expected standard in reading at the end of KS1, compared with 96% of students without any special educational needs.

Two thirds of 7-14 year olds with serious behaviour problems have language impairment.

50-90% of children with persistent speech, language and communication difficulties go on to have reading difficulties.

When language difficulties are resolved by the age of 5 and a half, students are more likely to go on to develop good reading and spelling skills. This good performance continues throughout their school careers.

The 'attainment gap' between children with communication difficulties and their peers at the end of KS4 is also marked. Just 13.8% of children with SLCN achieve the expected standard in GSCEs, compared with 70.4% of pupils with no special educational needs.

Those with a history of early language impairment are at higher risk of mental health problems e.g. 2.7 times more likely of having a social phobia by age 19.

At least 60% of young people in young offender institutions have communication difficulties.

References and further reading:

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- Snowling, M.J et al (2011) Language and literacy attainment of pupils during Early Years and through KS2: Does teacher assessment at 5 provide a valid measure of children's current and future educational attainment? *The Better Communication Research Programme.* Department for Education: https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/183539/DFE-RR172a.pdf

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More information about the scale and impact of speech, language and communication needs can be found here: http://www.thecommunicationtrust.org.uk/media/2612/communication_difficulties_-_facts_and_stats.pdf