Priority area three: Communication - Friendly schools

Why is this priority area important?

Creating a communication friendly environment for pupils in our schools encourages the development of good communication skills in all pupils and creates a more inclusive environment for those who struggle. This is best done by the way we talk as adults, through the opportunities we give pupils to communicate and by the physical environment we work within.

How does this link to the 2014 SEND Code of Practice?

The Commitment provides guidance on how to achieve high quality teaching that promotes communication development, with particular focus on strategies and environments that remove barriers to learning.

What are the principles we are trying to achieve?

- We give each other time to communicate.
- We all have opportunities to communicate in our school.
- We want all our pupils to be able to communicate to the best of their ability.

The four actions for Communication - Friendly schools

Choose one of the actions for this area:

Our action (What are we going to do?)	Our aim (Why are we doing it?)	To help you fulfil your commitment
3.1 Implement the 'think time rule' in classrooms.	We give each other time to talk.	• Read the information on how to use the 'think time rule' and what difference it can make. • Decide when and how you'll try it out. • Try it out and share your findings across your school.
3.2 Introduce a visual support strategy in classrooms (visual timetables, talking frames, symbol support)	Our physical environment supports communication.	• Read guidance on including visual support on the Symbols Inclusion Project (SIP) website. • Choose one or more examples to try in your school. • Share your examples, and what you notice from them, across your school and with other schools undertaking the Communication Commitment.
3.3 Include speaking and listening activities explicitly in lesson plans for example by running *No Pens Day Wednesday* (for primary and secondary).	Speaking and listening are on our teaching and learning agenda.	• Have a staff discussion on the best ways to include speaking and listening in your planning. Have a look at some *No Pens Day Wednesday* materials to give you some ideas. • Trial a way to include speaking and listening in your planning and discuss how well it works. • Use some of the activity ideas from Commtap to think about the sorts of activities your plans could include for the early years, primary classes and secondary classes.
3.4 Run a competition about communication (for our pupils or the most communication friendly classroom. The RCSLT's Voice Box is a good example of this.	We recognise and celebrate our communication friendliness.	• Look at the information about the key features of a communication friendly environment. • Think about planning a whole school competition around communication. Have a look at the Giving Voice Campaigns Voice Box competition and the National Literacy Trust's Write On poetry slam toolkit. • Run your competition and share your successes across school, and with other schools in the Communication Commitment.