

# Communication

## Communication at Red Gates

At Red Gates Communication underpins everything that we do and is our main focus is to support pupils to develop their ability and motivation to communicate with their environment and the people in it. It links to all areas of the curriculum. Staff are trained to use a total communication approach, which incorporates but is not limited to speech, sign, symbols and gesture to support our pupils to develop their ability to communicate for different purpose, e.g. requesting or commenting. Teachers assess pupil progress regularly to plan next steps and liaise with the SaLT for advice through indirect therapy input. In Early Years Foundation Stage, pupils are assessed using 'Communication and Language' which is broken down into 'Listening and Attention', 'Understanding' and 'Speaking'. In all other pathways, the pupils are assessed using the Red Gates Steps for Communication for their specific pathway.

### EYFS

In the Early Years Foundation Stage, the emphasis is placed on supporting the pupils to feel confident in their new environment and developing an understanding of the routines of the class throughout the day. They are introduced to visual timetables and many song cues to support their ability to anticipate what is happening next. Through structured play sessions, pupils are presented with choice making activities and visual aids including objects of reference, photos and for some pupils, symbols to develop their ability to communicate with those around them using their preferred method of communication. Pupils are introduced to the Attention Autism Programme and have access to Stage 1 'Bucket' sessions initially, to develop their attention and spontaneous communication skills. This progresses onto including Stage 2 'Attention Builder' sessions to sustain pupils' attention for longer periods of time. Intensive Interaction is used on a one to one basis to develop the 'building blocks' of communication and the pupils desire to want to communicate with the people around them. Pupils are introduced to PECS as a mode of communication, initially starting with Stage 1.

### LISS

In the LISS Pathway, Communication begins to further develop pupils independence and social skills through targeted teaching activities and experiences. Communication is developed through the use of role play activities linked to the topic for the term and the core stories they are reading in class. Interactive and turn taking games are encouraged, with pupils beginning to lead the games and understand simple rules and social expectations. Attention Autism stages 1-4 further develops pupils attention, the ability to communicate spontaneously, turn taking skills and the ability to work independently following an adult model. Pupils use communication boards to communicate about the activities they are taking part in and further develop their ability to comment, request and direct peers in activities, all the while extending their vocabulary and knowledge of the world around them. Makaton is evident throughout the pathway. In Key Stage 2, pupils are encouraged to take more control of their learning, e.g. choosing what they want to cook, who they want to work with etc. They are encouraged to generalise their communication skills across the school and when on community visits in the local area. Pupils are supported to express their feelings and emotions in 1:1 sessions through the use of 'Talking Mats', identifying areas pupils may find difficult and working to resolve them through collaborative work between school and home.

### Sensory

The teaching of communication is embedded into all areas of the curriculum to support the pupils develop their ability to communicate meaningfully with the world around them through a vast range of sensory based learning experiences. Intensive Interaction is used to foster trusting relationships with the adults they work with to increase pupils' willingness to interact with those around them. Sensology supports the development of choice making. The structured sessions allow for each pupil to explore different sensory stimuli for each of their senses, ultimately showing a preference. PECS is used widely throughout the pathway, and incorporated across the day with pupils working at the stage appropriate for them. Attention Autism is used to develop attention and spontaneous communication, with pupils taking part in up to stage 3 (turn taking) of the four stage programme. In Key Stage 2, pupils continue to develop their understanding of photos and symbols with particular emphasis on developing their ability to self-regulate their own behaviour, e.g. requesting a movement break or a sensory item such as a 'bear-hug'.

### ASD

The ASD pathway presents the broadest spectrum of communicators in the school, with those working in early development levels to those working in the higher RG levels. It therefore utilises the strategies used in other pathways for pupils where appropriate. The use of TEACCH in the pathway is paramount to supporting a predictable structure for the pupils, reducing anxiety, and is used to embed key vocabulary and develop independent learning. Where appropriate, pupils use Colourful Semantics to help structure their communication, whether it be requesting, or commenting on a story that they have read. Activity themed communication boards are used at differentiated levels to support pupils to communicate for a wider range of functions, this includes when in the local community and asking for help to find items in a shop or to order a drink in a café. Attention Autism is used, with pupils progressing quickly to attend to all four stages of the programme through carefully planned and resourced activities linked to the topic. Social interactions are encouraged through the use of Attention Autism and important life skills such as turn-taking and sharing are developed through repetition of motivating activities.