



Speech, Language and Communication Policy

We at La Petite Academy are committed to meeting the speech, language and communication needs of all children in order to give them the best possible foundation for their schooling and later years.

This policy is aimed at informing others of how we meet children's speech, language and communication needs in the setting, with particular emphasis on reaffirming staff of the ways in which we support children with their communication; and parents and potential parents will be made aware of how we intend to support children in this area.

At La Petite Academy, we operate an inclusion and equality policy and ensure that all children have access to nursery services and support irrespective of their gender, race, religion, colour and creed or sexual orientation of parents or carers.

Speech, Language and Communication needs are assessed in accordance to the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) and where appropriate the Early Years Profile.

Early Identification of Speech, Language and Communication Needs

Levels of communication are identified by key people through learning journey observations planned for their children following on from previous observations and also general daily observation and interaction. When a child first attends the setting, their key person (each child is assigned a key person upon registration) completes an initial assessment on the child under the three prime and four specific areas of the EYFS; this provides a baseline entry level at which to begin developing children's needs without activities planned being too challenging or not stimulating enough for the child. Together with progress reviews in the form of EYFS Development Trackers carried out thrice annually proves to be a successful method in the early identification of a speech, language or communication need. Children that attend La Petite Academy in between the ages of two and three are also subject to a progress review of the three prime areas, which includes communication and language. Using these tools informs observations that are planned to develop children and aid their progression. Observations are carried out on a daily basis for daily opportunities and experiences (planning), weekly for learning journeys and monthly for recording photographs.

Upon registration, parents are welcomed to complete an information form about their child, detailing information such as who they live with, religion and languages they are exposed to; these details are then discussed on the child's first settling in session. Our registration form also asks what language each child speaks and any key words they can already say. Information such as this gained before the child starts at the nursery is useful in the preparation of the child attending the session.

The Physical Learning Environment

The three biggest rooms in the nursery have large windows allowing natural day light to flow in. The two smaller base rooms have windows in each room and all rooms within the setting are backed up by artificial lighting.

All resources available to the children have photographs of the items on the boxes and/or are in clear boxes where possible which are rotated on the shelves so the children have access to a variety of resources.

The nursery has a simple one level layout with access to all rooms and areas off a single corridor. All rooms have their doors open at all times except when being used as a sleep room and the Tweenies room who have the bottom half of the door closed for safety reasons.

Background noise is kept to a minimum where possible. Music is played at specific intervals throughout the day; these are music and movement time, sleep time to soothe the children to sleep and at tidy up time to encourage the children to put the resources away.

The base rooms are painted in calming, neutral colours to enhance displays of children's work which brought down to the children's level using materials and resources attached to the display board. The

sensory room, corridor and bathroom are also painted with a neutral tone. These colours allow children to focus on their activities without becoming distracted or over stimulated by vibrant colours.

The Enabling Environments section of the non-statutory guidance of the EYFS supports the physical environment as does the Every Child Matters Agenda and Elizabeth Jarmin's notion of communication friendly spaces. Within each base room, the Sensory Room and on the bottom garden there are specific areas that have been designed to promote open communication either solitary, with other children or with adults. These communication friendly areas are small, intimate spaces and cosy areas with visual prompts to encourage communication (mirrors, emotion pictures, resources relating to the groups' book of the month and books). The children may also wish to take resources of their own choosing in to the area. These areas are important for the development of speaking and listening skills away from the general noise of the nursery.

Knowledge and Skills of the Staff Team

Staff knowledge of development stages gained through experience and training and support from the EYFS Development Matters have proved to be useful in the early detection of a communication need. Staff knowledge of the development stages of the EYFS is also used to determine if a child is achieving at the expected rate. Staff attend training to further and update their knowledge and communicate this to other staff through memos and at staff meetings. Staff are also provided with the opportunity to disclose from general observation whether they feel a child needs more support with their language and communication needs through quarterly supervisions and daily contact with the Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENCo) who also leads and guides staff through communication disorders.

Staff within our two to three years age group are now responsible for completing a two and a half year assessment on their children within the three prime areas of the EYFS when they reach that age which is also a useful tool in the detection of speech, language or communication needs.

Should a child attend the setting that requires specialist provision, the staff receive training through the child's speech and language therapist or other outside agencies involved with the child. As the child moves groups within the setting, information is written down and shared with the child's key people to ensure a smooth transition. This also occurs when a child moves to another setting or begins their schooling.

Staff are also encouraged to role model language by asking open ended questions and narrating their play with the children; visual prompts in all areas of the nursery remind the staff of this and act as a guide for less experienced staff and students.

The staff's knowledge of their key children also highlights if there are any concerns.

Staff knowledge is audited by regularly reviewing their needs and enquiring about areas in which they feel they need further training, support or guidance through quarterly supervisions and regular communication with the manager. To further audit staff's knowledge it is an aim to introduce peer observation to detect and reflect on how staff communicate with children and areas in which they may need to improve or need further guidance. This will be a starting block for increased awareness of staff's communication knowledge which will be further reviewed through a staff knowledge audit through www.communicationhelppoint.org.uk All staff continually contribute to the setting's Self Evaluation and any communication complaints or compliments are always noted as part of this.

Universal, Targeted and Specialist Levels of Provision

La Petite Academy believes that all children have a right to experience and develop alongside their peers irrespective of their individual needs. There may be occasion that in order to meet these individual needs adaptations may need to be made. The nursery is committed to working alongside parents in the provision for their child's individual needs, to enable us to help the child to develop to their full potential. The nursery is committed to working with any child who has a specific need to enable every child to make full use of the nursery's facilities. All children have a right to a broad and well-balanced early learning environment.

The Communication in Print software is used for all children at a universal level regardless of whether they may have an additional language or limited communication. Symbols are placed in appropriate spaces for children to gain a sense of routine and become confident within the environment to aid the development of their communication and school readiness. Photographs are often used alongside the symbols as reinforcement as whatever is depicted in a symbol may not look like the actual item or activity and may cause confusion. For children at a targeted level, these symbols and pictures are made in to a key ring which the child's key person, persons working with the child and other staff in the same group wear and use to communicate with children whose skills may be limited or need additional support.

The Preschool group use symbols on a daily basis as part of their visual routine. This involves the children sitting as a group to discuss what activities they will be doing throughout the day and is done in the morning

and afternoon for children who attend the different sessions we offer. The visual routine is visible throughout the session and staff and children take off symbols as each stage is accomplished. Not only does this prepare children for the routine of a school day but for children who have additional needs, it provides them with a sense of security knowing what will be carried out during the session. This has also been recently introduced in to the Toddlers room, using photographs of each activity to prepare the children for their day ahead.

On a targeted level, in cases where a child has an additional language, a letter is sent to the parents asking for simple words and commands to be translated in to their home language which is transformed in to a language booklet. This booklet contains a picture of the word or command (obtained from Communicate in Print software), the English flag and spelling and the home language flag, spelling, symbols and pronunciation. The purpose of such language books is to provide a sense of belonging to both the child and their parents as well as their extended family who may frequent the setting. The staff use language books as a communication tool to connect with children in a language in which they understand and are familiar with.

The Sensory Room provides a calm and quiet environment for children with targeted and specialist needs to engage in small group work or one to one sessions. A bag of resources specifically designed for children with an additional need are often used in this room for one to one or small group work.

It is decided that children move between targeted and specialist provision through reviews with parents to establish progress made and with the specialists that suggested the provision in the first instance. If it is deemed that a child is meeting their proposed targets, it is likely that their level of provision would be lowered; however this may change if the child regresses and shows signs of needing targeted or specialist support once again.

Progress between these provisions is measured against the EYFS and compared to the EY Profile or whichever targets/profile the child is working towards.

Parents and Carers

We at La Petite Academy believe that in order for children to receive quality care and early learning that suits their individual needs, parents and staff need to work together in a close partnership. A two way sharing of information is key to this. The nursery team welcomes parents as partners and this relationship needs to be built on trust and understanding. It is important that we, as carers, are able to support parents in an open and sensitive manner.

Resources are made available to parents and carers on speech, language and communication via a parents' library which consists of books that parents can access and borrow from the setting. A special educational needs board displays information on speech including a guide to the language that children should have at certain age milestones as well as signposting parents to supporting information and the setting's named SENCo. Alongside this information board is also some information on the EYFS and how we measure children's progress.

We recognise that parents are the main people in their children's lives and have a huge influence and impact on their learning. As such, we involve parents in their children's learning through sending their learning journey home each month to see their progress at nursery and to add their own contributions to their child's learning; this includes any concerns they have regarding their development as well as suggestions as to what to set as their child's next steps and asking if there has been a change in circumstances which may affect their child's learning, as well as being asked what their child's interests are in the home environment, which are then used in conjunction with their developmental next steps to further their interest in their own learning. Parents are also regularly invited in to the setting to attend parents' evenings where they may discuss their child's development needs including communication. Verbal communication is also encouraged at the beginning and end of their child's session.

To encourage parents to support and extend their child's learning from nursery to the home environment, the use of communication puppets is strongly supported. Children are invited to take a puppet complete with accessories, diary and camera on holiday, overnight or over a weekend period and document their time with them. When the child brings the puppet back to the setting, they are encouraged to share their time with them with their key person and friends. This can be done through staff members reading out the diary entries and looking through the photographs that have been taken as well as the child telling the group about their adventures.

Roles and Responsibilities

The member of staff with an overall responsibility for the provision of children's speech, language and communication needs is Helen Poyser, also the settings' Manager, SENCo and Early Years Professional.

Other staff involved in speech, language and communication needs are key workers, nursery nurses and nursery assistants.

The SENCo regularly spends time in the nursery observing within age groups and consulting the EYFS guidance and Enabling Environments section of the EYFS to ensure that basic communication needs are being met and delivered to the children in our care, identifying any areas for improvement.

Onus is also placed on parents to communicate and issues or concerns they may have with regards to their child's speech, language and communication needs.

Outside Agencies

Outside agencies are welcomed in to the setting to encourage and support the children's needs. Initially, concerns may be reported to the key person by the parent, this is then discussed with the setting's SENCo. The SENCo will then carry out observations of the concern and make a decision based upon previous experience and knowledge as to whether the concern is something that can be managed internally or whether a referral needs to be made.

Should further support be deemed necessary the following may be contacted

- Claire Forward
Speech and Language Referral
07795293688
- Emma Lane
Speech & Language
01332 888060
- Jane Cockroft
Early Intervention Team
01332 641408

Children and Their Families

La Petite Academy is committed to maximising the involvement of children and their families in their learning. Parents have ample opportunities to meet and discuss their child with the key person and are regularly invited in to the setting to spend time with their child in creative activities.

In the first instance, children are offered two settling in sessions free of charge which last for two hours before their scheduled sessions begin. On these sessions parents may discuss any information which we may need to be aware of whilst the child is in our care.

When a child reaches two and a half years, it may be necessary to complete an assessment to determine their stage of development if this has not already been completed by their health visitor. This outlines their progress so far against the three prime areas of the EYFS (which includes Communication and Language) and specifies how they achieve the characteristics of effective learning. A copy of this document is given to the child's parents for their comments to be made, then an appointment is made to discuss the document. A copy is also given to the parents to pass on to their GP or Health Visitor. This draws upon the staff's knowledge of their key children and can be a useful tool in the detection of additional needs.

Resources

There are a plethora of resources available within the nursery as well as externally to support and promote effective speech, language and communication which have previously been mentioned in this policy. These include

- The knowledge and experience of the SENCo and staff
- Internal and external training and courses
- Communication puppets
- Communication friendly spaces
- Information books and leaflets for parents (all of which are available in a variety of languages for those who speak English as an additional language)
- Support from the Early Intervention Team
- Providing activities and resources under the Communication and Language prime area of the EYFS
- SENCo resources bag (obtained through a training course) which contains a variety of activities aimed at children with specific needs however can be used at a universal level
- Holding open mornings with family members

We are also able to signpost staff and parents towards services which may help them in support children to develop their speech, language and communication skills.

At La Petite Academy we are continually evaluating all areas of our practice ensuring we are complying with current legislation such as the Early Years Foundation Stage and the Special Educational Needs Code of Practice as well as ensuring the needs of the children are individually met helping them achieve their true potential.

This policy was reviewed on	Signed on behalf of the nursery	Date for review
<i>25th September 2017</i>		<i>September 2018</i>