

# *Leeds for Learning:* Talk Matters

A multi-agency approach to closing the gap in attainment for vulnerable groups through supporting speech, language and communication development.

An ideal opportunity to use pupil premium funding to provide a high impact, value for money solution to closing the gap.

“Pupils’ acquisition and command of vocabulary are key to their learning and progress across the whole curriculum.”  
National Curriculum 2014



# Introduction

The Talk Matters programme is a multi-agency approach to supporting speech, language and communication for young people involving Speech and Language therapists, Teaching and Learning consultants, Educational Psychologists, teachers and teaching assistants to support schools to close the gap in attainment for pupil premium pupils who have poor language skills. It combines whole staff training with modelled teaching sessions giving teachers the opportunity to see the training in action in their own classrooms. The Talk Matters team will provide intensive support for your school over the course of a term ensuring that language development is a key driver of educational attainment and all staff are equipped with the necessary knowledge and skills to sustain and develop this good practice across the school.

## Background

### The wider educational context

Language has critical importance for learning and wider development, however many children are starting school below age-related expectations, with evidence to suggest that without the right support, they don't catch up.

Data highlights the number of children with speech, language and communication needs (SLCN) in areas of social deprivation:

- More than 50% of children start school with poor language.
- 5 year olds in poor families are more than a year behind their wealthier peers.
- Evidenced continuation of language difficulties if not supported in primary, into secondary and beyond.

### *Poor language impacts on attainment, well-being and long term prospects:*

- 90% of children with SLCN have poor reading skills.
- 60% of 7 – 14 year olds with behavior difficulties have SLCN.
- 50% of pupils at risk of school exclusion have high levels of language need.
- 60% of youngsters in young offender institutions have SLCN.
- 15% of children with SLCN achieve 5 A-C GCSE's compared to 57% of all young people.

The earlier that all children develop confidence in their speech, along with an extensive vocabulary, the more likely it is that they will be able to improve their overall competence in reading and writing. Ofsted, Moving English Forward 2012

### ***Good language makes a difference:***

- Competent language skills have been found to moderate the effects of social disadvantage, with children more likely to succeed in their education and employment.
- Children from poorer backgrounds who develop good language skills are more likely to become more affluent in later life.

### **Quote from Mel Ainscow on the impact of a similar programme:**

“Talk of the Town is a powerful approach for improving speech, language and communication among children and young people from disadvantaged backgrounds. This in turn offers encouraging possibilities for improving educational outcomes more generally and, in the longer term, the life chances of young people.” Ainscow et al, Manchester 2012

### ***Professional development:***

Offering a collaborative approach in the classroom is based on best practice continuing professional development (CPD), which suggests that an ‘expert’ working alongside a class teacher over several sessions, has the most impact on changing practice. In addition, this is a strength-based model building on the strategies that teachers are already using.

## **Aims:**

The Talk Matters programme has been designed **to close the gap in attainment in English and mathematics** for vulnerable pupil groups including vulnerable pupil premium pupils by:

- Increasing staff confidence in teaching speech, language and communication as part of the curriculum.
- Establishing universal “good practice” across the school to help support all children with speech, language and communication development.
- Supporting early identification of children with SLCN.
- Joint working between practitioners in health and education.
- Sharing universal good practice, targeted and specialist support

# The model

A health check carried out by the Talk Matters team focussing on: language learning interactions, classroom environment and behaviour management. A detailed report will be shared with the school and outcomes will inform bespoke package of support.

Training day for all staff on language development in the classroom

Baseline assessments of pupils  
Teacher and pupil questionnaires

Modelled teaching sessions in 4 classrooms over 4 sessions  
Staff meetings to celebrate and reinforce professional development

Video reflective sessions  
An educational psychologist will offer two reflective video feedback sessions to one teacher in each school to support reflection on practice.  
The feedback session will be led by the practitioner and will focus on positive interactions within the classroom and the emotional component of communication

End of project assessments and final evaluation report

Final evaluation visit

## Evaluation of the programme

The programme will be thoroughly evaluated to measure its success using a range of baseline and end of programme assessments. These will include:

- teacher and pupil pre and post questionnaires
- teacher and pupil evaluations
- standardised speaking and listening tests for target pupils
- NC levels for speaking and listening, reading, writing and maths
- Pre and post lesson observations including video clips
- Pre and post communication friendly checklist

## Views from pilot schools ....

Children at Meadowfield are increasingly **coming in with low communication skills and** poor vocabulary development.

Language Rich (renamed Talk Matters) has provided a bespoke, detailed programme to meet these needs along with developing staff and learning environments. We will be rolling Language Rich out to the whole school during our summer term and into next year. Helen Stout, Head teacher at Meadowfield

Early data indicates that the work done through the Language Rich project has been successful in increasing the speaking and listening levels for all children and has had a marked improvement in vocabulary development, particularly for children lower down school. Alex Clark, Y2 teacher and SENCo at Meadowfield

## How much does it cost?

- 1. Basic Package: £5000** for DSG-funded schools  
**£7500** for academies

*This is a highly-subsidised introductory price which includes:*

- *a comprehensive language audit accompanied by a detailed report*
- *a whole school training day on language development plus two further staff meetings to celebrate and reinforce good practice*
- *16 in-class model lessons*
- *Video reflective sessions facilitated by an educational psychologist*
- *Baseline and final assessments*
- *final evaluation report*

*The above includes:*

<i>10 days of speech and language therapist support @£350 a day:</i>	<i>£3500</i>
<i>8 days of teacher support @£350 a day:</i>	<i>£2800</i>
<i>12 days of Closing the Gap consultant @£500 a day:</i>	<i>£6000</i>
<i>1 day Educational Psychologist support @ £500 a day</i>	<i>£ 500</i>
<i>Admin and resources</i>	<i>£ 200</i>
<i>Total</i>	<i>£13,000</i>

The Team:

1. Therese O'Sullivan, Teaching & Learning consultant, Closing the Gap Team
2. Hannah Cloke , Assistant Head Teacher, Bankside PS
3. Tricia Bell, Speech and Language therapist, NHS
4. Gemma Brain, Speech and Language therapist, NHS
5. Karen Jessup, Senior Educational Psychologist

*Due to the intensive nature of the programme, the Talk Matters team will only have the capacity to support three schools per term.*

## Talk Matters reply slip

Name of school:

Name of programme co-ordinator :

Job title:

School phone number:

**Names of participating teachers and year groups** - the teachers who participate in the sustained collaborative practice in class are ideally experienced teachers who can play a role in supporting other staff by sustaining and developing good practice across the whole school.

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Head teacher's signature:

Print clearly or email your reply to the administrative assistant for the course: [keelie.brown@leeds.gov.uk](mailto:keelie.brown@leeds.gov.uk)