



Communication

Communication and Interaction Intent, Implementation and Impact Statement

This statement should be read alongside our Phonics and Early Reading III document

Introduction

At Old Park our vision, mission and values are driven by four key areas: the unique learner, positive relationships, engaging environments, learning and development. These are at the centre of our school ethos and underpin our approach to communication and interaction.

Effective communication systems enable our pupils to make choices, be informed about what is happening to and around them, express their likes and dislikes, exert their human rights and make a positive contribution to their community. They also allow our learners to begin to develop phonemic awareness and early reading skills.

Old Park is a Makaton friendly school. We have been recognised by the Makaton charity as a school that is accessible for people who use Makaton to aid their communication. We use Makaton signs and offer training for families and other professionals.

Communication:

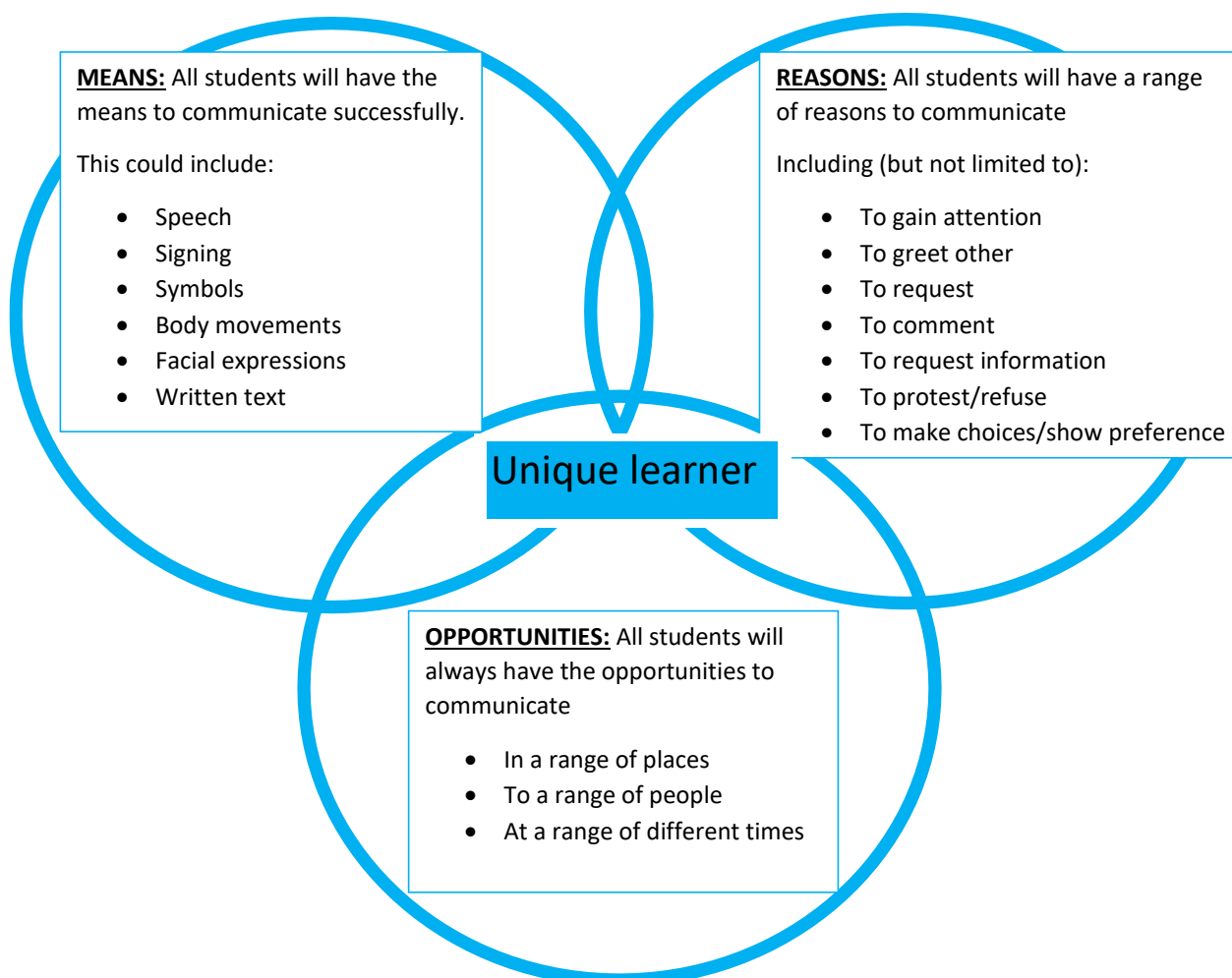
Communication is the successful sharing and receiving of meaningful information between people. Communication can be verbal or non-verbal. At Old Park we believe Communication is the foundation for our students to progress, achieving independence and succeeding both academically and socially.

AAC:

Augmentative and alternative communication (AAC) includes all forms of communication (other than speech) that are used to express thoughts, needs, wants, and ideas. Different types of AAC include facial expressions, gestures, signs, symbols, real objects, PECS (Picture Exchange Communication System), switches, communication books, aided language displays etc.

Intent

Communication and Interaction at Old Park is driven by...



Means, reasons and opportunities model – Money and Thurman(1994)

Implementation

The unique learner:

- The most appropriate communication system is identified through assessment between class staff and Speech and Language therapists for each individual pupil. This information is included in the individual Education, Health, Care Plans (EHCP),
- This communication system is embedded into the pupil's routine and curriculum to ensure they have regular opportunities and a range reasons to communicate.
- All communication attempts made by our pupils are valid and responded to using the most appropriate system.
- Staff use and model the appropriate communication system for each individual pupil showing all communication is equally respected and important. This will always be alongside spoken speech.
- Staff understand to Teach AAC they must Speak AAC.
- At Old Park we have continuously high expectations for all of our pupils and we ensure they are immersed within communication with opportunities to demonstrate progress and develop.

Positive relationships:

- At Old Park we understand the importance of working with multi-agency specialists to ensure we achieve the greatest outcomes for our pupils. We therefore work closely with our Speech and Language Therapy colleagues on a weekly basis. In addition, we also work alongside peripatetic teachers for those sensory impairments.
- Our therapists work within classrooms alongside teaching staff supporting the implementation of specific strategies/approaches for the whole class and also for individual pupils.
- Our therapists attend parents evening and deliver workshops supporting families to embed communication strategies at home.
- The senior leadership team also work to ensure appropriate training programmes are in place to support all staff in the implementation of the communication and interaction approach.
- Our therapists offer an 'open-door' policy, meaning staff and families are able to seek support as/when it is needed.

Engaging environments

- The term "total communication" is used in Old Park School to describe the environment and approach towards communicating with all pupils.
- A multi-modal approach is adopted.
- The environment, both inside and outdoor learning areas, reflect this commitment to total communication.
- We ensure our pupils have access to a total communication approach when we are in environments outside the school (e.g. community links/forest school) through our continued use of speech, signs and symbols.
- All pupils have a 'All About Me' profile which details their communication needs.
- At Old Park we understand consistency is key in order to create a successful total communication environment, we therefore have a robust 'Total Communication Guidance Pack' to ensure consistency between and within classrooms.

Learning and Development

- The progress of each individual pupil's communication and interaction is closely monitored and evidenced.
- Old Park School utilises a speaking and listening development framework to guide teachers in setting appropriate outcomes.
- Clear links are made between communication and interaction opportunities and our phonic and reading curriculum
- Assessment and monitoring take place through the use of:
 - Classroom observations and annotations including high and low engagement
 - Personal Provision Plans linked to EHCP outcomes
 - Annual review of EHCPs
 - Annual report to families

Impact

Education Health Care Plans

There are clear links that impact across all four areas of the EHCP from within the school's communication and interaction curriculum and total communication approach.

- **Communication:** the school's communication and interaction curriculum has been developed in response to the significant and varied communication needs of the pupils at Old Park School which are detailed in their EHCPs. Our therapists work with the class team to identify the most appropriate communication system for each pupil. EHCP targets are devised by class teachers with support from our therapists in school which link closely with the communication curriculum and our total communication approach. Our total communication approach is evident in all areas across the school where students can access a range of systems including TaSSeLs (on body signing), Objects of reference and symbol supported communication tools including aided language displays. The staff across school are all highly trained to support the communication needs of the pupils. Parents are also regularly invited into school to receive training and support from therapists. At EHCP reviews and parents' evenings twice a year, EHCP targets are reviewed and discussed with parents.
- **Cognition and Learning:** at Old Park we understand that for our pupils to access a range of learning opportunities they need the communication skills to do so. The communication skills taught in the Communication and Interaction curriculum underpins both how they will learn and how they will engage with their learning. Communication skills allow pupils to listen, attend and access a range of teaching materials including speech, symbols, Makaton signs and objects. They also help pupils to respond and comment, ensuring they can be active participants within their learning. By following the communication curriculum we encourage pupil voice to identify the most appropriate cognition and learning targets.
- **Social, Emotional and Mental Health:** the ability to communicate will have a big impact on our pupils' social, emotional and mental health. Communication skills help our pupils to feel understood, emotionally regulated and part of a community. There are implications for safety related to this, particularly developing expressive communication and the resulting ability to discuss relationships, experiences and feelings. Another impact communication skills can have is that pupils will have access to a wider social circle and enjoy interacting with people by developing skills in engagement with familiar and unfamiliar adults and peers. Skills in communication will also help them to develop confidence and a sense of belonging to the world around them. The ability to communicate and socialise also helps support pupils' mental health and self-esteem, confidence and promotes their voice. Pupils learn to communicate how they are feeling and this helps them manage their emotions and regulate themselves.
- **Sensory and Physical:** our communication and interaction curriculum is used to develop the skills for our students to be able to independently regulate by identifying their own sensory processing needs and regulation strategies. Communication skills enable our students to request activities to help regulate and encourage readiness for learning. The alternative communication strategies embedded within this curriculum helps our students understand the steps involved in self-care such as dressing, toileting etc. For our students working at

Pathway 1, we use TaSSeLs and OoR to communicate when personal care is going to take place and work towards these students having a voice as part of their personal care needs. Pupils at other levels also learn to request their sensory diets and to communicate when something hurts or they need some help.

Pre-Subject Specific Learners

Our Communication and Interaction curriculum encourages our pre-subject specific learners to become active participants within the world that they are living. In line with their cognitive and physical development, pupils develop emergent communication of their awareness of an interaction, responding consistently to the same familiar people or resources around them, and moving towards or away from others to indicate basic wishes to interact, seek comfort, or reject touch from another. They begin to respond consistently to preferred stimuli, for instance; different items presented alongside a sensory story. They also begin to tune into more sounds, develop their focus, attention and visual skills which opens up more experiences and helps them to learn and develop across all areas. This also includes access to alternative communication systems including but not limited to: TaSSeLs, Objects of Reference, Switching, Eye Gaze, PECS, Aided Language Displays, Makaton signing. Their progress with these systems is closely monitored to ensure all our students meet their full communication potential.

Subject Specific Learners

Subject specific learners continue to develop their knowledge of vocabulary and begin to form sentences for a range of communicative functions. For these pupils they begin to expand their vocabulary while having the opportunity to use language to request, comment, socialise, ask and answer questions and participate in the world around them. These students develop a communication system that is understood by both new and familiar people. This may include using systems such as speech, sign, AAC, PECS, gesture or vocalisations or the combination of these methods.

Preparation for Adulthood

During an Old Park School stakeholder consultation on Post 19 hopes and aspirations across all pathways, a variety of responses were received. The following are addressed through the school's communication and interaction curriculum and total communication approach.

- Expressing likes and dislikes.
- Expressing preferences and opinions
- To have developed an appropriate and functional means of communication which provides/gives maximum independence and self-expression.
- Have the confidence to have a voice.
- To be able to communicate in the wider community in various settings.
- To understand universal signs which are found within community settings. (toilets, traffic signs, college).
- Understand simple directions and be able to follow them.
- To understand core vocabulary, e.g. I, you, more, finish, again, yes, no, stop, verbs, adjectives.
- To understand signs and symbols in the community.
- To read menus, shopping lists, instructions and directions.
- To read for pleasure at the highest possible level.