



## **How Speech and Language Therapy is delivered** **Information Sheet for Parents/Carers**

Speech and Language Therapy (SLT) in primary schools helps children develop their communication skills, including understanding language, using speech clearly, and expressing their thoughts effectively. Strong communication skills are essential for learning, social interaction, and overall confidence in school.

At present, the Federation commissions an annual allocation of 35 days for speech and language therapy services, meaning a therapist is typically on-site at each school once a week.

### **Speech and Language Therapy is provided at three levels:**

**Universal Support** – This is for all children and focuses on creating a communication-friendly environment in each school. It includes strategies that teachers and staff can use to support language development across the whole class, such as visual aids, modelling language, and structured conversations.

**Targeted Support** – This is for children who need additional help but do not require one-to-one therapy. It involves small group interventions such as *Colourful Semantics*, *Bucket Time*, and *What's in the Bag*, which help children develop attention and listening skills, understand sentence structure using colour-coded visuals to organise words, and build early vocabulary. Other interventions may focus on grammar, vocabulary development, social communication, narrative skills or speech clarity.

**Specialist Support** – This is typically provided for children with significant and persistent speech, language, or communication. Within the Federation, this is usually for children in our care who are non-verbal and/or making very limited vocalisations. Additionally, children with a diagnosis of developmental language disorder (DLD) and those in receipt of an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP). A Speech and Language Therapist assesses these children and provides tailored advice to staff, parents, and sometimes external agencies to ensure the right support is in place.

### **Collaboration with Speech and Language Therapists and Assistive Technology Support**

In addition to in-school support, we collaborate with **CENMAC**, which provides bespoke assistive technology for children with complex communication needs. For non-verbal children, this may include AAC (Augmentative and Alternative Communication) devices, ensuring they have the necessary tools to communicate effectively.

We also work closely with speech and language therapists, making referrals for children who require targeted or specialist support, including clinic-based intervention for speech production difficulties such as speech sound disorders, stammering, and apraxia.



Children with significant speech production difficulties (beyond typical age) are typically seen in a **clinical setting rather than in school**. Referrals for these children are made directly to the **Evelina London** Speech and Language Therapy service, where they receive specialist assessment and intervention.

For residents of **Southwark**, these clinic appointments take place at **Sunshine House**, while for **Lambeth** residents, they are held at the **Mary Sheridan Centre**.

### **Speech and Language Support – It's Everybody's Business**

Staff at the Gem Federation have worked alongside speech and language therapists for many years, developing a strong understanding of effective interventions. As a result, many strategies and support measures are implemented proactively without the need for direct consultation with a therapist. This allows therapists to focus on providing specialist support for children with more complex needs, such as those who are non-verbal and require AAC (Augmentative and Alternative Communication) devices. Additionally, therapists play a crucial role in delivering workshops for parents and training for staff, ensuring a whole-school approach to developing children's communication skills.

The following chart outlines the different levels of speech and language support available for children, from universal strategies to targeted and significant specialist interventions.

Level of Support	Where	Examples	Support & Interventions	Resources
<b>All children: Universal Support</b> General support for all children to enhance communication.	Whole School	Labelling the environment, visual prompts, storyboards, daily routines, and providing clear instructions.	Support is embedded into everyday classroom activities to help all children, especially those who may need additional support.	Visual timetables, environmental labels, pictures, sensory toys, storyboards etc.
<b>Some children: Targeted Support</b> Mild to moderate speech and language needs, requiring small group interventions or strategies within school.	Support is provided by the teaching team. This could be by the teacher or support staff, in small groups or one-to-one	Children who struggle with certain sounds, delayed vocabulary development, following instructions, social communication, or sentence structure.	Delivered by trained school staff through structured interventions.	Colourful Semantics, Bucket Time, What's in the bag, Vocabulary-building activities, Speech sound practice tools such as visual cues, phonics interventions, social communication groups, social stories, zones of regulation etc.
<b>A few children: Specialist Support</b> Children with severe or complex speech and language needs	Support is delivered by trained inclusion support staff and SEND class-based teaching assistants within the school environment.	Children with unclear speech beyond typical age range, stammering, non-verbal, or using AAC devices. Requires specialist assessment from Speech and Language Therapists and may have an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP).	Individualised interventions by therapists, such as tailored speech therapy sessions, intensive interventions, and external support from agencies i.e. CENMAC	AAC devices (e.g., communication boards, speech-generating devices, iPads with communication apps); Speech therapy sessions tailored to the child's individual needs; Social stories and visual supports to help with social communication and understanding emotions; Picture Exchange Communication System (PECS) for non-verbal communication
	Support is delivered by speech therapist in a clinical setting.			Intensive interventions for speech sound production.  Targeted fluency interventions for children who stammer, such as the Lidcombe Program or Stuttering Support Apps