



**Speaking & Listening  
Functional Skills Curriculum**

***Every Lesson Counts***

*VISION:*

*Challenging educational orthodoxies so that every child makes good progress in core subjects;  
all teachers are committed to personal improvement and fulfil their responsibilities;  
all children receive a broad and balanced curriculum;  
all academies strive to be outstanding.*

***Labor Omnia Vincit***

*'Hard Work Conquers Everything'*

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## 1. Background

In 2014, Ofsted stated the following reason for why The Sir Donald Bailey Academy (known as Bowbridge Primary School in 2014) was not yet outstanding overall:

***"There is inconsistency in the extent to which teachers use questioning to deepen pupils' knowledge and understanding, and to develop their language skills"***

The Sir Donald Bailey Academy is a typical Forge academy in that it serves a highly deprived area (top 5% deprivation indicator nationally) and the vast majority of children who attend the academy are white working class children. This group of children is the most underperforming 'group' of children nationally, and has been for many years. The Forge Trust's academies generally fit a similar descriptor, and therefore this curriculum is relevant to all academies in the trust.

## 2. Aims

The aims of our curriculum are threefold:

1. To improve the language skills of all children to be in line with independent schools;
2. To develop the communicative behaviour of all children;
3. To assess speaking and listening more effectively, and maximise pupil progress in this area.

The government do not currently require speaking and listening to be a key performance indicator in primary schools. Shepherd (2005) comments on the devaluation of oracy in English schools, mentioning factors such as our government's obsession with league tables, and difficulties with summative assessment for teachers.

Irrespective of the national agenda, our trust view was that we must work on this as a school improvement priority. Over three decades ago, Barnes (1982: 170) concluded:

It is becoming increasingly clear that deficiency explanations of social class differences in education are unsatisfactory. It is not enough to see working-class homes as 'deprived', 'uncultured', characterised by emotional and social instability, for this looks all to like an outsiders' comfortable view of the immense diversity of life within any such groups.

Barnes' comment is even more pertinent in today's world, as in 2016 the challenge of closing the achievement gap between disadvantaged children and their peers is the single biggest challenge the government and teaching profession face today. This is highlighted in a report commissioned by the House of Commons in 2014. "White children who are eligible for free school meals are constantly the lowest performing group in the country" (p.3).

### 3. Vehicles to deliver the long-term project

- a) Cross-curricular themes (topic web) are explored at the medium term planning stage in order for speaking and listening opportunities to be carefully planned for. Also, the enterprise curriculum will allow for these real life and meaningful opportunities;
- b) A whole school approach towards teaching and learning of functional skills (the four strands explored in this document) that list the specific actions and activities that teachers must take and complete. Staff development meetings were dedicated to formulating these activities and actions at The Sir Donald Bailey Academy in January 2015.

Also, whole school target setting will be crucial in order to make 'speaking and listening' central to everything we do in our academies.

### 4. The context at The Sir Donald Bailey Academy with Academic References

*(Taken from L. Hessey's MA Assignment: An Impact Review of the Speaking & Listening Curriculum –June 2016)*

The challenge for most schools whose catchment is predominantly made up of white working class children is always to ensure that children have a firm grasp of the standard dialect. Edwards (1999:46) defines the standard dialect as: 'that variety normally used in print, and on those occasions when speech most closely resembles the written form.'

Traditionally, dialect has referred to differences in accent, vocabulary and grammar (Edwards 1999); this definition allows us to move away from imposing value judgements on children's (working class) speech patterns.

Rosen (1972:7) suggested that an examination of the dominant culture of our society to the culture of the dominated should be done. He predicted that: 'the linguistic capital of the dominant culture is persistently over-valued, and the dominated culture persistently under-valued.'

Rosen's point is valid, because there is a lack of appreciation of the speakers' cultural experience if you belong to the white working class group of children. Edwards (1999:41) also supports this view, and concludes that:

"dialects are not equal in fact because of these pejorative associations, and the frequent monopoly of positions of power by those who can speak the standard language."

As recently as 2016, education correspondent Sally Weale reinforces Rosen's and Edward's position in the debate. In an article published in The Guardian, she states that a report undertaken by The Sutton Trust Educational Charity found that privately educated people were dominating the UK's leading professions, including law, politics, medicine and journalism.

In his discussion of intersections between social class and language, Volisinov (1998:28) states that language is a sign system, and that the meaning of verbal signs is an arena for class struggle, commenting: "a ruling class will try to narrow the meaning of social signs, making them uni-accentual." In other words, only Standard English is good enough for the ruling class who govern the country, and there is no tolerance of different accents.

However, it could be argued that the comments of Rosen, Edwards and Volisonov are cumbersome, because they imply that regional dialects, including poor grammar, may be equally as acceptable as Standard English in formal or business situations. All three academics could have expanded on the subject of speakers being aware of their audience, selecting an appropriate register, and speaking with an acceptable level of grammar that an occasion dictates. Our trust approach is to value the cultural experience of our pupils, whilst developing each individual's ability to vary their approaches to speaking, and ensure that each child masters Standard English. Consequently, our children have a chance of gaining 'positions of power' in adulthood. Furthermore, 'there is a demand in the National Curriculum for pupils to be articulate, coherent and effective in Standard English' (Grugeon, E *et al*, 2003). Luby (2016) highlights in his report (written to clarify progress with the new speaking and listening curriculum following professional conversations with teachers) that teachers at The Sir Donald Bailey Academy consistently corrected children's speech and made children aware of their audience and context when speaking (p.10).

My view as the CEO of The Forge Trust is that teachers generally should 'strategically fit' with the demographics of the school: if children feel that they belong and have something in common with their teacher, they are far more likely to excel and make sustained and rapid progress due to the excellent relationships. This is particularly true when we analyse accents and dialects, where children can see how their role models perform and vary their approaches to speaking.

Rosen (1972) offers a stark warning of what can happen when a strategic fit between teacher and pupil is not apparent:

"much of the language which the working class encounter in their daily lives is transmitted to them through a variety of agencies not under their control which deploy a language designed to mystify, to intimidate and to create a sense that the present arrangement of society is immutable."

The impact of the main factors affecting our new curriculum are outlined below.

## **1. Support from Home**

Edwards (1976:86) concludes:

"The most common social explanation for the linguistic superiority of middle-class children was their closer and more frequent contact with significant adults."

There are, however, many other explanations that are similarly as common and pertinent. It is well documented that children who live in poverty often use a restricted code (attributed to Basil Bernstein) when speaking. Macarthy (as cited in Edwards, 1976) commented that middle-class children used longer sentences at an earlier age and had a wider vocabulary, due to the poor language models, and less interaction of lower-class parents with their children (p.86). Tough (1982) adds that middle-class children, by the age of 5, are using a form of language similar to that of their parents (p.11). Children living in poverty do not get the correct modelling of basic grammar, nor do they have access to a wide range of vocabulary in their home surroundings.

Again, Rosen (1972) offers an interesting analysis of the situation when he identified four socialising agencies: school, family, peer group and work (p.7). My view is that school can

strongly influence two of the four of these agencies-school and peer groups-but the difficulty lies in breaking a culture at home and influencing the family. Rosen (1972:7) commented that: 'all attention is directed towards the home,' and this may explain the wide gap in language ability between middle-class children, and children who are 'in the grip of poverty': the private sector place more importance on public speaking, and speaking and listening in general. Grugeon *et al.*, (1998:22) reinforce that: 'the process starts in the home with the development of the child's own language resources in social interaction with family and community.'

Schools can massively influence children and their peer groups, and teach them an elaborated code in the correct context with inspirational local role models as teachers. However, influences in the home and many generations of disconnection with school makes it extremely consuming for minimal rewards, even though it could be argued that it is our moral imperative as educators to keep trying.

Edwards (1976:145) suggests:

"a restricted code is entirely suited to some contexts and some purposes, and carries its own aesthetic. Problems arise when those accustomed to its use move into contexts in which other communicative demands are made."

This is precisely where schools, and the curriculum, must give children regular opportunities to apply what they have been taught in terms of language registers, vocabulary and Standard English.

Barnes (1982), Edwards (1999) and Grugeon *et al* (2003) discuss the things that parents can do to help develop their children's language capabilities in the early years, and imply that speaking in the home means that you become a member of the family, as children and parents share meanings through verbal communication. Snow (1982) argues that all children, irrespective of background, learn to talk through parental influence in various areas:

"They learn to talk through one of the following situations: (a) their parents are producing semantic contingencies; (b) their parents are training them in comprehension; (c) some sort of highly predictable set of language stimuli in the environment recur in such a way that children can start initiating and using them; (d) they have discovered that language can be used for social control." (p.257)

Snow is clear that the absence of one of the above situations is not detrimental to a child's language ability. I would add that for most children living in poverty, their parents do not train them in comprehension, nor do they provide dialogue that allows for semantic contingencies, where a parental response furthers a child's comment. Semantic contingency is basically continuing a topic started by a child. However, it has to be done in a certain way for children to successfully acquire language.

For example:

Child, "New shoes." Adult, "These are your new, black leather school shoes."

Child, "Go now." Adult, "Do you want to go to school now?"

Although as a linguist and educational psychologist Snow's point is valid, she fails to appraise what the impact would be for a child if these were missing in two or more of the situations. My professional experience has demonstrated several times that highly successful schools bridge this gap, and provide all four situations for the vast majority of children.

Edwards (1976) speaks of the three types of control that parents assert, and suggests that working-class parents use mainly imperatives that simply announce the rules, using commands with no reasoning, whereas middle-class parents use 'positional appeals' to remind children what is expected of people like them, and personal appeals, stating the situation and consequences that would follow (p.108). There is a direct link to Snow's four situations of talk, and poverty children having a language diet consisting of only imperatives; therefore not receiving any teaching of comprehension nor semantic contingencies from home.

Tough (1982) discusses an extra challenge for schools in deprived areas, stating: 'the amount of adult interaction provided to infants between 12 and 24 months varies greatly with mothers from different backgrounds' (p.30). This is a sound reason for principals to extend the age range of their schools to start at pre-school age, just as we have done at The Sir Donald Bailey Academy.

## **2. Staff Training and Teaching Competence**

Irrespective of whether or not teachers in a school constitute a 'strategic fit' with their context, community and the school they serve, I would argue that they have a moral imperative to ensure children have a rich vocabulary, and ensure children understand the different speech registers, including how and when to use them. Grugeon *et al* (2003) advocate teachers completing their own language history with children at school, discussing their own accent and dialect, as well as influences over the years regarding their speech habits (p.47). This is particularly helpful to get buy-in from working-class children. Edwards (1976) adds that working-class children, whose language is very different to the classroom register, may 'code switch', which results in children over-correcting themselves. The danger, he argues, are that teachers may assess this as unsystematic speech (p.136).

Bernstein's code deficit theory (1971) attempted to explain the differences in the meaning of speech between lower working-class people and upper working-class and middle-class people. Jones (2013: 162) defines the codes as: 'the language of the educational process.'

Edwards (1976: 92) explains: 'the codes exist only in the mind. They are nothing more than 'verbal planning activities' at what Bernstein calls the psychological level.' She adds further that: 'the lower working-class is said to be confined by the restricted code' (p.90) but that: 'restricted code is no way a synonym for 'linguistic deprivation', because its user has the full range of linguistic options available to him.' (p.90)

The implications for schools are a challenge: in the light of Bernstein's analysis, schools might benefit children if they can motivate and enable them to select wisely from their repertoire of language resources, depending on the situation. Since most parents of children living in poverty will not do this, teachers need to be aware of a potential cultural mis-match between home and school. However, with skilful leadership, the home culture can be acknowledged and respected, and parents can buy into their children's future education and increased resulting employability. Language constituting a restricted code is only understood by its users, who generally belong to a particular culture, therefore background knowledge is relied upon by users to interpret the meanings of words. In the world of work, this is unhelpful, and teachers must encourage use of the standard dialect and an elaborated code. According to Edwards (1976), an elaborated code is: 'where the gap between the speaker and the listener can only be crossed by explicit speech' (p.91).

It is also important for teachers to ensure that lexical words, subject specific, are taught to children (Grugeon, E *et al.*, 2003, p.19). This is also known as 'content vocabulary' (Edwards, S., 1999, p.62).

**Figure 1-A Framework for Structured Language Activities**

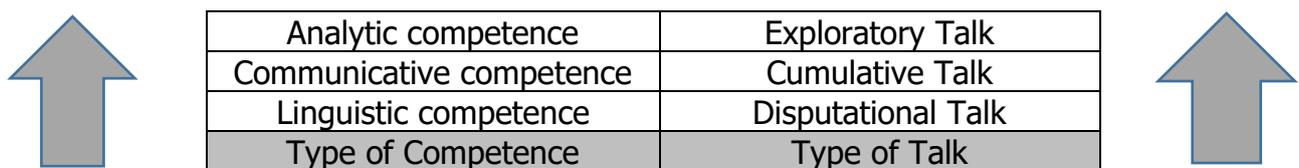
Taken from Edwards, S., 1999, p.62

<p><b>All Purpose Vocabulary</b>          colour, size, shape, prepositions, greetings, social</p>	<p><b>Content Vocabulary</b>          Subject words          Topic words          Literacy, numeracy words</p>
<p><b>Language Context</b>          Audience, purpose of talk, formality, standard English</p>	<p><b>Function Words</b>          Eg) in, on, the, and          Question words-when, how          Elements of grammar</p>

Children who live in poverty often find the language context quadrant the hardest to grasp. Good teaching generally deals with specifics such as vocabulary and words. However, language context is often overlooked by mainstream schools, even though independent schools typically teach this quadrant. According to Corson (1988) Bruner’s ‘analytic competence’ theory suggests that children are competent if they can reason, and that this is a good indicator of high academic performance (pp.5-6). This is the hardest competence for children who live in poverty to grasp, and it is linked to language context described by Edwards. Corson (1988) concluded that teachers must concentrate on children’s zone of proximal development (Vygotsky), and organise language experiences to extend this (p.25).

Corson (1988) defines Bruner’s linguistic competence as the ‘universal grammar’ all children use to communicate, irrespective of language barriers and language competence. Communicative competence describes children’s understanding of speech in certain contexts, and analytic competence is described as the ability to use language for thinking, a prime task for the school (p.15). Complimentary to the Bruner’s competences are the three types of talk described by Edwards (1999): disputational, cumulative and exploratory (p.84). Cumulative talk happens when children build positively on what others have said, and is ‘characterised by repetitions, confirmations and elaboration’ (p.84). This is very closely linked to Bruner’s communicative competence. Edwards (1990:84) defines exploratory talk as: ‘where the group engages critically but constructively with each others’ ideas, and statements and suggestions are offered for joint consideration.’ Similarly, this is closely linked to Bruner’s analytic competence, which demands higher-level evaluation skills from children.

**Figure 2-Links between Bruner’s language competences and Edwards types of talk (1999)**



Note: Arrows denote increasing levels of difficulty

Kirkland, L., Patterson, J. (2005) and Corson (1988) discuss the value of questioning children to maintain dialogue, and argue that teachers should ask higher level questions that children can relate to, and acknowledge the importance of questions following a child's opening statement. When children can relate to the context, meaning becomes the primary focus. This can have huge benefits for children in other curriculum areas, such as reading comprehension. Grueon (p.67) adds that 'we can challenge children's thinking if these questions are kept 'open', leading them into other areas of discussion and further questions.' Barnes (1982) suggests that teacher questions could be placed into three categories: factual (what), 'open' questions calling for reasoning where the answers may be factual, and reasoning ('how' or 'why') questions. These are open when alternative answers are permitted and encouraged. They are closed when they invite the recall of already disclosed sequences of cause and effect, or when the 'right' approach is marked out by the teacher (p.171). Children who are dealing with 'reasoning' questions are demonstrating 'analytic' competence, and are far more likely to succeed academically. Barnes (1982:67) adds further that children can provide similar assistance to one another when an open approach to tasks is taken. 'This is characterised by most clearly the use of the hypothetical mode: the pupils ask questions of one another of a kind which invite, summarise and dismiss.' Rosen's (1972) socialising agencies-the peer group-also agree with Rosen's hypothetical mode (p.7).

Children from middle-class backgrounds do not often carry the burden of regional dialects, and speak the standard language without having to differentiate their style. Style is a consideration for working class children, particularly when one considers that their future success as a person may depend on it. Edwards (1999:35) states that:

Even simple societies differentiate between colloquial speech and the 'higher' styles reserved for ceremonial and other occasions. Most societies will have several varieties which distinguish their users geographically or socially, and others which are reserved for (or conventionally associated with) particular activities.

Over three decades ago, Barnes (1982:167) commented further on the approach towards style that many schools put on speaking and listening:

Many teachers insist that their pupils must speak the standard English dialect in an accent and vocal quality which approximates to local middle-class speech styles. They call this 'good English' and discuss low-status styles as 'slovenly speech'. They do this either in order to teach their pupils to 'speak correctly' or (with more sophistication) in order to help them 'get a good job'

Having worked in schools fitting the white working class descriptor throughout my career, it would appear that the DfE and the national agenda have devalued the importance of oracy, since there is minimal guidance given in the revised National Curriculum 2014. Barnes (1988:26) agrees that: 'if the case for oral language is a compelling one, why does it remain so unstressed in the world's schools?' Kirkland and Patterson (2005) also discuss the relegation of oral language use in the classroom (p.391). Nevertheless, our school's stance is firmly in agreement with Barnes' recommendation in terms of speaking a standard dialect.

Although our school's stance would advocate a 'deficit' model to oral language development, since our pupils need upskilling, we are aware of the dangers of 'vacuum ideology'. Keddie (1973:15) stated that: 'many children come to school to find their experience dis-valued and discounted: they are treated as empty and filled with knowledge.' Firstly, teaching and pedagogy has changed since the 1970s due to research, and it could be argued that standards of teaching have risen generally in state schools. With the independent watchdog Ofsted's constant scrutiny of schools today, any school that treated its pupils in such a way would fail an inspection: children's wellbeing is crucial. Grugeon (1998) argues against a deficit model and argues that teachers want to teach a language that reflects their own backgrounds, therefore when a child does not speak in this way, or struggles with oracy, schools brand parents as deficient in some way (p.23). The Sir Donald Bailey Academy leadership team's view is in line with the findings from the majority of Year 4 responses in the pupil interviews the CEO conducted; that by focussing on oracy and standard English, children will 'grow up and have a better chance of getting a good job.' It is clear that even our pupils accept that there is a knowledge gap to be filled in this area.

Grugeon, Hubbard, Smith and Dawes (1998) comment that The Bullock Enquiry in 1975 (Department for Education and Skills) endorsed the use of oral language and small group teaching strategies, and stressed that schools should recognise that language was a cross-curricular responsibility. In the late eighties and early nineties, the National Oracy Project (NOP) was designed to give speaking and listening equal status to reading and writing in schools. Clearly, educational policy has changed considerably since then. Kirkland and Patterson (2005:392) conclude that, 'the cost of deleting oral language development from our classrooms is high.'

### **3. SLT Monitoring and Evaluation of Speaking and Listening, and Subject Knowledge Expertise**

One aim of the new curriculum is to maximise pupil participation and pupil feedback. Corson (1988:52) stated that:

Class size is the chief constraint on a teacher in oral language work, but even for unacceptably large first school classes there are recommendations which can be made to promote effective talk.

Corson adds that small group work of three or four children works best (p.53). This is known as wave two teaching, secondary to 'first quality' whole-class teaching-a feature of schools recognised as good or outstanding in 2016.

Assessment of speaking and listening is also crucial. Corson (1988) advocates assessment (in the form of observations) of children in situations 'normal' to their culture; this is outlined as a main aim of our curriculum. It is the skill of leadership to ensure this happens, by ensuring a 'strategic fit' between the home culture and school. In particular, the relationship between teacher and pupil is most crucial if children are to maximise their oral language skills. Corson elaborates further that: 'children will be otherwise reluctant to play the tester's game and results might not properly reflect the level of language ability' (p.55). This view also supports Labov's earlier view and studies on the vernacular in New York City.

A rigorous speaking and listening curriculum allows children to develop conversational competence (Wardborough 1985). Corson (1988:106) states that: 'conversational competence is a serious part of senior school teaching.' However, in 2016, it should be said that this is a key aim of any leadership team in any primary school, as the drive to 'improve standards' has increased.

The significance of early intervention regarding the language development of children is also crucial. Farran (1982:29) states that: 'the second year of life, however, is a very important year for the infant, and one to which mothers of varying backgrounds appear to react differently.' Active synthesis occurs in the second year of life, so pre-school is crucial as children have more of an awareness of their experiences. According to Corson (1988) 'by seven years the structure of a child's language is all but fully developed.' Snow (1982:266) adds further that: 'teachers of young children have to be highly intelligent, knowledgeable and highly professional in the context of the children's learning.'

**Table 1-Conversational Competence (Wardborough 1985) & our New Curriculum**

Stage of Conversational Competence	Strand of our new Curriculum
1. One and only one person speaks at a time.	Speaking, Listening
2. The end of an item of conversation is signalled by a change in pitch or pace; by pausing; or by a gesture in relaxation.	Non-verbal communication, speaking, listening, awareness of audience (all four areas)
3. An interest in speaking in the conversation is signalled by bodily movements or an intake of breath.	Non-verbal communication
4. Interruptions depend on a successful application of strategies, if they are not to be resisted as speakers.	Non-verbal communication, speaking, listening, awareness of audience (all four areas)
5. Closing a conversation is a co-operative activity.	Listening

It is clear that conversational competence is well covered in the four strands of our curriculum.

## 5. Methodology & Researched Topics

(Taken from L. Hessey's MA Assignment: An Impact Review of the Speaking & Listening Curriculum – June 2016)

**Table 2-Themes arising from a Review of the Literature & further reading**

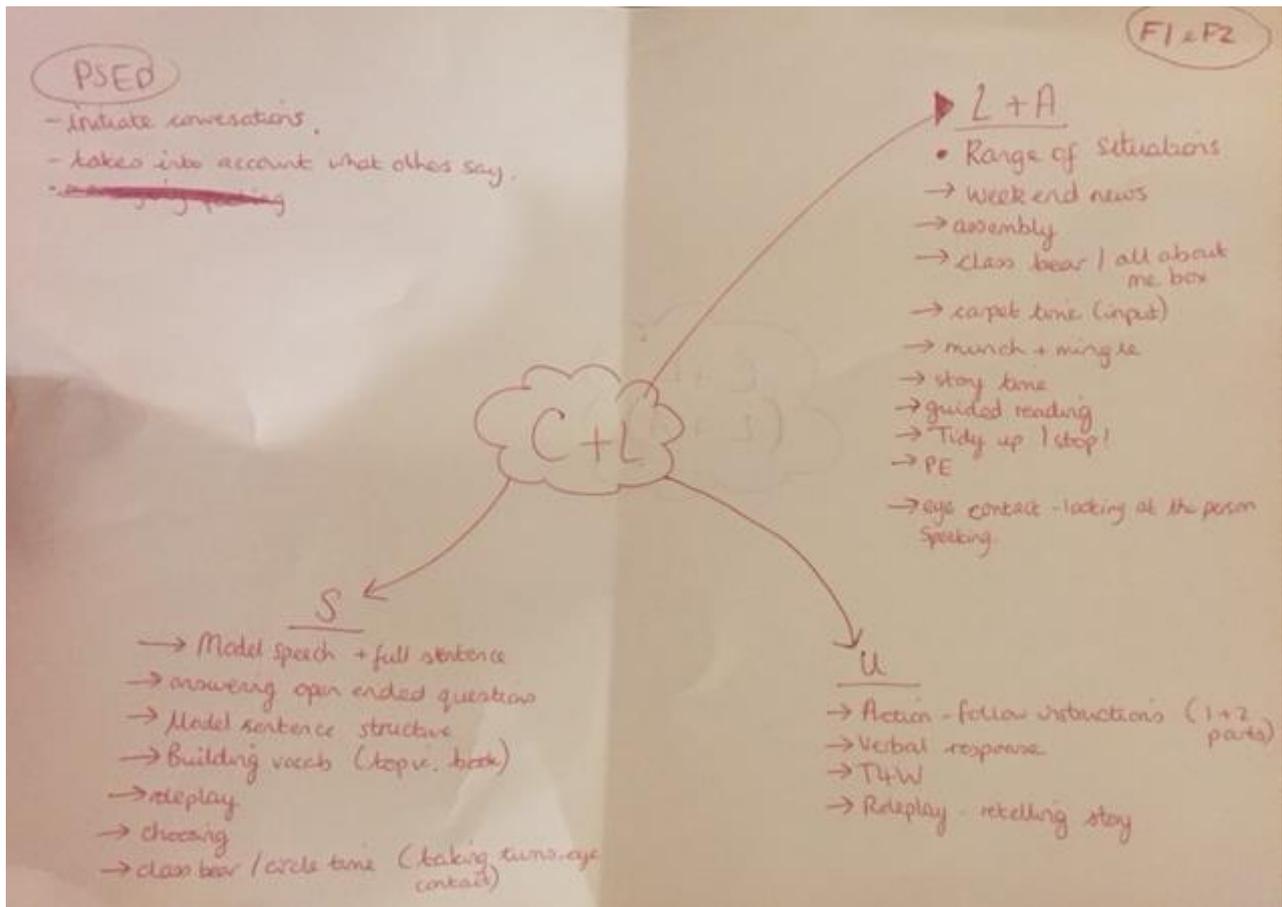
Theme/Specific Key Area	Aspects
Support from home	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Differences with middle class and working class homes and parents (Edwards, 1976);</li> <li>• Control: 3 types (Edwards, 1976)</li> <li>• Verbal deprivation and 'deficit theory' (Edwards, 1976; Labov, 1969)</li> <li>• Recording the use of language in the home by parents (Edwards, 1999)</li> <li>• Socialising agencies (Rosen, 1972)</li> </ul>
Staff Training and Teacher Competence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Signs (Volosinov, 1998)</li> <li>• Codes-restricted and elaborated codes (Bernstein)</li> <li>• Setting expectations for white working class children (Edwards, 1976)</li> <li>• Code switching for white working class children (Edwards, 1976)</li> <li>• A substantial curriculum to deal with speaking and listening (Edwards, 1999)</li> <li>• Assessment of Speaking and Listening (Corson, 1988; Grugeon, 1998)</li> <li>• Sharpening Listening Skills (Edwards, 1999)</li> <li>• Framework for structured language activities (Edwards 1999)</li> <li>• Teachers completing their language history (Grugeon 1998, 2003)</li> <li>• Socialising agencies (Rosen, 1972)</li> <li>• Motivation of children through excellence and enjoyment</li> <li>• Hidden and Manifest curriculum (Barnes, 1982)</li> <li>• Teachers' approach to correcting pupils (Grugeon, 1998, 2003; Hart 1982)</li> <li>• Importance of dialogue and conversation (Corson, 1998)</li> <li>• Checklist of skills mastery for language curriculum (Corson, 1988; Grugeon, 1998)</li> <li>• Decentration (Piaget, 1932)</li> <li>• Planning for speaking and listening</li> <li>• Language proficiency &amp; communicative competence (Bruner, 1975)</li> <li>• Vertical grouping (Corson, 1988)</li> <li>• Teacher as role model: speaker and listener (Corson, 1988)</li> </ul>
Children's engagement with curriculum	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• School culture/strategic fit between pupils and teachers (Edwards, 1976)</li> <li>• Classroom register: preserving social distance between pupils and teachers (Edwards, 1976)</li> <li>• Importance of listening skills (Edwards, 1999)</li> <li>• Child centred/led learning, and ownership of curriculum (Rosen, 1972)</li> <li>• Group work and varied pedagogical approaches (Rosen, 1972)</li> </ul>
Leadership: SLT Monitoring, Evaluation and Skill	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Schools providing children cultural experiences (Corson, 1988)</li> <li>• Small class sizes (Corson, 1988)</li> <li>• Personalisation of learning (Corson, 1988)</li> <li>• Early intervention (Corson, 1988; Tough, 1982; McGinness, 1982)</li> <li>• Whole school system such as 'conversational competence' (Wardhaugh, 1985)</li> </ul>
Challenges for white working class children	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Speaking: responding to superiors and strangers (Edwards, 1976)</li> <li>• Restricted and elaborated codes (Bernstein, 1971)</li> <li>• Using language to question things (Edwards, 1976)</li> <li>• Lack of education of white working class parents on standard English (Edwards, 1976)</li> <li>• Lack of interaction between mother and child in white working class homes (Edwards, 1976)</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lack of support and back up from home for white working class children (Edwards,1976; Rosen,1972)</li> <li>• Language skills of white working class children (</li> <li>• Language deficit on school entry &amp; school readiness (Farran, 1982)</li> <li>• Lack of role models (Farran, 1982)</li> <li>• Mis-match between school and home expectations (Feagans &amp; Clark, 1982)</li> <li>• Lack of knowledge of the world and cultural experience (Snow, 1982)</li> <li>• Poor reading skills due to lack of vocabulary and knowledge of the world (Snow, 1982)</li> </ul>
Context: Our Curriculum	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Signs (Volosinov, 1998) and standard English, including uni-accentualism</li> <li>• School culture/strategic fit between pupils and teachers (Edwards,1976)</li> <li>• Speaking focus (Edwards,1999)</li> <li>• Dialects (Edwards,1976)</li> <li>• National Oracy Project-National Curriculum (Grugeon,1998)</li> </ul>

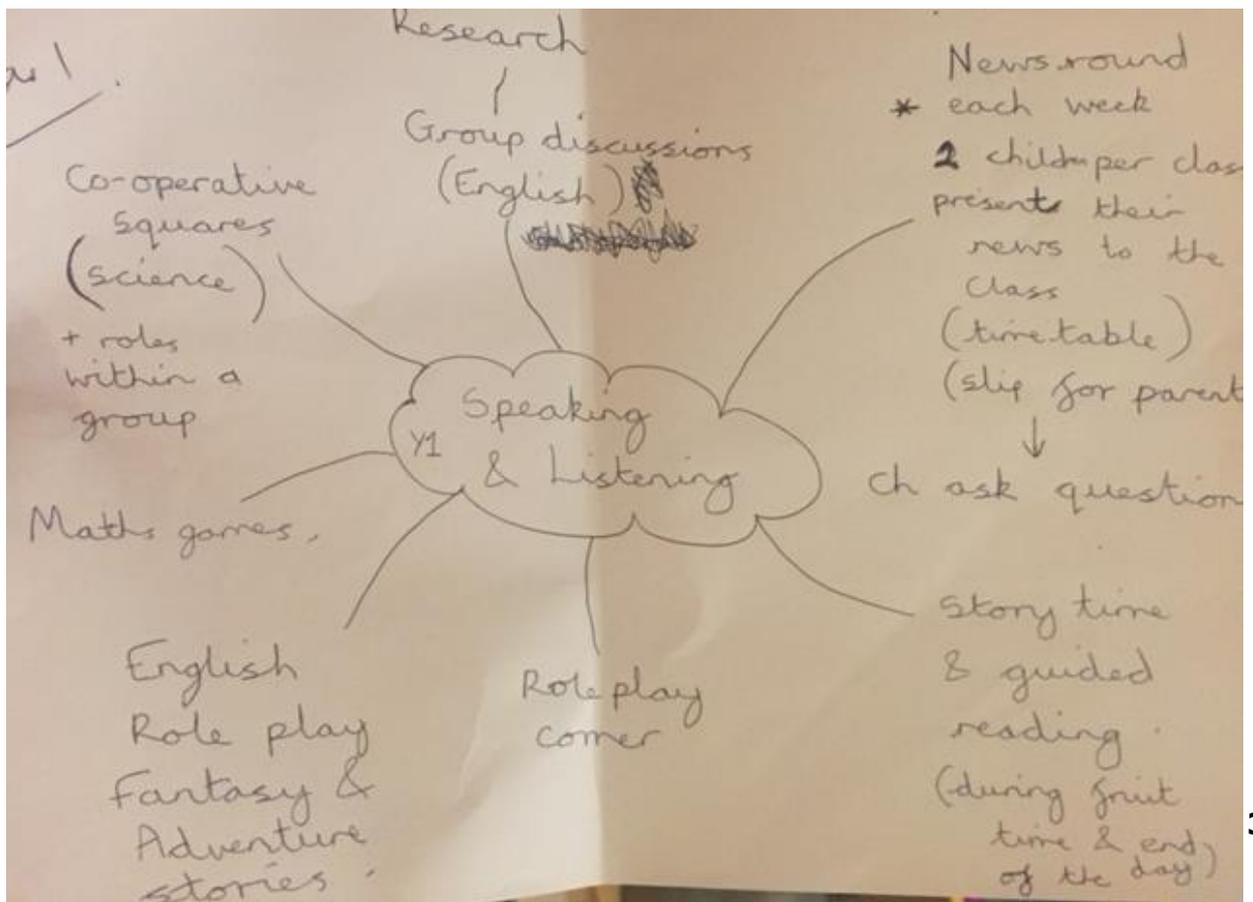
For each key area, many themes arose, and I critically evaluated the sources, attempting to show an awareness of potential conflicts, and the credibility, validity and reliability of the sources. I attempted to justify any professional judgements that I made based on the literature review, as well as my own professional experience gained as both a classroom practitioner and a school leader.

## 6. Examples of Medium Term Planning and Topic Webs

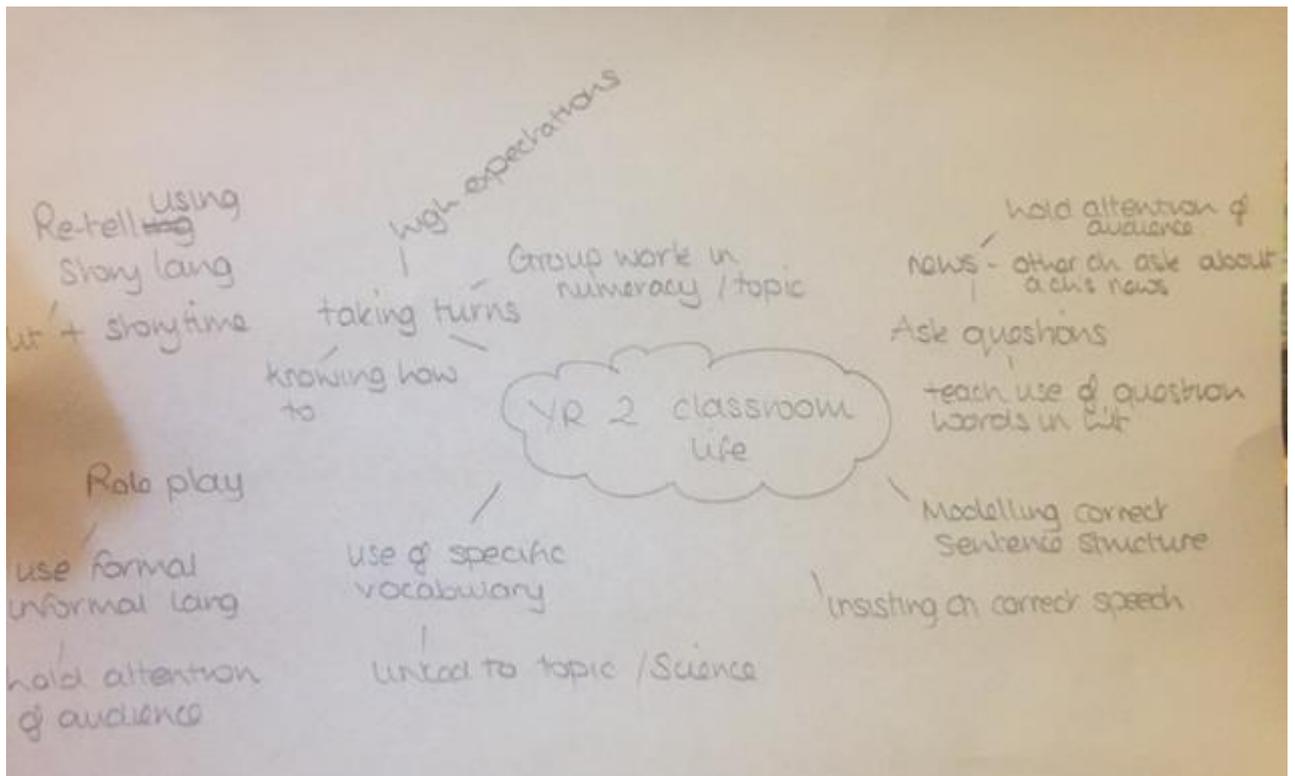
Foundation Stage 1 & 2



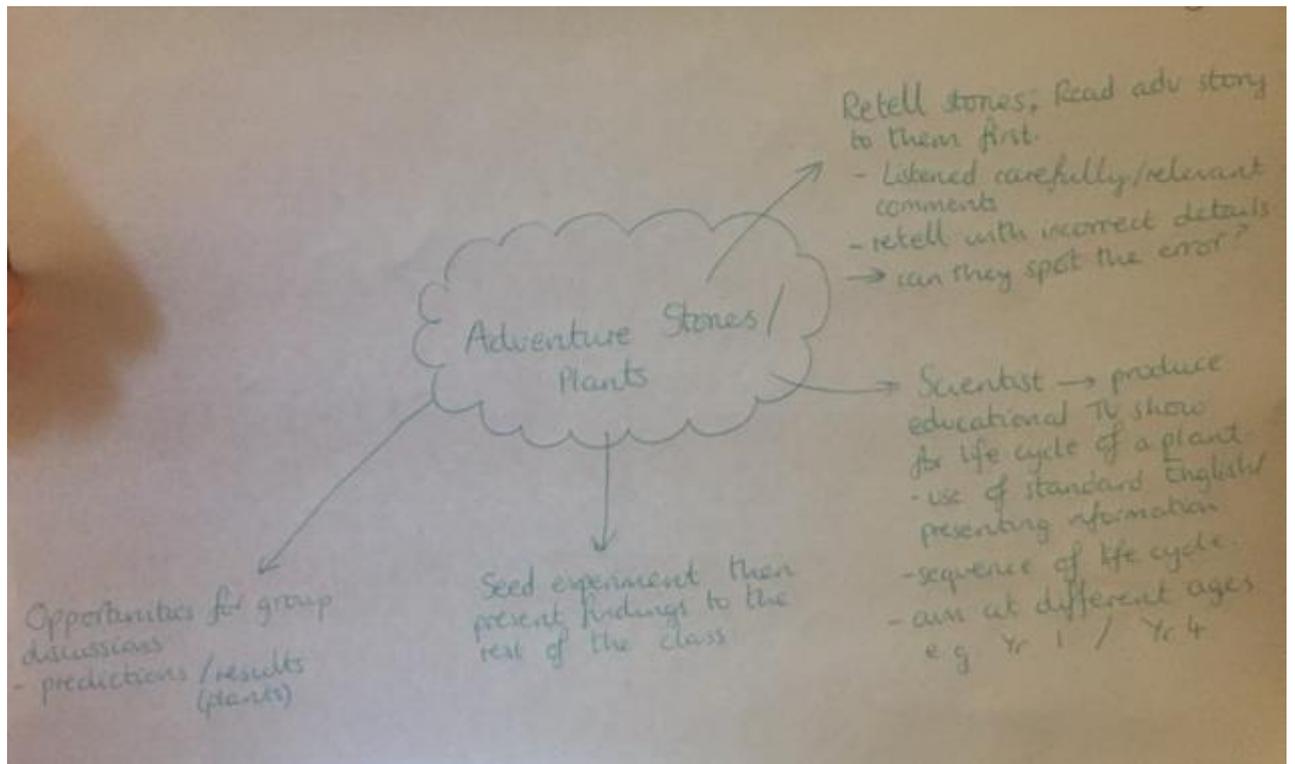
Year 1



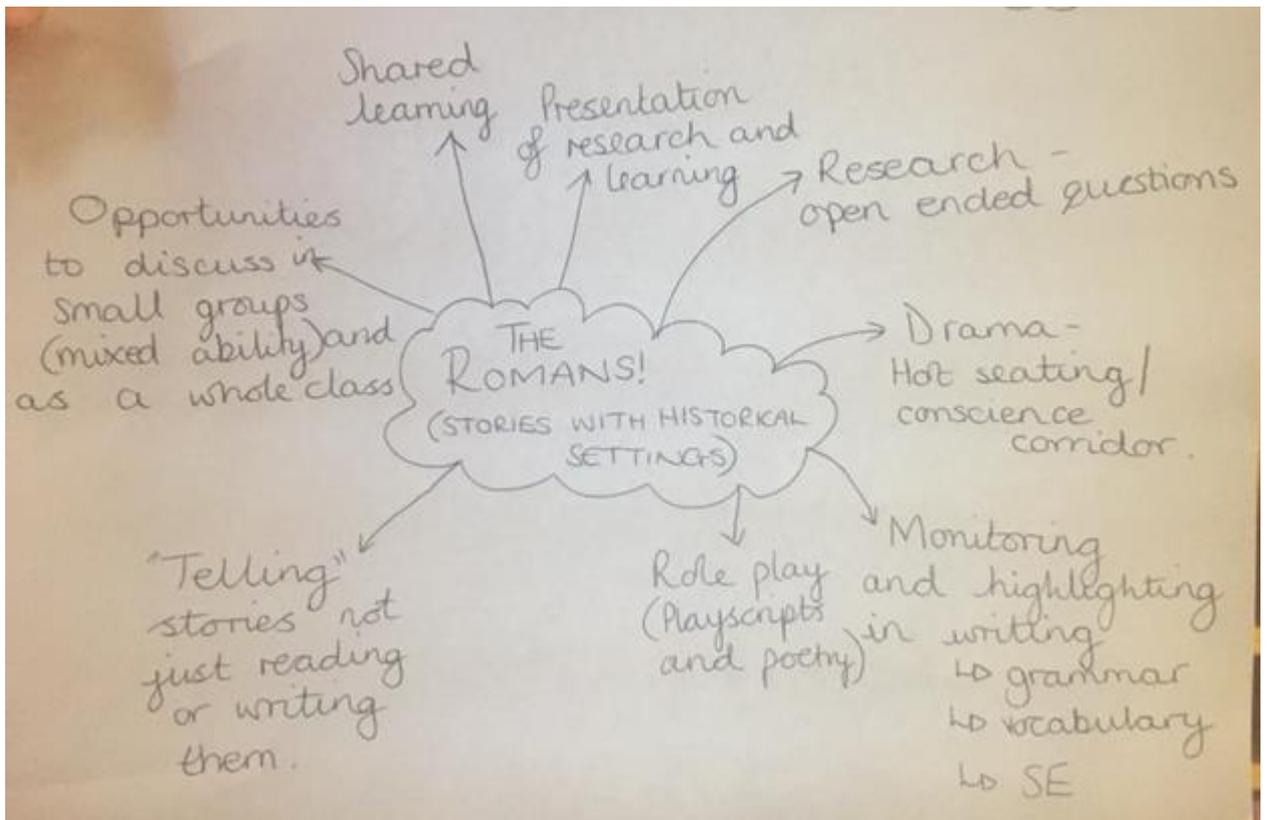
Year 2



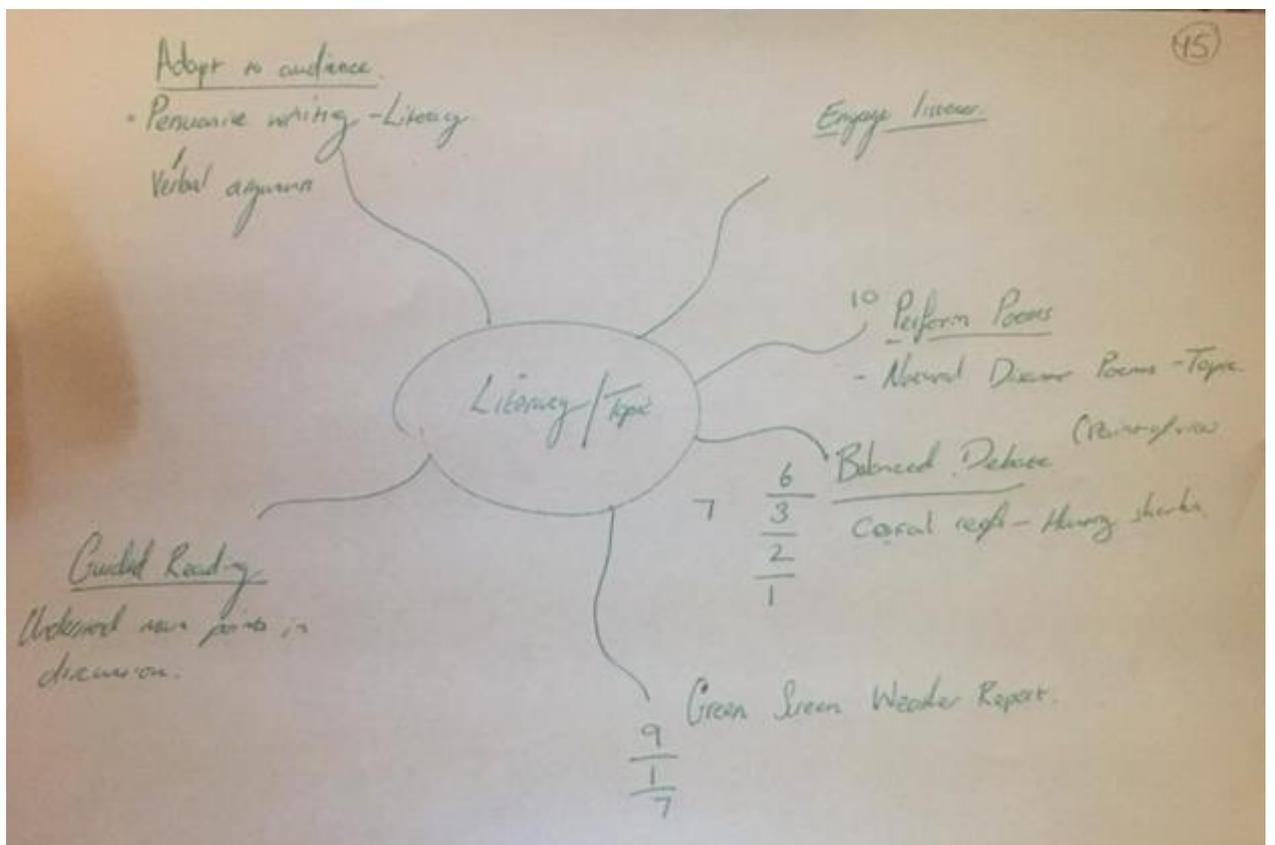
Year 3

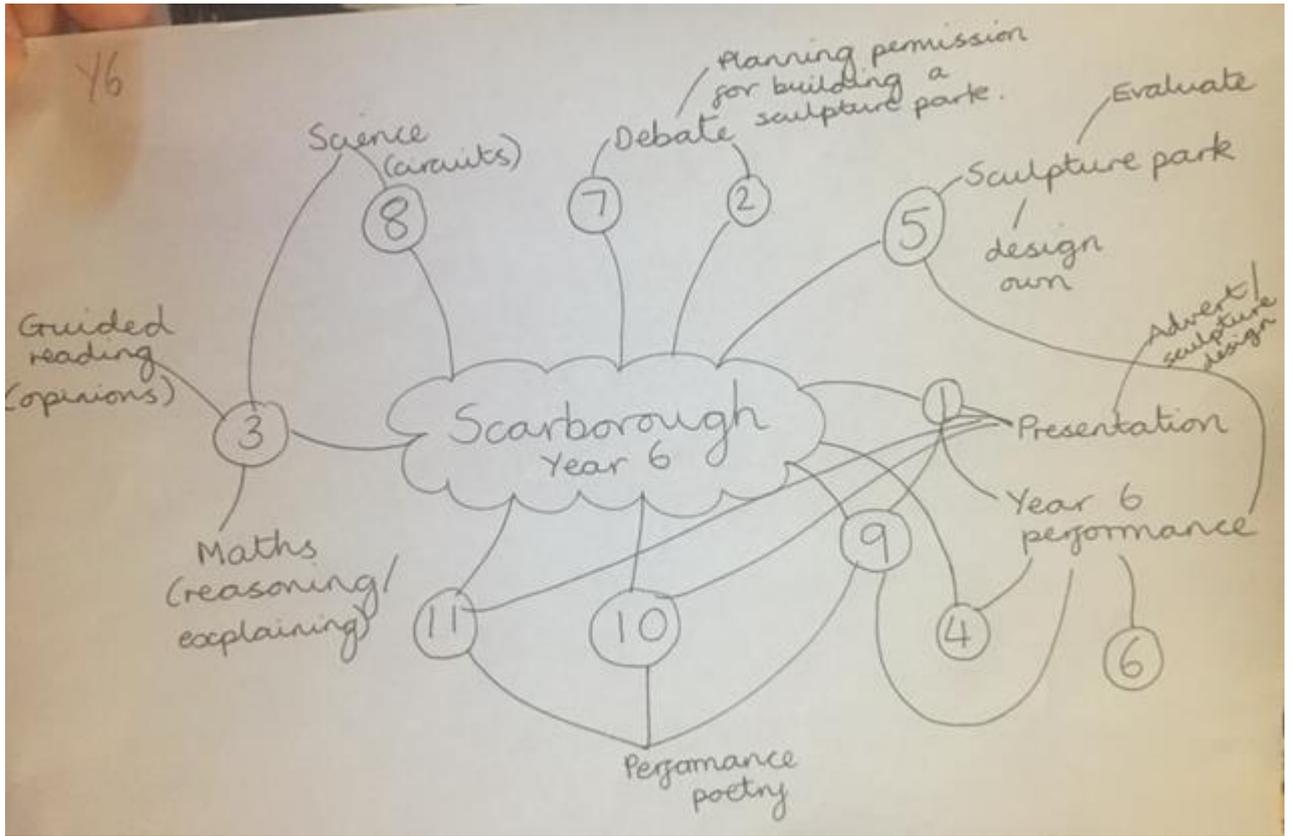


Year 4



Year 5





## 7. A Whole School Approach: The Four Strands

Note: Staff Development Meetings at The Sir Donald Bailey Academy were dedicated to creating the following lists for teachers to ensure that children receive opportunities to practice the skills in each of the four strands.

### 7.1 Opportunities for Children to show an Awareness of their Audience

1. Children to meet and greet visitors and conduct school tours to potential parents;
2. To correct children and have a consistent approach by all staff;
3. Build in opportunities to speak to different audiences, making use of the community café;
4. Class assemblies where children formally present information to the school;
5. House assemblies, where older children plan & deliver an assembly linked to themes of week;
6. Role play opportunities in class. Give children character cards. For example, *'you are greeting a visitor to school, and your partner is the visitor. How would you greet them?'*;
7. Children to answer class phones;
8. Children take on roles in class projects such as 'project lead';
9. Video blog on school website, making use of green screen technology;
10. Children working in office and café;
11. Children recording a message on the school answer machine;
12. Expectations of the children: how we speak and discipline them;
13. Answering registers properly-*'Good morning Miss.../Dinners please Miss...'*
14. Inviting children to SLT meetings.

### 7.2 Opportunities for Children to Speak and Discuss

1. Superstar Assemblies where children discuss and talk about their dreams;
2. Children bring in newspapers-'what's been happening in the week?'
3. Circle time and 'show n tell' sessions;
4. Class debates using house system, and use of talk partners in lessons;
5. Through problem solving such as 'Talk it Solve it' in maths;
6. Talking Tables (EYFS);
7. School Council;
8. Hot seating as a teaching strategy in English;
9. School radio/podcast to go on the website;
10. Children applying to go into the year group above and new class;
11. Partaking in the Woolfit Festival;
12. Taking messages on behalf of the class teacher to other classes or departments;
13. Produce a sports report for all school team matches

### 7.3 Opportunities for Children to Listen

1. Note taking and actively listening for key information;
2. Responding appropriately in terms of body language (Non-verbal communication);
3. Taking messages on behalf of staff and following instructions;
4. Having a 'look out' focus and selecting 3 things to spot;
5. Following instructions for 'what makes a good listener'. "*Eyes looking and ears listening*";
6. Visitors coming into school to speak;
7. Listening to audio stories;
8. Watching videos in lessons;
9. Working in pairs and responding to a partner;
10. Flipped Learning-watching teacher videos outside of the school day;
11. *Every Lesson Counts*-demonstrating excellent behaviour for learning.

### 7.4 Opportunities for Children to Practise Non-Verbal Communication

1. Training children for a range of contexts. For example, when showing visitors round school children should be taught to use a firm handshake (also when leaving lessons shake teacher's hand and make eye contact);
2. Using Makaton where applicable;
3. Using signs and symbols in the classroom;
4. Using appropriate bodily contact;
5. Showing an awareness for special awareness;
6. Demonstrating appropriate facial expressions;
7. Showing appropriate emotions and being taught these. For example, what does it look like to be angry?
8. Using drama and freeze frames in lessons;
9. Modelling scenarios. For example, '*Your dog has died. Is it appropriate to smile?*'
10. Children to create social stories and act them out. Pay particular attention to body language and facial expressions.

## 8. What the National Curriculum Requires in spoken language and KS1 and KS2

Pupils should be taught to:

- Listen and respond appropriately to adults and their peers;  
(applies to speaking, listening, non-verbal communication and awareness of audience)
- Ask relevant questions to extend their understanding and knowledge;  
(applies to speaking)
- Use relevant strategies to build their vocabulary;  
(applies to speaking and listening)
- Articulate and justify answers, arguments and opinions;  
(applies to speaking, listening, non-verbal communication and awareness of audience)
- Give well-structured descriptions, explanations and narratives for different purposes, including for expressing feelings;  
(applies to speaking)
- Maintain attention and participate actively in collaboration conversations, staying on topic and initiating and responding to comments;  
(applies to listening, speaking, awareness of audience and non-verbal communication)
- Use spoken language to develop understanding through speculating, hypothesising, imagining and exploring ideas;  
(applies to speaking)
- Speak audibly and fluently with an increasing command of Standard English;  
(applies to speaking)
- Participate in presentations, discussions, performances, role play, improvisations and debates;  
(applies to speaking, listening, non-verbal communication and awareness of audience)
- Gain, maintain and monitor the interest of the listener/s;  
(applies to speaking and awareness of audience)
- Consider and evaluate different viewpoints, attending to and building on the contributions of others;  
(applies to listening and speaking)
- Select and use appropriate registers (ways of speaking differently) for effective communication.  
(applies to speaking, awareness of audience and non-verbal communication)

**Note: Blue font applies to our trust curriculum, not National Curriculum)**

**Every language has 5 registers (Teachers and children should familiarise with these):**

<b>Register</b>	<b>Definition</b>	<b>Explanation</b>
Frozen	Language that never changes	Wedding vows, Miranda rights
Formal	Standard English	Speeches, school lessons
Consultative	Less formal standard English	News casting, employee to employer
Casual	Language between friends	Loose sentence structure, vernacular speech
Intimate	Language between lovers or other close family and friends	Pet names, inside jokes

## 9. Year Group Expectations (age related attainment)

**Mastery:** All criterion achieved

*Mastery must be tested using authentic tasks and scenarios at the heart of "doing" the subject. And instruction for mastery must be designed backward from these corner stone tasks (Wiggins & McTighe, 2005).*

**Above ARE** age related expectation allows for 1 or 2 criterion not to be achieved

**At ARE** The majority of criterion are met

**Below** age related expectation is anything less than **At ARE**.

The grids below can be used to assess children in classes.

How many children should we keep record keeping documentation on? (x2 LA/MA/HA?)

**(Note: These grids were constructed by Focus Education 2014-Y1 onwards)**

<b>A 2 Year old child should be able to</b>	<b>Pupils</b> 	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I
• Seeks comfort from familiar adults when needed										
• Can express their own feelings such as sad, happy, cross, scared and worried										
• Shows understanding and cooperates with some boundaries and routines										
• Expresses own preferences and interests										
• Interested in others' play and starting to join in										
• Seeks out others to share experiences										

<b>A child in F1 should be able to...</b>	<b>Pupils</b> 	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I
• Link sentences using 'and' and 'because'										
• Use talk to connect ideas										
• Ask questions about why things are happening										
• Use intonation, rhythm and phrasing to make the meaning clear to others										
• Use vocabulary focussed on objects and people that are of particular importance to them										
• Build up vocabulary that reflects the breadth of their experiences										
• Use talk in pretending that objects stand for something else in play										
• Understanding the use of objects (eg. What do we use to cut things?)										
• Show understanding of prepositions such as 'under', 'on top' or 'behind'										
• Respond to simple instructions. eg. To get or put away an object										
• Understand 'why' and 'how' questions										
• Listen to others one to one or in small groups, when conversation interests them										
• Listen to stories with increasing attention and recall										
• Join in with repeated refrains and anticipates key events and phrases in rhymes and stories										
• Focus attention-still listen or do, but can shift own attention										
• Follow directions										

<b>A child in F2 should be able to...</b>	<b>Pupils</b> 	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I
• Achieve all criteria for children in F1										
• Express themselves effectively, showing awareness of listeners' needs.										
• Use past, present and future forms accurately when talking about events that have happened or are to happen in the future.										
• Develop their own narratives and explanations by connecting ideas or events.										
• Follow instructions involving several ideas or actions.										
• Answer 'how' and 'why' questions about their experiences and in response to stories or events.										
• Listen attentively in a range of situations.										
• Listen to stories, accurately anticipating key events and respond to what they hear with relevant comments, questions or actions.										
• Give their attention to what others say and respond appropriately, while engaged in another activity.										

<b>A Year 1 Speaker...</b>	<b>Pupils</b> 	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I
• Speaks clearly and confidently in front of people in the class										
• Can re-tell a well known story and remember the main characters										
• Can hold attention when playing and learning with others										
• Can keep to the main topic when we are talking in a group										
• Can ask questions in order to get more information										
• Can start a conversation with an adult they know well or with their friend/s										
• Listens carefully to the things other people have to say in a group										
• Join in with conversations in a group										
• Joins in with role play										

<b>A Year 2 Speaker...</b>	<b>Pupils</b> 	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I
• Can ask a question to gain more information and clarify meaning										
• Can talk in complete sentences										
• Can decide when they need to use specific vocabulary										
• Can take turns when talking in pairs or a small group										
• Is aware that formal and informal situations require different language (beginning)										
• Can retell a story using narrative language and linking words and phrases										
• Can hold the attention of people they are speaking to by adapting the way they talk										
• Understand how to speak for different purposes and audiences (beginning)										
• Can perform a simple poem from memory										

<b>A Year 3 Speaker...</b>	<b>Pupils</b> 	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I
• Can sequence and communicate ideas in an organised and logical way, always using complete sentences										
• Varies the amount of detail and choice of vocabulary, depending on the purpose and the audience										
• Take a full part in paired and group discussions										
• Shows that they know when Standard English is required and use it (beginning)										
• Can retell a story using narrative language and add relevant detail										
• Show that they have listened carefully because they make relevant comments										
• Can present ideas or information to an audience										
• Recognise that meaning can be expressed in different ways, depending on the context										
• Can perform poems from memory adapting expression and tone as appropriate										

<b>A Year 4 Speaker...</b>	<b>Pupils</b> 	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I
• Asks questions to clarify or develop their understanding										
• Can sequence, develop and communicate ideas in an organised and logical way, always using complete sentences										
• Shows that they understand the main point and the details in a discussion										
• Adapts what they are saying to the needs of the listener or audience (increasingly)										
• Shows that they know that language choices vary in different contexts										
• Can present to an audience using appropriate intonation, controlling the tone and volume so that the meaning is clear										
• Can justify an answer by giving evidence										
• Uses Standard English when it is required										
• Can perform poems or plays from memory, conveying ideas about characters and situation by adaption expression and tone										

<b>A Year 5 Speaker...</b>	<b>Pupils</b> 	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I
• Can engage the listener by varying my expression and vocabulary										
• Can adapt my spoken language depending on the audience, the purpose or the context										
• Can develop my ideas and opinions, providing relevant detail										
• Can express my point of view										
• Can show that I understand the main points, including implied meanings in a discussion										
• Can listen carefully in discussions, can make contributions and ask questions that are responsive to others' ideas and views										
• Can use Standard English in formal situations										
• Is beginning to use hypothetical language to consider more than one possible outcome or solution										
• Can perform their own compositions, using appropriate intonation and volume so that meaning is clear										
• Can perform poems and plays from memory, making careful choices about how they convey ideas. Can adapt their expression and tone										
• Can begin to select the appropriate register according to the context										

<b>A Year 6 Speaker...</b>	<b>Pupils</b> 	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I
• Talks confidently and fluently in a range of situations, using formal and Standard English, if necessary.										
• Asks questions to develop ideas and take account of others' views										
• Explain ideas and opinions giving reasons and evidence										
• Take an active part in discussions and can take on different roles										
• Listens to, and considers the opinions of others in discussions										
• Makes contributions to discussions, evaluating others ideas and responds to them										
• Can sustain and argue a point of view in a debate, using the formal language of persuasion										
• Can express possibilities using hypothetical and speculative language										
• Engages listeners through choosing appropriate vocabulary and register that is matched to the context										
• Can perform their own compositions, using appropriate intonation, volume and expression, so that literal and implied meaning is clear										
• Can perform poems and plays from memory, making deliberate choices about how to convey ideas about characters, context and atmosphere.										

## 10. Teaching & Learning Functional Skills: Speaking & Listening in Functional English

This programme of study is designed for Years 5 and 6 and should be consistently reinforced. At this stage of children's education, they will also be introduced to new uniform, where they will be made to wear a proper tie and school blazer. These are deliberate strategies that will have a positive impact on the life chances and opportunities for our children.

### Why the focus on speaking and listening?

In a school like The Sir Donald Bailey Academy, where the majority of children who attend the school live in deprivation, it is vital that we recognise that our children need more than just 'teaching' to attain the national benchmark of pupil achievement, whatever that may be. We have to prepare our children for life, where they will be competing for jobs with children who attend private schools and who have better financial support at home. Historically, our children lack the confidence required to politely intervene in a conversation, or know how to greet a person formally by a hand shake. These skills are 'drilled' in private schools, and this is one of the reasons why children from more middle class backgrounds present better and gain the best jobs in adulthood.

In The Forge Trust, we aim to break this cycle by giving our children the very best start in life and equipping them with these key life skills.

## Key aims for our children

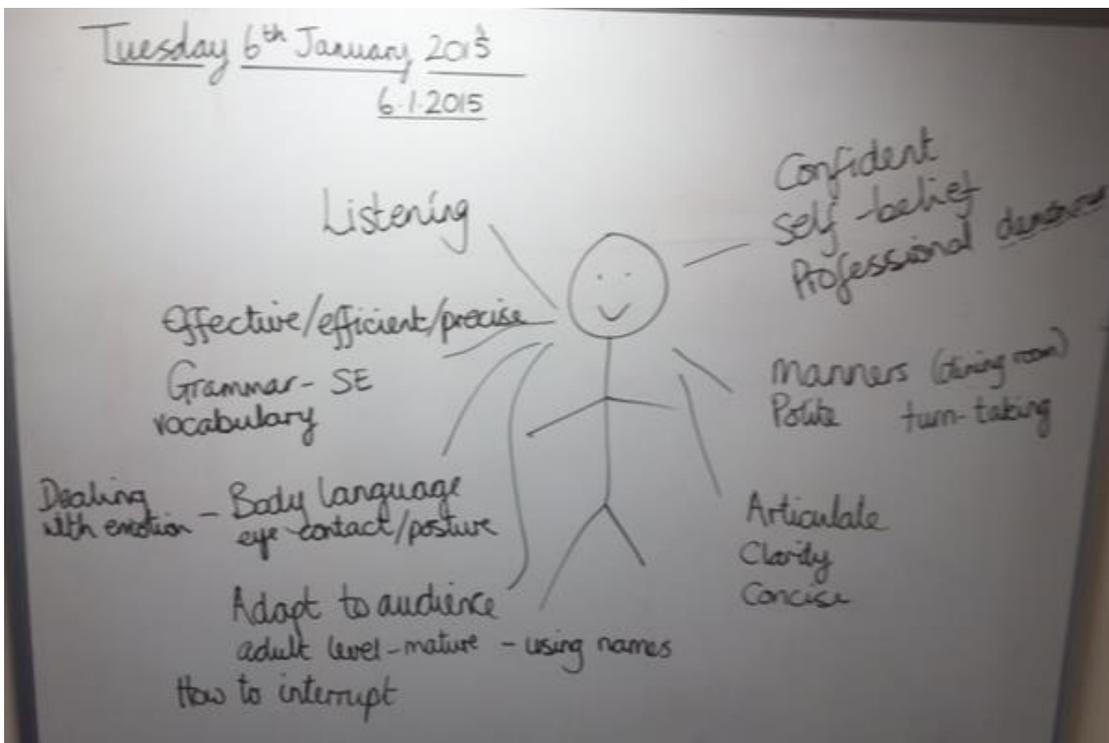
- Have more productive relationships with other people;
- are able to obtain the information they need from organisations and individuals they have to deal with;
- can explain things clearly and make a case for themselves;
- can relate well to peers and colleagues;
- are more successful in their careers;
- have a reduced risk of experiencing conflict and aggression from others.

We have split the implementation of this work into 2 key phases. Phase one will teach children how to deal with people who we know or people who work in the establishment they are familiar with. In terms of age related attainment, we refer to this phase as Year 5. Phase two will teach children how to deal with people who they don't know. In terms of age related attainment, we refer to this phase as Year 6. *However, teachers must use their assessment of children's ability level and deliver teaching that is suitably matched to the individual needs of the child.*

Note: Many of the ideas and information provided in this document were taken from the 14-19 education and skills document published in 2007.

Starting Activity: as a first step with this programme of study the whole staff Must answer the following question:

***'From a speaking and listening point of view, what do we want our children to look like?'***



## 11. Speaking and Listening Strands

There are 4 main strands to the work we will carry out.

**Stand 1 –Awareness of audience**-children thinking about how they come across other people and considering the listener’s needs.

**Strand 2-Speaking and Discussion**-successfully dealing with one-to-one and group discussions and exchanges.

**Strand 3-Listening**-from following simple instructions to active and reflective listening.

**Strand 4-Non-verbal communication**-the powerful messages this adds to oral communication.

### Strand 1-Awareness of Audience

#### Background for Strand 1

Children should understand that people start forming impressions of us as soon as we meet them. Our posture, facial expressions and gestures can speak louder than our words. They send out clear signals about our interest, openness and attentiveness, and give clues about whether what we are saying is consistent with what we are really feeling.

Phase 1a: children are required to be involved only in exchanges and discussions with one other person and the audience is likely to be people with whom they are already familiar such as other children, teachers, friends or other social contacts.

**Teaching Tip: at this point please note that teachers should model exactly what they want the children to do and how they should say it. This must be reinforced every day at every point of the day by ALL staff, inside and outside of lessons.**

#### **Example:**

Child walks up to teacher in the playground.

Child: I want toilet Miss.

Teacher: Tommy, what you meant to say was ‘excuse me Miss, but could I please go to the Toilet?

The child is then made to repeat the sentence back to the teacher.

Phase 1b: children must make active contributions with one or more people and small group discussions become more appropriate.

**Teaching Tip:** This can be assessed during lessons and group work.

Phase 1c: children take part in both formal and informal exchanges and they start to become aware of what they need to do to make a worthwhile contribution to a discussion.

**Teaching Tip:** This can be assessed during lessons and group work. Informal exchanges would constitute a group working together in a lesson. The formal exchange would be presenting findings to the rest of the class where a child may have to take into account how to show respect, how to communicate feelings, and how to change their tone of voice.

Three things that will influence an audience are as follows:

1. **RESPECT.** This is the esteem we show towards someone. If we do not show respect we are indicating that we do not care about them, or value them or their views. A key element is the way we communicate and show empathy.
2. **COMMUNICATING FEELINGS.** Obviously the words we utter do matter, but our actions, expressions, posture and physical behaviour can convey as much as the words. We can tell whether someone is angry or approachable, attentive or preoccupied, happy or sad, from their expression and tone and the way they walk, stand or sit.
3. **TONE OF VOICE.** Research has shown that the tone of voice carries more meaning than the individual words themselves. Tone of voice plays an even bigger part when we are on the phone and cannot see the other person. Call centre staff are often taught to smile when talking to customers on a telephone as their tone of voice becomes more positive.

**Phase 2: children are required to adapt what they say for different audiences. These audiences will include people with whom they are unfamiliar.**

**Teaching Tip:** children will need to be taught how to be professional and formal. They need to know how to greet someone that they have never met, and how to introduce themselves to a person or audience.

Example. 'Hello, pleased to meet you. I am Joe Bloggs a Year 5 pupil'. A hand shake should accompany this, and children should display the confidence to make the first move and be assertive yet friendly.

Children should be explicitly taught how to adapt their behaviour for different people such as a teacher, a friend, a stranger/visitor or a parent.

## **Strand 2-Speaking & Discussion**

### Background to Strand 2

Most of the speaking that we do in everyday life is on a one-to-one basis, whether talking with a teacher, a colleague at work, a shop worker, a friend or a member of the family. All levels of the standards for speaking and listening include one-to-one exchanges.

Phase 1a: children are required to talk with only one other person.

### **Teaching Tip/Activity 2:** Who do you talk to?

This activity helps children to recognise the range of people they talk to. It can be used with most children at every level. Each child should draw a circle in the middle of their page with their own name in the centre. Then they need to draw a spider diagram of all the people they talk to. The next branch on the diagram should then explain what they talk to this person/people about. Also, how they speak to this person/people should be noted down. For example, do they use the same tone of voice or same words, do they stand or sit differently, how far do they adjust their language?

Extension 1: children can keep a talk diary for the week recording whom they have spoken to, for what reason and how they consciously adjusted their language and tone.

Extension 2: children can plan and rehearse in their own minds a conversation with a customer in the community café, and following the exchange, record how they prepared for the conversation and reflect on how successful they felt they had fulfilled their intention. Other opportunities for children to practice speaking one-to-one include the following: order a takeaway meal or school supplies; leave an answerphone message to a parent when working in the school office.

Phase 1b: children are required to talk to more than one person at the same time and address them as a group

**Teaching Tip:** opportunities for children to practice speaking to a group include describing an event or experience; describe a picture; explain a procedure or rules such as health and safety.

Phase 1c: children will be engaged in both formal and informal exchanges with a much wider range of people

**Teaching Tip:** opportunities for children to practice speaking in these ways include giving an opinion on a local or topical issue to a group of friends or people you don't know. Consider how would this change the behaviour of the speaker. Children could also receive a visitor, and show them round the school (formal). Children could read a short piece of writing and talk about it, or present points on a contentious issue.

Teachers should teach children what 'formal' means, and changes in language should be discussed and noted. Teachers should demonstrate when changes in pace, tone and volume have on an exchange. For example, someone making a sales pitch to sell a product would require a fast pace, friendly tone and suitable volume (not too loud and not too quiet).

Phase 2: children can assess the situation they are in, and respond appropriately and adapt quickly as the exchange moves on.

**Teaching Tip:** Children could give complex information or instructions to others, speak persuasively to make a case for a sale in the community café, give and accept feedback on some work in class, and handle complaint in the community café.

Irrespective of the phases above, the first thing children need to think about is why they need to speak to another person. They will also need to consider:

- their relationship to this person;
- how formal or informal their speech needs to be;
- what the other person already knows;
- what they need to know.

### Asking Questions

Asking appropriate questions is a significant aspect of both speaking and listening.

Phase 1: children ask questions to gain information. They will benefit from practice from asking questions and clearly planning them in advance. Children should have opportunities to ask questions in real situations outside the classroom. Teachers need to plan for these assessment opportunities.

Practical activities could include: asking for information in shops including the community cafe, or asking for directions/information when out on a planned trip. Children should speak clearly and compose questions that will get them the information they need.

**Teaching Tip:** Teach children the most common question words such as *who, what, when, where, how and why*. Children should compose a question on a given topic using each word.

At phase 1, children should respond to simple questions, such as giving information about themselves to a teacher, careers officer, the school nurse.

Phase 2: Children should be introduced to different types of question. Teachers should help them select appropriate questioning techniques.

- Questions can be asked to check understanding, clarify or seek information or move a conversation on;
- Children can watch/listen to radio or TV interviews and identify the types of question asked.

### **Open and closed questions**

Many children rely on closed questions. They need to recognise that, while appropriate in some situations, this will close down a situation or conversation quite quickly.

Closed questions can be useful when you need precise facts. For example, 'what colours do the trousers come in?'

Open questions can be used to:

- start a conversation;
- allow the other person to tell you what they think or feel;
- establish empathy;
- move a conversation forward;
- find out more about someone's experiences.

Open questions include the follow up questions designed to keep conversations going and elicit more detail. For example, 'can you tell me a bit more about that?' 'Then what happened?'

**Teaching Tip:** Give out a list of closed questions to children and get them to rephrase them as open ones. Compile a list of closed questions such as 'Did you like this colour?' 'Did the interview go ok?' 'Do you like the new lunch menu?' 'Have you had a good day?' Remind children to use words such as **How, What** or **Which** to start a question.

### **Interviews**

Interviews are a good way of allowing children to practise asking and answering questions. At a simple level, children could work in pairs to find out as much as possible about their partner's knowledge or views on a certain topic. Possible topics are 'Your worst day at school', 'ideal holiday', 'a hobby'.

**Teaching Tip:** Get children to interview for job roles within the community café in school. Some children could be the interviewees and some the interviewers.

## **Discussions**

Discussions can be formal and informal. A discussion with friends or colleagues about a topic can be informal, where there are no laid down rules of engagement. However, in a work situation, where your boss may be present, it can tend to be formal. For example, a staff meeting.

Children need the chance to practice discussion.

### **Group size, composition and layout**

The size and composition of groups and the layout of the room can have a big effect on how productive discussions will be. It is also useful to be aware of barriers to effective discussions.

#### **Group size**

Pairs-these are quick and easy to organise because furniture does not need to be moved. They are also less threatening and each child is obliged to talk. However, there is little challenge from different viewpoints and they are therefore prone to quick consensus.

Groups of 3-4-a group this size allows for a broader input of ideas yet remains a relatively secure number for children who are less confident. There is a risk that some children will not contribute, so group composition is important.

Groups of 5-8-this can bridge the gap between small group discussion and whole class discussion. They are also a good common size for meetings and discussions at work. They are good for discussions that require a range of views and for developing turn-taking skills and teamwork. Care needs to be taken to ensure that one or two group members do not dominate and groups need to include someone who can lead/chair the discussion.

Whole group-in whole group discussion, everyone gets the same experience and the teacher can guide and monitor the talk. If it is a large group (more than 12), it is inevitable that some children will remain silent unless they are explicitly drawn in. This may make less confident children uncomfortable.

#### **Group composition**

Groupings should be managed by the teacher and planned to suit the task. All groups must be given clear instructions about the purpose of the task, what they must do, what outcomes are expected and how long they have to complete it. Children can be grouped in terms of:

- friendship-when sharing and confidence building are priorities;
- ability-when it is important to pitch the work at the right level;
- structured mix-to ensure diversity and a range of viewpoints;
- random mix-a democratic way to build up experiences of working with a range of other people.

## Room layout

The environment for a discussion is important. This included the space you use, the layout of tables and chairs, and other resources such as whiteboard, flipchart, internet or library access for children to search for information. Room layouts include:

- U-shape;
- café style, cabaret style
- theatre style
- hollow square
- classroom style

**Note: Traditional classroom style is not good for discussions. It is very difficult for children to make eye contact or use active listening.**

## Barriers to effective discussion

It is important to be aware of the range of things that can get in the way of effective group discussions. These include:

- Language-use of technical language or jargon can exclude some. Language may be used inappropriately.-for example, informal language that is used in a formal setting and vice versa. Children may not have English as their first language.
- Environment-a noisy environment can make it hard to hear what others are saying and can be distracting. Other environmental factors, including heat, light, lack of space or lack of facilities, can have an effect.
- Time-there may be a lack of time or a discussion can sometimes take too long and participants' attention can wander.

## Teaching Tip: Ground Rules

Encouraging children to think about rules that they might apply to a group discussion can help them to understand how a discussion should work. It is important that the children themselves set the 'rules' as they are then more likely to follow them. Explain to children that ground rules for discussion can help everyone to have their say and keep the discussion on track. Teachers may give prompts such as 'listen to other people carefully' but do not give them all the obvious ones.

- Divide the group into smaller groups or pairs and give each group/pair some blank cards
- Ask them to spend 10-15 minutes coming up with a set of rules for effective discussion. They will need to discuss and agree these before writing one rule on each card;
- When the time is up ask each group/pair to read out their rules. List them on a flipchart;
- Ask the whole class/group to discuss these ground rules, and agree which they want to adopt.

The group can refer to these rules throughout their discussions.

## Persuasive Speech

Phase 2: children should be taught to present information and ideas clearly and persuasively to others. Practical strategies for doing this could include:

1. Sales pitch-children pitch their products in the community café. They could make a dvd that plays in the café so that customers can watch it as they enjoy food and drink in the café. Get them to think about what people need to know about the product (unique selling propositions) and its features and benefits. Also, which key words or phrases will listeners 'hook onto' or remember?
2. 'Come fly with me'-Teachers could provide a range of holiday brochures about resorts or towns. Children have to describe the resort or town and persuade people to visit.

Note: Leaders and staff use the power of observation when in and around school and note the 'dialect' and phrases that children say. In whole school assemblies, these phrases/words should be displayed and children should be taught the correct standard English version of what was said. This should be reinforced every day and be part of the school's culture.

## Strand 3-Listening

Listening is a vital functional skill in life and work and for learning in all curriculum areas. However, it is an invisible and largely untaught skill.

We can all become better listeners. The result is likely to be improved relationships, less conflict and increased effectiveness-in short, better communication with peers, colleagues, teachers, friends and family.

### Active Listening

Being able to listen attentively and to understand and remember what you have heard is a valuable skill. If you feel you have something important to say but no one listens to you properly, it can be upsetting and frustrating. Active listening is a way of paying attention to other people so that they feel you understand what they are saying.

Active listening means listening for a purpose, perhaps to get information or to solve a problem, but it can also involve simply showing support or taking an interest in how a person feels.

In many vocational sectors-such as health and social care, childcare or hairdressing-it is particularly important for children to develop the ability to reflect on their performance as a listener.

**Teaching Tip:** children should be taught how to show they are listening actively.

- Set aside what they are doing in order to concentrate on the speaker;
- Make sure their mind is focused so that you can give the speaker their full attention;
- Make eye contact with the speaker;
- Sit where they can be seen without the person having turn to see them-arrange chairs so that you they at a slight angle, where each party can comfortably see the other one;
- Sit close enough for comfort and so that you can easily be heard without having to raise your voice. Check whether the distance between you feels comfortable for both of you. Remember that people vary in the amount of 'personal space' they need.

- Be quiet-if you do not interrupt, it encourages the other person to speak;
- Nod your head to indicate that you are listening;
- Use expressions like 'I see', 'yes', 'mm'
- Check your understanding from time to time. Say, 'so you mean...?'
- Paraphrasing-this does not just mean repeating what the person has said but putting it into your own words;
- Use 'open' body language, such as leaning forward, facial expressions and gestures that show you are actively listening and interested.

### **Teaching Tip:** Turning in and Tuning out

Explain to children that active listening is a vital skill but it is tiring and difficult to maintain over a long period. Good listeners are able to move in and out of active listening (for example in meetings or during a presentation) because they notice clues that tell them when they should actively listen again.

This activity helps children to identify the main points when children listen using the context of a radio programme. For example, an engaging activity for boys would be listening to Radio Nottingham post match reaction for the Forest game. Children should be encouraged to recognise the times when we listen more actively and to identify the 'clues' that trigger this type of listening.

Use the BBC radio websites to get interviews that are appropriate to both girls' and boys' interests and level. Tell children to make notes about the programme as they listen.

When the programme has finished, discuss issues such as:

- Did they capture the main points of the programme? How did children differ?
- Did children find their attention drifting during the programme? Did this matter?
- How does our attention come and go while listening? What kinds of clues help us to 'switch on' again for vital bits of information? (Examples are a change of speaker, a change in tone of voice or a question).

### **Taking Oral messages**

One of the most common situations in which we have to listen is when we take a message. Children will be expected to take messages from a range of people, at home and at work. Messages may be relayed in person or by telephone. Taking a message requires careful listening, accurate recording, or remembering of the facts, and passing on the message accurately.

**Teaching Tip:** Talk to children about ways in which to pass on a message accurately. What will it more likely that the message will be passed on accurately?

## Strand 4-Non-verbal communication

Non-verbal communication is used in both speaking and listening. It is a powerful communication tool which we use all the time-often unconsciously. Becoming aware of our own and others' non-verbal behaviour can help improve the quality of any discussion or exchange. Children enjoy finding out about non-verbal communication-providing it is done sensitively. It is also vital to make sure that they understand that non-verbal communication can be open to a range of interpretations and analysing one element in isolation can be misleading. There are other factors that need to be taken into account.

- Cultural differences may affect the amount of eye contact that is considered appropriate;
- People who have a visual or hearing impairment may stand 'too close' so that they can hear or see better;
- Children or teachers with behaviour in the autistic spectrum or movement disorders may give misleading non-verbal messages.

Non-verbal communication includes vocal signals, body language and personal presentation.

### Vocal signals

**Teaching Tip:** Children should be given opportunities to practice the following:

- Tone of voice-a high-pitched voice can show excitement, happiness or stress; a raised voice can show anger or frustration; a low pitch can convey that a topic is serious
- vocalisations-we use sounds like 'mmm', 'aha', 'er' when we are listening to show how we are reacting or to indicate that we are paying attention and listening to a speaker.

### Body language

**Teaching Tip:**

- Gesture-includes the use of hands, head and body. Some are simple to interpret such as pointing or nodding. Others are more complex such as playing with hair or placing a hand on one's cheek
- Posture-this plays an important part in first impressions. Walking with an upright posture and head held high indicates confidence. Slouching in a chair gives the impression of boredom.
- Facial expression-smiling, frowning or staring give people powerful messages about how a person is feeling
- Eye contact-is something that some children will find hard to make in formal situations or when meeting someone for the first time. Children should know that it is good to make eye contact at the beginning of a conversation and then to look at the person occasionally during the conversation but to break it from time to time.
- Body contact-can be a tricky area. What is appropriate depends on the context and the relationship between two people. However, there is one piece of body contact that all children should become comfortable with-a firm handshake. Many young people feel very inhibited about this. They should be encouraged to practise until they become comfortable with each other and with people they meet.
- Personal space-this is best described as the space we need around ourselves to feel comfortable in the company of others. The general rule is to avoid standing too close, as it can seem threatening, or too far, so as to appear distant or uninterested.

## Personal presentation

This means thinking about how we present ourselves to others and included appearance (such as wearing the right clothes), mannerisms and social manners.

**Teaching Tip:** Developing children's social manners does not mean lessons in etiquette! At a simple level it means smiling when meeting someone, introducing yourself, greeting people appropriately and using their name.

## Non-verbal communication activity

This simple group, individual or pairs game helps children to interpret different types of non-verbal communication. Make up sets of cards with the following written on (with pictures):

- arms crossed;
- raised eyebrows;
- slumping in chair;
- talking quickly;
- raised voice;
- playing with hair;
- smiling;
- nodding;
- shaking head;
- pulling at ear;
- hands clasped behind head;
- tapping fingers;
- thin lipped;
- making eye contact;
- avoiding eye contact.

**Teaching Tip:** Ask children to suggest what these behaviours may indicate. It can be useful to do this in pairs and then to share as a whole group. This will also help to reinforce the fact that non-verbal communication can be open to a range of interpretations.

Extension: Children can role play different forms of non-verbal communication during a conversation. They might be given particular behaviours to include. Give children some statements and ask them to say them in different tones of voice.

## Assertiveness

Assertiveness is a vital communication and life skill. Learning to be assertive can increase confidence and self-esteem and enable people to handle conflict more effectively. An important part of assertiveness is open, secure body language.

**Teaching Tip:** Practising standing or walking in an assertive way can help to develop assertiveness.

Passive body language is the classic 'victim' stance of hunched shoulders, avoiding eye contact. An aggressive stance could involve clenched fists or standing inside another person's 'comfort zone'.

**Teaching Tip:** Tell children to walk around the room, starting by walking in their normal way. As they walk around, ask them to change how they are walking by calling out 'passive', 'aggressive', 'assertive'.

### **Non-verbal communication activity: Soap Opera**

This activity helps children to recognise the effect of non-verbal communication (NVC) on listeners. Because it used dramatic performance, the NVC is likely to be more marked and easier to identify.

#### **Teaching Tip:**

- Record an episode of a soap opera-pick one that is popular with your children and where they will be familiar with the characters.
- Ask children to draw three columns on a piece of paper, headed 'Character', 'What he/she did' and 'What was the effect?'
- Explain that you will show the video and ask children to make notes in the first two columns of any non-verbal communication they see.
- Show, say, 10 to 15 minutes of the video.
- When the video is finished, ask children to complete the third column about the effect that the non-verbal communication had on the other actors involved in the exchange or discussion.
- Ask children to feed back on the activity. How you do this will depend on the size of the group. With a large group teachers may ask children to share what they saw in pairs or in groups of four. With a small group you can have a single discussion.
- Extension: Factual programmes such as *Newsnight* or the news, particularly those where the presenter is trying to convey authority or power, can also give valuable insights into non-verbal communication. Similarly, chat shows can provide a wealth of examples from a wide range of people.

## Notes & Reflections