

Communication and Language – Prime Area

At **Bollin Primary School** we recognise that Communication and Language underpins all seven areas of learning. We place a strong focus on vocabulary, oral language and language comprehension. We promote children's enjoyment and develop their love of stories, rhymes, songs and books. We include frequent and high-quality interactions between adults and children using the ShREC approach. We prioritise shared oral storytelling and shared reading with plenty of opportunities for repeated practice of language in a range of contexts.

Statutory Framework Educational Programme for Communication and Language (September 2026)

'The development of children's spoken language underpins all seven areas of learning and development. Children's back-and-forth interactions from an early age form the foundations for language and cognitive development. The number and quality of the conversations they have with adults and peers throughout the day in a language-rich environment is crucial. By commenting on what children are interested in or doing, and echoing back what they say with new vocabulary added, practitioners will build children's language effectively. Reading frequently to children, and engaging them actively in stories, non-fiction, rhymes and poems, and then providing them with extensive opportunities to use and embed new words in a range of contexts, will give children the opportunity to thrive. Through conversation, storytelling and role play, where children share their ideas with support and modelling from their teacher, and sensitive questioning that invites them to elaborate, children become comfortable using a rich range of vocabulary and language structures.'

Development Matters

Nursery Foundational Knowledge and Skills	Reception Foundational Knowledge and Skills
• Enjoy listening to longer stories and can remember much of what happens. • Pay attention to more than one thing at a time, which can be difficult. • Use a wider range of vocabulary. • Understand a question or instruction that has two parts, such as: "Get your coat and wait at the door". • Understand 'why' questions, like: "Why do you think the caterpillar got so fat?" • Sing a large repertoire of songs. • Know many rhymes, be able to talk about familiar books, and be able to tell a long story. • Develop their communication but may continue to have problems with irregular tenses and plurals, such as 'runned' for 'ran', 'swimmed' for 'swam'. • Develop their pronunciation but may have problems saying: ○ some sounds: r, j, th, ch, and sh ○ multi-syllabic words such as 'pterodactyl', 'planetarium' or 'hippopotamus'. • Use longer sentences of four to six words.	• Understand how to listen carefully and why listening is important. • Learn new vocabulary. • Use new vocabulary through the day. • Ask questions to find out more and to check they understand what has been said to them. • Articulate their ideas and thoughts in well-formed sentences. • Connect one idea or action to another using a range of connectives. • Describe events in some detail. • Use talk to help work out problems and organise thinking and activities, and to explain how things work and why they might happen. • Develop social phrases. • Engage in story times. • Listen to and talk about stories to build familiarity and understanding. • Retell the story, once they have developed a deep familiarity with the text, some as exact repetition and some in their own words. • Use new vocabulary in different contexts. • Listen carefully to rhymes and songs, paying attention to how they sound. • Learn rhymes, poems and songs.

• Be able to express a point of view and to debate when they disagree with an adult or a friend, using words as well as actions. • Start a conversation with an adult or a friend and continue it for many turns. • Use talk to organise themselves and their play: “Let’s go on a bus... you sit there... I’ll be the driver.”	• Engage in non-fiction books. • Listen to and talk about selected non-fiction to develop a deep familiarity with new knowledge and vocabulary.					
Early Identification and Support – Nursery Entry Checkpoint (around age of 3) As part of transition, we pro-actively work with prior settings, professionals and parents/carers to ascertain key milestones for Communication and Language. Our own early observations also support gaining a holistic view of each child. Where there are concerns, we are quick to identify these, involving parents/carers and other professionals as appropriate. We aim to support children through increasing our quality interactions with them. 1. Can the child shift from one task to another if you get their attention using their name? 2. Can the child use around 300 words (descriptive language, space and function)? 3. Is the child linking up to 5 words together? 4. Is the child using pronouns (‘me’, ‘him’, ‘she’), and using plurals and prepositions (‘in’, ‘on’, ‘under’)? 5. Can the child follow instructions with three key words like: “Can you wash dolly’s face?” 6. Can the child show that they understand action words by pointing to the right picture in a book? 7. Note: watch out for children whose speech is not easily understood by unfamiliar adults. Monitor their progress and consider whether a hearing test might be needed.						
Nursery	Autumn 1	Autumn 2	Spring 1	Spring 2	Summer 1	Summer 2
Enquiry Question	Am I the same as you?	What’s that sound?	Whose are those shoes?	What happens when I...?	How does your garden grow?	What can we find in local habitats?
Texts	Elmer – David McKee Hello Friend – Rebecca Cobb The Same But Different – Karl Newson	The Quiet Little Firework – Nicola Coppack The Christmas Promise – Allison Mitchell A Walk into the Woods – Flora Martyn	I’m the Bin Lorry Driver – David Semple Busy Day: Firefighter – Dan Green My Mummy is a Plumber – Jason & Kerrine Bryan	Jabari Tries – Gaia Cornwall Swim, Swim, Sink – Jenn Harney Little Bears Wood – Ellie Woollard	Yucky Worms – Vivian French Growing Good – Bernard Ashley Luna Loves Gardening – Joseph Coelho	The Girl, The Bear and the Magic Shoes – Julia Donaldson Mad About Minibeasts! – Giles Andreae Animal Homes – Libby Walden

		Peace at Last – Jill Murphy				
Vocabulary	Vocabulary introduced through key texts (see Literacy), applied and embedded through talk in C&L					
Listening, Attention and Understanding	This outlines the expected progression for most children; however, we recognise that development will vary depending on individual starting points, including for children with SEND, who may follow their own developmental pathways.					
	<u>Foundations of Attention</u> Focus: Attention, engagement, and responding to talk Children: • Show fleeting attention (short bursts of focus) • Respond to: ○ their name ○ familiar voices • Begin to listen in one-to-one interactions • Understand simple instructions (e.g. “come here”, “sit down”) • Shift attention between adult and activity (emerging joint attention) Adult role: • Gain and hold attention deliberately ○ Use child’s name, eye contact, gestures • Keep language simple and clear • Use visual cues, actions, and repetition		<u>Sustaining Attention</u> Focus: Listening for longer and understanding simple language Children: • Sustain attention for short group times • Follow two-part instructions • Begin to: ○ listen to short stories ○ attend to simple explanations • Understand more everyday vocabulary • Participate in back-and-forth interactions Adult role: • Gradually increase length of listening demands • Use clear, chunked instructions • Check understanding through: ○ “What do we need to do?” • Reinforce with gestures and modelling		<u>Understanding and Linking Ideas</u> Focus: Comprehension and early understanding of meaning Children: • Listen and attend during longer group sessions • Follow instructions with more than one step • Begin to: ○ understand why and how in simple terms ○ respond to basic questions about stories/events • Show understanding of: ○ familiar routines ○ simple explanations • Begin to link ideas heard Adult Role: • Ask simple why/how questions • Support children to process and respond, not rush answers	

	• Comment on what the child is doing to anchor attention • Reduce distractions during interactions Emphasis: <i>“Get attention first → then communicate”</i> Example: Adult: “Shaun... look! Ball.” Child looks Adult: “Throw the ball!”	• Begin to introduce basic questioning (what/who/where) Emphasis: <i>Sustain attention → process simple meaning</i> Example: Adult: “Get your coat and line up.” Child collects coat and moves to line	• Use repetition to strengthen understanding • Make thinking visible: ◦ “We need coats because it’s cold” • Introduce simple explanations in context Emphasis: <i>From listening → to understanding meaning</i> Example: Adult: “Why do we need to wash our hands?” Child: “Because dirty”
Speaking	This outlines the expected progression for most children; however, we recognise that development will vary depending on individual starting points, including for children with SEND, who may follow their own developmental pathways.		
	<u>Foundations of talk</u> Focus: speaking confidence and simple expression Children: • Use single words → short phrases • Begin to name objects/actions • Talk about immediate experiences (“me”, “now”) • Start to respond verbally in interactions Adult role:	<u>Building sentences</u> Focus: sentence formation and vocabulary growth Children: • Use 3–5 word sentences • Begin to use: ◦ verbs (run, go, make) ◦ simple descriptors (big, fast) • Start to answer simple questions • Begin back-and-forth exchanges Adult role:	<u>Extending talk</u> Focus: clarity and early narrative Children: • Speak in longer sentences (4–6 words) • Begin to: ◦ link ideas (and, then) ◦ explain simple events • Talk about past experiences • Engage in sustained interactions Adult role: • Model conjunctions

	- Model simple sentence expansion - Heavy use of commenting + echoing Example progression: “car” → “blue car” → “my blue car”	- Model full sentences - Introduce new vocabulary in context Example: “I build tower” → “I am building a tall tower”	Encourage retelling Example: “I went park and played slide”
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Early Identification and Support – Nursery Exit Checkpoint (around age 4)

As part of nursery to reception transition, our Early Years team pro-actively work together to ensure checkpoint assessments inform future learning. Where gaps continue to remain a concern, we work with parents, our EYFS Lead and SENDCo to identify next steps.

1. Is the child using sentences of four to six words?
2. Can the child use sentences joined up with words like ‘because’, ‘or’, ‘and’?
3. Is the child using the future and past tense?
4. Can the child answer simple ‘why’ questions?

Reception	Autumn 1	Autumn 2	Spring 1	Spring 2	Summer 1	Summer 2
Enquiry Question	What does a family look like?	How are my senses ignited at this time of year?	Who works in special places in our community?	What discoveries will I make?	Why do things change over time?	What can we see down on Earth?
Texts	The Tiger Who Came to Tea – Judith Kerr Goldilocks and the Three Bears Nabil Steals a Penguin – Junissa Bianda & Nishani Reed	The Best Diwali Ever – Shonali Shah Leaf Thief – Alice Hemming Tree – Beritta Teckentrup The Snowy Day – Ezra Jack Keats	You can’t call an elephant in an emergency – Patrica Cleveland Peck What the Ladybird Heard? - Julia Donaldson In My Mosque Book - M. O. Yuksel	Rosie Revere, Engineer – Andrea Beaty Cake – Sue Hendra Jack’s Amazing Shadow – Tom Percival	Oliver’s Vegetables – Alison Bartlett and Vivian French Godfrey is a Frog – Alex Latimer Lost in the Toy Museum – David Lucas	Martha Maps it Out – Leigh Hodgkinson Looking Down – Steve Jenkins Snail and the Whale – Julia Donaldson Here we are – Oliver Jeffers

			Or We Go to Shul - Douglas Florian			
Vocabulary	Vocabulary introduced through key texts (see Literacy), applied and embedded through talk in C&L					
Listening, Attention and Understanding	This outlines the expected progression for most children; however, we recognise that development will vary depending on individual starting points, including for children with SEND, who may follow their own developmental pathways.					
	<u>Securing Attention and Understanding</u> Focus: Consistent attention and understanding clear instructions Children: - Listen attentively in: - whole-class sessions - small groups - Follow longer instructions - Understand: - key vocabulary - classroom routines - Begin to: - respond to what/where questions reliably - Maintain attention despite low-level distractions Adult role: - Expect and reinforce active listening behaviours - Model how to listen and respond appropriately	<u>Developing Understanding and Reasoning</u> Focus: Understanding explanations and thinking through language Children: - Understand: - why, how, and what might happen questions - Listen to stories and: - recall key events - understand simple cause and effect - Follow more complex instructions - Use listening to: - solve problems - plan actions Adult role: - Use sustained shared thinking - Ask: “Why do you think...?”	<u>Secure Understanding and Active Listening</u> Focus: Deep understanding, reasoning, and responsiveness Children: - Listen attentively in a range of situations - Understand: - instructions - explanations - stories with increasing complexity - Respond appropriately by: - answering questions - following multi-step instructions - contributing ideas - Show understanding by: - explaining - predicting - making connections			

	• Use clear sequencing language (first, then) • Check understanding regularly • Explicitly teach listening routines Emphasis: <i>Secure attention → accurate understanding</i> Example: Adult: “First put your book away, then come to the carpet.” Child completes both steps independently	○ “What might happen next?” • Model reasoning language: ○ because, so, if • Encourage children to process before responding • Extend children’s understanding through discussion Emphasis: <i>Understanding → reasoning</i> Example: Adult: “Why did the tower fall down?” Child: “Because it was too tall”	Adult Role: • Expect children to listen, process, and respond independently • Provide opportunities for: ○ discussion ○ reasoning ○ prediction • Model active listening behaviours explicitly • Encourage children to: ○ ask questions ○ clarify understanding • Use talk to extend thinking, not just check recall Emphasis: <i>Listening as a tool for thinking</i> Example: Adult: “Why did the character feel sad at the end?” Child: “Because he lost his friend, so he was lonely”
Speaking	This outlines the expected progression for most children; however, we recognise that development will vary depending on individual starting points, including for children with SEND, who may follow their own developmental pathways.		
	<u>Securing sentence structures</u> Focus: well-formed sentences and clarity Children:	<u>Developing reasoning & narrative</u> Focus: explanation and sequencing Children: • Link ideas using:	<u>Fluent, Connected Talk</u> Focus: fluency, detail, and independence Children:

	• Use full sentences consistently • Begin to: ○ use connectives (and, because) ○ ask questions • Start to organise ideas verbally Adult role: • Model correct grammar • Scaffold sentence building Example: “I made a bridge because the cars need to cross”	○ because, then, so • Begin to: ○ explain thinking ○ describe events in order • Use talk to: ○ solve problems ○ plan play Adult role: • Use sustained shared thinking • Ask “how/why” questions Example: “It fell down because it was too tall, so I made it shorter”	• Speak in well-formed, connected sentences • Can: ○ describe events in detail ○ hold conversations ○ explain ideas clearly • Use a range of vocabulary • Use talk for: ○ reasoning ○ storytelling ○ social interaction Adult role: • Model rich, extended talk • Use well-formed, grammatically accurate sentences • Introduce precise vocabulary in natural contexts • Verbally model how ideas connect and expand Example: “Yesterday I went to the park with my mum and we played on the swings. I liked it because it was really high.”
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Early Identification and Support – Reception End of Key Stage Assessment

Early Learning Goals (ELGs) – are they Year 1 ready?

As part of transition, our Early Years team pro-actively work with the Year 1 Phase Lead and SENDCo to discuss the ELG outcomes in detail. These assist the Year 1 team with planning for an effective transition. We continue to work closely with parents/carers and appropriate professionals during this time.

Listening, Attention and Understanding	Speaking
Children at the expected level of development will:	Children at the expected level of development will: • Participate in small group, class and one-to-one discussions, offering their own ideas, using recently introduced vocabulary.

- Listen attentively and respond to what they hear with relevant questions, comments and actions when being read to and during whole class discussions and small group interactions.
- Make comments about what they have heard and ask questions to clarify their understanding.
- Hold conversation when engaged in back-and-forth exchanges with their teacher and peers.

- Offer explanations for why things might happen, making use of recently introduced vocabulary from stories, non-fiction, rhymes and poems when appropriate.
- Express their ideas and feelings about their experiences using full sentences, including use of past, present and future tenses and making use of conjunctions, with modelling and support from their teacher.

At Bollin Primary School we prepare our reception pupils for the next stage of their education. We are ambitious for Year 1. In Communication and Language we aim for our reception pupils to leave:

- listen attentively and respond appropriately
- sustain conversations and express ideas clearly
- use a broad and growing vocabulary
- explain their thinking and describe events in sequence
- engage meaningfully with stories, rhymes and non-fiction