



In planning and guiding what children learn, the **Prime Areas of Learning (Personal, Social and Emotional Development, Communication and Language and Physical Development)** underpin and are an integral part of children’s learning in all areas. We reflect on the Characteristics of Effective Teaching and Learning. These are: **playing and exploring** – children investigate and experience things, and ‘have a go’; **active learning** – children concentrate and keep on trying if they encounter difficulties, and enjoy their achievements for their own sake; **creating and thinking critically** – children have and develop their own ideas, make links between ideas, and develop strategies for doing things.

Experiences in the womb lay the foundation for communication, and a baby’s voice is evident from the beginning. Babies use their bodies, facial expressions, gestures, sounds and movements to seek connections and respond to those around them. Young children depend on back-and-forth interactions with responsive others to develop confidence as effective communicators and language users. Communication and language development are closely intertwined with physical, social and emotional experiences. Communication and language lay a foundation for learning and development, guiding and supporting children’s thinking while underpinning their emerging literacy. Language is more than words. As children grow, they begin to be aware of and explore different sounds, symbols and words in their everyday worlds; a language-rich environment is crucial. A child’s first language provides the roots to learn additional languages, and parents should be encouraged to continue to use their home languages to strengthen and support their children’s language proficiency as they join new environments. Children’s skills develop through a series of identifiable stages which can be looked at in three aspects – Listening and Attention, Understanding, and Speaking. While not all children will follow the exact same sequence or progress at the same rate, it is important to identify children at risk of language delay or disorder as these can have an ongoing impact on wellbeing and learning across the curriculum.

This document should be used with EYFS Literacy.

EYFS Communication and Language Education Programme (Statutory)

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, story-telling 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.

EYFS Communication and Language: Listening and Attention

Range 5

Listens to others in one-to-one or small groups, when conversation interests them

Listens to familiar stories with increasing attention and recall

Joins in with repeated refrains and anticipates key events and phrases in rhymes and stories



EYFS Communication and Language

Focusing attention – can still listen or do, but can change their own focus of attention
Is able to follow directions (if not intently focused)
Range 6
Shows variability in listening behaviour; may move around and fiddle but still be listening or sit still but not absorbed by activity
May indicate two-channelled attention, e.g. paying attention to something of interest for short or long periods; can both listen and do for short span

ELG: Communication and Language: Listening and Attention

Statutory ELG: Listening, Attention and Understanding Children at the expected level of development will:
 - 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.

Communication and Language: Understanding

Range 5
Understands use of objects (e.g. <i>Which one do we cut with?</i>)
Shows understanding of prepositions such as <i>under, on top, behind</i> by carrying out an action or selecting correct picture.
Responds to instructions with more elements, e.g. Give the big ball to me; collect up all the blocks and put them in the box.
Beginning to understand <i>why</i> and <i>how</i> questions.

Range 6
Understands a range of complex sentence structures including negatives, plurals and tense markers.
Beginning to understand humour, e.g. nonsense rhymes, jokes.
Able to follow a story without pictures or props.
Listens and responds to ideas expressed by others in conversation or discussion.
Understands questions such as <i>who; why; when; where</i> and <i>how</i> .

Statutory ELG: Listening, Attention and Understanding

Children at the expected level of development will: - 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.

Statutory ELG: Comprehension (Literacy)

Children at the expected level of development will: - Demonstrate understanding of what has been read to them by retelling stories and narratives using their own words and recently introduced vocabulary; - Anticipate – where appropriate – key events in stories; - Use and understand recently introduced vocabulary during discussions about stories, non-fiction, rhymes and poems and during role-play.

Communication and Language: Speaking



EYFS Communication and Language

Range 5	
Beginning to use more complex sentences to link thoughts (e.g. using and, because)	
Able to use language in recalling past experiences	
Can retell a simple past events in correct order (e.g. <i>went down slide, hurt finger</i>)	
Uses talk to explain what is happening and anticipate what might happen next	
Questions why things happen and gives explanations. Asks e.g. <i>who, what, when, how</i>	
Beginning to use a range of tenses (e.g. <i>play, playing, will play, played</i>)	
Continues to make some errors in language (e.g. <i>runned</i>) and will absorb and use language they hear around them in their community and culture	
Uses intonation, rhythm and phrasing to make the meaning clear to others	
Talks more extensively about things that are of particular importance to them	
Builds up vocabulary that reflects the breadth of their experiences	
Uses talk in pretending that objects stand for something else in play, e.g. <i>This box is my castle</i>	
Range 6	
Extends vocabulary, especially by grouping and naming, exploring the meaning and sounds of new words	
Uses language to imagine and recreate roles and experiences in play situations	
Links statements and sticks to a main theme or intention	
Uses talk to organise, sequence and clarify thinking, ideas, feelings and events	
Introduces a storyline or narrative into their play	
Statutory ELG: Listening, Attention and Understanding	
Children at the expected level of development will: Hold conversation when engaged in back-and-forth exchanges with their teacher and peers.	Statutory ELG: Speaking
	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; - 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.