



# Communication and Language (EYFS) – Intent, Implementation and Impact

*Rugeley John Taylor School | Nursery & Reception | Aligned to EYFS 2025, Development Matters 2023 and evidence-informed early years practice*

## CONTEXT (Why Communication and Language matters)

Communication and Language (CL) is the foundation for learning across the curriculum. Through high-quality interactions, children develop listening, attention, understanding and speaking so they can think, learn, make friends and take part in the life of the classroom.

We prioritise talk: adults model language, introduce ambitious vocabulary in meaningful contexts, and create many opportunities for children to practise speaking and listening in play, routines and small-group learning.

## Characteristics of Effective Learning (how children learn in CL)

- Playing and exploring: children investigate new words and ideas through play and real experiences, trying out language in role play and talk.
- Active learning: children build attention and listening stamina, practise new words repeatedly, and gain confidence to speak in a group.
- Creating and thinking critically: children explain ideas, justify choices, ask questions (“I wonder...”) and make links between experiences.

## 1) INTENT (What we want children to know and be able to do)

Our intent is that every child becomes a confident communicator who can listen attentively, understand and follow instructions, and express thoughts, needs and feelings clearly. Children will build a broad, rich vocabulary and learn to use talk to connect, to learn and to think.

### By the end of Reception, children will typically be able to:

- Listen attentively and respond with relevant questions, comments and actions during stories, discussions and play.
- Hold back-and-forth conversations with adults and peers, using increasingly complex sentences.
- Use newly learned vocabulary in context, including topic words and language for feelings and thinking.
- Retell stories and recount events, sequencing key parts and describing details.



### **RJT curriculum drivers (communication)**

- Vocabulary and oracy: rich talk, story language and explicit vocabulary teaching every day.
- Listening and attention: routines and activities that build focus, turn-taking and active listening.
- Confidence and belonging: every child's voice is valued; talk is inclusive and respectful.
- Language for thinking: sentence stems and questioning that develop explanation, reasoning and curiosity.

## **2) IMPLEMENTATION (How we teach Communication and Language)**

We teach CL through daily routines, story-rich practice and purposeful interactions. Adults plan for talk, model language, and use sustained shared thinking to deepen children's communication. Practice is frequent, repeated and meaningful across the day.

### **A. Daily non-negotiables (what happens every day)**

- Storytime and book talk: adults model language, explain new words, and ask open questions.
- Talk routines: turn-taking, listening to others, talk partners and "sentence stem" prompts.
- Songs, rhymes and chants: building sound awareness, memory, rhythm and vocabulary.
- Language in routines: greetings, registering, transitions, snack and tidy-up—children practise real-life language.
- Adults narrate and extend: "I noticed...", "I wonder...", "Tell me more...", "Why do you think...?"

### **B. Nursery (foundations)**

- Focus on settling, relationships and communication for needs, choices and feelings.
- Adult-led small groups for listening games, song/rhyme repetition and story language.
- Role play and small world to rehearse everyday language and new vocabulary.
- Visuals and objects to support understanding; home language valued and used where possible.

### **C. Reception (depth and independence)**

- Structured talk opportunities in whole-class and small-group learning (including talk partners).
- Explicit teaching of vocabulary and sentence structures linked to topics, texts and experiences.
- Children encouraged to explain processes and reasoning ("I chose... because...").



- Storytelling approaches (including Helicopter Stories where used) to build narrative and confidence.

#### **D. Enabling environment (continuous and enhanced provision)**

- Language-rich areas: role play, small world, book corners, investigation areas with prompts and labelled resources.
- Talk prompts displayed at child height: “I notice...”, “I wonder...”, “Tell me about...”.
- Story baskets/props that support retelling and imagination.
- Opportunities to record ideas: drawing, captions dictated to adults, floor books and photo talk.

#### **E. Inclusion and early identification**

- Adults identify communication needs quickly and provide additional practice and scaffolding.
- Visual supports, gestures and modelling support understanding; vocabulary is pre-taught where needed.
- EAL: home language welcomed; key vocabulary taught explicitly; opportunities for talk in low-pressure contexts.
- Partnership with families and specialists (e.g., speech and language) to support progress.

#### **F. Assessment and monitoring**

- Observation-led assessment across routines, play, adult-led learning and story discussions.
- Evidence includes children’s talk, photos, brief notes and examples of vocabulary use in context.
- Planning responds to what children can do next: more practice, more vocabulary, more talk opportunities.
- Reception: best-fit judgements aligned to Listening, Attention and Understanding; and Speaking.

### **3) IMPACT (What difference this makes)**

- Children communicate confidently, using talk to connect with others and participate in learning.
- Children listen attentively and can follow instructions and join in group routines.
- Vocabulary grows noticeably: children use new words accurately in play and learning conversations.
- Children can retell stories and explain thinking with increasing clarity and detail.
- Stronger language supports progress across all areas, especially early reading, writing, maths and self-regulation.



**Reference points:**

- EYFS Statutory Framework (effective from 1 September 2025) – Educational Programmes and Characteristics of Effective Learning.
- DfE: Development Matters (revised September 2023) – pathways and characteristics of effective practice.
- Ofsted: Education Inspection Framework (for use from November 2025) and Early years inspection toolkit (September 2025).
- Ofsted: Best start in life – research review for early years (Prime areas and Specific areas publications).
- Birth to 5 Matters: Non-statutory guidance (used as developmental reference points).