



Unlocking potential and meeting the needs of all

A personalised, aspirational curriculum inspiring excellence and preparing all pupils well for the next phase of education and life

Intent:

Communication is a **fundamental skill** and every pupil has the **right** to develop their communication.

Through the Communication Pathway, The Milestone wants pupils to develop their fundamental communication skills. Pupils working at levels 1-6 will be developing their fundamental communication across the following 4 areas:

- Refusal and rejection
- Making choices and sharing wants/needs
- Building social relationships
- Sharing/gaining information

Through our whole school Total Communication approach, we also aim to ensure every pupil has a valuable and transferable means to communicate.

Implementation:

Levels 1-6 acknowledges that communication for some of our learners is complex and sometimes staff need to find meaning in some actions or behaviours in order to reshape communication. Pupils will be working at a level appropriate to them. If a pupil needs to be baselined then the baselining document can be used

Pupils will develop their communication across the following levels:

1. Pre-Intentional Behaviours

- Pupil does not have voluntary control over behaviours.
- Pupil does not seem aware that any behaviours can elicit a response from another
- Adults are able to give some meaning to behaviours e.g. crying might be hunger, discomfort, tiredness but these patterns in meaning are inconsistent

2. Intentional Behaviours

- Pupil has control over some behaviours.
- Pupil does not seem fully aware that these behaviours can elicit a specific response from others.
- Adults can interpret needs and desires from behaviours such as body movements, facial expressions, vocalisations and eye gaze. These patterns seem consistent.

3. A) Unconventional Behaviours

- Behaviours are used intentionally to communicate.
- Behaviours are not widely considered socially acceptable for us to use in other settings or as we grow older.
- Communicative behaviours include body movements, vocalizations, facial expressions and simple gestures (such as tugging on people).
- **We do not actively teach this level but we acknowledge some pupils may be communicating unconventionally and therefore they may be baselined at this level.**

B) Conventional Behaviours

- Behaviours are used intentionally to communicate.
- Behaviours are considered socially acceptable for us to use in other settings or as we grow older.
- Behaviours may include communicative behaviours include pointing, nodding or shaking the head, waving, hugging, and looking from a person to a desired item.
- Note that many of these gestures (and especially pointing) require good visual skills and may not be useful for individuals with severe vision impairment.
- Some vocal intonations may also be used at this stage.

4. Concrete Symbols

- "Concrete" symbols that physically resemble what they represent, are used to communicate.
- Concrete symbols include photos, pictures, items (such as a shoelace to represent "shoe"), "iconic" gestures (such as patting a chair to say "sit down") and sounds (such as making a buzzing sound to mean "bee").
- For some individuals, concrete symbols may be the only type of symbol that makes sense to them; for others they may serve as a bridge to using abstract symbols.

5. **Abstract Symbols**

- Abstract symbols such as speech, some pictures, manual signs, Braille or printed words are used to communicate.
- These symbols are "abstract" because they are NOT physically similar to what they represent.
- They are used one at a time.

6. **Language – 1 Word Level (small sentences)**

- Symbols (concrete or abstract) are combined into two- or three-symbol combinations ("want juice", "me go out"), according to grammatical rules.
- The individual understands that the meaning of symbol combinations may differ depending upon how the symbols are ordered.

Outcomes will be taken from the pathway with pupils working on these daily. Evidence (written observations, photos, videos) should be added to evidence for learning every 3 weeks. Pupils will work on outcomes in a range of contexts: 1:1, in small group activities and in whole class activities. Communication can be developed within all subjects and pupils will learn to transfer skills beyond the classroom.

Pupils working at levels 4-6 may also be using outcomes from the AAC pathway to further compliment and enrich their communication.

Due to our Total Communication approach, we value all types of communication. The following modes of communication may be seen in use by pupils and/or being modelled by adults:

Total Communication: We are committed to our whole school Total Communication approach and environment, which values all types of communication and ensures the whole school approach is clear, embedded and offer variety. As part of our Total Communication approach, we value all types of communication. These include but are not limited to:

- Behaviour
- Gestures and body language
- Facial expressions
- Real objects
- Objects of reference

- TOBIs
- Photos
- Widgit symbols
- Tassels (on body signing)
- Makaton Signing

- AACs – low tech, mid teach and high tech
- Written word
- Drawings
- Language at an appropriate level

Impact:

The impact of the teaching of communication at the Milestone School can be seen through ongoing assessment and discussion throughout the year. This includes but is not limited to:

- Evidence for Learning
- Updating SOLAR (our assessment tool)
- Pupil progress meetings
- EHCP reviews
- Internal/external moderation
- End of year reports
- Anecdotal evidence
- Engagement Model

Based on the needs of the children, evidence is collected in a range of ways. Teachers gather evidence throughout the year (every 3 weeks) to show the progress that children have made. Selected evidence (written observations, photos, videos) is matched to an outcome and uploaded onto Evidence for Learning throughout the year. Progress is assessed against The Milestone Progression Pathway for Communication, using SOLAR, which is updated throughout the year.

Some pupils, particularly those working within levels 1-2, may make minimal or no measurable progress within single academic years. This is to be expected, with Evidence for Learning and the Engagement Model documenting more anecdotal evidence over long periods of time.

Pupils on this pathway or that require an adaptive mode of communication will have a communication passport as part of their one-page profile. This will move with them to new classes or new settings.

Once pupils have secured and generalised all skills in the Communication pathway they will move on the 'Speaking and Listening' strand of the English pathway.

Assessment Framework

- **Communication pathway levels 1-6**
- **AAC pathway**
- **Total Communication Framework**