**What does a Speech and Language Therapist do in a school setting?**

Speech and Language Therapists can help to provide information to parents and professionals regarding Speech, Language and Communication. They can observe, collate information, complete assessments, provide interventions/ resources, refer to other services if necessary and provide relevant training.

A school based therapist can work with a child providing specialist and targeted therapy. This can be within a group situation, 1:1 or within the classroom/school environment or working directly with staff. The aim is to work directly with parents and children to ensure their needs are being met. The main areas of development are:

* Attention and Listening
* Understanding of Language
* Use of Language
* Speech Sounds
* Social Communication Skills

Parents can access additional information and resources, to help children with SLCN generalise their new skills e.g. utilise their skills not just in the classroom, but at home and beyond.

Teachers can use the resources and advice within classroom environments to emphasis speech therapy targets and enable children to transfer these skills into educational situations e.g. conversations, interactions, following rules and class routine, answer questions, follow instructions, appropriate play and to be able to communicate their needs and wants.

Springwood Heath is also becoming a ‘Communication Friendly Environment’ which demonstrates the use of communication through different methods. The following are considered Communication Friendly;

* Use of visual/symbol/picture support e.g. for timetables, tasks, areas, charts, to aid understanding, expressing and general communication
* Access to AAC (Augmentative and Alternative Communication)- the use of communication devices e.g. Ipads, Laptops, Computer systems with appropriate communication software (switches, symbol support, voice output, eye gaze systems) to support learning and communication.
* Developing attention and listening skills first- showing good looking, sitting and following group routine
* Allowing adequate processing time- giving a child time to respond.
* Promoting independence in work and play situations and differentiating work
* Staff support- Teaching assistants who have been trained to support children with SLCN and evidence that staff are aware of current speech and language targets set for the child.
* Staff training- training that focuses on the language levels used when speaking to a child with SLCN and approaches they use to listen and talk
* Environmental considerations e.g. light input, layout, space, noise levels
* Events, activities and communication days- allows parents to access information about SLCN and communication in general, as well as being able to provide strategies and advice based on the needs of the child
* The ways in which parents/carers and other environments also support communication
* Developing an awareness and use of sign and gestural support e.g. Sign-A-Long, Makaton, general gesture e.g. pointing that supports communication and interaction.
* Teaching that incorporates use of visual and tactile approaches including use of real

objects, practical activities, pictures, video.

* Seating plans- to enable a child to have access to every point of communication e.g. facing the teacher, near the front.

Speech and Language Therapists work with a range of difficulties. Here are some of the following:

* mild, moderate or severe learning difficulties
* physical disabilities
* language delay
* specific language impairment
* specific difficulties in producing sounds
* hearing impairment
* cleft palate
* stammering
* autism/social interaction difficulties
* dyslexia
* voice disorders
* selective mutism
* neurological disorders/impairments
* mental health
* eating and swallowing

There is more information for parents about how you can support the needs of children and access other services via the following links and advice sheets.

<http://www.elklan.co.uk/downloads/free-downloads>

<http://www.elklan.co.uk/courses/for-parents-and-carers>

<https://elklantraining.worldsecuresystems.com/resources?_ga=1.157117299.958373227.1465892616>

<http://www.talkingpoint.org.uk/>

<http://www.talkingpoint.org.uk/resources-search>

<http://www.talkingpoint.org.uk/directory/free-resources-parents>

<http://www.afasic.org.uk/download/101/>

<http://www.ican.org.uk/~/media/Ican2/What%20We%20Do/Enquiry%20Service/Visual%20timelines%20fact%20sheet%20parents.ashx>

<http://www.ican.org.uk/~/media/Ican2/What%20We%20Do/Enquiry%20Service/Top%2010%20Toys%20Factsheet.ashx>

<http://www.ican.org.uk/~/media/Ican2/What%20We%20Do/Enquiry%20Service/My%20Child%20Has%20Glue%20Ear%20Factsheet.ashx>

<http://www.ican.org.uk/~/media/Ican2/What%20We%20Do/Enquiry%20Service/Augmentative%20and%20Alternative%20Communication%20AAC%20Factsheet.ashx>

<http://www.ican.org.uk/~/media/Ican2/What%20We%20Do/Enquiry%20Service/Tips%20for%20a%20communication%20supportive%20Primary%20School.ashx>

<http://www.ican.org.uk/~/media/Ican2/What%20We%20Do/Enquiry%20Service/Early%20Language%20development.ashx>

<http://www.speech-therapy.org.uk/free-speech-and-language-resources>