



Spotlight on Easton CE Academy

Easton CE Academy in Bristol was the winner of the Communication Commitment Award at the 2017 Shine a Light Awards.

The senior leadership team at Easton CE Academy believes a whole-school approach to language and communication plays a vital role in children's development and academic success. As a result they have put numerous initiatives and activities in place to benefit pupils.

Last year, Easton CE Academy decided that 2016/2017 was going to be their year of communication. To kick start activity in June 2016, they started to work with a speech and language therapist from ChildSpeech. Together they completed an action plan using The Communication Trust's Communication Commitment website to help prioritise actions and plan for the school year ahead.

They have since:

- Appointed a Communication Champion in each key stage who have special responsibility for speech, language and communication. They receive training from their speech and language therapist and are allocated time to meet, plan actions and share tips and resources with other staff. This includes meeting with their fellow Communication Champions to decide on actions and monitor new initiatives.
- Organised a whole-day school inset dedicated to speech, language and communication need (SLCN) training as well as running several twilight sessions to enable staff to identify children with SLCN and learn ways to support them in the classroom.
- Introduced a weekly 'Top Tip for Communication' sharing at staff meetings, for example using a visual timetable or using the 10-second rule (where teachers pause between asking a question and asking a child to respond, giving children who have language-processing difficulties the opportunity to process and respond).
- Created a communication section for parents on the school website, introducing their speech and language therapist, and providing updates and suggestions on games and activities that can take place at home.
- Arranged two coffee mornings for targeted groups of parents, giving them the chance to meet with other parents and their child's speech and language therapist.

In addition to the above, the senior leadership team has increased its budget, setting aside money to allow for I CAN's Early Talk Boost and Talk Boost training, Word Aware training and weekly Speech and Language Therapy (SALT) support. The budget has also allowed for three Communication Champion teachers who act as in-house experts, disseminating information and trying our new ideas and techniques.



Outside of training the school embraces a whole-school approach to communication, with visual timetables used in all classes helping children, staff and visitors be clear about the structure of the day, and their varied curriculum allows for forest trips, cooking and extra curriculum days like Chinese New Year.

This commitment to SLCN has benefitted staff and pupils across the whole school. All staff are aware of how to make their teaching and environment 'language friendly' and possess the knowledge and tools to help identify children with SLCN.

Through the use of the I CAN's Talk Boost programme and the dedication of the staff, children and parents alike, Easton CE Academy is now reaching all children who fall below the expected level of attainment in SLCN, as well as those who need help from SALT. This has helped to build the confidence of the teaching teams, who can see they are making a real difference.

Easton CE Academy has been awarded the *Communication Commitment of the Year Award* for its whole-school approach providing support and training across the entire workforce, for using a varied, communication-friendly curriculum, enhancing parental involvement and showing a real focus on long-term impact.