

## Spotlight on Aerodrome Primary Academy School

*Aerodrome Primary Academy School in Croydon was the winner of the Primary School of the Year Award at the 2015 Shine a Light Awards.*

*Despite being an average-sized primary school, the proportion of pupils with special educational needs (SEN), and in particular those with speech, language and communication needs (SLCN), is well above average, as is the number of disadvantaged children. However the school's 'A chance for all' approach, ensures all students have the opportunity to improve their life chances through communication.*

In the Children's Centre, English as an Additional Language (EAL) Groups encourage development through stories, songs and creative activities. Within the nursery, *Bucket Time*, takes place where toys are used to focus on attention building and encourage early language and communication development for children with severe SLCN.

Reception children are screened for speech and language delay at school entry and prioritised children attend the *Just Arrived At School* oral language programme. For year two pupils, the *Talk for Writing* programme encourages expressive development of story content and structure as a foundation for writing; older pupils with SLCN across the school take part in *Partners in Talking* groups, encouraging confidence for talking within groups.

Across the school, SLCN pupils are supported with visual aids in assemblies such as Communication Print, which uses imagery alongside words, and Makaton - a language programme using signs and symbols to help people to communicate.

Regular *No Pens Day Wednesdays*, an initiative which encourages schools and settings to put down their pens and to run a day of speaking and listening activities, are held and Communication Challenges for parents offer opportunities for parents to talk to their child about their learning. Parents of pupils in the school's Enhanced Learning Provision (ELP) Base have regular parents meetings to model specific strategies that can be reinforced at home.

Priority is given to developing functional language skills and confidence for communication, allowing pupils with SLCN to take part in whole-school events such as Aerodrome's Got Talent and I CAN's Chatterbox Challenge initiative.

Non-teaching staff are also involved in supporting children to achieve. Kitchen, office and caretaking workers are highly important to the school community and the school offers employment to young adults with SLCN.

Staff training is important to the school; ensuring staff are knowledgeable about strategies to support pupils with SLCN. The school's Base staff regularly provide training to newly qualified teachers (NQTs) and students, aiding early identification and support strategies for pupils with SLCN within local mainstream schools.

The results of Aerodrome Primary Academy's commitment are wonderful. Tracking from the Children's Centre shows clear progress with communication and language areas of learning and the post-intervention measure with the reception class pupils shows evidence of increased vocabulary and rapid progress from significantly low scores on school entry.

The year two *Talk for Writing* programme, which enables children to imitate the key language they need for a particular topic orally before they try reading and analysing it, has shown significant progress for pupils, particularly those with SLCN, and standardised assessments for those in Base record 85% of children show progress with targets in line with expected levels across the whole school.

Aerodrome Primary Academy has been awarded the *Primary School of the Year Award* for their dedication and creation of numerous initiatives put in place to aid pupils' communication skills. The school's provision for SLCN pupils, while having a whole-school holistic approach for all pupils, is a strong example of how all pupils' speech, language and communication needs can be integrated with success.