



## **Spotlight on Parkdale Primary School**

*Parkdale Primary School in Nottingham was the winner of the Primary School of the Year Award at the 2017 Shine a Light Awards. Believing that language and communication skills play a vital role in its children's development and academic success, Parkdale Primary School believes dedicated support and early identification is key.*

The school adopts a traffic light rating system as an initial step to identifying children's language skills, with bespoke training given to staff to support them in becoming more confident and accurate in their identifications.

The identified children are then assessed using The Communication Trust's progression tools in order to give staff a baseline in all aspects of their speech, language and communication skills. From this information a profile of each child is created, outlining their particular strengths and the areas where support is most needed.

This empowers the school to implement appropriate interventions and strategies including narrative and storytelling, I CAN's Talk Boost programme, Language for Thinking, signs and symbols, and interaction strategies.

The school has even employed an additional teacher to implement the interventions, ensuring they are tailored to meet the needs of each child as they progress through the school. In addition to this, Parkdale Primary School employs a speech and language therapist one day a week to deliver training and support the delivery of the individualised programmes.

Outside of pupil-focused activity, the school ensures there are many 'communication-friendly spaces' for all children to enjoy. This includes quiet spaces to share stories, cosy corners for children to gather, uninterrupted play sessions and den building opportunities. There is also a dedicated play leader indoors and outdoors to capitalise on opportunities to develop the children's language skills.

Parkdale Primary School also provides transition sessions during the summer terms in partnership with their local Children's Centre, attends local county networks to keep up to date with best practice and local initiatives, and has a named Language Lead in school, as promoted by the Nottinghamshire Language for Life strategy.

The results for Parkdale Primary School are fantastic. In 2015, children entered reception below age-related expectations for their communication and language development; in some cases significantly below. By the end of the summer term they had made significant progress, with listening and attention increasing from 16% on entry to 86% on exit, and with speaking increasing from 13% on entry to 87% on exit.

Parkdale Primary has been awarded the *Primary School of the Year Award* for its communication-friendly environment, the implementation of additional interventions and the outstanding impact their work is having on its children's achievement.