

Spotlight on Longmoor Primary School

Longmoor Primary School in Liverpool was the winner of the 2019 Primary School of the Year Award at the Shine a Light Awards.

Longmoor Primary School started an initiative in 2011 to address the very low communication and language skills of their youngest pupils and due to the team's hard work and dedication, Longmoor Primary has now become a 'trailblazer' in their local authority!

The school has developed a bespoke diagnostic assessment for pupils on entry to early years so they can specifically tailor interventions to individual needs. This has formed the basis of provision that has been so successful, it has been expanded throughout the whole school to improve the language skills of every child.

The Shine a Light judges were blown away with the level of importance the school places on communication. It is at the forefront of everyone's mind and the school has a dedicated oracy team and a communication specific teacher performance management target. In addition, Longmoor Primary has joined the nationally recognised Voice21 project and a dedicated section about speech, language and communication within their annual school improvement plan.

The high priority of oracy is also reflected in the school's curriculum planning documents and despite school budgets being squeezed, a portion of Longmoor's budget is directed to the development of oracy for staff training and purchasing specialist equipment. They have also employed a specialist drama teacher and invested in a new communication and language tool, Stoke Speaks Out.

It wasn't just the senior leadership team and staff room activity that grabbed the judges' attention, it was also the support they provide their children. Following assessment for speech, language and communication needs (SLCN), a provision map and pupil profile is created for each child requiring additional support, working with their experienced Communication and Language Assistants to ensure progress.

On a wider, whole-school level, the school is constantly looking at ways to promote and support communication in a fun and interactive way. They have introduced themed weeks with an oracy element and encourage participation in whole-school/public performances with their spelling bees, Poem a Day, choir, orchestra and productions at Christmas and over the summer. Longmoor Primary has even created specific roles and clubs that prioritise communication including school councillors, playground buddies, play leaders, debate team, public speaking club and press gang.

As if all that wasn't enough, the staff take the time to extend their support to parents, working closely with them to promote speech and language skills via parental training, oral motor and health sessions and stay and play sessions.

They have also created a weekly Lego Club for parents of children with special educational needs (SEN), particularly those who have SLCN. Longmoor recently worked with the Ethnic Minority and Traveller Achievement Service team in Liverpool to develop a programme for new-entrant pupils, who have English as their additional language, and their families to support integration into school, assessment of their language needs and appropriate provision.

The school performance results are testament to the schools amazing work in promoting communication. Just 10% of their pupils are at the 'expected' level for communication and language (C&L) upon admission to the nursery.

By the time the children leave, they are articulate, fluent and confident speakers. Summer 2018 results showed 94.9% of children were at expected level in C&L come the end of Reception. By the end of Key Stage 2, 93% of children were at expected level in reading, 88% in writing and 91% in EPGS (English, grammar, punctuation and spelling).

For further information about the 2019 Shine a Light Awards visit www.shinealightawards.co.uk and follow us on Twitter #awards_SAL