

Case study – Knowsley Central School

Type: Special School **Location:** Merseyside **Website:** www.knowsleycentral.co.uk

Although in my capacity as a Speech and Language Therapist I have run *No Pens Days* in other schools, 2014 was Knowsley Central School's first *No Pens Day Wednesday*. The day also happened to coincide with one of the days of our Ofsted inspection – the school was awarded an 'outstanding' rating, with speech and language therapy commended in particular, a testament to the importance of spoken language skills.

Each teacher was responsible for planning all of their lessons for the day with a focus on speaking and listening. There were a variety of different innovative and exciting activities happening throughout the day. For example, one lesson involved the pupils making food models and learning about the different properties of various types of foods!



We began the day with an assembly to introduce *No Pens Day Wednesday* to the pupils and to let them know the structure of the day. The assembly PowerPoints provided by The Communication Trust were extremely useful here, and it was so easy to supplement the Trust's information with our own material. For example, to ensure that the 'no pens' rule was enforced, we selected four students to be members of the 'pen police'. They were given police hats and badges, and were responsible for walking around school at various points throughout the day to ensure that no pupils (or staff!) were using pens.

In addition to this, three pupils were selected as our 'news team'. They were responsible for documenting the day by taking photographs and interviewing peers and members of staff about their views on *No Pens Day*. We also had a joke box competition, where all pupils were asked to submit a joke, with three prizes awarded at the end of the day for the best ones!

The day was an overwhelming success; it resulted in increased awareness of the importance of speech, language and communication skills, as well as an increased awareness of the need for all staff to take responsibility for the development of pupils' communication skills. Teachers commented that the day made them think more creatively about how they teach their lessons and how they can incorporate more easily targeted spoken language objectives. There has also been a great impact on pupils – many of the children now have more awareness and knowledge about why speech, language and communication skills are so important.



The day would not have been a success without the creativity of the staff and the enthusiasm of all our pupils at Knowsley Central. As a result of the huge success of the day, we are hoping that *No Pens Day Wednesday* will feature more regularly in the school calendar!

Sophie Humphries, Lead Speech and Language Therapist