Reception Baseline Case Study

D is a Reception pupil in the Designated Speech and Language Provision that the school hosts. He is 4yrs 11 months old.

He has a diagnosis of verbal dyspraxia from the neurology department at a nearby children's hospital. He can produce some single consonants –m/t/p/b/f/d/s/g/k/l/n   and a few vowels- o/a/oo/ow/ar spontaneously . He has just begun to combine C and V to say a very few words clearly- two/car/no/go/cow/moo. He has used a V.O.C.A for the past 9 months and can communicate some simple phrases with this E.g I like pop.

He also uses approximately 50 Makaton signs which he can combine e.g Mum +Home / Big+ Dog .

His listening and attention skills are variable in both 1 to 1 and group contexts. His comprehension is slightly below average when assessed formally but in general classroom/conversation contexts he functions well and when focused follows most instructions accurately.

His gross and fine motor skills are slightly delayed and he has been assessed by Occupational Therapy.

He has always been a very keen communicator and makes great use of all modalities. He has excellent relationships with adults and peers.

He has a good visual memory and is developing early literacy and numeracy skills. His V.O.C.A has enabled him to acquire recognition of symbols and some words for reading and spelling e.g. mum/cat/dog/dad

I undertook the assessment sitting alongside D at a school PC in a quiet area. We were able to complete it in 35 mins approximately. He did need refocusing on about 6 occasions. He was able to attempt all the items presented until the discontinuation feature activated appropriately. I needed to repeat the instructions myself to him on several occasions- I dropped the 'Can you point… ' and just used 'Point to ….' .

As D has no significant comprehension difficulties, he could follow the instructions. I feel other children with receptive language difficulties might need some support with this.

He did not use his V.O.C.A at all. As I have worked with him for over 9 months , his speech attempts are now clearer to me and I also know his ability level e.g in number recognition/counting/reading. I do think that this would have been very different in September last year- when I had only known him for a few weeks. It would have been much more difficult to establish if he was attempting the correct responses. Also it would not have been helpful to use his V.O.C.A then for items such as counting/number recognition/reading – as this would possibly give him correct score for an item which he was just matching visually.

Reception baseline assessment – case study 2 for The Communication Trust

When recognizing letters D can now produce the correct phonemes for many- in September last year he could recognize some graphemes but his speech sound production was so limited it would have been very difficult to assess this accurately.

I am not sure if it would be acceptable for a child to use Makaton signs to respond to some of the items – as I know D would have done in September. So it would be helpful to have some guidance on this for future users. Likewise I presume the adult could use some signing as support but not for items such as the receptive vocabulary section requiring the child to point to items in the picture.

On some occasions D was aware of the Y/N scoring element on the screen- this could be a distraction for some pupils.

Overall I feel that the assessment did give an accurate picture of D's current skills. I did not find out anything I didn't already know- as we have only very recently completed the end of year assessment for the EYFS data! So at this stage of the school year it would not inform my future plans for work with D- this would of course be different when using the baseline as intended at the beginning of Reception.

- Specialist Teacher, Specific Language Disorder Team