

# What Works – frequently asked questions

## What is *What Works*?

It is an online database of evidenced interventions which can be used to support individuals, targeted groups or whole cohorts of children to improve their speech, language and communication skills.

## What does it do?

- Details who the interventions are aimed at; who they can be delivered by; where to go to for more information and what the current evidence base is.
- Brings together information that reaches across professional groups - recognising the vital role of the speech and language therapist and the vital role played by the wider team including universal practitioners, special educational needs co-ordinators (SENCOs), specialist teachers, pastoral care and parents.
- Promotes interventions where the evidence base suggests that implementing the programmes will support positive outcomes for children and young people.
- Gives academic references that support the interventions' evidence base.
- Signposts to other sources of information that may help.

## What does it not do?

- Promise to be comprehensive at this stage. There are many good interventions and programmes that haven't been included because we don't know about them yet. We hope that the database will prompt others to share their evidenced interventions with The Communication Trust so that we can include and promote what works to the widest possible audience.
- Make unsubstantiated claims. The evidence base for each intervention is outlined. We welcome additional evidence on any of the interventions listed within this database to further develop the evidence base.
- Focus on guidance for commissioners on a whole population level at local authority or children's services level. Although the interventions could form part of a wider commissioning approach, the Commissioning Support Programme (CSP) tools and Centre for Excellence and Outcomes work provides further guidance on these as does the Trust's [commissioning web page](#).

## How was it created?

The database is an online version of a report developed by the Better Communication Research Programme (BCRP) and The Communication Trust. The report is co-authored by James Law, Wendy Lee, Sue Roulstone, Yvonne Wren, Biao Zeng and Geoff Lindsay. It was created after a review of intervention literature related to children with primary speech and language difficulties and a detailed study of what interventions and approaches were being used in practice, including interviews with senior managers from Educational Psychology

Services, Speech and Language Therapists and other key education professionals. The Communication Trust gathered additional evidenced interventions currently in use, and an eminent educational psychologist was consulted.

Taking an evidenced based approach, 60 interventions were identified within this report as having a robust enough evidence base, categorised as either strong, moderate or indicative. These interventions formulate the foundation of the online database.

### **Who is it for?**

The database can be used by teaching staff (both teachers and teaching assistants), speech and language therapists (SLTs) and early years' staff who work with children with speech, language and communication needs (SLCN).

### **Why has it been developed?**

One of the key findings of the Better Communication Research Programme is that the children's workforce needs more information about supporting children to develop good communication skills, particularly boosting the skills of those with SLCN. This database will give them access to evidenced interventions which can be successful if used with children.

### **How are interventions assessed for inclusion?**

Interventions will only be included on the *What Works* database if the moderating group are satisfied that the research evidence is robust and outcomes for children are positive. Detailed information on how this process works can be found on the *What Works* database [here](#).

### **Who sits on the Moderating Group?**

Members of the Moderating Group are:

- [James Law](#)
- [Wendy Lee](#)
- [Sue Roulstone](#)
- [Yvonne Wren](#)
- Kamini Gadhok, [The Royal College of Speech and Language Therapists](#)

### **I'm a parent of a child with SLCN. Will *What Works* help me?**

*What Works* is designed for practitioners who work with children with SLCN, showing them what interventions are suitable and successful for different children. It isn't designed for parents and so does contain technical information. If you need information, there are some

websites designed for parents including [www.talkingpoint.org.uk](http://www.talkingpoint.org.uk) or you can contact Afasic through their website [www.afasic.org.uk](http://www.afasic.org.uk)

### **I'm a local authority commissioner. Can I use *What Works*?**

The *What Works* website provides information and evaluation of individual programmes for children with SLCN, which are important to support best practice and achieve positive outcomes for children.

However, it's important to note that these programmes aren't seen in isolation and should be viewed as part of a coherent evidence-based model of service delivery. There is growing evidence that such models have long-term positive outcomes for children.

For more information about how this can work in practice, visit our website [here](#) to find out about *Talk of the Town*, a community-led, whole-school, multi-agency approach to supporting children's speech, language and communication.

### **My search criteria turned up no results. Where else can I find help?**

*What Works* is being rolled out for a year-long consultation programme with key stakeholders and practitioners. More interventions will be added once they've satisfied the selection criteria so keep checking back.

If you have any queries about the content of the database, please email our enquiries inbox at [enquiries@thecommunicationtrust.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@thecommunicationtrust.org.uk) or complete the online feedback form.