

Case study of local good practice in identifying children and young people with SLCN

Swallow Hill Community College

Leeds

Introduction

Swallow Hill is a secondary school academy in West Leeds with around 700 students aged 11 to 16. A high proportion of students enter the academy with communication needs, with the prevalence well above average. As one of two Language Resource Secondary Schools in Leeds, the academy provides students with a differentiated language curriculum and access to speech and language therapy, where required.

Identifying and screening

Swallow Hill uses a phased approach to identify speech, language and communication needs (SLCN), with class teachers and support staff raising initial concerns, followed by informal assessment and ultimately, and if needed, a speech and language therapy diagnostic assessment.

The Communication Trust's *Progression Tools* are used to identify SLCN in Year 7. Results from the screening are then triangulated with data from the Year 6 SATs and the academy's MidYIS (Middle Years Information System) baseline assessment. The team also consult The Communication Trust's *Universally Speaking* resources to check students' progress against age-related expectations.

Sharing and developing knowledge

The academy's speech and language therapist (SLT) sits within the special educational needs and disability (SEND) team and attends weekly meetings with the rest of

the SEND staff to enable careful monitoring of SLCN identification. These meetings also allow discussion of students with other identified needs, such as social, emotional and mental health (SEMH). Screening of these students has shown a strong link between SEMH and SLCN.

To support accurate identification, teaching and support staff receive a range of training, from whole school sessions through to time spent working with the SLT. The SLT works closely with teaching and support staff to enhance universal practice in the classroom and support universal interventions and staff development. In addition, the Senior Leadership team developed a strategic plan for communication to ensure approaches meet the needs of the students.

Universal good practice

There are two programmes of work to support communication in key stage 3. The first is a programme for all Year 7 and 8 tutor group sessions three mornings per week. This supports vocabulary building, collaborative talk and the understanding of spoken language.

The second is a communication curriculum, which is taught to half of Year 7. Staff use *Progression Tools* and MidYIS data to identify which students require the programme. These tools are then used, alongside Progress 8 measures, to assess impact. The curriculum has proven effective in developing students' understanding and use of language and has led to better Progress 8 scores. The communication lessons, which are delivered by trained teachers and support staff, have also developed staff's skills, leading to improved communication support across the academy.



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