

Press Release – For Immediate Release (20.12.2011)

## **SPEECH, LANGUAGE AND COMMUNICATION PRIMED TO BECOME KEY PART OF NATIONAL CURRICULUM FROM 2014**

*Communication coalition celebrates after its proposals form key recommendations for the future of the National Curriculum*

The Communication Trust, a consortium of nearly 50 leading voluntary sector organisations specialising in speech, language and communication, has today (20<sup>th</sup> December 2011) welcomed the focus on speech, language and communication in *The Framework for the National Curriculum* report.

Compiled by the Expert Panel for the National Curriculum review, the report has officially called for speech, language and communication to form part of the curriculum for all subjects from September 2014 right through compulsory schooling, rather than being focused in the National Curriculum for English.

The report specifically refers to a resource developed by The Communication Trust and Pearson Assessment – *Universally Speaking* – a set of three booklets that outline the ages and stages of children’s communication from birth to 18-years-old.

Authored by Wendy Lee, Professional Director for The Communication Trust, *Universally Speaking* helps parents and the children’s workforce to know if a child is on track with their communication development and what to do if they are struggling. The booklets were developed as a key resource for the *Hello* campaign (national year of communication) and currently 33,000 copies have been disseminated.

Anita Kerwin-Nye, Director of The Communication Trust, said: “We are delighted to see children’s speech, language and communication forming a major part of the Expert Panel’s recommendations for the future of the National Curriculum. This is a big step forward for the issue and follows recent news that communication is now being included in the Ofsted framework.

“The Communication Trust and our members have long been campaigning for speech and language to be an integral part of the school curriculum for children of all ages. We will be pushing these recommendations forward to ensure they become a reality and remain hopeful that they will receive cross party political support.

“I am delighted that the work of the Trust has been recognised in the report and we are keen to work with the Expert Panel, the Government and other experts over the next 18 months. While the National Curriculum won’t apply to academies we are continuing our work to influence them on the vital importance of children’s speech, language and communication through our partnership work with the Specialist Schools and Academies Trust (SSAT) and with academies directly.”

*The Framework for the National Curriculum* report highlighted “There is a compelling body of evidence that highlights a connection between oral development, cognitive development and educational attainment. We are strongly of the view that the development of oral language should be a strong feature of any new National Curriculum.

“The implication of our understanding of the significance of oracy is that, while it should find a particular place within the National Curriculum for English, it should also be promoted more widely as an integral feature of *all* subjects.”

To download the full report from the Expert Panel for the National Curriculum review, visit <https://www.education.gov.uk/publications/standard/publicationDetail/Page1/DFE-00135-2011>

To download or order the *Universally Speaking* booklets, visit [www.hello.org.uk/resources](http://www.hello.org.uk/resources)

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## **Notes for editors**

### **About The Communication Trust**

- The Communication Trust is a campaigning voice for children with speech, language and communication needs. It raises awareness, influences policy, promotes best practice among the children’s workforce and commissions work from its members.
- It is a coalition of nearly 50 leading voluntary sector organisations and an advisory group, which includes the Royal College of Speech and Language Therapists, Association of Educational Psychologists and the General Teaching Council.
- In the UK, it is estimated that 1 million children and young people have some form of speech, language and communication need (SLCN). In areas of social deprivation, upwards of 50% of children start school with language delay that can affect their ability to learn and make friends.
- A child or young person with a speech, language and / or communication difficulty may have speech that is difficult to understand; they can say words and sentences, but they are very unclear so they can’t get their messages across. For more information on the communication barriers faced by children and young people with SLCN, visit (talking trouble website).
- The Trust ran *Hello* the national year of communication – in conjunction with Jean Gross, the Government’s Communication Champion for Children – aiming to make children’s communication a

priority in homes and schools across the UK. The Trust was one of the campaigning voices that secured the Bercow Review in 2008, which ultimately led to the year of communication.

- For more information about the Trust visit [www.thecommunicationtrust.org.uk](http://www.thecommunicationtrust.org.uk) or [www.hello.org.uk](http://www.hello.org.uk)

### **About Pearson Assessment**

- Pearson Assessment is the world's largest commercial developer and distributor of educational assessments and psychological testing materials with a 90 year history of commitment to researching and developing products to a reliable high standard.
- Pearson Assessment is dedicated to the pursuit of professional excellence, leadership, and growth through acquisition, development, publication, and the maintenance of quality assessment tools in order to anticipate and meet the needs of its customers.
- Pearson Assessment have sponsored the *Hello* campaign (national year of communication) in 2011.
- For more information, visit [www.psychcorp.co.uk](http://www.psychcorp.co.uk)