

Communication Friendly Environments - Schools

Take time to observe what is working well in your school/classroom; identify possible areas for development.

Visual Support

- Use visual timetables
- Display teaching staff photographs
- Display colour coded maps
- Use non-verbal communication to support spoken language, such as gestures
- Use resources and equipment labelled with a symbol and the word
- Use wall displays that are not overcrowded and distracting

See Visual Support Advice Sheets for further information.

Whole School Approach

Use consistent ways of gaining pupil's attention, such as: Maracas, 'give me five'.

Consistent use of visuals:

- Use narrative cue cards in each classroom
- Display visual rules
- Use word wheels for pre-teaching vocabulary
- Facilitate social interactions for those who need support.

'Good to ask'

- Promote independence.
- Have a system where pupils put a red pencil/'help' card/traffic light system at the end of their desk to signal when they need help.
- Give children the opportunity to communicate in different ways, such as a 'worry box'.

Support processing

- Use 'the 10 second rule' to give pupils time to respond to questions.
- Break instructions down and give in the correct order.
- Repeat instructions – do not rephrase.
- Encourage pupils to write down key words and to repeat instructions back to themselves.
- Regularly recap lesson aims.

See Auditory Memory Advice Sheet for further information.

Environment

- Have areas throughout the school where children can find a calm, quiet space with fewer distractions, such as a reading area with curtains.
- Be aware of the effect of temperature, lighting and fresh air on pupil's concentration.

If you have any questions or to request further Advice Sheets please contact the department on **01925 946686** or visit our website. Further advice can be found on The Communication Trust website: <http://www.thecommunicationtrust.org.uk/resources/resources/resources-for-practitioners/> 

References:

Dockrell, J. E., Bakopoulou, I., Law, J., Spencer, S. & Lindsay, G (2012) *Communication Supporting Classroom Observation Tool*. The Communication