



School Plan: Language and Communication

Month	Theme	
S E P T E M B E R	Myself	<p>Communication: Engagement, Listening and attention</p> <p>Stage One: Through appropriately playful learning experiences, children should be able to show interest in, demonstrate joint attention and actively listen and attend for enjoyment and for a particular purpose.</p> <p>Progression Steps: a-d</p> <p>Priority: Pairing, reinforcer inventory, exploring what will motivate the students to communicate, and engage more deeply and successfully with teaching and learning.</p> <p>Differentiated activities:</p> <p>AAC/ PECs: Exploring a range of different items that might engage the students, and ensuring that visuals are prepared to enable them to request or choose the ones that are most appealing for each individual student.</p> <p>Lamh/ Gestural communication: working on simple imitation games (Simon Says, primary movement programme for example) and assessing the students' motor imitation skills (paying particular attention to basic functional gestures, such as pointing, or signalling 'my turn'). Modelling the Lamh target vocabulary for the current theme in a group setting.</p> <p>Verbal Language: Ensuring that all visuals have the correct word written underneath them to build word recognition and ensure consistent language use across classroom staff. Exploring the target vocabulary around the theme of 'Myself', paying particular attention to 'my favourite things', as we assess re-inforcers and build a motivating choice board for each student to use.</p> <p>Linkage/Integration: Maths (Time), ICT, PE, SPHE, Drama</p>
	My Family	<p>Strand: Communication: Engagement, Listening and attention</p> <p>Stage One: Through appropriately playful learning experiences, children should be able to show interest in, demonstrate joint attention and actively listen and attend for enjoyment and for a particular purpose.</p> <p>Progression Steps a-d</p> <p>Priority: ensuring each student has a way to request their preferred items.</p> <p>Differentiated activities:</p> <p>AAC/ PECs: using a manding box, with 5-7 preferred toys inside it, a timer and visuals. Students to use their PECs (at the level they are currently on) to request a preferred item from their box, which they can then access for a defined period of time (suggest 3-5 minutes). Adding family members to their visuals to support their transition home where possible)</p> <p>Lamh/ Gestural communication: Having the target Lamh vocabulary for the theme 'My Family' modelled at group, and continuing with motor imitation games to build their gestural repertoire. Working on making choices with a manding box- pointing to a 3D object held up in an array of two, to indicate their desire to access that object.</p>



		<p>Verbal Language: Tacting box- box full of flashcards of their preferred items (and including family members) for them to verbally identify to become more confident and fluent using the language of choice, preference and their thematic vocabulary in school. Ensuring that a personalised choice board is available for them throughout the day.</p>
		<p>Linkage/Integration: ICT, Mathematics, SPHE, Drama</p>
O C T O B E R	Autumn	<p>Communication: Motivation and choice</p> <p>Through appropriately playful learning experiences, children should be able to choose, listen to, respond to and create texts in a range of genres and in other languages where appropriate across the curriculum for pleasure and interest</p> <p>Progression Steps: a-d</p>
		<p>Priority: ensuring each student engages with, and participates in, Story-Time at an appropriate level for them.</p> <p>Differentiated activities:</p> <p>AAC/ PECs: using PECs to request a preferred book from an array of two or more at story-time.</p> <p>Lamh/ Gestural communication: Having the target Lamh vocabulary for the theme ‘Autumn’ modelled at group, and continuing with motor imitation games to build their gestural repertoire. Selecting a preferred book using gesture- pointing to the book they like the best and having their choices praised and affirmed.</p> <p>Verbal Language: Becoming familiar with the language of story-time, and texts: book, page, picture, writer, illustrator, blurb, cover, beginning, end, story etc. through having it modelled for them. Engaging verbally with the text, answering simple wh questions or identifying what is depicted in the illustrations depending on their language level.</p>
		<p>Linkage/Integration: Literacy, SESE, Drama</p>
O C T O B E R	Halloween	<p>Communication: Motivation and choice</p> <p>Through appropriately playful learning experiences, children should be able to choose, listen to, respond to and create texts in a range of genres and in other languages where appropriate across the curriculum for pleasure and interest</p> <p>Progression Steps: a-c</p>
		<p>Priority: Each Student to engage with, and participate in group-work, communicating preferences and answering simple questions.</p> <p>Differentiated Activities:</p> <p>AAC/ PECS: Using PECs to identify what they want from a range of Halloween sensory toys, or treats. Demonstrating excitement when a preferred item or activity appears, and being motivated to request it.</p> <p>Lamh/ Gestural Communication: Having the target Lamh vocabulary for the theme ‘Halloween’ modelled at group, and continuing with motor imitation games. Using gesture to indicate preferences from a range of Halloween toys or treats (as appropriate). Exploring a variety of sensory</p>



		<p>items on the theme of Halloween, and indicating with body language or facial expression their feelings in relation to these experiences (emphasis on requesting and refusing)</p> <p>3. Listening to a social or sensory story to prepare them for Halloween and engaging in conversations with others on topics of interest arising from this story (teacher to tailor it to maximise interest, for example including favourite characters as possible Halloween costumes, favourite treats as possible trick or treat snacks)</p> <p>Linkage/Integration: Attention Autism, SPHE, ICT, Literacy, Music, Drama, SESE</p>
N O V E M B E R	Planet Earth In Space	<p>Communication: Motivation and choice</p> <p>Through appropriately playful learning experiences, children should be able to choose, listen to, respond to and create texts in a range of genres and in other languages where appropriate across the curriculum for pleasure and interest</p> <p>Progression Steps: a-c</p>
		<p>Priority: Each Student to work on refusal of a non-preferred item or activity.</p> <p>Differentiated Activities: AAC/ PECS: Having a 'no' visual added to their PECs book, to enable them to refuse. Seeing this modelled by their peers and by staff in the classroom. This activity to finish with accessing something preferred.</p> <p>Lamh/ Gestural Communication: Having the target Lamh vocabulary for the theme 'Planet Earth in space' modelled at group, and continuing with motor imitation games. Using gesture to refuse what they don't want, and working on imitating the lamh sign for 'No'. Appropriate ways to refuse to be modelled by staff in the room to support the students learning of this valuable skill.</p> <p>Verbal language: Reading a story featuring refusal as a theme (for example Green Eggs and Ham) and practising polite ways to refuse non-preferred activities ('no thank you', 'not right now').</p> <p>All Students: creating a book of things they don't like: My book of 'no'. Referring to it to practice their refusing at groupwork/story-time</p> <p>Linkage/Integration: Drama, SPHE, SESE</p>
D E C E M B E R	Winter Celebrations	<p>Social Conventions and awareness of others</p> <p>Recognise that language style changes with different relationships and audiences.</p> <p>Progression Steps: a-c</p>
		<p>Priority: Students to work on greetings, and responding to greetings from familiar and unfamiliar people</p> <p>Differentiated Activities: AAC/ PECS: Preferred family members and staff to be added to communication book. Contrive opportunities for them to request social interaction with a specific person. (if this is too big a goal, getting a student used to 'who I am working with' boards might be a nice way to build their visual literacy in preparation for this)</p>



R		<p>Lamh/ Gestural Communication: Signing ‘Bye’ or ‘See you’ to their peers at goodbye. One strategy for this is a ‘Goodbye’ posting book, with pictures of familiar and unfamiliar people so they can practice greeting in a more structured and predictable manner. Working on their new target vocabulary, and continuing to build motor imitation skills.</p> <p>Verbal language: Having a warm, pleasant greeting modelled for them at the end of each school day, and contriving opportunities (using visual supports or sentence starters where appropriate) to say goodbye other members of their school community.</p> <p>Linkage/Integration: Literacy, SPHE, ICT, Drama</p>
J A N U A R Y	Winter- hot and cold	<p>Social conventions and awareness of others</p> <p>Recognise that language style changes with different relationships and audiences</p> <p>Progression Steps: a-c</p> <p>Priority: Students to work on saying goodbye appropriately across a range of staff and peers</p> <p>Differentiated Activities:</p> <p>AAC/ PECS: Goodbye Group- students to use visuals to choose which staff member or peer they would like to say goodbye to at the end of the school day.</p> <p>Lamh/ Gestural Communication: Signing ‘goodbye’ to their peers at group. Practising the sign- One strategy for this is a posting activity, with flashcards of familiar and unfamiliar people so they can practice saying goodbye in a more structured and predictable manner. Working on their new target vocabulary, and continuing to build motor imitation skills.</p> <p>Verbal language: Having a warm goodbye modelled for them at the end of each school day, and contriving opportunities (using visual supports or sentence starters where appropriate) to say goodbye to other members of their school community.</p> <p>Linkage/Integration: SPHE ,Drama, SESE</p>
	Weather	<p>Social conventions and awareness of others</p> <p>Show understanding of the listener’s needs while, with support, initiating, sustaining and engaging in conversations on personal and curriculum-based topics and responding verbally and nonverbally.</p> <p>Progression Steps: a-d</p> <p>Priority: Taking turns with another child</p> <p>Differentiated Activities:</p> <p>PECS/AAC: Using a my turn/ your turn visual and a timer to support their engagement in a preferred activity with their peer. Having a range of peers to choose from included in their PECS book/ AAC (permission may be needed from home for this as the book should travel home with them)</p> <p>Lamh/ Gestural communication: Signing to indicate ‘me’ or ‘my turn’ and ‘you’, working on the language of time ‘wait’ ‘finished’, ‘I want more time’, etc. along with their Lamh target vocabulary and motor imitation skills.</p>



		<p>Verbal Communication: Using strategies such as social stories or social scripts to scaffold their turn-taking within the context of a structured, enjoyable activity, for example playing with a train set, the board game headbandz or Socially Speaking.</p> <p>ALL STUDENTS: focus for Attention Autism to be turn-taking, and turn-taking to take place in groups. Staff to praise students for turn-taking and sharing at informal opportunities and celebrate their successes as much as possible!</p> <p>Linkage/Integration: Drama, Literacy, SPHE, SESE.</p>
F E B R U A R Y	Love	<p>Sentence Structure and Grammar</p> <p>Use coherent sentences of increasing complexity with correct tense, word order and sentence structure, while using connectives and producing compound and complex sentences to elaborate appropriately.</p> <p>Progression Steps a-d</p> <p>Priority: Filling in the blanks in familiar settings (group roll call), songs and action rhymes</p> <p>Differentiated Activities:</p> <p>PECS/ AAC: using visuals to fill in the blanks in familiar and enjoyable settings. Core boards or picture icons for lyrics to preferred songs, or for particular aspects of group, e.g. Days of the week could be used to support this communication goal.</p> <p>Lamh/ Gestural communication: Teacher to identify the signs that each student can do fluently, and to contrive a song or rhyme that enables them to use those signs to fill in pauses in the recitation or singing. Students to continue having the target vocabulary for the theme modelled for them, and to work on motor imitation in group settings.</p> <p>Verbal Language: Teacher and staff to contrive pauses in songs, rhymes and familiar verbal phrases to allow students to ‘fill in the blanks’. Students to be praised for contributing, and the pauses to get longer as they become more confident participating verbally in songs, rhymes, poems and routines.</p> <p>Linkage/Integration: SPHE, Drama, Music</p>
	Animals	<p>Sentence Structure and Grammar</p> <p>Use coherent sentences of increasing complexity with correct tense, word order and sentence structure, while using connectives and producing compound and complex sentences to elaborate appropriately.</p> <p>Progression Steps a-d</p> <p>Priority: Increasing the length of their word strings.</p> <p>Differentiated activities:</p> <p>PECS/AAC: Working on stage four: I want. If already mastered, introducing a new sentence starter, for example ‘I see’. For students who are not far along to reach this stage yet, contrive opportunities to have their peers, or staff members model it for them.</p> <p>Lamh/Gestural Communication: Students work on the most functional word string for them, given their typical requests and range of mastered lamh signs- for example ‘I want’, ‘Help me’, ‘More time’</p> <p>Students to continue having the target vocabulary for the theme modelled for them, and to work on motor imitation in group settings.</p>



		<p>Verbal Language: Students to be supported to respond with longer sentences (two or more words) in groups, and at natural opportunities throughout the school day. Visuals such as core vocabulary boards, or sentence starters, may support them when working towards this.</p>
		<p>Linkage/Integration: SPHE, Drama</p>
M A R C H	Mother's Day St Patrick's Day	<p>Vocabulary Use different strategies such as a speaker's gestures, tone of voice, known words, pictures, sentence structure, definitions and descriptions to acquire and show understanding of new words, to include other languages where appropriate. Progression Milestones a-b Priority: To build the learner's functional vocabulary around a specific topic that will be of benefit to them (e.g. people I know, rooms in the school, foods, body parts, clothes.)</p> <p>Differentiated Activities: PECS/ AAC: Student's new words to be made up as flashcards, and opportunities for them to request using their new vocabulary words to be contrived (examples- Mr Potato Head- requesting features, Dress-Up toy, requesting clothes, requesting sweets by colour, or reinforcers by colour of box they are kept in) Lamh/ Gestural Communication: Students to continue having the target vocabulary for the theme modelled for them, and to work on motor imitation in group settings. Target signs that will be functional for the students to be modelled by all staff at natural and contrived opportunities throughout the school day.</p> <p>Verbal Language: Student to build their functional vocabulary around a specific subject that will be of use to them, and to work on those words across subjects and activities at natural and contrived opportunities. Understanding of new words to be assessed by having a range of pictures of the same word/ item, and by the use of their vocabulary in different settings and contexts.</p> <p>Linkage/Integration: SPHE, Drama, SESE</p>
	Spring	<p>Understanding Use sophisticated oral vocabulary and phrases, including the language of text, topic and subject-specific language, and express and use de-contextualised language. Progression milestones: a-d Priority: To request a recurrence or a change in activity.</p> <p>Differentiated Activities: PECS: Break card to be introduced for students, change or pause visual could also be introduced on whole class visual schedule to model the meaning. Lamh/ Gestural Communication: Students to continue having the target vocabulary for the theme modelled for them, and to work on motor imitation in group settings. Target signs linked to continuing or pausing an activity (More, Again, Stop, Finished, Break) for the students to be modelled by all staff at natural and contrived opportunities throughout the school day.</p>



		<p>Verbal Language: The language of breaks or activities that can be requested throughout the day if needed to be practiced and modelled for the student. Contriving opportunities for them to appropriately request a break from an activity or for a recurrence of that activity.</p> <p>Linkage/Integration: SPHE, Maths (Time), Drama</p>
A P R I L	Air and Water	<p>Understanding</p> <p>Through appropriately playful learning experiences, children should be able to use different strategies such as a speaker's gestures, tone of voice, known words, pictures, sentence structure, definitions and descriptions to acquire and show understanding of new words, to include other languages where appropriate.</p> <p>Priority: Using Question Words/ Asking</p> <p>Differentiated Activities:</p> <p>PECS/AAC: Boosting requesting opportunities throughout the school day, by having desired items visible but not accessible without help. Modelling of questioning words at group. Pupils to use PECS to respond to some questions- around number, colour, what they see, where possible.</p> <p>Lamh: continuing with the target vocabulary and the motor imitation. Working specifically on signs for Wh questions, and having asking and answering modelled by staff, peers at informal opportunities and group.</p> <p>Verbal Language: Games like twenty questions, Guess Who, Headbanz can be helpful for this. For more emerging verbal communicators, having sentence starters, scripts or visual cues could be useful. Identifying the three most common questions that would be used throughout the school day e.g 'Is it finished? Can we go outside? Where are we going? What are we doing next? Who is working with me today?'; and have them modelled and practised by staff and peers.</p> <p>Linkage/Integration: SPHE, Drama, Maths</p>
	Easter	<p>Understanding (Vocabulary)</p> <p>Through appropriately playful learning experiences, children should be able to use sophisticated oral vocabulary and phrases, including the language of text, topic and subject-specific language, and express and use decontextualised language .</p> <p>Progression Steps a-d</p> <p>Priority: Using the language of pain/ discomfort</p> <p>Differentiated Activities:</p> <p>PECS/AAC: Introducing visuals around parts of the body, and an icon to indicate pain. Reading social story about the Doctor's office with visuals of different body parts and use of the pain icon to familiarise themselves with its meaning. Songs featuring parts of the body to be taught while associating the visuals with the body part.</p> <p>Lamh/ Gestural Communication: Continuing with target vocabulary and motor imitation. Working on naming and signing body parts in groups, and the signs for 'sore/ pain' and 'doctor'. Songs like Head shoulders knees and toes and Miss Polly may be suitable for signing along to.</p> <p>Verbal Language: Social story and role play around visiting the doctor/ identifying pain in the body.</p> <p>All Students: to be introduced to the language of pain at natural opportunities, e.g. a fall in the yard, staff can model 'sore' and the body part while comforting and tending to the pupil in question.</p> <p>Linkage/Integration: SESE, PE, SPHE, Drama, Music</p>



M A Y	Outdoors	Understanding (Demonstration of understanding) Through appropriately playful learning experiences, children should be able to demonstrate understanding through the ability to give and follow instructions, comprehend texts and clearly state a case. Progression steps a-c
		Priority: Following instructions during familiar classroom routines. (Tidying the school) Differentiated Activities: PECS/AAC: Choosing from an array of different 'class jobs' using visuals to represent them. Doing that job upon instruction. Lamh/ Gestural Communication: Continuing with target vocabulary and motor imitation. Learning a simple routine for a life skill/ class job and the signs that go with it. Following the instruction to complete the activity with increasing independence. Verbal Language: Coming up with a class jobs rota, using talk and discussion. Following verbal instructions to complete their assigned activity within the classroom setting.
		Linkage/Integration: SPHE, SESE.
J U N E	Holidays and Summer	Exploring and Using (Requests, Questions and Interactions) Through appropriately playful learning experiences, children should be able to express personal needs, opinions and preferences, and make requests with confidence. (a-d)
		Priority: Expressing themselves, requesting, making choices more confidently. Differentiated Activities: PECS/ AAC: To request a range of fun activities throughout the school day, and to choose from a greater array of visuals, organised by category in their PECs books. Lamh/ Gestural communication: Continuing with target vocabulary and motor imitation, focusing on the language of choice and requesting ' me, yes, no, I want, please, and language for common requests- open, push, etc.'
		Verbal Language: Working on personal information questions- Name, Age, School, and personal preferences. Do you like? Yes/ No.
		Linkage/Integration: SPHE, SESE, Drama



Personal and Social Skills	✓
Play and structured activities	✓
Mathematical Skills	✓
Physical Skills	✓
Use of ICT	✓
Attractive Materials	
Aesthetic and Creative Skills	✓
Communication Skills	