

## Key features of effective practice in schools

### Features relevant to support for speech, language and communication needs in schools

Throughout all of the evidence collected as part of the *Bercow: Ten Years On* review, it was clear that there was no one perfect solution. Just as every area, every team, and every service is different – so are the solutions. Instead, from our evidence, we have drawn out the common features of impactful practice. All of these are practical actions schools can take to make a real difference.

During the review, throughout our thematic analysis, we identified recurring themes and features of the success stories people shared with us. In our oral evidence sessions, we specifically asked people to identify what had made the difference. We asked:

***“What are the key factors in the success of [your work] from which others can learn? What do others need to do to achieve the success that you have?”***

This document outlines features relating to support in schools.

Feature	More information
<b>Someone leading speech, language and communication</b>	Through our evidence gathering, the advice was not to impose yet another leadership position in schools, but instead to ensure there was someone with responsibility to keep the issue alive. It was even better if there was a group of people to ensure that if one person left, the impetus was maintained.
<b>Strong relationships</b> – with other professionals	In schools, we heard that close collaboration between teachers, assistants and speech and language therapists working in the classroom or in planning had impact. Where speech and language therapists were treated as members of the school team, in some cases employed by the school, this worked well to improve outcomes for children and young people.
<b>Speech, language and communication across the curriculum</b>	Communication skills are a fundamental part of many aspects of children’s development, especially fundamental to learning. Supporting spoken language should be everyone’s job – not just the SEN department or the English team
<b>Use the evidence</b> of what works	We know so much more about effective intervention. The What Works database provides examples, but watch the <i>Bercow: Ten Years On</i> website for examples of services or schools who have measured the impact of intervention. Here’s an <a href="#">example</a> .

<p>Recognise the <b>comorbidity of SLCN</b></p>	<p>Co-morbidity is quite a medical term – but SLCN are rarely children’s only need. Communication skills are a fundamental part of many aspects of children’s development. As such, they should be integral to other agendas, not a ‘bolt-on’. In effective schools we clearly saw this, for example: SLCN integral to behaviour management processes in schools, and built into the screening for social, emotional and mental health needs.</p>
<p>Support <b>across three levels</b>: universal, targeted and specialist.</p>	<p>In schools this is sometimes known as wave 1,2,3. Key to the success of this approach is ensuring that there is speech and language therapist involvement in all three levels. At <a href="http://www.bercow10yearson.com/resources">www.bercow10yearson.com/resources</a> there is a description of support for children with SLCN at three levels in schools.</p> <p>Effective services drew on evidenced interventions at each level.</p>
<p><b>Listen to children, young people and their families</b></p>	<p>Effective schools knew what support pupils preferred and helped them the most. They worked closely with parents to ensure that continuity between schools and home.</p>
	<p>Schools who actively asked pupils what support they preferred were often surprised, but used this information to good effect. There are examples of ways to consult with children and young people on the <i>Bercow: Ten Years On</i> website and also in our <a href="#">children’s consultation report</a>.</p>
<p><b>Universal support is key: part of quality first teaching</b></p>	<p>For specialist intervention to be effective, people told us again and again that there needed to be good communication-friendly practice in place across the school. This is essential for awareness raising, for early identification, and to ensure efficient allocation of more specialist input.</p>
<p><b>Staff training should be a core part of universal support</b></p>	<p>People told us that it was important that training should not be a one off – professional knowledge is embedded through regularly refreshers, joint working and collaboration. This is supported by the evidence base.</p> <p>Ongoing learning and reflection on the job is important as well, as access to more formal training opportunities.</p>

<p><b>Measure the impact of intervention</b></p>	<p>The <i>Bercow: Ten Years On</i> review found that only 15% of respondents to our survey said impact data was regularly collected and shared. The most effective schools planned interventions based on evidence, and then measured the impact after a defined period. Some schools had thought about ways to combine this data to contribute to their reporting about progress in spoken language.</p>
<p><b>Systems in place to track spoken language</b></p>	<p>There is no statutory requirement to report on spoken language after age 5. The most effective schools had ways to track the progress of children using tools such as the <a href="#">progression tools</a>, <a href="#">language link assessments</a>, <a href="#">CAT</a> or <a href="#">Midyis tests</a> in Year 7, or The Communication Trust <a href="#">Communicating the Curriculum</a>. See our factsheet 'Tools for measuring progress in spoken language' at <a href="http://www.bercow10yearson.com/resources">www.bercow10yearson.com/resources</a></p>
<p><b>SLCN embedded in school policies</b></p>	<p>People advised us that having a whole school speech, language and communication policy did not necessarily guarantee progress. Instead, effective schools have SLCN as part of other, key policies – e.g. the inset schedule, part of curriculum development, within the school SEN information report.</p>