

Let's TALK Derby

**TALK
Derby**

Welcome to the TALK Derby newsletter. We will be sharing with you information about TALK Derby Ambassadors, TALK Derby DAY and tell you about two settings' involvement with the project.

Please share this newsletter with your friends, family and colleagues to spread the the word about TALK Derby around the city.

March 2020, Issue 4

Celebrate with TALK Derby this summer!

TALK Derby is inviting everyone across Derby to celebrate communication, speech and language on 1 July 2020. TALK Derby DAY is a chance for parents, businesses, schools, colleges, nurseries, childminders and other organisations to organise activities that encourage conversations – between adults and with children and young people.

Schools, colleges and early years settings also have the opportunity to win £250 to spend on supporting speech, language and communications development in their school or setting by sharing their TALK Derby Day event on TALK Derby's social media channels. Businesses can nominate a city-based school, college or early years setting to receive the money.

To help organisations plan for the day, a resource pack is available to download from the TALK Derby website along with posters to help promote events: <https://talkderby.org.uk/talk-derby-day/>.

Don't forget to tell us what you have planned by emailing info@arch-comms.co.uk

Despite the current situation presented by COVID-19 (coronavirus), we still intend to celebrate TALK Derby DAY. We are currently looking at alternative ways to do this and will keep you informed through the TALK Derby website and social media channels.



Supporting TALK Derby at Derwent Stepping Stones' teddy bears picnic

We are sorry, but due to COVID-19 (Coronavirus), and because we want to protect everyone's health, we have made some important decisions about TALK Derby. All face-to-face activity (including training, events and meetings) have been paused until further notice. We will continue with all webinars and e-learning and will do what we can to offer you choices during this period should you still want to get involved. We are available on the telephone and email if you wish to contact us.

Thank you and stay safe.

About TALK Derby

TALK Derby was launched June 2019 with the aim of improving children's social mobility by supporting development of their speech, language and communication skills.

There are already clear signs of the positive impact it is having in the city. Over **300 practitioners** have been trained, and over **130 schools and early years settings** are now running a range of activities to support children's speech, language and communication development.

First TALK Derby Ambassadors announced

TALK Derby has been running for just over eight months and there are already clear signs of the positive impact it is having in the city.

This is very much a team effort and many people have helped the project's progress. To recognise the contributions of the people who have championed TALK Derby these people have been invited to become TALK Derby Ambassadors.

Our new Ambassadors have been asked to continue to promote TALK Derby by sharing information and encouraging others to make the TALK Derby pledge.

We hope to share more about our Ambassadors in future newsletters.



How you can support TALK Derby

1. Make the TALK Derby pledge and commit to spending more time talking and listening to the children in your lives.
2. Visit our website: talkderby.org.uk or contact us direct: info@talkderby.org.uk.
3. **Follow like and share our social media:**
 - Twitter: TALKDerby
 - Facebook: TALKDerby
 - Instagram: talk_derby
4. **Look at and share TALK Derby's resources for parents:** <https://talkderby.org.uk/resources/>.

Top tips... for when you're outside

Encourage communication, speech and language with under-fives – with the following ideas:

1. **Have a teddy bears' picnic** – plan how many cups and plates you need and what food to take (it doesn't have to be a lot) then find a space inside or head out into the garden with your guests (we suggest dolls, teddy bears and dinosaurs) and enjoy! You can even have your picnic in the house.
2. **Talk about the weather** – what is the weather today? What should we wear? Talk about the noises the weather makes. Make some simple rainmakers using rice or pasta in a bottle.
3. **When you are outside** – make a list with pictures of the things you might see.
4. **Write a letter** – with your child, write a letter or draw a picture to send to someone special. If you can, take it to the postbox together as part of your daily exercise and talk about the journey the letter will take to get there. Or send a picture of the letter to your loved one. You could even call them to tell them what it says.

Inspired by Coventry City Council's Chattercards: https://www.coventry.gov.uk/info/146/speech_and_language_development/2545/children_s_talking_0-5_years/3.

TALK Derby in action

Little changes make a big difference for Redwood Primary School

With more than 600 pupils, Redwood Primary School in Sinfin has taken a whole school approach to supporting speech, language and communication development. They believe TALK Derby can benefit all children by raising attainment and aspirations.

Making small changes

Sarah Chaffe, the Foundation Stage lead told us: "Settings don't need to do great big things; they just need to make little changes to see the impact."

That's exactly what she and Rachael Kirk, the school's TALK Derby Champion, have done.

Involving the whole school

Training sessions have been introduced for Foundation Stage staff and teaching assistants. Sarah also gives regular updates and tips to all staff to ensure they're practising good communication skills.

Partnerships with parents

Strengthening partnerships with parents is hugely important and staff are already seeing increased confidence and skills in children and their parents and carers.

After one of their teaching assistants attended the Let's Talk with Under 5s training, Redwood are now running their own course for parents full of practical hints and tips.

Foundation Stage has regular 'come and read' sessions to promote the importance of sharing books for language development.

Following TALK Derby training 'Ask me about' stickers were introduced. Staff give these to children with something they did during their day written on them. Parents are encouraged to chat to them about it.

'Greet your child with a smile not a mobile' signs have been on the school gates. These generated a lot of positive comments from parents and interest from the local media.

Changes to the curriculum

TALK Derby training influenced changes to the curriculum and learning environment at Redwood. Rachael's Balanced System audit of the Foundation area created cosy spaces for the children to talk in and listening stations with CD players and headphones. In the playground, 'fancy a chat?' signs have been put on some of the benches and play dens, where children are encouraged to chat to their friends.



Cosy space for talking in the Foundation area

Foundation children have been introduced to the 'Poetry Basket' from Helicopter Stories. This develops their language skills and knowledge of rhymes.

The 'word aware' scheme, used throughout school, introduces key vocabulary in a structured way, putting an emphasis on vocabulary development across the curriculum.

New intervention programmes have been started for children who need the most support when they start school.

Seeing results

Redwood Primary School's involvement with TALK Derby has had a positive impact. Sarah has identified a big difference in the quality of interactions with children, and teaching assistants have also commented on the progress they've seen in them. TALK Derby has helped to raise staff awareness of the importance of communication.

Read the full article [here](#).

TALK Derby in action

Tina Burke, Whitecross Nursery

Whitecross Nursery School in Derby is a maintained school with children attending after their third birthday and usually for three terms leading to starting school. Children access different sessions across the week. Most are using the 30-hours funding, some attend the full five days and others only 15 hours.

Tina Burke, teacher at Whitecross Nursery, says: "We were offered access to training and the Balanced System through the TALK Derby project when this was extended to the whole city in November 2019.

The nursery is based in a relatively affluent area of the city, which means that we face slightly different issues and challenges to settings in other areas of Derby. Using the Balanced System has enabled us to gain positive feedback on what we are doing well and focus on a few areas where we want to improve.



SCHOOLS AND SETTINGS

Settings can access The Balanced System through TALK Derby

Whitecross has completed the Understand phase of the system – an audit of communication, speech and language activities using defined categories and by grouping interventions into universal, targeted and specialist. They are now on the Plan and Do phase and are implementing a number of actions and setting targets.

Tina says; "One of the key actions was to involve staff more in the activities of the Special Educational Needs (SEN) co-ordinator and make sure outcomes from external meetings were shared and understood. The SEN Teaching Assistant now has more formal opportunities to feed back to staff, for example, when liaising with speech and language therapy for a specific child.

"We are also looking at supporting parents and looking at things we can provide to do at home. One of these is Rhyme Sacks which contain a rhyme and props which the children can take home and share with their parents or carers."

Tina also says the 'understand phase' identified that communication, speech and language activities and interventions were working well for children identified with specialist needs and more generally across all children, but those in the middle needed more focus.

"We need to look more at the children in the middle – the 'targeted' children. These may be children that are waiting to be seen by a speech and language therapist, or have seen one and we have been asked to continue our work and monitor progress. We are now working on this as a nursery."

Tina concludes: "The main benefit to us has been that it has made us focus on what we are doing to support communication, speech and language. We didn't find many gaps when we did the Understand phase but we have found the joint sessions, where we can share our experiences with other settings, have been very helpful. It's also been nice to meet the people based at other settings across the city with different challenges and issues.

"I would recommend the Balanced System process, even if you're doing well supporting communication, speech and language in your setting. It's a great way to evidence that and get positive feedback. It will show you any gaps and help you put plans in place to improve. All settings have areas they can improve on, we can never be complacent."