

Overview

Speech Bubbles is a targeted, year-long, evidence-based intervention for children in Key Stage 1 who display a Speech, Language and Communication Need. The programme runs over 24 weeks across an academic year (eight per term). It aims to support 20 children in Year 1 and Year 2 in developing their Speaking, Listening and Attention Skills. The programme also aims to enhance the skills of a member of school staff (a high-level TA, Learning Mentor or SENCo (Special Educational Needs Coordinator), for example) to run small group creative work. Speech Bubbles was originally created by London Bubble.

The programme aims to celebrate children as storytellers: in the roles of author, performer, and audience for each other's stories. Children who are struggling with their communication are empowered to tell their stories and act them out. They are encouraged to feel confident using their voices and develop and improve their listening and attending skills, as well as performance skills and overall confidence in verbal and non-verbal communication. The programme invites parents to attend two sessions (at the end of the first term and the third term) so they can share their child's achievements.

In 2012-2013, Half Moon ran a pilot Speech Bubbles programme for two Tower Hamlets primary schools and a primary school in Brent. This pilot was in partnership with London Bubble, supported by SHINE. Since then, we have grown the project in Tower Hamlets. In the academic year 2021-2022, with the support of funding from the DCR Allen Charitable Trust, the Harold Hyam Wingate Foundation, the Chartered Secretaries and Administrators Charitable Trust, the Souter Charitable Trust and Tower Hamlets Arts Education Service (THAMES), we were able to offer subsidised places to nine schools in Tower Hamlets.

Schools

Christ Church Primary School
Kobi Nazrul Primary School
Manorfield Primary School
Mayflower Primary School
Our Lady and St Joseph's Primary School
St Anne's and Guardian Angels Primary School
St Saviour's Primary School
Stebon Primary School
Wellington Primary School



Speech Bubbles school staff and Half Moon practitioners at the year-end evaluation.

Monitoring

- 171 Participants
- 100 Male, 71 Female
- 86 English as an Additional Language (EAL)
- 87 in Year 1, 83 in Year 2, 1 in Year 3
- 71 eligible for Pupil Premium
- 11 Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) or Statement



The programme ran in nine primary schools in Tower Hamlets between September 2021 and July 2022. Eight of the schools ran the programme over 24 weeks (eight per term). One school ran the programme over 16 weeks (one of the schools was on a separately funded trial programme of a shorter (two terms), smaller (16 children) model for Covid recovery but this school went on to pay for the third, summer term of the programme. One school ran the programme over 20 weeks, having come on board to the programme in January 2022.

In eight schools, 20 children in Year 1 and Year 2 were referred to the programme (one school only referred 16). The children referred were divided into two groups of equal numbers who each received a 35-45minute session each week. Each group is normally a mixture of Year 1 and Year 2 children, but some schools preferred to work with single year group classes due to timetabling issues.

In each school the programme was delivered in partnership between a Half Moon drama practitioner and a member of school staff (a high-level TA, Learning Mentor or SENCo, for example). The programme relies on consistency: in terms of room, day and time of sessions, delivering practitioner and member of school staff. All school staff and drama practitioners (seven from Half Moon) attended a day-long training session with London Bubble at the start of the programme. Schools and practitioners also attended and contributed to termly evaluation sessions.

This year continued to bring challenges in terms of logistical issues, given everything schools were having to deal with in light of the Covid-19 pandemic. Staff absences meant it was hard to have consistency of school staff members each week in sessions, children were absent at times and practitioners had to cancel sessions last minute due to their own illness.

Speech Bubbles is like being in school but you have to focus. We play games, we do good listening and we do stories which is actually pretty fun! – Speech Bubbles child

I like Speech bubbles because it's like another world! – Speech Bubbles child

I like it when we act the stories. Today I loved being the log! – Speech Bubbles child

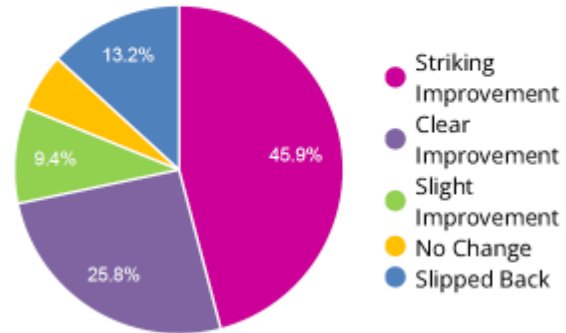
I loved the story. My brother would love this! – Speech Bubbles child

Evaluation and Impact Measurement

The programme ran well with excellent outcomes for participating children. Teacher assessments showed that 81% of pupils involved in Speech Bubbles improved their learning, speaking and listening skills this year:

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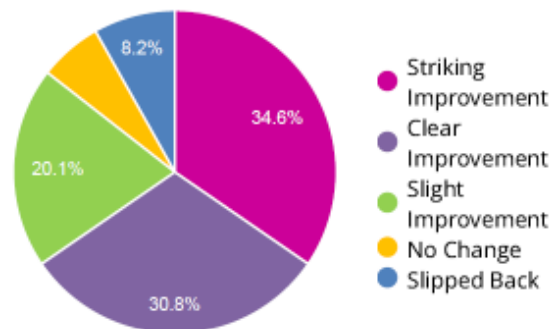
Learning, Speaking and Listening



86% of pupils involved in Speech Bubbles improved their emotional behaviour and conduct behaviour:

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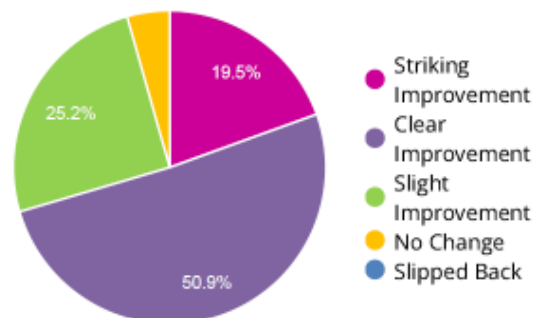
Emotional Behaviour and Conduct Behaviour

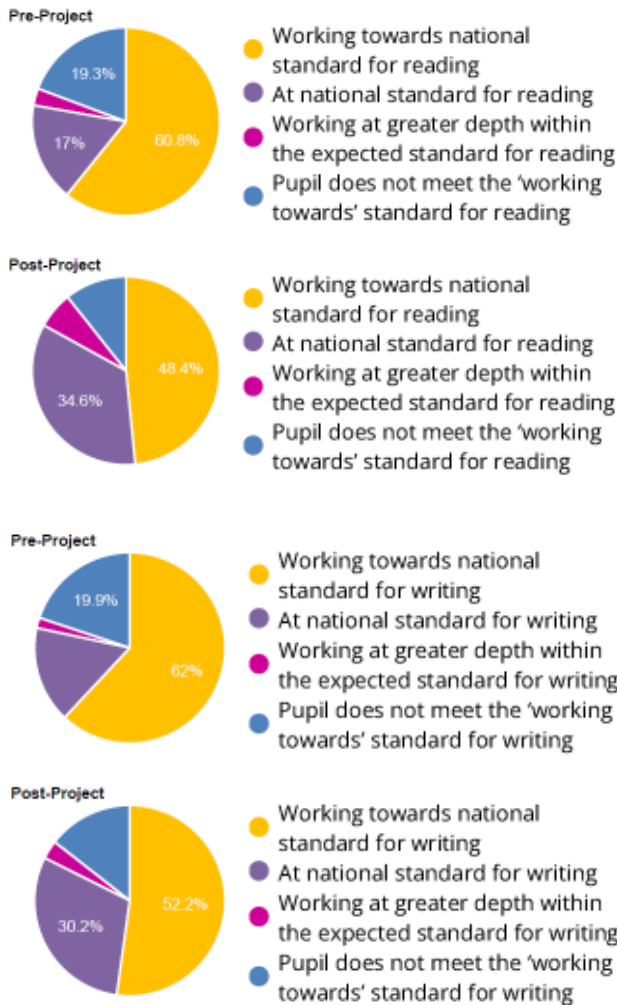


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Teacher Comments





Speech Bubbles is designed to support children’s communication development but we have also started to see its impact on supporting literacy development in the participating children. The number of children who were below age-expected targets for literacy (either working towards national standard or not meeting national standard) also fell from 80% at the start of the programme in reading and 82% in writing to 60% in reading and 67% in writing at the end of the programme. The number of children working at or above national standard rose from 20% in reading and 18% in writing at the start of the programme to 40% in reading and 33% in writing at the end of the programme.

Analysis of Pre- and Post-Project Forms

For each child referred to the programme, teachers complete a pre- and post-project online form. These forms note the frequency of behaviours related to 'learning, speaking and listening' (scored 1-6) and 'emotional behaviour and conduct behaviour' (scored 1-6). Teachers are asked to make comments about whether the child is currently reaching age expected targets for reading and writing. In the pre-project form they provide a short statement as to why the child has been referred to the programme; and in the post-project form, comments to help us understand any changes observed in the child. At the end of the programme the scores are compared, and children are then placed in the categories of 'striking improvement', 'clear improvement', 'slight improvement', 'no change' or 'slipped back' based on the scores and the comments made.



In learning, speaking and listening 46% of children showed an overall striking improvement, 26% showed a clear improvement, 9% showed a slight improvement, 6% saw no change and 13% slipped back.

In emotional and conduct behaviour 35% of children showed an overall striking improvement, 31% showed a clear improvement, 20% showed a slight improvement, 6% saw no change and 8% slipped back.

In teacher comments about the change, they had noticed back in the classroom, 19% of children showed an overall striking improvement, 51% showed a clear improvement, 25% showed a slight improvement and 5% saw no change.

Examples of pre- and post-project scores and comments for those children who have made a 'striking improvement' overall:

TA scored 14 and 31 at the start of the programme

TA scored 8 and 21 at the end of the programme

Teacher comments at the start of the programme:

T is a lovely boy, who would really needs to have a friendship group. He often plays alone and is quite solitary as he finds it difficult to make himself known/understood. He has been part of the NELI intervention and other interventions to support his speech and vocab however, he is still significantly behind his peers.

Teacher comments at the end of the programme:

T has had an impressive boost in confidence. He communicates his needs well and is able to form longer sentences. He works hard to share his thoughts and ideas.

AA scored 26 and 34 at the start of the programme

AA scored 16 and 24 at the end of the programme

Teacher comments at the start of the programme:

A finds reading, writing and number work tricky. It would be wonderful to help him build his confidence and verbal literacy.

Teacher comments at the end of the programme:

A has developed a really great attitude to himself and his learning. He is growing in confidence and works so hard. He is less reluctant to speak in class and is very engaged.

AH scored 18 and 36 at the start of the programme

AH scored 16 and 24 at the end of the programme

Teacher comments at the start of the programme:

A gets on well with her friends but struggles to listen and engage with learning.

Teacher comments at the end of the programme:

I have been very impressed with the change in A's engagement in learning. She really tries hard to listen and engage now.



SR scored 29 and 36 at the start of the programme

SR scored 16 and 24 at the end of the programme

Teacher comments at the start of the programme:

S is quite quiet and reluctant to speak in front of people a lot of the time. She fades away into the background when working in groups and seems to lack confidence to speak or take any control. Quite shy and lacking in confidence.

Teacher comments at the end of the programme:

S has come out of her shell completely and is so confident speaking to her peers and adults. Her abilities in all subjects has improved massively, especially writing. She is so close to reaching secure in her reading. I have been majorly impressed with her progress academically and in confidence this year.

DB scored 26 and 34 at the start of the programme

DB scored 13 and 24 at the end of the programme

Teacher comments at the start of the programme:

D is a shy child who works better in small groups. She lacks confidence in her own abilities and rarely expresses her opinions during whole class activities. She will answer some questions when chosen but often becomes embarrassed. It would be good for her to work on her confidence when expressing ideas, thoughts and opinions with larger groups. This would also then help her feel more confident to complete work with more independence and form relationships with those outside of her family.

Teacher comments at the end of the programme:

D has made huge improvements in all aspects of her learning this year. Although she is still working towards the year group expectation, she is significantly closer than she was at the start of the year. D participates well in class, asks and answers questions and is able to communicate effectively with both adults and peers. She has friends who she plays well with and engages in conversation with them. D will take part in drama activities in class and even share her work with others. D listens carefully. Her progress in reading and writing has been outstanding - going from not recognising the letter 'a' to reading phase 5 phonic books independently.

AJ scored 29 and 35 at the start of the programme

AJ scored 16 and 24 at the end of the programme

Teacher comments at the start of the programme:

A is a very capable child whose lack of confidence can sometimes hinder her learning as she will not ask for help when needed. While she has made some improvements in sharing her ideas and opinions with familiar adults, she still lacks confidence in sharing with the whole class. She will often become extremely embarrassed when asked a question, even if she knows the answer and sit in silence rather than answering. She will quietly say the answer to me however. It would be good for her to work on her confidence when expressing ideas, thoughts and opinions with larger groups.

Teacher comments at the end of the programme:

A has come a long way with her communication skills. She is able to actively participate in all areas of learning, work well with partners and other children in her class. A is confident to share her work, reading it aloud, share ideas from paired talk and even role play as different



characters. A can recall stories that have been heard in class and use these as inspiration for her own stories.

RD scored 24 and 33 at the start of the programme

RD scored 13 and 23 at the end of the programme

Teacher comments at the start of the programme:

Building confidence and speech and language

Teacher comments at the end of the programme:

R almost always completes her learning, concentrates well in class, she is more confident with participating in class discussions. She has also started to ask for support if there is anything she doesn't understand. She has formed healthy friendships within the class.

TG scored 18 and 33 at the start of the programme

TG scored 16 and 23 at the end of the programme

Teacher comments at the start of the programme:

Confidence

Teacher comments at the end of the programme:

T has started to concentrate more in class, is more willing to complete all his learning and move onto the next task. He shows more interest in class discussions. His confidence has progressed with more participation in answering questions.

FB scored 19 and 31 at the start of the programme

FB scored 13 and 20 at the end of the programme

Teacher comments at the start of the programme:

Would benefit from a smaller-group to articulate his outlandish ideas.

Teacher comments at the end of the programme:

More confident to talk to staff members about things that may have gone wrong and saying hello to unfamiliar adults in school.

RK scored 21 and 27 at the start of the programme

RK scored 11 and 21 at the end of the programme

Teacher comments at the start of the programme:

Great 1-1 but clams up in larger feedback sessions or in demonstrating his work.

Teacher comments at the end of the programme:

Much more confident around larger crowds such as coming into the hall during whole school assemblies.

TP scored 24 and 34 at the start of the programme

TP scored 15 and 24 at the end of the programme

Teacher comments at the start of the programme:



T is anxious about coming to school and about new learning experiences that we may be doing. T needs routines and familiar faces for him to open up and feel comfortable to attempt the learning. T has made improvements in his speech and language but needs constant adult support and encouragement in his learning.

Teacher comments at the end of the programme:

Less anxious and more willing/confident to have a go. Has made fantastic progress over the course of the year in all of his learning.

MA scored 24 and 36 at the start of the programme

MA scored 17 and 24 at the end of the programme

Teacher comments at the start of the programme:

M lacks confidence in a large group. She is often very quiet when on the carpet and needs support for group discussions.

Teacher comments at the end of the programme:

M is very vocal she is able to express her feeling and thoughts to adults and peers, she has become more and more confident throughout the year. She is comfortable and confident with different adults e.g. PE teacher and music teacher.

AC scored 22 and 32 at the start of the programme

AC scored 16 and 23 at the end of the programme

Teacher comments at the start of the programme:

A needs some support with his communication during whole class session. He communicated using eye contact and body language. He is confident communicating with his friends and in small groups.

Teacher comments at the end of the programme:

A is more confident in class, he takes pride in his work and would often then an adult what he has achieved. He is very eager to learn and explore new learning and activities.

NH scored 30 and 36 at the start of the programme

NH scored 19 and 24 at the end of the programme

Teacher comments at the start of the programme:

N has a limited vocabulary and often gives answers using one-word responses. He needs questions repeated or rephrased to help him answer them. He communicates well with his peers in a social setting, i.e. the playground. N needs support with his writing in terms of forming sentences.

Teacher comments at the end of the programme:

N has made great progress this year. His understanding has improved and he uses full sentences to communicate ideas with the class. He is always willing to join in with whole class discussion and works well in pairs and small group tasks.



We can celebrate all the positive results for the children detailed in the sections above, but we must also comment on the children for whom comparing their pre- and post-project assessments show fewer positive results.

Children whose scores reflected 'no change' or having 'slipped back':

Some children were shown to have seen 'no change' or 'slipped back' in the scoring system for their learning, speaking and listening score or emotional behaviour and conduct behaviour score. This reflects how our scoring system is not a perfect method and that there can be discrepancies due to teachers' scoring children more rigorously at the end of an academic year, than at the beginning. The scores must be read alongside the comments made by the teachers that in some cases show some improvement in the children. It may also show that for some children, they did make good improvements in the Speech Bubbles sessions but that some of that was not yet transferring back to the classroom but was still happening. Some children also missed a few Speech Bubbles sessions and consistent attendance might have helped them make further progress. Some children mentioned below may benefit from returning for a second year of Speech Bubbles. We include practitioner comments on the children to give an understanding on whether the child was starting to make improvements in the Speech Bubbles sessions even if those were not as yet transferring back to the classroom. In some instances, a child may need even more targeted support than Speech Bubbles can offer and consequently, schools can see that a child might need to be referred for one-to-one speech and language therapy.

There were children whose scoring was moderately reduced at the end of the programme compared to the start of the programme, but the teacher comments suggested some improvement. This is supported by the fact that teacher comments for 17 children who were scored as having 'slipped back' (-1 to -4 difference between start and end score) or shown 'no change' (0 difference between start and end score) reflect some overall improvement having taken place. Of these 17 children, 14 had seen an increase in one of their scores, even if there was no change or 'slipped back' in the other score. Given that these 'decreases' are only small numbers and our assumption that teachers' scoring may be more rigorous at the end of the year, they do not warrant further analysis below.

Examples of children who have 'slipped back' more than -3 in Learning, Speaking and Listening and/or Emotional and Conduct Behaviour:

DD showed a decrease of -5 in Learning, Speaking and Listening and -5 in Emotional and Conduct Behaviour.

At the beginning of the project, the teacher commented that:

D struggles with vocabulary and sentence structure, and although he is making progress and does try very hard we feel this will offer him an opportunity to improve his language and be confident to persist after the first time.

At the end of the project, the teacher commented that:

D is beginning to share his thoughts and ideas in class more and is becoming a more vocal member of the class. He is continuing to work on his concentration. D is also able to work

independently in some areas of the curriculum. He is engaging with a wider range of children in the class.

Our practitioner also commented:

He found it hard to focus at the beginning of the year, he would always try to enter the square when it wasn't his turn. His excitement can make him forget to take turns and listen to others. However, for the last half of the year he learnt to control his excitement and has become a really strong member of the group. He is excited to take part when it's his turn and when it's not his turn he is excited to watch others enjoy themselves. (D missed two sessions).

DE showed a decrease of -4 in Learning, Listening and Speaking.

At the beginning of the project, the teacher commented that:

D can be quite defiant, but also struggles with his language and relationships. He struggles with instructions, and is unconfident to try new things, even though he can do many things he doesn't think he can.

At the end of the project, the teacher commented:

D enjoys talking about topics that he is interested in e.g. his sister, sonic or spiderman. He has participated in some literacy lessons this half term focussing on the story 'Traction man' with his character being 'Super D'. He is still working on verbally expressing his emotions, as he would rather physically show us when he is feeling upset.

Our practitioner also commented:

D can come across very shy and quiet but get him to act out a story and he is fully committed and confident. I will never forget when I told D that it was his turn to tell this weeks story and the excitement and 'Yes' he shouted were brilliant. (D missed three sessions)

RO showed a decrease of -3 in Learning, Listening and Speaking.

At the beginning of the project, the teacher commented that:

R is a hardworking boy who enjoys his learning and participates well. He will give ideas during shared learning. He becomes emotional if he is struggling with his learning and finds it hard to communicate what is wrong. I would like to see R become more open to discuss his feelings and to express himself.

At the end of the project, the teacher commented that:

When R is happy and his emotions are stable, he is able to join in with class activities and work's well with his peers. He is confident to put up his hand to ask and answer questions. He will take part in role-play and drama in whole class or small group settings. R will talk in pairs and share his thoughts with the class. R listens carefully and picks up on specific vocabulary used in the books we are reading or from teacher talk. R is always keen to use these within the classroom. He has shown improvement in all of these areas.

When R is feeling sad or upset about something, which occurs most days, he shuts down. He struggles to communicate and will not engage well with his peers. He can raise his voice. He finds it hard to persist in challenging situations and becomes upset. There has been some progress in this area however it prevents him from completing his work.

Our practitioner also commented:

Having previously worked with R last year it was a joy to have him back. He has a great imagination and will always share ideas for what could happen next in a story. He takes turns, listens and supports others. He also loves his superhero's and loves the hulk. I have seen R really grow over the 2 years and if he continues to push himself and build his confidence he will do really well. (R joined in week 4 and missed one session)

CF showed a decrease of -3 in Emotional and Conduct Behaviour.

At the beginning of the project, the teacher commented that:

Struggles to organise thoughts when speaking

At the end of the project, the teacher commented that:

She has become more attentive to her learning when doing an activity. She has formed strong friends

Our practitioner also commented:

C has really enjoyed Speech Bubbles. She uses her whole body and voice in her acting, and is extremely expressive, for example, she was a great lost kitten in one story, mewing sadly and moving her whole body like a cat. She has learnt to take turns, waiting patiently, and listening to others ideas well. She understands the questions about the stories and answers confidently. (C missed one session)

IR showed a decrease of -3 in Learning, Speaking and Listening.

At the beginning of the project, the teacher commented that:

She has difficulty forming healthy and positive relationships with peers.

At the end of the project, the teacher commented:

Confident communicator

Our practitioner also commented:

I was showing some slow progression for the first term. Then she seemed to become quieter and shy and had a tendency to sit next to one of the TA's and not engage with the session. The TA's checked if she was okay and she said she was having some friendship problems. The change in class teachers/ TA's in the Speech Bubbles groups could have contributed. Her story was very similar to The Ugly Duckling and so we explored themes of friendship which she did well. In the last few weeks she seemed much happier and more confident. She offered playful creative ideas and made silly faces as characters. She made us adults laugh a lot in the last session!

HU showed a decrease of -5 in Learning, Listening and Speaking.

At the beginning of the project, the teacher commented that:

Reluctant to speak in class.

At the end of the project, the teacher commented:

Growing in confidence

Our practitioner also commented:

H was a quiet child. He was reluctant at first to go into the story square and found it pressurising. Over time he gained confidence in this, particularly when acting in a group with others. He sometimes froze when asked a question. Developed a nice playful friendship with Amirah who is more confident. He found it hard to give a story and needed prompting. Always had ideas to offer for what his name in the bucket tasted like. Gave thoughtful ideas in the games as well. (H missed two sessions)

KA showed a decrease of -6in Learning, Speaking and Listening.

At the beginning of the project, the teacher commented that:

Has quite slow speech and is fairly quiet in class.

Lacks confidence in whole class situations.

At the end of the project, the teacher commented that:

K engages in classroom discussions more. He shares his thoughts with his peers in group and paired activities. K can communicate his needs with the adults in the classroom.

Our practitioner also commented:

K was really consistent across the year, he seemed to really enjoy coming to SBs - was focussed and engaged throughout. He very rarely volunteered to answer questions or give ideas, but would do so if asked and seemed to enjoy contributing (but we did have to be careful that he didn't disappear into the group, as he could do if we didn't ensure he was contributing). He told a lovely story at the end of the year about some good people in England helping some homeless people. (K missed four sessions).

MB showed a decrease of -4 in Emotional and Conduct Behaviour.

At the beginning of the project, the teacher commented that:

M has a limited range of vocabulary and finds it difficult to form sentences. She needs support when answering a range of questions, e.g. what, who, where. However, she is much more confident when supported by visual aids and uses widget confidently to form sentences for written tasks.

At the end of the project, the teacher commented that:

M is more willing to participate during class discussions. She puts her hand up to join in and express ideas. She is more motivated to work with her learning partner during paired tasks.

Our practitioner also commented:

M ran into every Speech Bubbles session with a huge grin on her face, she would always engage and always came up with her own, thoughtful answers to questions. Towards the end of the year, she had started to struggle quite a bit in class, and teachers had noticed a change in behaviour. However, this never translated across into SBs - she always remained happy and engaged. Although she sometimes wondered away from the story square, or her attention appeared to have wandered, the moment you asked her a question, it was clear that her thoughts and focus were still present in the session, as she would always answer straight away. (M missed one session)

KC showed a decrease of -4 in Learning, Listening and Speaking.

At the beginning of the project, the teacher commented that:

Little confidence in front of peers.

Poor communication skills.

At the end of the project, the teacher commented that:

K sometimes needs reminding to communicate his needs with adults. K works well with peers but sometimes can be seen lacking in motivation.

Our practitioner also commented:

K was wonderful this year. I remember in one of the early sessions we were talking about favourite animals, and acting them out. His was an ant - and he was very tentative about doing the acting. So it was an absolute joy to see him in the final session of the year absolutely owning the story square as a cat and an ant (again). Kenny became very good at taking initiative on acting and having a go at playing lots of different characters. Kenny finds it difficult to say some words, but we really saw his confidence in speaking grow across the year. (K missed three sessions).

SM showed a decrease of -5 in Learning, Listening and Speaking.

At the beginning of the project, the teacher commented that:

Poor communication skills.

Does not articulate words properly.

At the end of the project, the teacher commented that:

Less reluctant to speak with adults when in need.

Our practitioner also commented:

S always came in to SBs enthusiastically and always tried really hard at the sessions. He had the biggest voice in the room and gave everything his all. He was a particularly good Spiderman in several of the sessions. He grew in confidence across the year and seemed very happy and settled in the sessions.

SK showed a decrease of -3 in Learning, Speaking and Listening.

At the beginning of the project, the teacher commented that:

Really quiet. Rarely contributes on the carpet.

At the end of the project, the teacher commented that:

She will share her thoughts and ideas but only when directed to do so.

Our practitioner also commented:

S is a really good student who is really dry and funny and comes up with the best ideas. She missed a lot of the first term but this hasn't had an effect on her progress and is a good example of why students should carry on even if they miss a lot. She loves getting in the story square and is a great actor. She takes turns and listens to others. (S missed four sessions).

NS showed a decrease of -5 in Learning, Listening and Speaking.

At the beginning of the project, the teacher commented that:

N struggles to share with peers positively and is often reactive if he gets into disagreements. He will hit out at his peers or shout at them aggressively. N avoids telling an adult and will instead take the situation into his own hands and react to the child. Sometimes he is unkind to his friends and laughs at them if they get something wrong. His target would be to be kinder with his peers and be a supportive friend when they need it as well as learning to take turns and react appropriately and positively when something doesn't go his way or someone does something he doesn't like.

At the end of the project, the teacher commented that:

N seems to have made more secure relationships with his peers and communicates much more effectively. He has reduced the amount of times he has an outburst or struggles to communicate with peers and is much better at talking about what is happening to an adult. He is better at listening to advice and communicating when he needs help. He can still find some interactions with his peers hard especially if they are pushing his buttons or doing something he doesn't like.

Our practitioner also commented:

N is a very good student and he is brilliant in the story square however he really struggles with his emotions. He gets very upset very easily. He and another upset each other a lot by winding each other up and telling on each other. I don't think they have a very healthy relationship and I think they would have both done better if they hadn't been in the same group. Overall I have seen some good improvement in him in his turn taking.

SA showed a decrease of -3 in Learning, Speaking and Listening.

At the beginning of the project, the teacher commented that:

He is developing vocabulary, speech is unclear.

At the end of the project, the teacher commented that:

He attempts to communicate with peers and adults

Our practitioner also commented:

S struggled at the start of Speech Bubbles to concentrate and was often distracted by his peers and the room. During his time with Speech Bubbles he has shown moments of understanding and the ability to listen and process instructions, however due to absences, he has often reverted backwards some weeks. His stories were not coherent and it was necessary for him to have visual aids in order to create them. His sentence structure is not always correct or language clear, he does however, enjoy moving his body and embodying characters. He was able to correctly arrange our visual timetable and its structure using imagery.

LK showed a decrease of -3 in Learning, Speaking and Listening.

At the beginning of the project, the teacher commented that:

L struggles with forming sentences and words when it is to do with the learning. If I gave him a sentence to write he would not be able to remember and would easily get distracted. When we are doing work in the classroom L's attention is minimal and he will get distracted

within the first 5 minutes of sitting and doing learning. If it is something he enjoys (like drawing) he is able to sit there. He struggles forming sounds and whilst having phonics and reading interventions since September he hasn't make progress. He is becoming aware of his difficulties and other children are picking up on them and correcting them so he is also becoming self conscious. He has limited vocabulary.

At the end of the project, the teacher commented that:

L has become better at communicating his feelings in the classroom. When something is upsetting him he can explain why. When it comes to learning he still has very little attention. He is becoming a little bit more confident in sharing ideas and his confidence in creating sentences using colourful semantics is emerging. He has no trouble communicating with peers about things that he likes and is able to have conversations, but this is rarely to do with the learning.

Our practitioner also commented:

L was initially distracted by his friendship with a classmate while in Speech Bubbles. His acting skills are advanced, and with little external encouragement he began to take the Story Square section of the session more seriously. He is an energetic and imaginative young person who has taken steady and positive steps in understanding the nuances of group dynamics.

LC showed a decrease of -6 in Emotional Behaviour and Conduct Behaviour.

At the beginning of the project, the teacher commented that:

L lacks confidence in joining in with class learning and will often fidget or move away from the learning by distracting herself with another task in learning time. L is happy to please others and is a kind and caring member of the class. L does not receive support with her learning at home and has missed all learning during the C19 pandemic.

At the end of the project, the teacher commented that:

More confident in her reading. Still struggling with having consistent positive relationships with others and following instructions.

Our practitioner also commented:

L had a very interesting process. At the beginning she found it very hard to take turns and was very needy, often giving a stubborn response to not having her way. This improved a lot throughout and she became a very helpful and caring member of the group. She was always very happy to come to Speech Bubbles and loved being in the story square and showed a great enjoyment for drama. Her confidence was up and down but overall improved by the end. She matured a lot by the end of the whole process.

Areas for Development

We will continue:

- to urge all schools to consider sending two members of staff on the programme Induction Day in September to ensure that there is a member of staff with the appropriate skills available to cover if the main staff member is ill.
- to give really clear guidance and support to schools during the referral process so they do not refer children for behavioural needs alone;

- to give examples to schools as to why it is imperative that they write more detailed comments on each child in their pre- and post-project forms – making reference to the end of year impact report;
- to stick to groups made of just Year 1s and just Year 2s in some schools as it does work well in certain contexts;
- to encourage teachers to come and observe their pupils in Speech Bubbles sessions.
- to create materials for schools to create a display in their school about Speech Bubbles;
- to give examples to schools as to why it is imperative that they write more detailed comments on each child in their pre- and post-project forms – making reference to the end of year impact report.

We will also:

- as part of additional funding to Speech Bubbles CIO, train some practitioners to deliver an INSET for all school staff members to cascade the Speech Bubbles practice more widely throughout the school;
- talk to schools continuing with the programme for another year about whether the children who have appeared to 'slip back' or experience 'no change' would benefit from an additional year of the programme or different, more targeted support;
- produce a timeline document for the lead contact at each school to ensure they know at the start of the academic year when we will be in touch with them about assessments.

Conclusion

The Speech Bubbles programme is now embedded in some schools in Tower Hamlets and offers increasingly good, and often excellent, results for schools and participating children. It is important to always underline the need for consistency in the delivery of the programme, in terms of room and staffing; and ensure that it is delivered as a true partnership between the school and Half Moon. It is also important that schools are given an opportunity to make changes to their referrals, if necessary, after they have been delivering the programme for a term. We are already looking forward to continuing the programme in the coming academic year, working with at least six of the schools again.



Speech Bubbles session in action in Kobi Nazrul Primary.

Speech Bubbles Chant:

*In Speech Bubbles we do
good listening.
In Speech Bubbles we are
gentle with each other.
In Speech Bubbles we
take turns.
In Speech Bubbles we do
good acting!*