



WILLOW DENE School Development Plan 2026 - 27



To build on established communication approaches, ensuring our communication pathway and practice reflects emerging national developments in oracy and AAC



Communication is a well-established and embedded area at Willow Dene. As national developments in AAC, early language and oracy continue to evolve, our practice should remain current, evidence-informed and responsive to emerging best practice



Staff confidently implement consistent, evidence-informed approaches, families and professionals work collaboratively to support communication, and our practice influences and has impact beyond school



Drawing on DfE Oracy Framework and EEF guidance on Preparing for Literacy



Wider impact beyond the school.
Update across the year.

Contributing to whole-school communication policy and documentation and informing practice of external professionals including relevant charities and organisations

AUTUMN

What? (action)	Why? (is the change needed)	Success (what will it look / sound like?)	Evaluation (sources of feedback)
To identify and engage in high-quality CPD relating to Communication and AAC.	To ensure Willow Dene remain at the forefront of evidence-informed communication practice, understanding emerging national developments and considering their implications for our	Communication Matters conference attended and learning/new information reflected on to inform future practice.	Course evaluation forms.

	children and young people (CYP) at Willow Dene.	Key information shared with relevant teams.	
To develop an AAC pathway to support skill progression.	To ensure that class teams have a clear understanding of a CYP's targets and next steps linked to their use of AAC, from the point of implementation.	AAC target pathway in place to enable class teams to have appropriate targets to work towards at the introduction of an AAC device for a CYP. AAC clinic focused on review of targets and progress with AAC.	Class team feedback. Individual CYP use of AAC. AAC clinic minutes. Parent feedback.
To deliver AAC training for parents and staff alongside therapy teams.	To support the successful implementation of AAC at home as well as school for CYP by supporting parent/carer knowledge and confidence in use of AAC devices.	Parent training session delivered alongside SaLT. AAC devices used at home as well as in school. Parents/Carers report increased confidence and frequency of AAC use within everyday routines.	Parent feedback. CYP use of AAC. Evidence for Learning family app. Annual Reviews. SaLT home visit feedback.
To establish systems which support access to communication in the community for sixth form.	Having a transferrable communication system which can support consistent access to communication within the community will ensure all young people are able to develop skills in communication beyond the school environment.	Communication systems in place which can be used across regular community learning environments.	Sixth form team feedback. Annual Reviews. CLPs.
To establish and refine systems which support information sharing.	To further strengthen systems for information sharing so that key information can be utilised to inform practice and decision making.	Centrally stored database of AAC users at Willow Dene. All adults aware of specialist communication referral system and know how and when to use this. Regular meetings established between KW and SaLT team.	AAC user database Specialist communication referral form.

To update central communication systems within learning environments to provide consistency and communication opportunities.	To ensure all children are able to access a rich vocabulary linked to play experiences within learning environments to support communication development.	All learning environments have a core board and area specific fringe board to support communication. Both CYP and adults using and modelling communication within learning environments which matches CYP communication skills and goals.	Learning environments. Evidence for Learning. Class team feedback.
To create and implement communication systems within outdoor environments to support communication in play.	To ensure all CYP are able to access communication opportunities linked to play within playground spaces, using language that is relevant to their experiences and that is easily accessible outdoors.	Communication boards based on core and fringe boards in central playground locations. CYP and adults using and modelling communication during outdoor playtime experiences.	Playground environments. Evidence for Learning. Class team feedback. Playground LW feedback.
To support implementation of the Sense of Sound pre-foundations offer for CYP working at Early Development, alongside resources which support wider communication, language and early oracy.	To ensure CYP working at early development have access to a pre-phonics offer that strengthens the early communication, language and oracy skills that underpin literacy development.	All CYP have access to a daily phonics offer appropriate to their communication needs and learning profile. CYP working at Early Development are supported through the Sense of Sound pre-foundations offer. All adults are able to draw on best practice to support communication throughout the day.	Team feedback. LW feedback. Link leader discussions. Evidence for Learning.
To identify and establish links with external professionals.	To establish networking with external charities and agencies specialising in AAC, for example Good Point, to share experiences with wider community.	Professional partnerships established which result in shared practice, collaborative projects or reciprocal visits that inform communication practice.	