What can we learn from other schools already using the Balanced System® to develop SLCN Provision?
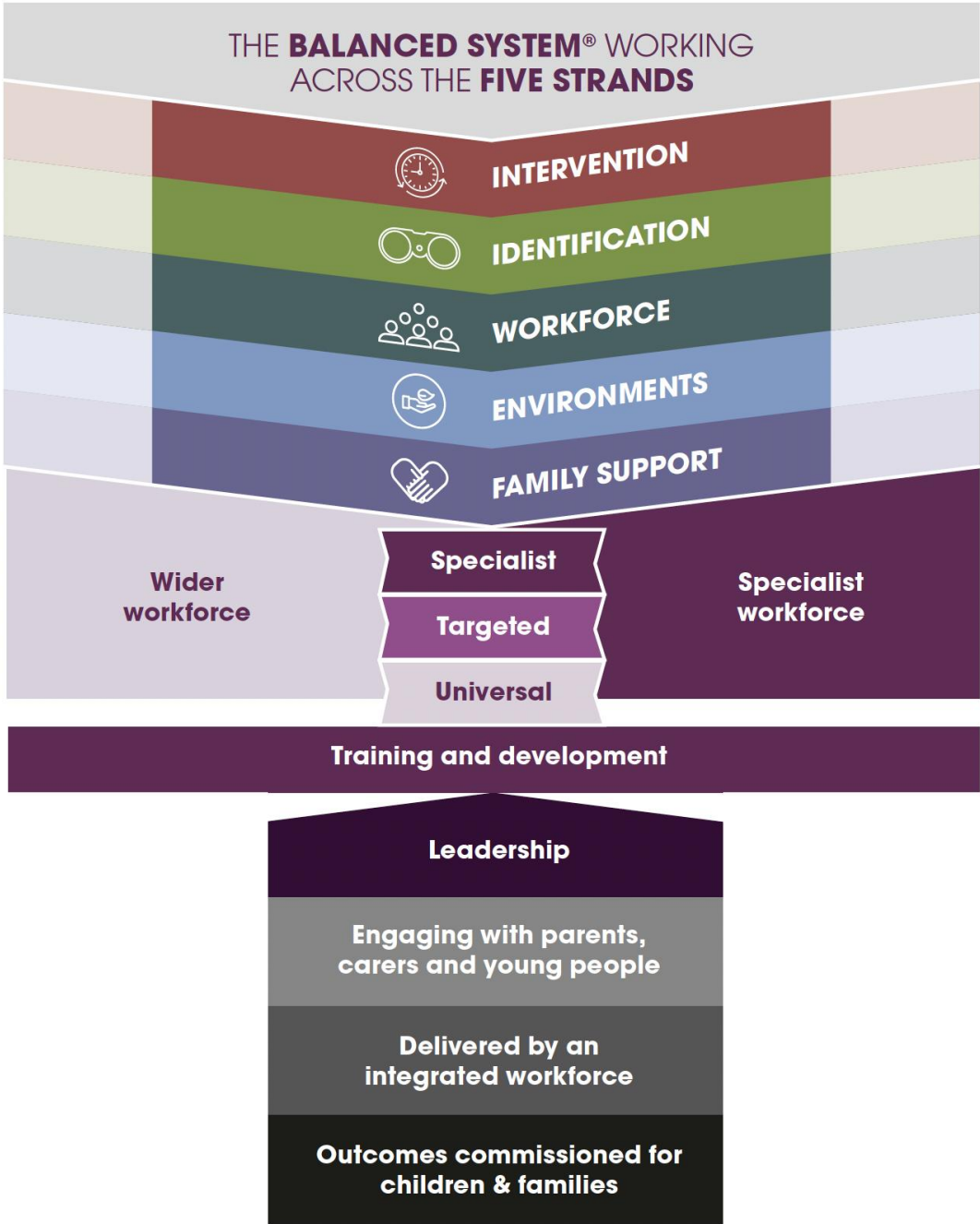
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8th October 2024

THE **BALANCED SYSTEM**® WORKING
ACROSS THE **FIVE STRANDS**

INTERVENTION

IDENTIFICATION

WORKFORCE

ENVIRONMENTS

FAMILY SUPPORT

Wider workforce

Specialist

Targeted

Universal

Specialist workforce

Training and development

Leadership

Engaging with parents, carers and young people

Delivered by an integrated workforce

Outcomes commissioned for children & families

THE BALANCED SYSTEM

THE BALANCED SYSTEM® HIGH LEVEL OUTCOMES FOR SPEECH, LANGUAGE AND COMMUNICATION NEEDS

THE BALANCED SYSTEM ®

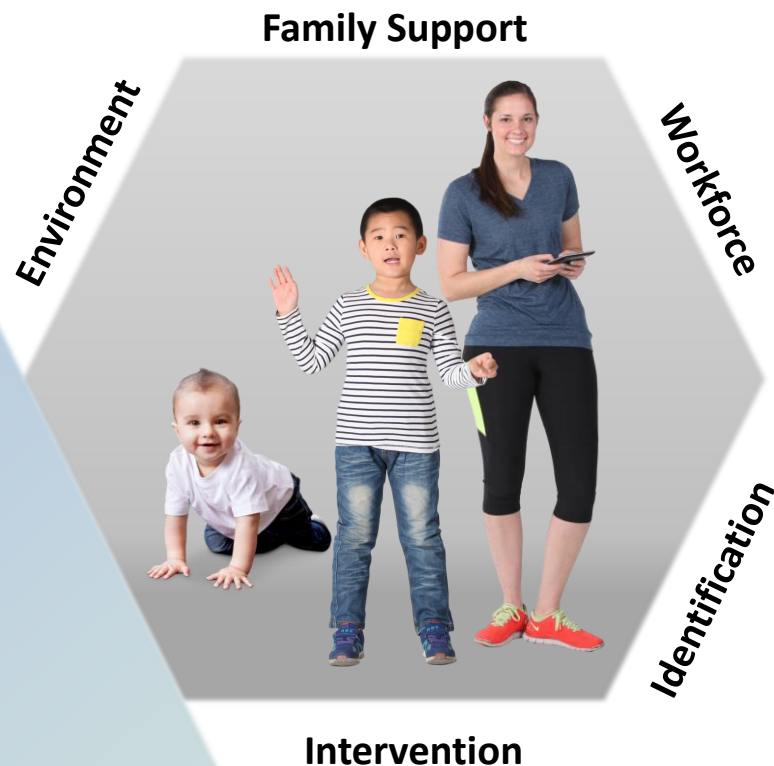| FAMILY SUPPORT	ENVIRONMENT	WORKFORCE	IDENTIFICATION	INTERVENTION
FS3. Specialist - Parents and carers of children with specialist SLCN receive specific specialist support to ensure confidence in their role as a key communication partner for their child and to increase their understanding of the specific communication challenges associated with their child's needs. Young people with SLCN are enabled to be active participants decisions about their support.	EE3. Specialist - Places where children and young people with specialist and complex SLCN spend their time for learning and leisure are communication friendly. The necessary adaptations are in place to maximise access in addition to the enhancements expected at a universal and targeted levels.	WW3. Specialist - Knowledge skills and expertise are developed in identified members of the wider workforce in order to ensure that, working with specialist support, there are staff that are confident and competent to support the delivery of specialist interventions including individual and small group work, support parents, adapt the environment and identify children who need specialist support.	ID3. Specialist - Children with specialist SLCN have their needs identified effectively and quickly. This includes multidisciplinary assessment where appropriate.	IN3. Specialist - Children and young people needing specialist intervention for their SLCN receive appropriate and timely provision in the most functionally appropriate context for their needs. Progress measures will include activity, participation and well-being goals in addition to goals relating to their core SLC impairment.
FS2. Targeted - Parents and carers of children with identified speech, language and communication needs (SLCN) access additional specific support to ensure confidence in their role as a key communication partner and educational support for their child. Families and young people with SLCN are supported to make choices and access services.	EE2. Targeted - Places where children and young people with identified SLCN spend their time for learning and leisure are communication friendly. Appropriate additional enhancements are made that enable children and young people with identified SLCN to more easily understand and to express themselves.	WW2. Targeted - The wider workforce is supported to develop specific knowledge and skills to support children and young people with identified SLCN. Setting and school staff are confident and competent to deliver targeted interventions, support parents, adapt the environment and identify children who need additional support.	ID2. Targeted - Efficient and accessible processes are in place that support the identification of more specific SLCN. The wider workforce, setting and school staff are supported to be confident and competent to identify children and young people who may require targeted support and/or referral to specialist services for their SLCN.	IN2. Targeted - Children and young people benefiting from targeted interventions will have access to evidence based targeted interventions to develop core speech, language and communication skills delivered in the most appropriate functional context. These might include 1:1 and / or small group interventions that are typically designed by specialist practitioners and delivered by those with appropriate training.
FS1. Universal - All parents and carers are supported with information and resources to encourage their role as effective primary communicative partners for their children. Families and young people are able to make proactive choices with respect to their child's or own needs.	EE1. Universal - Places where children and young people spend their time for learning and leisure are communication friendly. Environments have appropriate enhancements that make it easier for all children and young people to understand and express themselves.	WW1. Universal - The wider workforce is supported to have a good basic understanding of speech, language and communication including supportive strategies. Setting and school staff are confident in their role as facilitators of communication. The wider workforce has access to appropriate training around speech, language and communication.	ID1. Universal - Early identification of children and young people whose speech, language and communication needs may require targeted or specialist support is as efficient and accessible as possible. Preidentification information and advice is available in a given area, school or setting.	IN1. Universal - Homes, settings and schools are supported to develop the language and communication skills of all children and young people through language enrichment and supportive activities.

What Matters Most…

My family know how to support my speech, language and communication needs at home

The places where I spend my time are set up to help me understand and express myself

The other adults who support me know how to help me develop my speech, language and communication skills

If I am struggling and need extra help, I can trust someone will see and hear me and know what to do

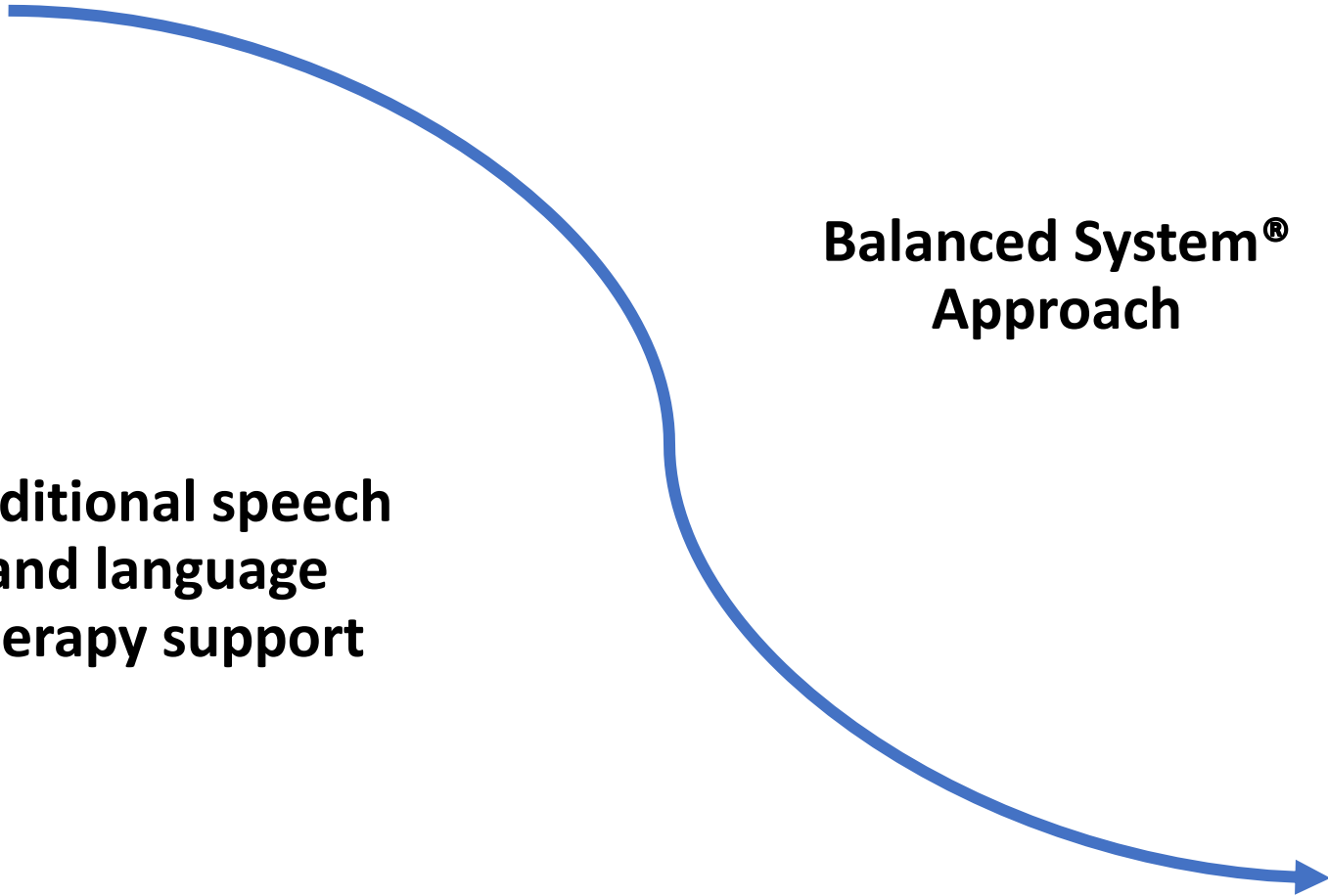I am given support at the right time to help me make progress

Family Support

Environment

Workforce

Identification

Intervention

THE BALANCED SYSTEM ®

The journey of a child with SLCN

**Balanced System®
Approach**

**Traditional speech
and language
therapy support**

The journey of a child with SLCN

Traditional approach

- Referral to SaLT

- Formal assessment (possibly in school, possibly in clinic setting)

- Gaps established

- Outcomes and targets identified by SaLT or no further action

- Report written

- Direct or indirect programme of support

- Reviewed

- Either wait for more intervention or no further action

PATHWAYS, TRAIN TRACKS AND STEPPING STONES

Outcome

B

We get the
system right to
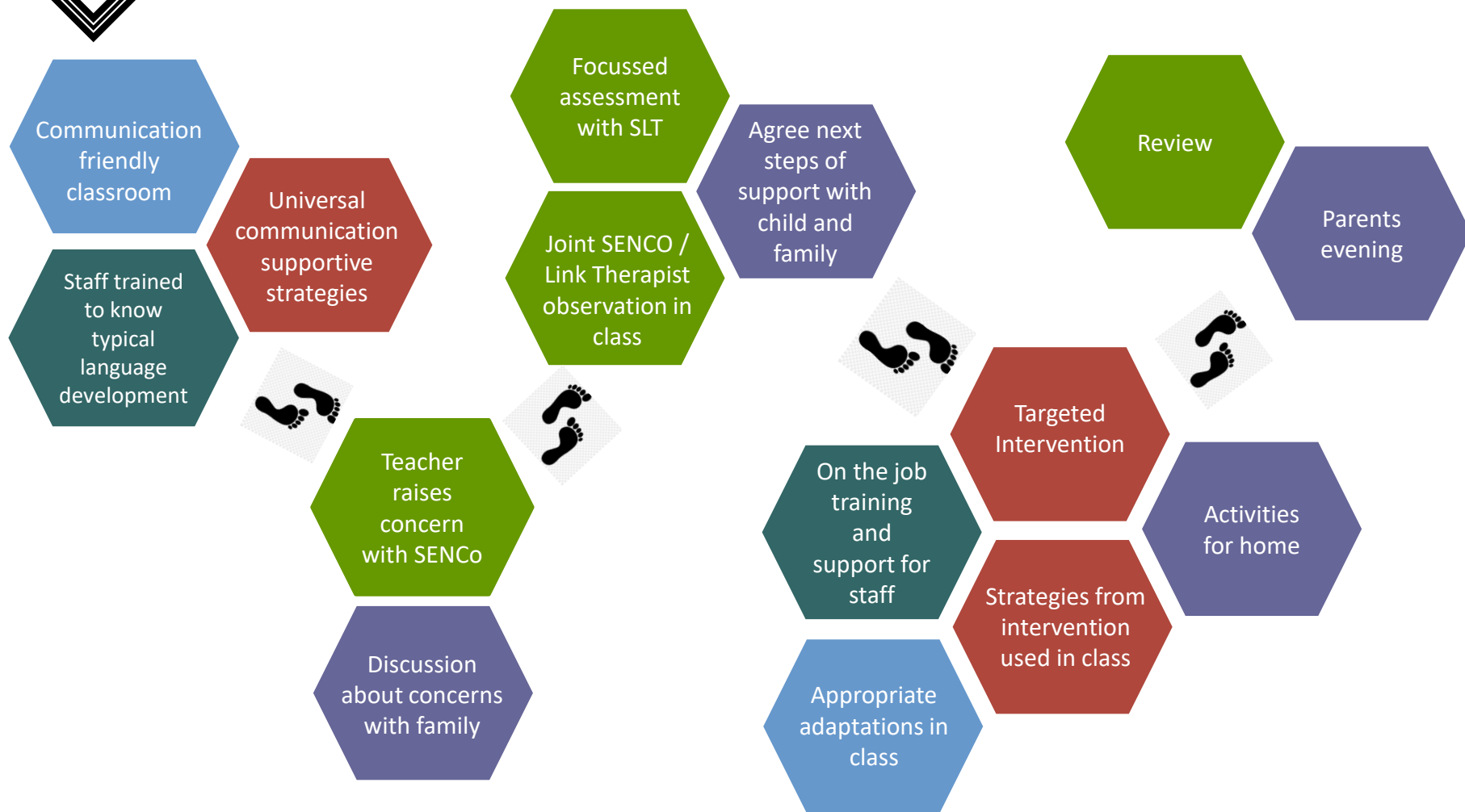allow different
journeys from
A to B

A

Rosa's Pathway

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WHAT WE DID (Link therapist's activities)

THE BALANCED SYSTEM®

	FAMILY SUPPORT	ENVIRONMENT	WORKFORCE	IDENTIFICATION	INTERVENTION
SPECIALIST	Specific strategies discussed with parents	Individualised strategies for a child with severe speech disorder	TA trained to support delivery of intervention for a child with severe speech disorder	Made onward referrals for a child needing further support for stammer	Provided direct therapy for a child with severe speech disorder (with TA)
TARGETED	Parent workshop - helping children learn new words	Supported development of communication boards for lunch hall	Coaching support for staff delivering vocabulary intervention	Joint observations with SENCo. Assessments and reviews as agreed with SENCo	Set up, coached and supported new targeted intervention for vocabulary
UNIVERSAL	Available at parents evening	Supported development of: Word walls Vocabulary mats	Brief sessions at staff meetings on effective vocabulary teaching; and supporting stammering	Recommended Language Link screen	KS 2 Assembly with teacher to introduce STAR approach

How is each journey experienced / supported by...

Child

Parent

Teacher

Speech and Language Therapist

Underlying beliefs

Traditional Approach

- Need an 'expert' to help
- Being told what to do
- Focus on what is wrong or the gaps
- No agency
- Reduced confidence and competence to meet needs
- Expert centred

Balanced System® approach

- Collaborative model
- Shared responsibility
- Focus on functional outcomes (what matters most)
- Empowerment
- Improves confidence and competence to meet needs
- Child centred

Balanced System® Core Delivery Principles

1. **Focus on functional outcomes and measures of impact**

2. **Access** – simple and easy access to the right information, assessment and support

3. **Place-based support** – Support delivered in the most functionally appropriate and relevant place

4. **Build the targeted offer (Continuum of provision)** – strong universal and targeted provision is key to facilitating access to specialist support as and when needed for a finite time

5. **Information –** high quality, accessible and consistent

Pinch with pride

- Some of our favourite examples from schools of activities to support outcomes at each of the Balanced System® five strands…

- In groups – decide which strand(s) you want to look at. Perhaps a priority for your school? Look at the example of provisions/activities from other schools.

- What can you take from these examples? What ideas does it spark?

Family Support

What?	Interactive 'wakelet' (webpage) about the importance of parent's role in supporting communication and language development. Parents asked to 'make a pledge' at the end of a parents evening via QR code e.g. "Eating a meal together and discussing our day"; "Discuss one major current affair in the news per week"; "Model the value of reading to my children";
Why?	Secondary school previously had no focus on universal support for families, but had high numbers of children with SLCN and SEN.
Impact?	"We banned devices at mealtimes. I don't know why we didn't do it before. We now talk about our days, give opinions, say how we felt about something that happened". "We've tried hard to play a board game together once a week. We're reading cue cards, instructions etc. arguing about our interpretations – all part of the fun!" "I can't believe I'm about to write this but to get my teen talking, I asked them to describe their favourite TikTok videos of the day. The one with best description means I have to watch it!! I reckon we've upped verbal communication by at least 50%"

Environment

What?	Cued Articulation delivered alongside phonics program universally in Reception
Why?	▪ Increased number of children coming into school with speech sound difficulties who were needing intervention to meet their needs. ▪ Phonics program (Little Wandle) did not have any visual cues to help children retain phonic sounds
Impact?	• Improvement in blending and segmenting skills and better retention of Phonic sounds • "The cues have also helped with the lowest 20% children as with just a reminder of the cue they are able to identify the sound they are reading" • "The cues have also enabled a child with very disordered speech to communicate more effectively with the adults in the room, when we can not understand what he is saying he will use the cue for the initial sound in the word which provides us with extra clues as to what he is trying to say. This has also minimised his frustration."

"The actions help me to know and remember the sounds"

Workforce

| What?	Creative ways to teach Makaton to all staff and engage children in this process including a Makaton Advent Calendar for all children and staff and "Caught Mak-handed!" award if staff 'caught' using Makaton in corridors.
Why?	- Makaton was not being used consistently across the school, even after training had been put in place to ensure key Makaton signs are used daily. - Lack of confidence of staff, especially non-teaching staff, in using key Makaton signs to support speech.
Impact?	"We really enjoyed learning the signing and we also taught these to our families at home. When pupils came into the office a Christmas time, we enjoyed signing to them and asking them to guess which symbol we were signing. This was fun and we really enjoyed being able to interact with the pupils." "Since February, 21 staff members have been 'caught Mak-handed' and are proudly displaying their prize badge or pen and certificate. Staff are noticeably making a conscious effort to use more signs to greet students."

Identification

What?	SaLT + Acting SENCo completing joint observation of a child. SaLT modelling strategies and tools that could be used to help identify next steps
Why?	- Concerns raised at Link therapy meeting about how child who had previous received direct SaLT is managing in school and accessing learning. - Lack of confidence in staff to be able to identify next steps and put them in place without specialist support.
Impact?	- Shared observation and discussion in 'real time' enabled Acting SENCo to see what the child needed from the adults supporting him and how to help him progress. This was linked to the AET Progression Framework which could be used again in the future. - Acting SENCo confident to move forward with small steps approach towards independent learning and child being more comfortable with a range of adults - Child engaging with learning in the classroom and benefitting from adult support that is responsive to his needs and communication.

Intervention

What?	Language through colour used universally rather than as a targeted intervention.
Why?	- In literacy sessions increasing numbers of children were being taught out in the corridor separately from their peers as they could not access the learning - Children needing additional support were taking TAs away from classes
Impact?	- Children are now able to meet learning objectives because barriers to participation have been removed "Colourful semantics didn't work the first time because I was using it to teach a concept, but now I can see that this was the wrong way round. Now I'm using it as a tool to remove a barrier to learning and it's having much more impact." "For a child who worries about what to write and really lacks confidence in getting ideas down on paper, it gives them support and boosts their self-esteem, which in turn boosts their motivation. I have children now who before weren't engaging in the activity, but are now excited about it and are demonstrating understanding and making progress".

Shared with hope…

- What are you going to take away from this session?

- Please let us know and give feedback here:

- https://forms.office.com/e/WwSuPa3nLs
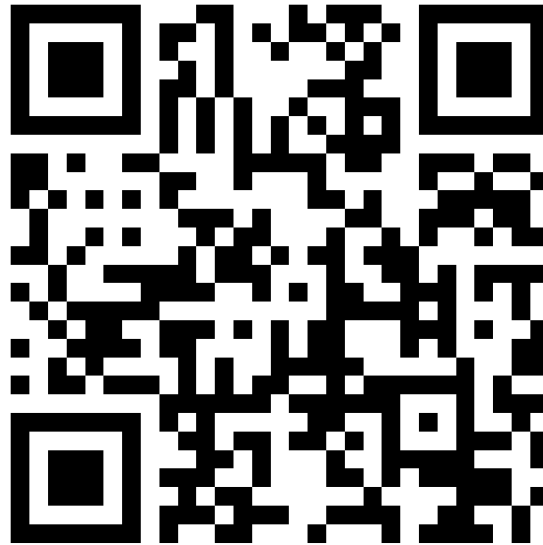
Further information / useful links:

- The Balanced System® in Kent for Speech Language and Communication Needs (SLCN) – KELSI

- If interested in Balanced System accreditation: What is it? : The Balanced System

- Audit of staff knowledge to support CPD Home - SLCF - The Communication Trust (slcframework.org.uk)

- The POD – Children's Therapies - The Pod | Kent Community Health NHS Foundation Trust (kentcht.nhs.uk)

- Information for parents and professionals: Speech and Language UK: Changing young lives

- RADLD | Raising Awareness of Developmental Language Disorder

- Speech Link and Language Link (universal screening and targeted intervention) Primary and Secondary packages Speech and Language Link - support for SLCN