**St Francis’ Nursery Unit**  
**Speech & Language Therapy and Phonological Awareness Policy**

**Introduction**

We the staff of St Francis’ Nursery Unit recognise that being able to read is one of the most important skills young children will learn during their early schooling and has far-reaching implications for lifelong confidence and well-being.

We recognise that it is our role to develop from the earliest stages in our setting, the children’s speaking and listening skills in all areas of the early years curriculum, so ensuring that beginner readers are ready to get off to a good start in phonetic work in Year One.

Developing speaking and listening skills are a priority in their own right and pave the way to making a good start on reading and writing. The more words children know and understand before they start on a systematic programme of phonetic work the better equipped they are to succeed.

In the early years we provide a broad and rich language experience for our children. We aim to enjoyably engage the children in worthwhile learning activities that encourage them to talk a lot, increase their stock of vocabulary and improve their command of dialogue.

In our setting the children will have lots of experiences of stories, rhyme, drama and song which help to fire the children’s imagination and interest, thus encouraging them to use language copiously in all areas of the curriculum.

**WellComm Language Assessment Toolkit**

During the Settling -In Period we assess all the children's expressive and receptive language skills using the WellComm assessment kit to identify any speech and language difficulties or delay. We use the information obtained to ensure that we cater for the needs of each child. For those showing difficulties and delays we make referrals to Speech & Language Therapy if necessary and work on their areas of development in Nursery using suggested WellComm activities. These activities are also sent home for the parents to work on.

All the children benefit from language activities so we implement WellComm activities each week into our whole class teaching. Those children with difficulties and delays are reassessed in Terms 2 and 3 to track progress and regular observations are made.
Small Talk ni - Professional Speech & Language Therapy Service

Using Extended Schools funding, Small Talk ni, (Professional Speech & Language Therapy Service) come into our setting to work with all the children on their receptive and expressive language. Work is also carried out with small groups of children experiencing difficulties with their speech, use of and understanding of language over five sessions. Through this intervention it is hoped that all the children will make progress in their language development.

In addition to this we provide a “Speech and Language and Phonological Awareness Programme” throughout the Nursery year and this is planned for and implemented every month. The core skills of attention, listening, memory, sequencing and discrimination will be addressed throughout the programme. We do lots of syllable clapping, clapping out the sounds in words. The children also have plenty of opportunities to experience and appreciate rhythm and rhyme and develop an awareness of rhythm and rhyme in speech, increasing their awareness of words that rhyme. We also introduce those children who are ready to some letter sounds through fun pre Jolly Phonics games and activities.

Some monthly activities are listed below:
(See monthly notes for more detailed plans)

September and October

- Assessment of Speech Sounds.
- Language Assessment
- Refer any children with significant Speech and Language problems to Speech Therapy.
- Facial Expressions to develop and enhance facial and tongue muscles and movement.
- Tina Tongue Stories

November

- Continue with September and October activities.
- Introduce some of Tina Tongue’s friends – Use Jolly Phonics characters.
- Play Sound Lotto games.
- Play “The teacher has a box . . .” – The children have to identify the noisy items in the box.

December

- Continue November activities.
- Play “Noisy Neighbour” game – Voice sounds.
• Talk about noisy and quiet situations.
• Make loud and quiet sounds with voices and instruments.

**January**

• Continue December activities.
• Play the “Listening Name” game.
• Animal Lotto game.
• Sound Lotto game.
• Make sound “ Socks and Shakers” – Guess what is making the sound.
• Introduce Syllable Clapping
  - Names
  - Vocabulary related to the topics – Shapes, Animals, Winter.
  - Everyday objects and objects in nursery.

**February & March**

• Continue February activities.
• Syllable Clapping
  - Names
  - Vocabulary related to the topics – Myself, Doctor’s equipment, Valentine’s Day, Pancakes.
• Introduce the children to the concept of rhyme.
• Make two word-rhyming strings eg. Humpty Dumpty.
• Make silly name rhymes eg. Hannah Banana.
• Missing rhyming words in familiar/unfamiliar songs and rhymes.
• Detection of non-rhyming words.
• “The Shopping Game” – Match rhyming character names to food items.
• “Noah’s Ark / Farm/ Zoo” Rhyming Games – Match rhyming character names to animals on Noah’s Ark / favourite animals.
• “Picture Rhyming” game – Recognition of words that rhyme with the target word presented.
• Play rhyming “Silly Soup” game – Identification of rhyming items that can be added to a bowl to make “Silly Soup”.

(The activities from April to June may only be suited to the top group of children in the setting. The other children should work on the activities of the previous few months during April, May and June).

**April/May/June**

• Continue February & March activities.
• “Rhyming Pair” game – Make a short rhyme using picked objects from a bag eg. A mouse in a house.
• Identification of a word in a group of three that does not rhyme.
• Introduce the Jolly Phonics Initial Letter Action Songs & Rhymes for:
  – S A T I P N rhymes.
• Recognise the above sounds at the start of a word. Use pictures for example of a sun, an apple, a tent, an igloo, a penguin, a nurse and ask the children to pick out the picture that starts with the above sounds, such as ‘S’.
• Identification of sounds that are loud or quiet.
• Play “Sound Box”.

September 2015