

Preparing for the start of your Secondary Language Link subscription

Secondary Language Link is a package for all your Key Stage 3 students. The standardised assessment is designed to be used as a whole class screen in Year 7 and then to track identified students through Years 8 and Year 9. Following assessment, group interventions are available for students who have been identified as having difficulties understanding language. Staff can access the SLCN toolkit to develop their skills in supporting students with speech, language and communication needs (SLCN) in the classroom.

Your school's Secondary Language Link subscription is due to start in September 2023.

To make the most of your subscription from the get-go, we'd recommend you consider doing the following before the subscription starts:

1) Access to a free trial

If you have not already done so, you are welcome to contact our Speech and Language Help Desk via email helpdesk@speechlink.co.uk, or by phone 0333 577 0784, to request a Secondary Language Link free trial. This will give you the opportunity to:

- Familiarise yourself with Secondary Language Link.
- Have a look at the resources and the content of the intervention groups.
- Run through the Secondary Language Link assessment on your computer. This will give us the chance to iron out any IT issues with you before you begin the process of assessing your Year 7 cohort.

2) Collate the information you need to add your pupils and classes to the system

When your Secondary Language Link subscription starts, your first task will be to add your classes and pupils. You can upload student data from SIMS or another MIS.

At present, we are only able to import pupil data uploaded in CSV (Comma Separated Values) format. Your CSV file must be less than 30MB and must contain the following data columns:

1. surname
2. forename
3. gender
4. dob
5. eal
6. pupil_premium

Getting student data ready to upload (in the format above) before your subscription starts will save you time when you're setting up your classes on the system in September.

NB: If you intend to upload student data from SIMS or another MIS, you should not add any individual students to the class first. It is only possible to upload student data to an empty class.

3) Organise your Year 7 universal screen

We recommend that the assessment is used universally in Year 7 to identify any hidden language difficulties which may impact on a student's learning and wellbeing, and then in years 8 and 9 for identified students to monitor their needs and progress.

Working out when and where you are going to screen your Year 7 students and who is going to support this process will likely take a bit of coordination and planning. Get the dates in the diary now! Things to consider:

- Students access the assessment online and complete it independently. The assessment can be carried out in groups, with a recommended staffing ratio of 1:12 for adequate supervision and invigilation.
- You will need to assign a PIN to each student so that they can access the assessment – this is not a complicated process, but you will need to factor time to do this into your planning.
- Students will each need access to an individual desktop or laptop computer with internet access and good quality headphones. We recommend a wired internet connection is used whenever possible. All headphones need to have been tested and confirmed to be in working order before proceeding with the assessment.
- The assessment will take approximately 40 minutes to complete, and we recommend that it be completed in one sitting, where possible.

4) Allocate preparation time to staff who will be running groups

Your Secondary Language Link package includes access to several fully resourced language intervention groups to develop students' language and communication skills. The Secondary Language Link assessment will support you to identify students who would benefit from being included in this intervention.

The adult delivering the intervention will need time before the group starts to familiarise themselves with:

- the content of the sessions including the videos, skills check, session plans, tracking sheets, resources, and communication cards.
- the Secondary Language Link site, particularly where to find the resources and where they need to input session outcomes information.

When adding the intervention groups to the timetable please be aware that:

- Sessions take approximately 45 minutes to deliver and should be delivered once a week.
- Each group consists of 7-9 sessions.
- All sessions include video content so the group will need access to a projector, interactive whiteboard or shared laptops.



...part of the Speech and Language Link
whole school approach