**Supporting Comprehension in the classroom**

Understanding spoken language helps children follow instructions, answer questions, understand stories and identify objects and pictures. A child’s understanding of language is usually ahead of their ability to use language.

Ways to support children in your class:

* slow down your rate of speech
* support your language with non-verbal clues - You can use gestures, pointing, facial expressions, pictures, etc. alongside simple words to help children understand.
* use visuals to support understanding, and encourage them to use visuals (to get their point across)
* break down instructions into shorter chunks to avoid presenting too much information at once
* order your sentences when giving instructions. Consider numbering your points too .
* give the children more time to respond and pause between instructions. Some children may need time to take in the information. A child may require up to 10 seconds to respond before the adult repeats or rephrases the question or instruction.
* check that the child understands.
* use pre warning strategies.
* consider using Blank levels
* re-phrase sentences - If a child does not follow instructions, they can be re-worded in a simpler way to encourage understanding.
* check they have the required vocabulary.
* reinforce and generalise new concepts and vocabulary - It is useful to have in mind new words and ideas the children are learning. These need to be regularly repeated throughout the school day in as many different situations as possible
* explicitly use new words in a range of contexts.
* use a multisensory approach to teaching new words.
* use the important/specific vocabulary in a sentence instead of words like: he/it/there
* ensure they understand **abstract** words such as; before, after, if, except, after that.
* build in regular brain / movement breaks
* provide scaffolds

Older children/young people:

* ask child/young person to tell you what it is they have been asked to do
* explicitly teach ‘comprehension monitoring’ strategies
* directly teach self-advocacy skills and embed them within classroom teaching, and the young person’s everyday life e.g. modelling how to ask for help or raise a concern. Practising skills such as conversation starters.