

## Speech, Language and Communication Needs (SLCN) Introducing 'The Balanced System®'

The way in which Speech and Language Therapy Service support is provided is changing, and the following information explains this.

Here in Kent, all schools have now adopted The Balanced System®, developed by Marie Gascoigne and provided through Better Communication CIC. This framework aims to ensure that children and young people with speech, language, and communication needs (SLCN) get the support they need.

Everyone involved with children and young people has a role to play in supporting the development of their speech, language, and communication. With this in mind, there are 5 strands to the Balanced system which are: family support, environment, workforce, identification and intervention. Within each strand, there are 3 levels of support:

**Universal** support is available to all children and young people to develop their speech, language and communication skills.

**Targeted** support is used when there is a concern about speech, language and communication or a need has been identified.

**Specialist** or individualised support is used where a child has more complicated speech, language and communication needs or may provide more specialist information and help.

Children can access all levels of support as appropriate and may benefit from support at more than one level at a given time. For most children with SLCN, universal and targeted provision will be enough to meet their needs.

**All schools have been allocated a named Speech and Language Link Therapist. Our linked therapist is Lara Dalton and we are focussing on family support in the first instance.** The therapist's role is to build a strong relationship with the school and support the development of speech language and communication provision across the five outcome strands and three levels. The therapist provides a range of support to schools, ensuring everyone is equipped to support children's communication needs. They will meet regularly with the SENCo to discuss specific children with SLCN and plan how to support them. They can also work with individual pupils or groups as appropriate. **If you would like an opportunity to meet the link therapist and find out more, please come along to our parent coffee morning on the 14<sup>th</sup> of May, straight after drop off, where Lara Dalton will be available.**