

School of Education

Empowering educational professionals to create strong language provision in the early and primary school years

A significant number of children now enter formal education with reduced levels of proficiency in oral language. Children who come from disadvantaged backgrounds and who are English language learners are at high risk of limited oral language skills which impacts on later educational achievement and socio-emotional functioning. In addition, significant concerns are raised about the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic and prolonged periods away from early years settings has had on children's language skills.

Our research aimed to evaluate the effectiveness of a knowledge exchange programme called Supporting Spoken Language in the Classroom (SSLiC)¹, which has been designed to support educational professionals to make changes across their setting to enhance children's oral language. It accomplishes that by providing practitioners with evidence-based tools that equip them with the skills to support children's language needs and create high-quality language learning environments. SSLiC uses evidence of effective professional development to provide training, regular mentoring and professional networking activities for staff, aimed at developing a systematic whole-setting approach to language support.

In this brief research report, we report on what was done, and what the outcomes were for your setting.

¹ SSLiC is a knowledge exchange programme developed at the Centre for Inclusive Education, at UCL/Institute of Education (London) in 2016 following research conducted as part of the Better Communication Research Programme (2009-2012).

What was done

In September-December 2022

- SSLiC Evidence Day: Introduction to the research evidence in the elements that support language and communication in educational settings.
- Completion of the SSLiC Self-Assessment School Audit.
- Completion of the SSLiC Action Plan.
- Monitoring of the SSLiC Action Plan and reviewing SSLiC Project activities in settings.

In January-April 2023

- Monitoring of the SSLiC Action Plan.
- Reviewing SSLiC Project activities in settings.
- Supporting the collection of evidence of impact of SSLiC Project activities.

In May-June 2023

- SSLiC Review Day: presentation of SSLiC Project activities and sharing of practice with other participating settings.
- Writing Case Studies to summarise SSLiC Project activities that can inform the wider educational community of 'what works' in educational settings for supporting children's language and communication.

Evaluation activities

At a pupil level: a sample of children in settings were observed to assess children's engagement with learning (using the Pupil Engagement Measure²).

At a setting level: classroom observations were completed to assess the quality of the language learning environment (using the Communication Supporting Classrooms Observation Tool, CSCOT³).

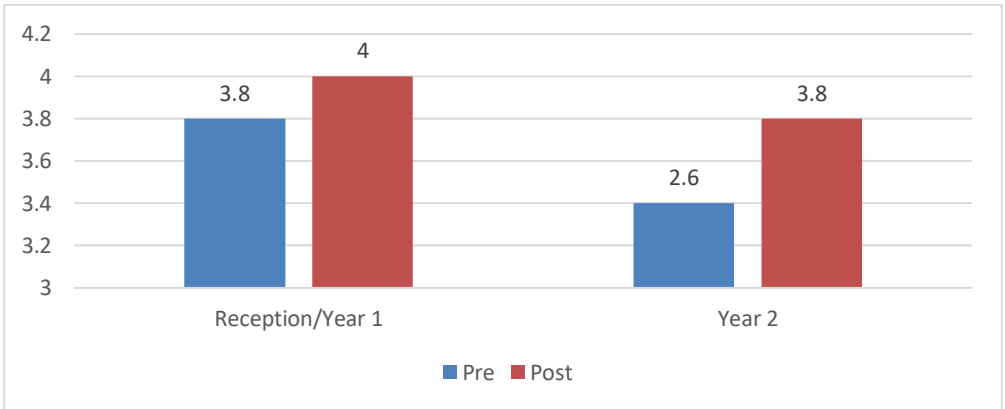
² Pupil Engagement Measure, Speech and Language UK.

³ Dockrell, J.E., Bakopoulou, I., Law, J., Spencer, S., & Lindsay, G. (2012). Communication Supporting Classrooms Observation Tool. Freely available from:
https://www.thecommunicationtrust.org.uk/media/93866/tct_bcrp_csc_final.pdf.

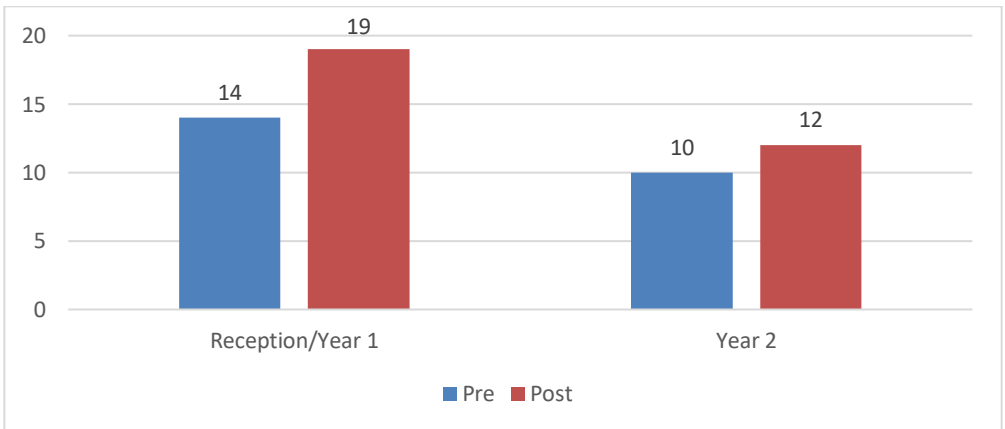
What we found

The following sections present the main findings of the evaluation for your setting.

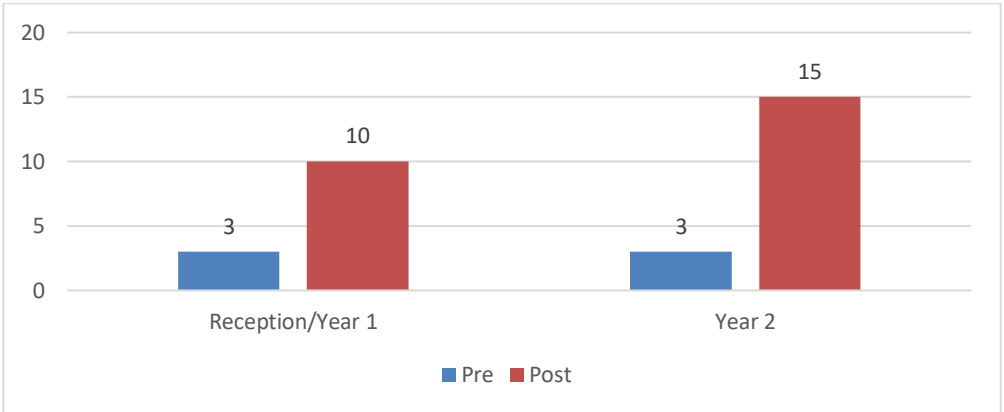
Pupil Engagement Pre and Post-SSLiC



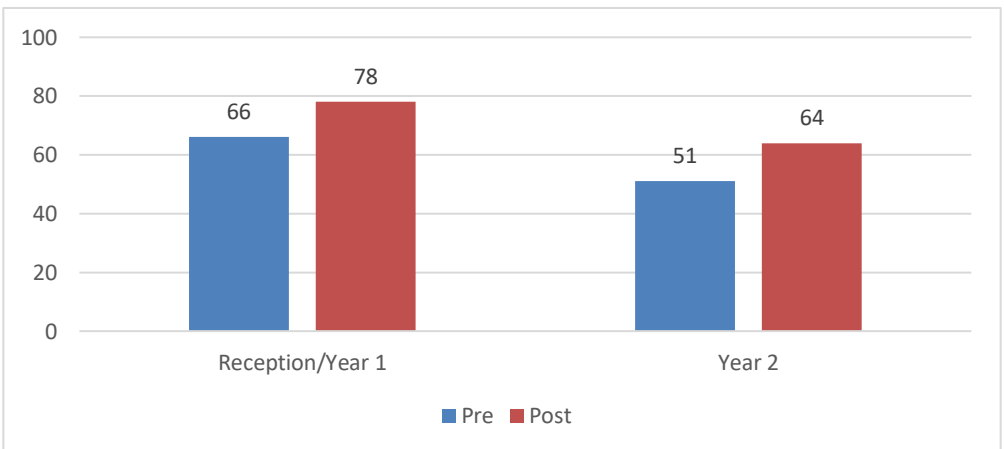
Language Learning Environment CSCOT Pre and Post-SSLiC



Language Learning Opportunities CSCOT Pre and Post-SSLiC



Language Learning Interactions CSCOT Pre and Post-SSLiC



Conclusion

Noticeable positive changes were observed in pupil engagement measures and the quality of the language learning environment across all year groups in your setting.

If you are interested in continuing your involvement with the SSLiC programme in the following academic year (2023-2024), please contact Ioanna.

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