

# Welcome

Early Years Curriculum Roadshow  
June/July 2022



# Content of the session

- The importance of communication and language.
- A curriculum for communication and language.
- Making progress through knowing more and remembering more
- How we look at communication and language on inspection

Amanda Spielman (HMCI)

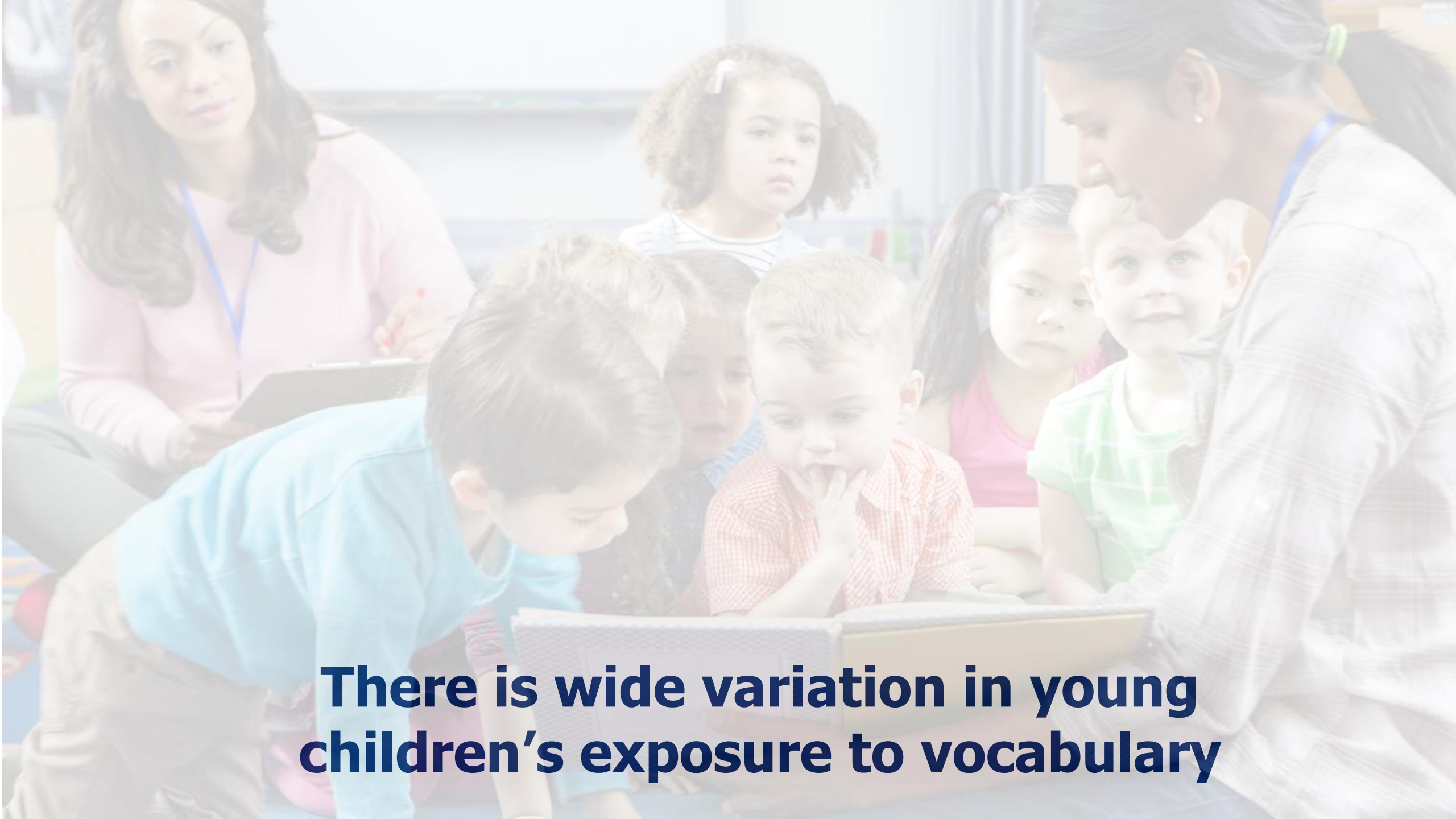
*'Thank you, as ever, for the determination and talent you and your staff show every day.'*





1

# The importance of communication and language



**There is wide variation in young children's exposure to vocabulary**

# Vocabulary size relates to academic success

Such correlations between vocabulary size and life chances are as firm as any correlations in educational research.



# Developing children's spoken language

- The rate at which children develop their language depends on the **quality and quantity of interactions** with adults.
- Some children will understand more and know more words than others when they first join an early years setting simply because of the quality and quantity of interactions they have already had.
- Children who begin with a poor understanding of language will need considerable support to develop their spoken language.

# What we know from our education recovery research

- some babies have struggled to respond to basic facial expressions
- delays in children's speech and language development
- social and friendship-building skills have been affected and children need more support with sharing and turn-taking
- regression in children's independence and self-care skills
- impact on children's physical development, such as delays in babies learning to crawl and walk.





2

# A curriculum for communication and language



**'The development of children's spoken language underpins all seven areas of learning and development.' EYFS 2021**

# Educational programmes must involve activities and experiences that provide:

- back-and-forth interactions
- conversations
- new vocabulary
- frequent exposure to books and extensive occasions to use and embed new words
- opportunities to become comfortable using a rich range of vocabulary and language structures.



# Exploring the curriculum for communication and language

Aims:

Building vocabulary and language structures  
Using new vocabulary and language structures

Through:



Interactions



Stories, rhymes and songs

Activities are not enough!

Activities are not a substitute for building increasingly detailed structures of knowledge



Curriculum thinking should prioritise:

Building vocabulary and language structures

Providing opportunities for children to use new vocabulary and language structures

# The curriculum is not...

- the same as teaching (pedagogy): the curriculum is **WHAT** is taught and not **how** it is taught.
- the same as providing 'experiences'. Providing 'experiences' is not a substitute for thinking about what children need to learn.
- about devising more and more elaborate or creative activities
- a substitute for working out what children need to learn and know.

# A good curriculum...

- is based on proactive thinking
- is the product of clear consideration of the sequence of knowledge necessary for children to make progress
- ensures that **all** children are ready for the challenges that await them.







3

**Making progress through knowing more  
and remembering more**



Knowledge does not sit as isolated 'information'  
in children's minds.



Has the content of the curriculum  
been learned long term?

'Learning is defined as an alteration in  
long-term memory. If nothing has altered  
in long-term memory, nothing has been  
learned.'

Sweller, J., Ayres, P., & Kalyuga, S. (2011). Cognitive  
load theory (Vol. 1). Springer Science & Business Media.





4

# How we look at communication and language on inspection

# Observation and discussion

- Inspectors will discuss children's learning and development with staff as part of the inspection.
- There will be **a particular focus on communication and language** because the development of children's spoken language underpins all 7 areas of learning and development.
- Much of this will be through **incidental conversations** prompted by observing the children at play and the interactions between them and adults.

# Understanding the curriculum

- Inspectors will complete a learning walk around the premises with the provider or their representative early on in the inspection. This provides an opportunity for leaders to explain how they organise the early years provision, including the aims and rationale for their EYFS curriculum.



# Seeing the curriculum in action

- Adults engage in dialogue with children – watching, listening and responding to children
- Adults model language well and encourage children to sing songs, nursery rhymes and musical games
- Adults encourage children to express their thoughts and use new words, encouraging children to speculate and test ideas through trial and error
- Adults support independence and confidence, enabling children to explore and solve problems
- Adults behave as excellent role models for children.





Language and communication takes  
place everywhere, all the time.

# Finding evidence that the curriculum has been learned

- Observing interactions and stories, rhymes, and songs
- Talking to key persons, SENCo and parents
- Observing and talking to children



# Remember...

- Ofsted inspectors are not looking for files full of assessment evidence on individual children. You don't need to photograph a child with a group of 5 bricks to prove that you have introduced children to the number 5. If the practitioner has been working with the child, they will know whether the child can recognise 5, can count up to 5, can build a tower of 5, or not.



# Bringing it together

Discussions with leaders to determine the effectiveness of their:

- oversight of the quality of adult interactions
- support to develop staff's own use of language
- understanding of the importance of adults modelling accurate language and how well they communicate this to staff.



## **'Good' grade descriptors**

- Children develop their vocabulary and understanding of language across the EYFS curriculum.
- Children enjoy, listen attentively and respond with comprehension to familiar stories, rhymes and songs that are appropriate to their age and stage of development.
- Children articulate what they know, understand and can do in an age-appropriate way, holding thoughtful conversations with adults and their friends

# Key messages

- A language-rich environment is vital
- High-quality interactions make **all** the difference
- We learn different things in different ways
- Children learn everywhere all the time





**Thank you**