



The ELSEC project is now approaching the end of its first term and has achieved so much in such a short amount of time. Find out what we have done so far and a taste of things still to come.

Early Language Support for Every Child (ELSEC) is a pilot project set up by the Department for Education (DfE), to explore ways in which professionals and parents can support children with their speech and language development, building capacity to meet the needs of all children and their families. It is a joint project between Education and Health across T&W and Shropshire, one of 9 Pathfinder sites in the country and sits within the SEND and AP Change Programme.

Since the launch of the ELSEC project in September 2024, 8 Primary schools and 6 private nursery settings in Telford and Wrekin have committed to working with the ELSEC team, during this first phase, to improve the speech and language offer for the children in Year 1, Reception and the pre-school year. In total, almost 900 children have been screened using the Talk Boost tool to identify the level of need in each setting, with 66% of children identified as needing some degree of support. As a result, around 250 children are now accessing small, targeted intervention with both ELSEC practitioners and school staff. One school has noticed a strong correlation between children accessing Talk Boost interventions and those who require additional support with their phonics, although Talk Boost is proving more effective than additional phonics support at this setting, a very interesting link to explore further.

The ELSEC team have allocated a practitioner to each setting, with multiple visits per week from them to run interventions, model and coach school staff and begin to run parent groups. The wider ELSEC team have met with school leaders in their settings, completed a communication audit in almost every setting as well as offering free Talk Boost training for all staff.

Feedback from all of our settings has been extremely positive and include:

*'Donna has been a breath of fresh air. It has been lovely to have another person to liaise with, instead of going solo. Our assessment process was a breeze, with Donna's amazing partnership. The children look forward to having their Talk Boost time and enjoy spending the sessions with Donna.'* (Windmill Primary)

*'Sarah feels like a true member of our team. From the start her enthusiasm and professionalism have really impressed us. She has worked tirelessly with our teacher, TA's and children to help us with the initial baselining and the intervention role out. We identified a great number of amber children and have many groups running and having Sarah has helped to instil confidence and give guidance to each of them to complete the intervention to a high standard. Our children look forward to her visits and are eager to engage with her and in the work. Her support to me as the Deputy Head teacher and SENCO has been immeasurable, and I have really valued our conversations and planning time with her. The ELSEC experience has been a fantastic one for our school.'* (St. Mary's Catholic Primary School)

As we head into the Spring term the ELSEC team will be very busy leading interventions and supporting staff, leading whole school CPD and rolling out a series of 4 more parent workshops both in settings and online. All settings will be offered training in other speech and language interventions to develop the school's own toolkit in meeting the needs of all pupils at the earliest possible stage of development.