



St. Anne's Loreto P.S.

Admission Policy of St. Anne's Loreto P.S.

School Address: Fairgreen, Navan, Co. Meath C15 E208.

Roll number: 00883P.

School Patron/s: Bishop of Meath Most Reverend Thomas Deenihan.

1. Introduction

This Admission Policy complies with the requirements of the Education Act 1998, the Education (Admission to Schools) Act 2018 and the Equal Status Act 2000, the relevant Health and Safety legislation and Equality legislation, and in keeping with the directives of the Patron. It was formally approved and implemented at a meeting of the Board of Management in December 2003 and is revised annually to account for our school structure regarding single and double classes. In drafting this policy, the Board of Management of the school has consulted with school staff, the school patron and with Parents/Guardians of children attending the school.

Equality of access is always the core value that determines all policy regarding the enrolment of children in our school. All children have an equal right to education. In order to fulfil this right, differences will be respected and valued in our school. No child will be refused admission for reasons of ethnicity, special educational needs, disability, language/accent, gender, traveller status, asylum seeker/refugee status, religious or political beliefs or values, family or social status.

While recognising the rights of Parents/Guardians to enrol their child in the school of their choice (where places are available) the Board of Management (BOM) of St. Anne's Loreto P.S. reserves the right and the duty in line with statutory regulations to determine the criteria used to accept children into junior infants and other classes in the school. Such criteria ensure the safety and protect the rights of currently enrolled students of the school. These criteria will be used by the BoM in determining which applicants are given priority when applicants outnumber the places available.

The policy was approved by the school patron on 18th August, 2020. It is published on the school's website and will be made available in hardcopy, on request, to any person who requests it.

The relevant dates and timelines for the St. Anne's Loreto P.S. Admission process are set out in the school's Annual Admission Notice which is published annually on the school's website at least one week before the commencement of the Admission process for the school year concerned.

This policy must be read in conjunction with the Annual Admission Notice for the school year concerned.

The Application Form for Admission is published on the school's website and will be made available in hardcopy on request to any person who requests it.



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2. Characteristic Spirit and General Objectives of the School

St. Anne's Loreto P.S is a Catholic co-educational P.S. with a Catholic ethos under the patronage of the Bishop of Meath, Most Rev. Thomas Deenihan.

"Catholic Ethos" in the context of a Catholic P.S. means the ethos and characteristic spirit of the Roman Catholic Church, which aims at promoting:

- (a) the full and harmonious development of all aspects of the person of the pupil, including the intellectual, physical, cultural, moral and spiritual aspects; and
- (b) a living relationship with God and with other people; and
- (c) a philosophy of life inspired by belief in God and in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus; and
- (d) the formation of the pupils in the Catholic faith,

and which school provides religious education for the pupils in accordance with the doctrines, practices and traditions of the Roman Catholic Church, and/or such ethos and/or characteristic spirit as may be determined or interpreted from time to time by the Irish Episcopal Conference.

In accordance with S.15 (2) (b) of the Education Act, 1998 the Board of Management of St. Anne's Loreto P.S. shall uphold, and be accountable to the patron for so upholding, the characteristic spirit of the school as determined by the cultural, educational, moral, religious, social, linguistic and spiritual values and traditions which inform and are characteristic of the objectives and conduct of the school.

Our Mission Statement advocates the characteristics of Respect; Love of Learning; Inclusion; Meaningful Work; Enjoyment and Reaching One's Potential amongst each other in our daily interactions.

The school is presently a 20-teacher school. This includes the Principal Teacher, 12 mainstream class teachers, 5 Special Education Teachers, a Full-time Teacher to cater for children with Developmental Language Delay and a Home School Community Liaison (HSCL) Co-ordinator. Additional staff comprise a full time School Secretary, School Caretaker, Part-time Speech & Language Therapist (HSE) and a number of Special Needs Assistants. A full range of classes is taught from Junior Infants - 6th Class.

3. Admission Statement

St. Anne's Loreto P.S. will not discriminate in its admission of a student to the school on any of the following:

- (a) the gender ground of the student or the applicant in respect of the student concerned,
- (b) the civil status ground of the student or the applicant in respect of the student concerned,
- (c) the family status ground of the student or the applicant in respect of the student concerned,
- (d) the sexual orientation ground of the student or the applicant in respect of the student concerned,
- (e) the religion ground of the student or the applicant in respect of the student concerned,



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- (f) the disability ground of the student or the applicant in respect of the student concerned,
- (g) the ground of race of the student or the applicant in respect of the student concerned,
- (h) the Traveller Community ground of the student or the applicant in respect of the student concerned, or
- (i) the ground that the student or the applicant in respect of the student concerned has special educational needs.

As per section 61 (3) of the Education Act 1998, 'civil status ground', 'disability ground', 'discriminate', 'family status ground', 'gender ground', 'ground of race', 'religion ground', 'sexual orientation ground' and 'Traveller Community ground' shall be construed in accordance with section 3 of the Equal Status Act 2000.

In accordance with Section 62 of the Education Act 1998, the Board of Management of St. Anne's Loreto P.S. will cooperate with the NCSE in the performance by the Council of functions under the Education for Persons with Special Educational Needs Act 2004 in relation to the provision of education to children with special educational needs, including in particular by the provision and operation of a special class or classes when required to do so by the Council.

St. Anne's Loreto P.S. will comply with any direction served on the Board or the Patron under Section 37A and 67(4)(b) of the Education Act 1998

St. Anne's Loreto P.S. is a Catholic P.S. whose objective is to provide education in an environment which promotes certain religious values and does not discriminate where it refuses to admit as a student a person who is not of the Catholic faith and it is proved that the refusal is essential to maintain the ethos of the school.

St. Anne's Loreto P.S. is a school which has established a class, with the approval of the Minister for Education, which provides an education exclusively for students with Developmental Language Delay needs specified by the Minister and may refuse to admit to the class a student who does not have the category of needs specified.

4. Categories of Special Educational Needs catered for in the School/Special Class

St. Anne's Loreto P.S. with the approval of the Minister for Education, has established a class to provide an education exclusively for students with Developmental Language Delay (DLD). The application process for this class is managed separately by a multidisciplinary team 'The Meath Language Classes Admissions Committee'. These professionals study referrals from EIS/HSE yearly and jointly with DE staff. Professional judgements will be applied regarding the admissions criteria and greatest needs of each applicant based on the consensus of the multidisciplinary members. Entry is subject to fulfilling the terms of the 'Meath Language Class Admissions Criteria' and adhering to the Language Class Policy on same. Vacancies in the DLD class are filled according and in line with vacancies determined in Term 2.

A separate St. Anne's Loreto P.S. Language Class Policy is set out immediately following this Policy. See Page 12.



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1. Admission of Students

This school shall admit each student seeking admission except where –

- a) the school is oversubscribed (please see Page 5 and Section 8 below for further details)
- b) a parent of a student, when required by the Principal in accordance with section 23(4) of the Education (Welfare) Act 2000, fails to confirm in writing that the Code of Behaviour of the school is acceptable to him or her and that he or she shall make all reasonable efforts to ensure compliance with such code by the student.

All denominational schools

St. Anne's Loreto P.S. is a Catholic Primary School and may refuse to admit as a student a person who is not of the Catholic faith where it is proved that the refusal is essential to maintain the ethos of the school.

School with special education class(es)

The special class attached to St. Anne's Loreto P.S. provides an education exclusively for students with Developmental Language Delay needs. The school may decline admission to this class, where the student concerned does not meet the criteria within the 'Admission Criteria Statement' and have the specified category of special educational needs provided for in this class.

What factors influenced the compilation of this enrolment policy?

The following is a list of factors that were considered by the Board of Management of St. Anne's Loreto P.S. in drawing up a clear enrolment policy:

1. Available space in classrooms and play areas.
2. Availability of Grants and Teacher resources. The School depends on grants and teacher resources provided by the Department of Education and operates within the regulations enforced from time to time by the same Department.
3. Educational needs of the children.
4. The presence of children with special educational or behavioural needs.
5. Department of Education directives on maximum class averages and on the minimum age for school enrolment.
6. Directives from the Patron, Most Rev. Thomas Deenihan, Bishop of Meath. In keeping with the Patron's wishes the school will accept on an alternate basis: one class of no more than 26 pupils OR two classes of no more than 52 pupils dependent upon those pupils transitioning from 6th class to second level in June of the year of the Junior Infant Admission process.



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In the event that the school is oversubscribed, the school will, when deciding on Applications for Admission, apply the following selection criteria in the order listed below to those applications that are received within the timeline for receipt of applications as set out in the school's Annual Admission Notice:

What are the school's enrolment criteria?

Based on the factors listed above, the Board of Management has stipulated clear criteria for enrolment. These are listed below in order of the priority afforded to each. These criteria will be used to prioritise children, who have reached their 4th birthday by 1st April in the year of admission and followed the required application procedure for enrolment. Priority will be afforded to the eldest applicant in each category.

1. Applicants who are siblings (brothers/sisters) or step siblings* of current pupils.
2. Applicants who are resident within the Navan Parish boundary. Proof of address may be required as supporting documentation with each application.
3. All other applicants.

* For the purpose of this policy the term siblings include children who are step-siblings, half-siblings and children who are being fostered by a family of current pupils of St Anne's Loreto P.S.

In the event that there are two or more students tied for a place or places in any of the selection criteria categories above (the number of applicants exceeds the number of remaining places), the following arrangements will apply:

The Principal will seek to clarify the exact time of birth from the applicant's Birth Certificate. Priority, as before, will be afforded to the eldest applicant.

In the event of a set of twins for enrolment where only a single vacancy exists, both children will be admitted by way of exception to the rules.

2. What will not be considered or taken into account

In accordance with section 62(7)(e) of the Education Act, the school will not consider or take into account any of the following in deciding on Applications for Admission or when placing a student on a waiting list for admission to the school:

- (a) a student's prior attendance at a pre-school or pre-school service, including naíonraí,
- (b) the payment of fees or contributions (howsoever described) to the school;
- (c) a student's academic ability, skills or aptitude (other than in relation to a student who meets the criteria for our DLD special class and as a result of greatest need has been offered a place by 'The Meath Language Classes Admission Committee').
- (d) the occupation, financial status, academic ability, skills or aptitude of a student's Parents/Guardians;
- (e) a requirement that a student, or his or her Parents/Guardians, attend an interview, open day or other meeting as a condition of admission;



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- (f) a student's connection to the school by virtue of a member of his or her family attending or having previously attended the school;
(other than siblings of a student currently attending the school)

- (g) the date and time on which an Application for Admission was received by the school,

This is subject to the application being received at any time during the period specified for receiving applications set out in the Annual Admission Notice of the school for the school year concerned.

This is also subject to the school making offers based on existing waiting lists.

Further Clarifications

The following conditions will also be adhered to by the Principal:

- **Children who have already completed junior infants** in another school, will not be considered for enrolment in the Infant classes in St. Anne's Loreto P.S. , but may be considered for the senior infant class provided they fulfil all relevant criteria, have followed correct application procedures and provided there is a place available.
- The Principal is not obliged to consider applications which **do not adhere to the stipulated procedure**, are late or incomplete, and those which do not include the relevant documentation.

3. Decisions on Applications

All decisions on Applications for Admission to St. Anne's Loreto P.S. will be based on the following:

- Our school's Admission Policy
- The school's Annual Admission Notice (where applicable)
- The information provided by the applicant in the school's official application form received during the period specified in our Annual Admission Notice for receiving applications.

(Please see section 9 below in relation to applications received outside of the admissions period and section 10 below in relation to applications for places in years other than the intake group.)

Selection criteria that are not included in our school Admission Policy will not be used to make a decision on an application for a place in our school.



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Application Procedure for Enrolment of a Child.

- A) Parents/Guardians seeking to enrol their children in St. Anne's Loreto P.S. are requested to complete an 'Enrolment Form' sent from the school and return it on/before the stipulated closing date, that is, **according to the published Annual Admissions Notice**. An original copy of the child's Birth or Adoption Certificate must be provided as supporting documentation with the application for enrolment so as to accurately establish the child's age. These documents will be photocopied and the originals returned. The child will be registered under the name which appears on the birth/adoption certificate.
- B) The names of all children who have applied will be placed on a class list.
- C) The Principal of St. Anne's Loreto P.S. will study and assess all applications after this date and, in the event of more applications than available places, apply the enrolment criteria.
- D) Parents/Guardians will be informed in due course of the decision of the Principal.
- E) Parents/Guardians of children who have been accepted for enrolment must inform the school, in writing, strictly by the date and time stipulated on the published Annual Admissions Notice whether they wish to accept the place or not. Failure to strictly comply with these dates and times will result in the re-allocation of the place.
- F) In the case of **children with additional needs** all medical/psychological/therapy reports and professional assessments must be supplied immediately upon acceptance of a place. Children with additional needs will be resourced in accordance with the level of resources provided by the Department of Education to the Board of Management. In the event of an application for a child with additional needs, the Principal will request a copy of all professional assessments of the child's needs. The Principal will meet with the child's Parents/Guardians to determine how best the needs specified can be met by the school. Where the Principal deems that further resources or personnel are required, she will request such resources from the Department of Education.

Please Note: The completion of any of the following does not confer an automatic right to a place in any class in the school.

- Registration of Interest Form;
- Application for Admission Form;
- Placing your child's name on a list, by correspondence, electronic or otherwise.

4. Notifying applicants of decisions

Applicants will be informed in writing as to the decision of the school, within the timeline outlined in the Annual Admissions Notice.

If a student is not offered a place in our school, the reasons why they were not offered a place will be communicated in writing to the applicant, including, where applicable, details of the student's ranking against the selection criteria and details of the student's place on the waiting list for the school year concerned.

Applicants will be informed of the right to seek a review/right of appeal of the school's decision (see section 14 below for further details).



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5. Acceptance of an offer of a place by an applicant

In accepting an Offer of Admission from St. Anne's Loreto P.S. the Parents/Guardians must indicate

- (i) whether or not they have accepted an Offer of Admission for another school or schools. If they have accepted such an offer, they must also provide details of the offer or offers concerned and
- (ii) whether or not they have applied for and are awaiting confirmation of an Offer of Admission from another school or schools, and if so, they must provide details of the other school or schools concerned.

6. Circumstances in which offers may not be made or may be withdrawn

An Offer of Admission may not be made or may be withdrawn by St. Anne's Loreto P.S. where -

- (i) it is established that information contained in the application is false or misleading.
- (ii) an applicant fails to confirm acceptance of an Offer of Admission on or before the date set out in the Annual Admission Notice of the school.
- (iii) the parent of a student, when required by the Principal in accordance with section 23(4) of the Education (Welfare) Act 2000, fails to confirm in writing that the Code of Behaviour of the school is acceptable to him or her and that he or she shall make all reasonable efforts to ensure compliance with such code by the student; or
- (iv) an applicant has failed to comply with the requirements of 'acceptance of an offer' as set out in section 6 above.

7. Sharing of Data with other schools

Applicants should be aware that section 66(6) of the Education (Admission to Schools) Act 2018 allows for the sharing of certain information between schools in order to facilitate the efficient admission of students.

Section 66(6) allows a school to provide a Patron or another Board of Management with a list of the students in relation to whom -

- (i) an Application for Admission to the school has been received,
- (ii) an Offer of Admission to the school has been made, or
- (iii) an Offer of Admission to the school has been accepted.

The list may include any or all of the following:

- (i) the date on which an Application for Admission Form was received by the school;
- (ii) the date on which an Offer of Admission correspondence was made by the school;



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- (iii) the date on which an Offer of Admission was accepted by an applicant;
- (iv) a student's personal details including his or her name, address, date of birth and personal public service number (within the meaning of section 262 of the Social Welfare Consolidation Act 2005).

8. Waiting list in the event of oversubscription

In the event of there being more applications to the school year concerned than places available, a waiting list of students whose Applications for Admission to St. Anne's Loreto P.S. were unsuccessful due to the school being oversubscribed will be compiled and will remain valid for the school year in which admission is being sought.

Placement on the waiting list of St. Anne's Loreto P.S. is in the order of priority assigned to the students' applications after the school has applied the selection criteria in accordance with this Admission Policy.

***Offers of any subsequent places that become available for and during the school year in relation to which admission is being sought will be made to those students on the waiting list, in accordance with the order of priority in relation to which the students have been placed on the list. The criteria of age will also be a consideration in that it must be appropriate to the class standard.

9. Late Applications

All Applications for Admission received after the closing date as outlined in the Annual Admission Notice will be considered and decided upon in accordance with our school's Admissions Policy, the Education Admissions to School Act 2018 and any regulations made under that Act.

Late applicants will be notified of the decision in respect of their application no later than three weeks after the date on which the school received the application. Late applicants will be offered a place if there is a place available. In the event that there is no place available, the name of the applicant will be added to the waiting list as set out in Section 9.

10. Procedures for Admission of students to other years and during the school year

The procedures of the school in relation to the admission of students to the school to classes other than the school's Junior Infants group and including admission to classes after the commencement of the school year are as follows:

Pupils may transfer from other schools, subject to available places, in accordance with the stipulations of **St. Anne's Loreto P.S. Admission Policy**, Department of Education guidelines and local agreements with other schools. An application from a child enrolled in another school in the parish or surrounding parishes will only be considered if the Principal is satisfied that it is in the best interests of the child. A child will only be accepted for



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enrolment in such circumstances after the school is furnished with all relevant information regarding attendance and progress, under the terms of the Education Welfare Act 2000. When the child's Parents/Guardians make such an enrolment inquiry, the school also requires a communication from the child's present school indicating the Principal's awareness of their intention to change school.

11. Declaration in relation to the non-charging of fees

The Board of Management of St. Anne's Loreto P.S. or any persons acting on its behalf will not charge fees for or seek payment or contributions (howsoever described) as a condition of-

- (a) an Application for Admission of a student to the school, or
- (b) the Admission or continued enrolment of a student in the school.

12. Arrangements regarding students not attending religious instruction

This section must be completed by schools that provide religious instruction to students.

The following are the school's arrangements for students, where the Parents/Guardians or in the case of a student who has reached the age of 18 years, the student, who has requested that the student attend the school without attending religious instruction in the school. These arrangements will not result in a reduction in the school day of such students:

A written request should be made to the Principal of the school. A meeting will then be arranged with the parent(s) or the student, as the case may be, to discuss how the request may be accommodated by the school.

13. Reviews/appeals

Review of decisions by the Board of Management

The Parent/Guardian of the student, or in the case of a student who has reached the age of 18 years, the student, may request the Board of Management to review a decision to refuse admission. Such requests must be made in accordance with Section 29C of the Education Act 1998.

The timeline within which such a review must be requested and the other requirements applicable to such reviews are set out in the procedures determined by the Minister under section 29B of the Education Act 1998 which are published on the website of the Department of Education.

The Board of Management will conduct such reviews in accordance with the requirements of the procedures determined under Section 29B and with section 29C of the Education Act 1998.



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Note: Where an applicant has been refused admission due to the school being oversubscribed, the applicant **must request a review** of that decision by the Board of Management prior to making an appeal under section 29 of the Education Act 1998. Where an applicant has been refused admission due to a reason other than the school being oversubscribed, the applicant **may request a review** of that decision by the Board of Management prior to making an appeal under section 29 of the Education Act 1998.

Right of appeal

Under Section 29 of the Education Act 1998, the parent of the student, or in the case of a student who has reached the age of 18 years, the student, may appeal a decision of this school to refuse admission.

An appeal may be made under Section 29 (1)(c)(i) of the Education Act 1998 where the refusal to admit was due to the school being oversubscribed.

An appeal may be made under Section 29 (1)(c)(ii) of the Education Act 1998 where the refusal to admit was due a reason other than the school being oversubscribed.

Where an applicant has been refused admission due to the school being oversubscribed, the applicant **must request a review** of that decision by the Board of Management **prior to making an appeal** under section 29 of the Education Act 1998. (see Review of decisions by the Board of Management)

Where an applicant has been refused admission due to a reason other than the school being oversubscribed, the applicant **may request a review** of that decision by the Board of Management prior to making an appeal under section 29 of the Education Act 1998. (see Review of decisions by the Board of Management)

Appeals under Section 29 of the Education Act 1998 will be considered and determined by an independent appeals committee appointed by the Minister for Education.

The timeline within which such an appeal must be made and the other requirements applicable to such appeals are set out in the procedures determined by the Minister under section 29B of the Education Act 1998 which are published on the website of the Department of Education.

Signed: *Máire O'Donoghue*

Chairperson of the Board of Management.

Date: 21st September 2023

Signed: *Clíodhna O'Brien*

Principal.



St Anne's Loreto Primary School Language Class Policy

Language Classes

One option within the clinical care pathway for provision of a Speech and Language Therapy service to children with Developmental Language Disorder (see Appendix 5) is by means of enrolment within a specific class. These classes, termed SSLD (Specific Speech and Language Disorder) classes by the DES or language classes, offer regular Speech and Language Therapy which is integrated with the child's academic development. For school aged children with a diagnosis of DLD in Ireland, an arrangement exists between the Department of Education and Skills (DES) and Department of Health & Children, (DOHC) / Health Services Executive (HSE), to provide school-based Speech and Language Therapy to children through language class. These classes have a pupil-teacher ratio of 7:1. The HSE funds the provision of Speech and Language Therapy services for the children attending these classes. There are currently 3 language classes within the following mainstream primary schools in Meath which cater for children with DLD:

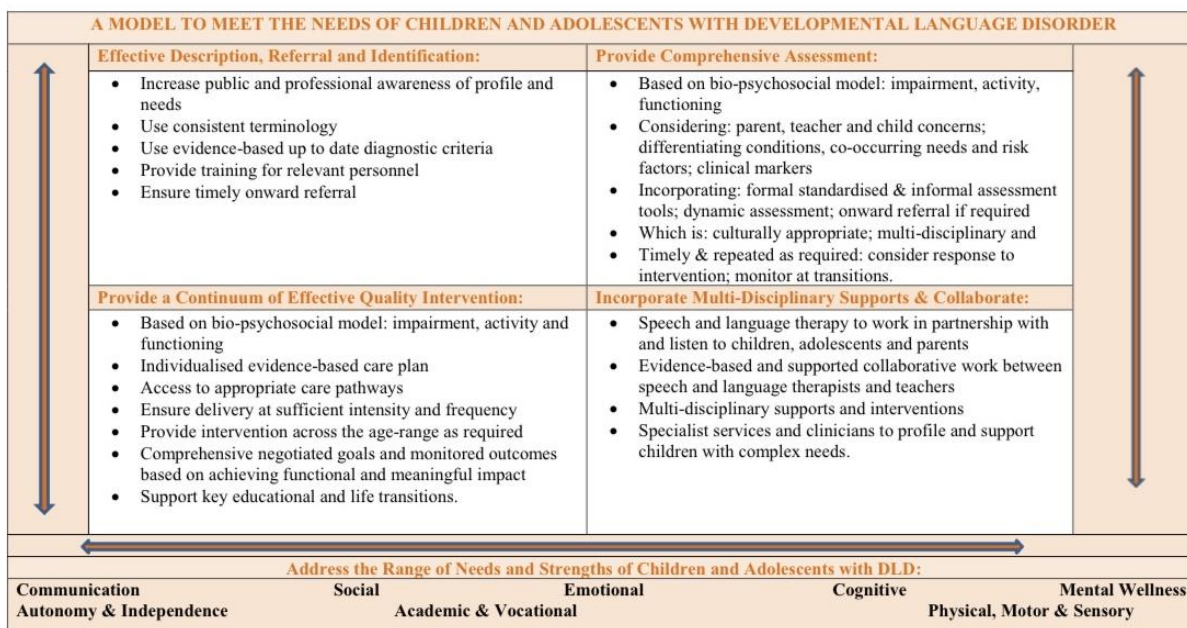
- St Mary's Convent Primary School, Trim (2 classes)
- St Anne's Loreto Primary School, Navan (1 class)

Language Class in St. Anne's Loreto Primary School, Navan

St Anne's Loreto Primary School, Navan, has one language class with a maximum capacity for 7 children. This class caters for the needs of boys and girls diagnosed with DLD from Junior Infants upwards. The maximum enrolment in each class is in line with the Department regulations (i.e. 7 children per class) to allow for intensive educational and Speech and Language Therapy programmes suited to the children's needs. Each class is staffed by a full time teacher and a part time Special Needs Assistant (SNA). Each language class has designated time for intervention provided by a Meath HSE Speech and Language Therapist. Children with a diagnosis of DLD are eligible to access services from their family's local health centre within their allocated Primary Care Network e.g. Clinical Psychology, Physiotherapy and Occupational Therapy as required on an outpatient basis. Children are enrolled in the language class for a one year placement initially, which may be extended to a second year if they continue to meet the language class admissions criteria. The second year must be sanctioned by the Meath Language Class Committee. Pupils follow the primary school curriculum (1999, NCCA) to the level at which they can access it, but they do not formally study Irish. The children receive regular Speech and Language Therapy intervention, which may be direct individual/group therapy and/or indirect intervention. Intervention is based on the principles of Evidence Based Practice. An emphasis is placed on empowering families and promoting generalisation of skills. This is in line with Support Children with Developmental Language Disorder in Ireland, Irish Association of Speech and Language Therapists Position Paper and Guidance Document, 2017.



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IRISH ASSOCIATION OF SPEECH & LANGUAGE THERAPISTS

Supporting Children with Developmental Language Disorder In Ireland.

IASLT Position Paper and Guidance Document, 2017

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The pupils in the language class are integrated with their peers in mainstream classes for some subjects, during break times and for school activities such as concerts and school tours. There is close collaborative and team working between the language class teacher, Speech and Language Therapist and parents to support the children to reach their potential. Goals are devised by considering parent priorities, as well as observations and outcomes of assessments by both the Speech and Language Therapist and the teacher. Goals are functional and chosen to have maximum impact on a child's participation in activities in all contexts.

The Meath Language Class Committee has the final decision on the enrolment of children in the 3 Meath language classes, which includes the language class in St. Anne's Loreto Primary School, Navan. Along with the Meath language class admissions criteria (see Appendix 1), the following additional local criteria must be met by each applicant:

- The child must live within the Meath catchment area at the time of referral (i.e. HSE North East).
- A child must be 4 years on/before the 1st of September in the year of his/her enrolment.

Referral Procedure for Language Class Placement

Each child referred to language class must have attended a period of regular Speech and Language Therapy. A child must meet the criteria for a diagnosis of DLD and the previous criteria for SSLI (see Appendix 1) to be eligible for language class application. A recent detailed assessment must be completed as part of the application process. A child who has not yet attended Speech and Language Therapy is not eligible for referral to language class. Language class referrals are completed by the child's local HSE Primary Care/ HSE/ Enable Ireland Child Development Network Team Speech and Language Therapist. Referrals can also be made by



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private Speech and Language Therapists. A parent must give informed consent prior to the initiation of the referral process.

In order to meet the criteria outlined by the DES for language class placement, each child must complete a psychological assessment. Children aged 6 years or over, are referred to the National Psychological Service (NEPs) for psychological assessment. In the present system, before a child is referred on for language class placement, it must be confirmed that the child's non-verbal performance IQ is within/above the average range (see the Meath admissions criteria on page 4). This is not a diagnostic criterion for DLD. Differing criteria for language class and diagnosis of DLD must be reconciled by the DES before changes can be made to local language class criteria.

The referring Speech and Language Therapist liaises with the child's parents, Clinical Psychologist, Occupational Therapist (if appropriate) and pre-school/ school teaching staff, to determine if the child meets the language class admission criteria and whether he/she would benefit from such a placement. Only children who meet the admission criteria may be referred to the Meath language class admission/discharge meeting.

Meath Language Class Admissions/Discharge Committee

The Meath language class admissions/discharge committee is a multi-agency and multidisciplinary group from the North Eastern Area Health Service Executive (HSE) and the Department of Education and Skills, (DES). It caters for the three language classes in Meath; 2 language classes in St Mary's Convent Primary School, Trim and the one language class in St Anne's Loreto Primary School, Navan. The committee is comprised of the following;

- The school principals of St Mary's Convent Primary School, Trim and St Anne's Loreto Primary School, Navan, County Meath
- One language class teacher (rotated between the above schools)
- The two language class Speech and Language Therapists from the above schools
- The manager of the Meath (HSE) speech and language therapy service
- One HSE Clinical Psychologist.

The roles and responsibilities of the above committee are to:

- Sanction the recommended discharges from the three Meath language classes
- Sanction the recommended second year placements for the three Meath language classes
- Sanction the new placements for the three language classes

The Meath language class admissions/discharge committee meeting occurs in April of each year. If additional meetings are required, they will take place before the end of the academic year if possible. Additional admission meetings may be necessary if available language class placements have not been filled from the first meeting e.g. a number of children do not meet the language class admissions criteria, parents decline language placements or there are an insufficient number of new referrals.



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Selection Procedure/ Prioritisation for Meath Language Class Placements

Children who meet the Meath Language Class Committee admissions criteria (see Appendix 1) may be referred to Meath Language Class Admissions/Discharge Committee Meeting. In order for referrals to be accepted, the following reports are required:

1. An up to date **Speech and Language Therapy report** confirming a diagnosis of Developmental Language Disorder (DLD). If a child's only language is English, standardised assessments must be completed within 6 months of referral to language class. **If a child is bilingual and additional languages are spoken in the home, SLT professional bodies state that it is not appropriate to use standardised SLT assessments based on English language norms as the scores will be invalid.** For bilingual children, descriptive and qualitative assessments including response to SLT intervention over time should be used to determine the significance of language learning difficulties across all languages. It is important to consider exposure to languages during this process.
2. A **priority rating scale** (see Appendix 2) to be completed by the child's Speech and Language Therapist in liaison with a Senior Speech and Language Therapist in HSE. The completion of the priority rating score form and the final priority rating score should be discussed with the child's parents/guardians.
3. An up to date **Psychology report** (within 2 years of referral to the language class admissions/discharge committee), which includes the results of a comprehensive assessment of the child's intellectual ability, including verbal (where appropriate) and non-verbal performance ability.
4. A **pre-school/school report** which provides information on the impact of the child's DLD on his/her educational progress and social emotional development. Recent educational attainments and assessment results should be included if available
5. An Occupational Therapy report if appropriate.
6. Any additional relevant medical reports e.g. from an Audiologist/ Paediatrician etc.

Following the receipt of a language class referral and the above reports, the Senior Speech and Language Therapist sends a letter of acknowledgment to the parents/guardians and the referral source. This will acknowledge that the referral has been received and give the date of the Meath language class admissions/discharge committee meeting.



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The Senior Speech and Language Therapist coordinating the speech and language therapy service to the Meath language classes collates and circulates the referring reports to all the language class committee members approximately one-two weeks before the Meath Language Class Committee admissions/discharge meeting.

The Meath language class admissions/discharge committee discusses the clinical and educational needs of the applicants for language class placements based on the information provided in the referring reports outlined above. A limited number of language class placements are available each year. Children who have the greatest need and would most benefit from language class placement are selected taking into account the availability of places at that time. The HSE North East Region priority rating scale for language class admissions (see Appendix 2) is used to allocate new language class placements in the counties of Meath, Louth, Cavan and Monaghan. The children with the most severe impairments of comprehension, expression of language and/or speech sound/phonological system, receive the highest priority scores. Professional judgement will be applied to the priority rating scale. Language class placements are not allocated on the priority score alone but also on the consensus of the multidisciplinary members of the local language class committee.

The rating scale has three objective scoring sections which correlate to the scoring on standardised speech and language assessments including standard scores, percentiles and standard deviations. The scale rates the severity of language impairment (comprehension and expression of language) and the severity of the phonological/ speech sound impairment. The priority rating scale includes descriptive information such as the amount, type of speech and language therapy the child has received and his/her progress in therapy, age and readiness for language class placement, alternative placement if he/she is unsuccessful in gaining a language class placement, impact of the child's DLD on his/her self-esteem, confidence and willingness to communicate. It also includes any associated difficulties the child may have e.g. in the areas of attention/listening, behaviour, occupational therapy needs etc.

All children are then listed in order of their priority. Those children at the top of the priority list will be recommended for places in the class for the academic year commencing in late August of that year. If a child was referred to the previous language class admissions committee and was unsuccessful, despite meeting the admissions criteria, an extra point will be awarded. Where the number of children referred exceeds the number of places available, names are placed on a prioritised waiting list for that admission year. Referrals are not carried forward from one year to the next and children who are unsuccessful in securing places in the language classes must be referred again if they are to be considered for the following year.

If there are spare places following allocation of all the children with a diagnosis of DLD, then a child on the referral list who does not meet the admissions criteria but, who, on agreement from the Meath language class admissions/discharge committee would benefit from a language class placement, may be offered a concessionary/spare capacity place for one year.



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Communication with Parents/Guardians Following the Meath Language Class Admission/Discharge Committee Meeting

The parents of children who have been referred for language class placement are informed of the outcome within 10 days of the admissions meeting. The recommendations of the Meath language class admissions/discharge committee are conveyed in writing to all the parents and referral sources. This letter is signed by the School Principal on behalf of the Board of Management and the Meath Language Class Admissions/Discharge Committee.

In the letters to parents/guardians of children who are not offered places, the reasons why the child's application for a language class placement was not successful are explained. This letter also includes details of the appeal process stating that the Section 29 Appeal forms are available on the DES website.

In the letters to parents/guardians of children who are being offered a place in the language class, parents/guardians are asked to complete and return the reply form within one week to the school Principal, stating whether they are accepting/ declining the language class placement including the completed transport form (if appropriate). If the parents/guardians haven't already visited the recommended language class they are invited to do so before accepting/declining the place.

Pupils who are offered a Language Class Placement

In mid-June, children who have been offered a place in the language class are invited to spend a morning within the language class to meet the children who will be in their class in the next academic year. Informal play activities are organised. The aim of the morning is to give the new children a positive, enjoyable and memorable experience. All the parents are encouraged to meet each other and the language class staff during an informal coffee morning in St Anne's Loreto Primary School. An existing parent whose child is still attending the St. Anne's Loreto Primary School language class may also be present to share their experiences, answer questions, and offer practical advice. Information is shared about the school in general, the uniform, school books, etc. Parents are encouraged to ask questions throughout.

All pupils are accepted within St. Anne's Loreto Primary School, Navan, on the understanding that they and their parents/guardians fully accept the school's policies, code of discipline, the language class SLT homework policy (see Appendix 3) and all other school policies (e.g. healthy eating etc.) currently in place.

School Transport to the Meath Language Classes

All children diagnosed with DLD who are attending the Meath language classes, are entitled to free transport and are required to complete the standard school transport application form. The schools transport service



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facilitates the children attending this class in the same manner as children attending other special classes/schools.

Inclusion of Pupils with DLD

Pupils in the language class will be no different to those in other classes in terms of not having any separate or additional provisions put into place from other classes in the event of staff illness, CPD (Continuous Professional Development), BoM approved absences or whole school events such as school visits, parish liturgy etc. Year to year, the allocation of teachers to classes is focused on the needs of the whole school, and consequently the school, though consistency is a Management priority, cannot guarantee long term continuity or predictability with regard to teaching staff.

All the children in the language classes are integrated with other pupils during playtime, during school trips and outings. These children may also be integrated into their age-appropriate mainstream class to avail of specific literacy/numeracy/social skills lessons e.g. Lift Off to Literacy. Children in the language classes, as part of their preparation for their return to a full size mainstream class, will be integrated for a number of subjects into a class of their peer group within St. Anne's Loreto Primary School. This is a gradual process and integration is increased prior to discharge. Reverse integration of peers from the mainstream school to the language class is also organised to facilitate newly formed friendships and generally to increase self-esteem and further develop the language class children's social and interactive skills. The language class teacher and Speech and Language Therapist discuss the child's progress with the mainstream teacher and the child's parents. The language class Speech and Language Therapist runs a 'leavers group' for those children to be discharged. This acknowledges their feelings as they prepare to leave the language class and return to their local school. Within the leavers group, the children are also taught practical strategies to generalise their newly acquired skills to the larger classrooms of the mainstream school.

Parental Involvement

Communication with the parents/ guardians is an essential part of language class placement. All parents are encouraged to attend 1:1 parent, teacher, SLT meetings in September. During this meeting, mutual expectations for language class are discussed, and parent priorities are identified. As well as further parent meetings, 1:1 therapy appointments with parent coaching, and group parent training, parents are encouraged to communicate daily in their child's school journal and/ speech and language therapy communication book. Contact may also be made directly by phone or by email.

St. Anne's Loreto Primary School Language Class direct phone line: 046 9021626

St. Anne's Loreto Primary School class teacher, Julieann Fitzgerald email: julieannfitzgerald@stannesnavan.ie

St. Anne's Loreto Primary School HSE SLT, Cáit Stack: cait.stack@hse.ie

St. Anne's Loreto Primary School Principal, Mrs. Miriam McCabe



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Parents/guardians are encouraged to keep the language class staff informed of their child's well-being and progress e.g. sending emails/ making phone calls. The language class staff also support the parents/guardians by answering their queries/ concerns and if necessary making onward referrals e.g. to clinical psychology e.g. child's behaviour/ low self-esteem/anxieties.

Parents/guardians are requested to complete questionnaires at the beginning and the end of their child's academic year to rate all areas of their child's communication skills including the areas of well-being, self-confidence and social and interactive skills. This subjective evaluation of the children by the parents/guardians is used alongside the objective results of the teacher and speech and language to evaluate and further develop the effectiveness of the language class placement.

Collaborative Working

The Department of Education & Skills (DES) language class teacher and the Health Service Executive (HSE) Speech and Language Therapist, collaborate to complete fortnightly objectives for each child within the language class. This involves planning and discussing teaching/therapy activities/strategies to help the children meet their potential in all aspects of their development including their wellbeing, self-confidence, academic skills, communication and social and interactive skills. At the meetings, each child's strengths and weaknesses are discussed and achievable, realistic targets/ objectives are set for each child which will have a positive impact on the child's everyday life.

In May, prior to discharge from the language class, the language class teacher, SLT, and parents/ guardians meet with the Principal and the teaching staff of the child's local school to discuss the detailed language class discharge report and recommendations. To help the children prepare and adjust to the transition from the small group setting of the language class to the large mainstream class, a one day/ week placement into the child's peer group class is arranged from approximately mid-May to the end of the academic year.

Discharge from the Meath Language Classes

Children typically attend a language class for 1-2 years. The maximum length of placement is 2 years. See Appendix 4 for details of discharge criteria.

Prior to discharge from a Meath language class, standardised speech and language and academic assessments will be carried out and reports forwarded to the relevant parties. On discharge from language class, if the child continues to require further SLT intervention, the language class SLT will refer children to the family's local health centre within the allocated Primary Care Network or if appropriate, refer the child for further diagnostic assessment e.g. to the HSE/ Enable Ireland Children's Disability Network Team (CDNT) or the Meath Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS).



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Policy updated by Cáit Stack & Anngele Milner, Senior Speech and Language Therapists, September 2022.

This Policy Document will be adopted and replaces any previous St. Anne's Loreto P.S. Language Class Policy Document.

A review of the contents within will be recommended every two years.

Cáit Stack & Anngele Milner
Senior Speech & Language Therapists

Dated: 30th September 2022



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Appendix 1

MEATH LANGUAGE CLASS ADMISSION CRITERIA

Amended on approval of local language class admission/discharge committees

May 2021

Selection Criteria required for entry to the Language Class follows closely the Department of Education's guidelines and are as follows:

1. A primary diagnosis of Developmental Language Disorder (D.L.D) which was previously known as Specific Speech +/-or Language Impairment (S.S.L.I).
 - Assessment on a battery of standardised tests by the child's SLT should place performance in one/more of the main areas of speech & language development at least –2SD below the mean.
 - If a child is bilingual and additional languages are spoken in the home, SLT professional bodies state that it is not appropriate to use standardized SLT assessments based on English language norms as the scores will be invalid. For bilingual children, descriptive and qualitative assessments including response to SLT intervention over time should be used to give an approximate age equivalent indicating a severe language disorder.
 - If a Specific Speech Disorder is present, the disorder must be considered at least moderate i.e. often unintelligible.
 - The Developmental Language Disorder is not attributable to permanent hearing impairment, emotional or behavioural disorders, physical disability, or Autistic Spectrum Disorder (A.S.D).
2. Non-verbal performance IQ must be within the average range or above.
3.

The child is of school going age and it is the optimal time for the child to receive maximum benefit from a language class placement.
4.

The child will have attended SLT for a minimum of 6-12 sessions.
- 5.



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The child & family are living in County Meath and are eligible to receive H.S.E. Meath SLT services; this catchment area also includes parts of Drogheda, County Meath and parts of Kingscourt, County Cavan.

Footnote:

- **N.B:** The child may present with a primary diagnosis of Developmental Language Disorder at school entry. However, through the process of intervention, the child's profile may be found to reflect an underlying disability such as Learning Disability, Autistic Spectrum Disorder etc. and will therefore be recommended for discharge at the end of his/her academic year.
- A rating scale is used as a guideline to prioritise children based on the nature and severity of the Developmental Language Disorder.
- Professional judgement will be applied to the rating scale. Language class placements are not allocated on the total priority score alone, but also on the consensus of the multidisciplinary members of the language class committee.



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Appendix 2

**Language Class Admissions
Speech & Language Severity
Priority Rating Scale**

Language Class area: _____

Amended May 2022

Child's Name:

D.O.B:

Parent(s)/Guardian(s) Name/s:

Address:

Telephone No.:

Home languages:

Present educational placement:

Attendance Days/Week:

Age of Child on September 1st 202__ = years.



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1. Severity of Child's Language Impairment:

Formal/Informal Assessment/s Used:

Date of Assessment:

Child's age at time of Assessment:

Raw Score	Standard Score	Percentile Rank	Standard Deviations	Priority Rating Score		
				Comprehension	Expression	
			-3.0 or Below	5	5	v. Severe
			-2.5 to -2.99	4	4	Mod-Severe
			-2.0 to -2.499	3	3	Moderate
			-1.5 to -1.99	2	2	Mild-Moderate
			-1.0 to -1.499	1	1	Mild
			0 to -0.99	0	0	WNL



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2. Severity of child's phonological impairment

Assessment Used:

Date of Assessment:

Child's age at time of assessment:

Severity rating	Intelligibility	Raw Score	Standard Score range	Percentile rank	S.D's range	Priority rating score
Severe	Always unintelligible		70 & below		-2.0 & below	3
Moderate	Often Unintelligible		71 to 77		-1.5 to -2.0	2
Mild	Mostly intelligible		78 to 85		-1.0 to -1.50	1
Normal	Intelligible		86 & above		Within - 1.0 & above	0

3. Second year on language class waiting list; [1]

TOTAL PRIORITY RATING SCORE:

Professional judgement will be applied to the rating scale. Language class placements are not allocated on the total priority score alone, but also on the consensus of the multidisciplinary members of the language class committee.

ADDITIONAL CONSIDERATIONS:

1. Amount and type of therapy (group/individual):
2. Response to intervention:
3. Length of time child has attended pre-school placement:
4. Readiness for National school in September:



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5. Impact of the Developmental Language Disorder/Speech Disorder on child's self-esteem, self -confidence and willingness to communicate:
6. Associated features e.g. attentional/sensory difficulties or coexisting disorder:
7. Referrals to other services

Signature:

Name:

Job title:

Date:



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Appendix 3

Meath Language Class

Speech and Language Therapy Homework Policy



Importance of Doing Homework

- You will be invited to attend Speech and Language Therapy appointments with your child. Please try to attend as many of these appointments as possible.
- Practice of speech and language activities at home is essential. Completing homework given will help your child to experience the maximum benefits of being in the Language Class and will help them to apply what they learn to their daily life.

Speech and language homework in the language class

- Homework will be provided in your child's speech and language folder. If you are unable to attend their appointment, a note explaining the homework will also be included.
- Please complete the homework. Please sign and return the pages in your child's folder. Please write a short note in your child's copy to let the speech and language therapist know how the homework went.
- Homework can be spread over a few days e.g. homework set on Wednesday should be spread over the next week. Homework can be revised on the evening before new work is provided.
- A general guideline is to spend **15 minutes daily** completing speech and language homework.
- **Be patient and positive, encourage your child's attempts, what may seem easy to you may be difficult for your child.**

I wish you every success in the new academic year.

Cáit Stack

Senior Speech and Language Therapist

Parent(s)/Guardian(s)



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Appendix 4

MEATH LANGUAGE CLASS DISCHARGE CRITERIA

Amended on approval of local language class admission/discharge committees

May 2021

Discharge from the Language Class will occur at the end of the academic year if a child meets any one or a combination of the following:

1. On a battery of standardised speech and language assessments the majority of speech and language skills are within normal limits. The child is scoring $-1SD$ to $+1SD$ (SS=7 to 13).
2. If a child is bilingual and additional languages are spoken in the home, SLT professional bodies state that it is not appropriate to use standardized SLT assessments based on English language norms as the scores will be invalid. Descriptive and qualitative assessments & response to SLT intervention over time should be used to give an approximate age equivalent.
3. **The primary diagnosis is no longer Developmental Language Disorder. As a result of diagnostic assessment/therapy, the child's current profile may be one of:**
 - Attention Deficit Disorder etc.
 - Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder.
 - Autistic Spectrum Disorder.
 - General learning disability.
 - Specific learning disability etc
4. The child is no longer of National School going age.
5. The child has made maximum gain within the Language Class setting i.e. language skills have plateaued and/or are commensurate with overall level of ability.
6. The child's needs would be more appropriately met in another educational setting e.g. special class.
7. Parents have requested that the child be discharged.
8. The child and family are no longer living in the County Meath catchment area and accessing Meath H.S.E SLT Services.



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The maximum length of placement within a Language Class is two years, but in exceptional circumstances a final third year may be sanctioned by the Admission/Discharge committee.

Appendix 5

Background Information: Developmental Language Disorder

Specific Speech and Language Impairment (SSLI), Specific Language Impairment (SLI), and Specific Language Disorder (SLD) were the labels used interchangeably in literature/clinically to describe the client group for which language class was established. Specific Speech and Language Disorder (SSLD) is the term used by the Department of Education and Skills (DES). **In 2017, based on recent international research and consensus, Developmental Language Disorder (DLD) replaced the term Specific Speech & Language Impairment (SSLI). Developmental Language Disorder describes “children likely to have language problems enduring into middle childhood and beyond, with a significant impact on everyday social interactions or educational progress”** (Bishop et al., 2017). Middle childhood encompasses 6-12 years in developmental psychology literature. In the context of this document, the term Developmental Language Disorder (DLD) will be used. The new DLD diagnostic criteria state that children's IQ does not need to be within the average range or above. To date, however, there has not been a new agreement between the Department of Education and the HSE to change the language class admission/discharge criteria and therefore the enclosed language class admissions is still in operation.

In DLD, any or all of the following areas of speech/language may be affected: language comprehension, learning and using the rules of grammar, pronunciation, learning, storing and retrieving words; conversation and describing skills. Children with DLD often experience literacy difficulties i.e. problems learning to read, spell and write.