

Speech Bubbles 2018 - 2019



Report prepared by:

Adam Annand, Associate Director
London Bubble Theatre Co
5 Elephant Lane
SE16 4JD
adam@londonbubble.org.uk

London Bubble is a registered charity, no 264359

Speech Bubbles 2018 - 2019

This report is presented in six sections:

1. Introduction

2. Monitoring

Who we worked with

3. Impact on communication and wellbeing

Speaking, listening and learning
Emotional and conduct behaviour
Teacher comments

4. Impact on academic attainment

3 & 4 include an analysis of the impact of the programme on children eligible for Pupil Premium.

5. Research

Learning about Culture
ISOTIS

6. Awards, writings and presentations

7. Summing up



1. Introduction

The 2018/19 school year has been the largest Speech Bubbles year yet! We worked with more partners, in more schools and reached more children than ever before. This growth was in part due to our involvement in the Royal Society of Arts (RSA) and Education Endowment Foundation (EEF) Learning About Culture research programme. This research is described by Dominic Wyse (Professor of Early Childhood and Primary Education, University College London) as the largest ever study into the impact of arts-education. The most satisfying thing has been that with that growth in delivery we were able to maintain the quality of the programme. The children who took part with such joy, imagination and creativity have shown developments in communication and personal and social wellbeing on a par with other years of the project.

2. Monitoring

Children and schools

- 64 schools (with one school delivering the programme for double the number of children). 26 of these schools were taking part in the EEF/RSA learning about culture trial.
- 1260 children in Key Stage 1

Pupil profile

- **35%** of children were reported as being eligible for Pupil Premium
- **48%** were reported as EAL (English as an additional language)
- **9%** were identified as having a statement or EHCP (education and health care plan)
- **58%** were male
- **42%** were female

Partners

- We have worked with **8** franchise partners: M6, Peoplescape, North West Drama Services, Oldham Theatre Workshop, Half Moon, Kazzum Arts, Immediate Theatre and Trinity Theatre, Tunbridge Wells.



- Speech Bubbles was delivered in **12** Local Authority areas; Bromley, Greenwich, Kent, Lewisham, Lambeth, Manchester, Salford, Oldham, Rochdale, Tower Hamlets, Newham and Southwark.

Training

- Over **323** drama practitioners, storytellers, teachers, learning mentors, speech and language therapists, drama therapists and students attended training.
- **6** whole day events
- **21** half day events
- **5** Experienced practitioners have undertaken a train-the-trainer programme and are now prepared to deliver Speech Bubbles training.
- All drama practitioners have completed the Communication Trust CPD Online Short Course: An introduction to speech, language and communication.



Just some of the fantastic team that make Speech Bubbles possible!



3. Impact on communication and wellbeing

We have continued with our pre and post project assessments across the Speech Bubbles project. The same procedures are used in schools where Speech Bubbles is delivered by London Bubble and where it is delivered by partner organisations. At the point of writing this report we had complete data sets for **790** of the participating children. This is lower than usual and from discussions with schools it seems that this is because the schools on the EEF research programme had a lot of other information to provide and they prioritised the surveys from the trial over the pre and post assessments.

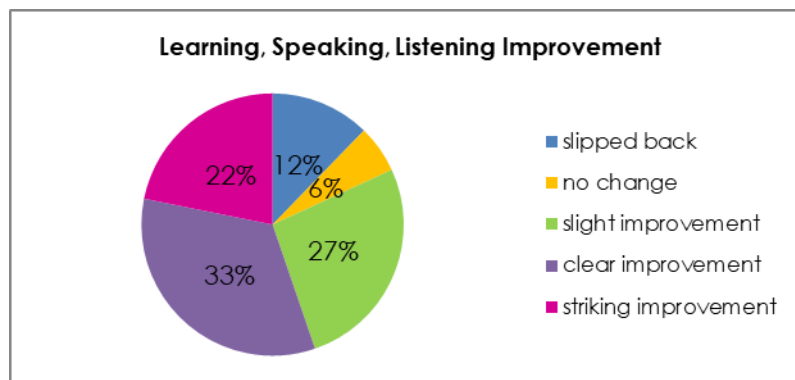
The Headline Figures

Across the project teacher pre and post project assessments indicated:

For Learning, Speaking and Listening

82% of referred children showed improvement

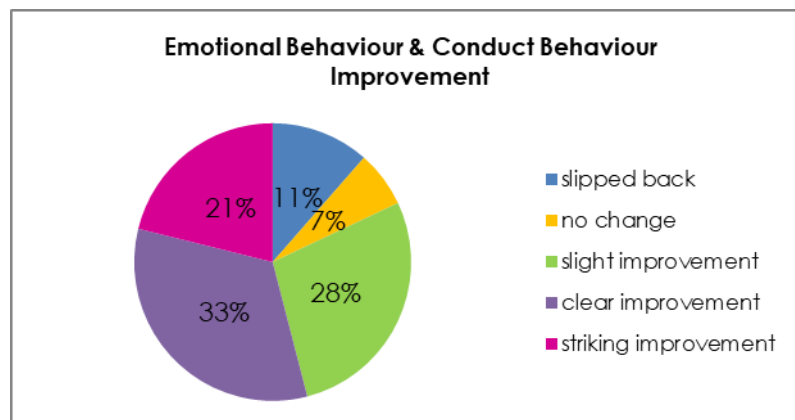
With **55%** having clear improvement – striking improvement



For Emotional Behaviour and Conduct Behaviour

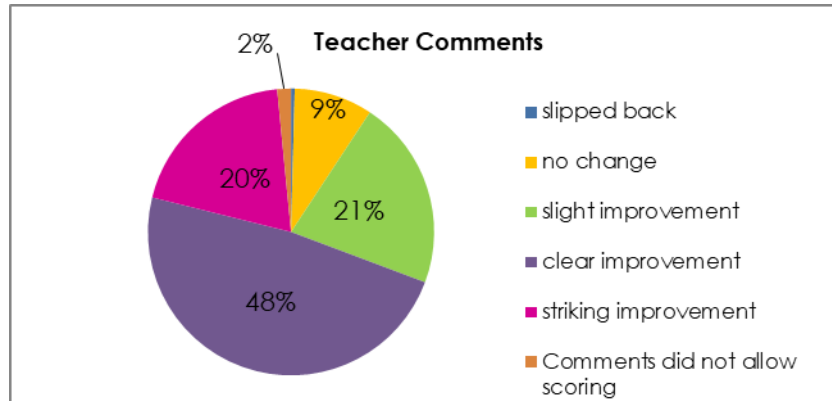
82% of referred children showed improvement

With **54%** having clear improvement – striking improvement



Teacher Comments

Analysis of the teacher's pre and post project comments reveals that they report **89%** of referred children making improvement and of those **68%** showed clear improvement – striking improvement.



The following comments have been taken from the teacher's pre and post project reporting. The comments are representative of typical comments for each category and are in ratio to the total number of comments.

Slipped back/No change (10%)

Pre M doesn't initiate communication or talk about his interests. Has limited language
Post M is reluctant to speak in class.

Slight improvement (21%)

Pre R sometimes struggles with her self-confidence **Post** R has challenged herself to step outside of her close friendship circle but often struggles to maintain these friendships.

Pre T needs to develop her self-confidence and develop more positive relationships with her peers. T can sometimes become very emotional especially when coming to school in the mornings. She enjoys working with her peers but sometimes needs support in turn-taking and sharing resources. She will benefit from working in a small group setting **Post** T has good communication skills but she needs to continue to work on her sharing and turn-taking skills. Also she needs to continue to develop positive relationships with her peers.

Clear improvement (48%)

Pre A struggles with self-confidence and has a limited vocabulary which means he is often shy in class. Communicates well with peers but less effectively with adults **Post** A has worked well this year and his communication with peers has improved.

Pre Z is reluctant to speak in class, has a limited vocabulary when sharing her ideas and does not follow instructions very easily. She relies on a lot of adult support to complete adult given activities **Post Z** shows more independence in writing and is more willing to share this and share ideas on the carpet

Pre C will almost always play alone. He likes to do creative activities and will spend extended periods of time working on them without communication with other children or adults. His language skills are improving, however he rarely speaks in sentences **Post C**'s communication has generally improved, although he still has a long way to go. C has learned to talk about his family and life outside of school when prompted. He generally enjoys talking about himself and usually does this in full sentences. His relationships with his peers and adults have also improved along with his listening skills that help with his communication.

Pre H seeks approval regularly to validate his actions **Post H** is confident speaking in class and communicates well with peers.

Pre L struggles to form verbal sentences and will often use the wrong words due to his limited vocabulary **Post L** has worked hard this year and I am pleased with the progress he has made in terms of physical contact with his peers. He is more inclined to use his words and not lash out

Striking improvement (21%)

Pre S has been selectively mute for most of the year. She is just beginning to whisper and read to familiar adults and close friends. She has high anxiety and doesn't like pressure or feeling put on the spot like she's being looked at **Post S** has made amazing progress this year. She now speaks whenever she is asked to although sometimes she may speak quietly. She engages in conversation with children and adults. She is still quite anxious when talking in front of the class but is starting to put her hand up more and come to the front of the class to complete examples and model work. She is confident sharing in a small group e.g. reading her letter to Mrs C.

Pre B is reluctant to speak in class **Post B** has grown in confidence and excelled in our class assembly.

Pupil Premium

Speech Bubbles is not identified as a Social Mobility programme or indeed specifically for children who are eligible for Pupil Premium or Free School Meals. However, in relation to the wider conversation about 'Closing the gap' we were interested to consider how children referred to the programme and who were also eligible for pupil premium were assessed by their classroom teachers. Whilst this doesn't provide us with conclusive evidence we can identify good progress by Pupil Premium children, however that progress seems to be marginally less than the progress for non-pupil Premium children.



For Learning, Speaking and Listening

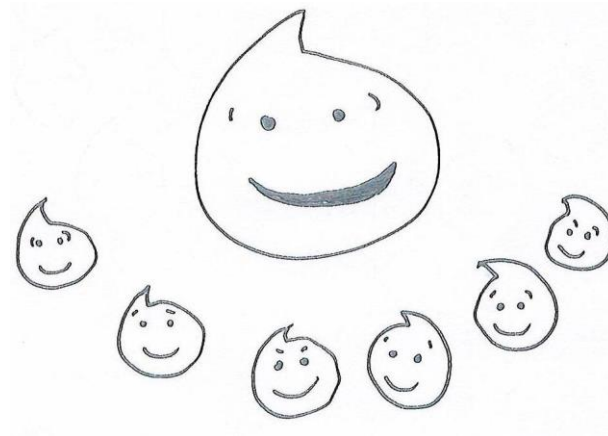
78% of referred pupil premium children showed improvement
With **53%** having clear improvement – striking improvement

For Emotional Behaviour and Conduct Behaviour

80% of referred pupil premium children showed improvement
With **50%** having clear improvement – striking improvement

Teacher Comments

Analysis of the teacher's pre and post project comments reveals that they report **88%** of referred pupil premium children making improvement and of those **68%** showed clear improvement – striking improvement.



4. Impact on Academic Attainment

Speech Bubbles is not identified or presented as an intervention to support academic attainment. However, we are interested to discover if there is any impact on academic attainment for children who are referred to and complete the programme.

This is a teacher reported measure:

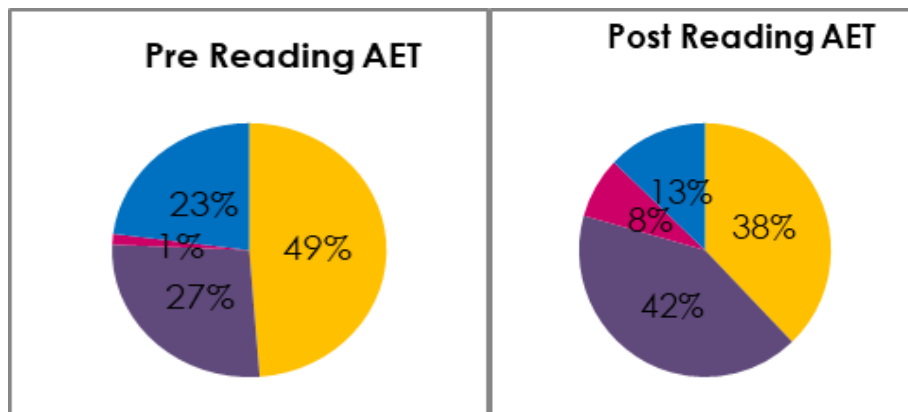
Reading

Key

- Working at greater depth
- Working at national standard
- Working towards national standard
- Not meeting national standard

For all children

Pre project: **28%** of pupils were working at or above age expected target
 Post project: **50%** of pupils were working at or above age expected target



For Pupil Premium children

Pre project: **26%** of pupils were working at or above age expected target
 Post project: **43%** of pupils were working at or above age expected target

Writing

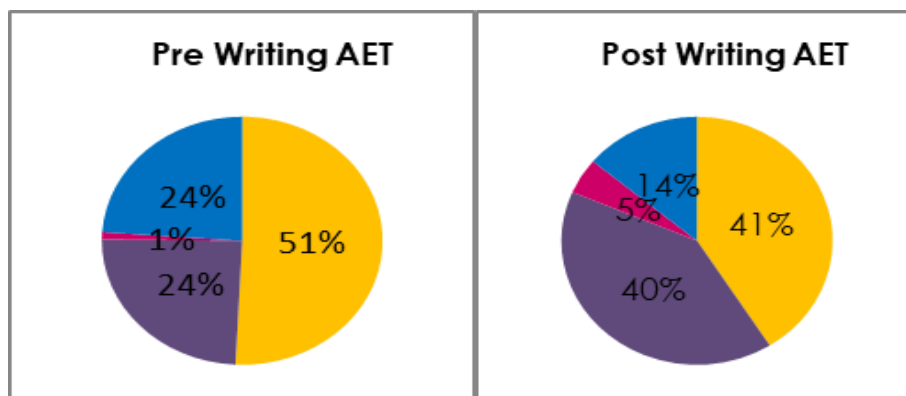
Key

- Working at greater depth
- Working at national standard
- Working towards national standard
- Not meeting national standard

For all children

Pre project: **25%** of pupils were working at or above age expected target

Post project: **45%** of pupils were working at or above age expected target



For Pupil Premium children

Pre project: **22%** of pupils were working at or above age expected target

Post project: **36%** of pupils were working at or above age expected target

In both Reading and Writing children eligible for Pupil Premium started at a lower level and whilst they showed progress it was less than the progress shown by their peers.

5. Research

Learning About Culture

This year we have been proud to be part of the RSA and EEF Learning About Culture programme. That has meant two things for us:

Firstly, 26 schools have been part of a Randomised Control Trial. London Bubble delivered the intervention in 11 of those schools and the remaining 15 were delivered by our partners Half Moon Theatre, Kazzum Arts, Immediate Theatre, North West Drama, Peoplescape, Oldham Theatre Workshop and M6 Young Peoples Theatre. The research phase has been completed and the findings will be published late spring 2020. The trial protocols can be read here:

<https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/projects-and-evaluation/projects/speech-bubbles/>



Secondly it has involved us in the RSA Evidence Champions Network. The network has been established to improve the knowledge and confidence of the cultural sector to embrace an evidence rich approach to our work. Speech Bubbles appears as a case study in the Evidence Champions handbook which is available here <https://www.thersa.org/discover/publications-and-articles/reports/evidence-handbook>

ISOTIS

Speech Bubbles was selected as the English case study for a Pan European research programme into inclusive curriculum. This study concludes that:

By providing ways for children to communicate more effectively, with teachers in the classroom, with peers in social settings, and with their family members, both their achievement and their wellbeing are likely to be enhanced. Children from many backgrounds have taken part and it appears, both from the documented evidence and from the comments of professionals involved in delivering the programme that this programme is well received and leads to impressive gains for the children.

www.isotis.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/ISOTIS_D4.3_Case-studies_curriculum_pedagogy_social-climate-interventions.pdf

6. Awards, writings and presentations

There has been considerable interest in the Speech Bubbles programme this year and that interest has focussed on the benefits to children, the research we have undertaken and the innovative approach to replication. The following list gives you a taste of how Speech Bubbles has been represented.

Drama Journal. Summer 2018 Volume 24.2

Evidence Not Advocacy

This is an article by Amelia Bird (Speech Bubbles co-ordinator) that describes the programme and the proven benefits for participating children

Shine a Light Award (Communication Trust & Pearsons)

Speech Bubbles was awarded the Innovation award for Speech, Language and Communication Needs. <https://youtu.be/SZxarYKYTQs>

Research in Drama Education. May 2019 Volume 24 number 2

Evaluating twinkles: reflections on the evaluation of a drama and communication project in schools by Adam Annand

Royal Opera House Bridge. The Thriving Child Conference. July 2019

Adam Annand in conversation with Dominic Wyse

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Qob8NOlwCEY&t=2s>



7. Summing up

The continued success of the Speech Bubbles programme in this year has been in large part down to the commitment, skill and experience of: Our theatre partners, the drama practitioners, the school staff and of course the wonderful children who are referred.

We would also like to mention the ongoing work of the Communication Trust, despite cuts to their core funding and consequential staff cutbacks they continue to work tirelessly for children with SLCN and the adults who support them. We have directly benefitted from their free resources and training, from their networking and their advocacy.



Speech Bubbles by Liz Atkin
Liz is a Speech Bubbles drama practitioner and visual artist