

# Talk Partners

## Why do we use Talk Partners at Sydenham Primary School?

The use of 'talk partners' as a strategy means that all children get the opportunity to think, discuss and express themselves orally.

Some children may feel more confident when expressing their ideas in a paired situation, rather than to the whole class, when the fear of getting a question wrong may actually restrict their learning; the shared responsibility for an opinion or view which comes with this strategy can raise children's self-confidence and encourage their engagement. It also gives the teacher more opportunities to ask higher order questions which require more thought, reflection and exploration, and it gives children time to think.

The use of talk partners can really take children's learning on further, and what's more, it's fun. All research shows that when speaking and listening is well developed and encouraged it has a positive impact on children's learning.

## What is the impact of using Talk Partners?

Some of the positive outcomes of using the talk partner's approach are that it:

- provides an opportunity for all children to speak and listen to each other;
- helps children to generate ideas, views and opinions safely;
- provides the opportunity for all children to voice their understanding of ideas, concepts, vocabulary and linguistic conventions;
- enables participation by children who might not be as confident in the whole class situation;
- helps in the rehearsal of words and phrases before committing them to paper or contributing to a larger audience;
- develops thinking, speaking, listening, collaborative and cooperative skills;
- ensures all children are involved in the lesson;
- encourages the involvement of boys;
- enables children to learn from each other;
- provides thinking time;
- encourages extended responses;
- develops coherent thinking;
- develops 'process talk' (thinking through talk);
- provides opportunities for adults to observe, listen to and assess children's understanding

## How do teachers at Sydenham Primary School choose Talk Partners?

All research shows that paired response work such as this works best when the pairing is **absolutely random**, and is seen by the children as being so. Random pairings tend to be seen as fairer by children and if the pairings are changed regularly, children get the opportunity to talk to children that they might not normally have interaction with on an extended basis.

Teachers at Sydenham Primary School change the children's talk partners every week. They use various methods of random selection, including a computerised sorting hat.

## Staff at Sydenham Primary School make the skill of Active Listening really important in the classroom by:

- avoiding repeating what children say;
- expecting others to respond;
- devising tasks which require all children to contribute what they know; not repeating instructions;
- sometimes speaking quietly;
- insisting children respond to the last speaker;
- ensuring children answer the question they are asked;
- encouraging children to speak audibly.



**Here are some Success Criteria**  
**to help your child to be a**  
**successful talk partner:**



**Do:**

1. Look at your partner when they are talking.
2. Look interested.
3. Don't let other things distract you.
4. Let your partner express their views.
5. Listen carefully to what your partner is saying to you.
6. Think carefully about what your partner is saying.
7. Stay focused on the question/task.
8. Try to be clear about what you mean.
9. Say more than one or two words.
10. Be prepared to agree to try and persuade, and sometimes be prepared to agree to disagree.





**Here are some ideas for ways  
for your child to respond to  
her / his Talk Partner:**



*Please support your child's learning by modelling these responses at home.*



- I think that.....
- It seems to me that.....
- I would have preferred it if.....
- Don't you think it would have been better if.....
- This makes it seem.....
- Perhaps a better way would have been.....
- I think.....because....
- I disagree with that because.....
- What do you think?

