

Welcome to the
**Southwark Hearing
Support Service
(SHSS) 2024
Spring Newsletter.**



WELCOME

Welcome to the Southwark Hearing Support Service (SHSS) 2024 Spring Newsletter.

Welcome to our newsletter for this term. How are you all doing? With this week (18th - 23rd March) bring British Sign Language Week, we thought that we would fill this newsletter with information about signing.

Sign Language is a communication form that has recently been in the news due to the development of the GCSE in British Sign Language (BSL). What great news! It has been approved for September 2025 with schools being able to offer this as a GCSE (equivalent to the Modern Foreign Languages GCSE). As part of the GCSE, students will be taught at least 750 signs and how to use them to communicate effectively with other signers for use in work, social and academic settings. Students will also learn about the history of BSL, and how it evolved into the language it is today. More information can be found here: <https://educationhub.blog.gov.uk/2023/12/21/british-sign-language-gcse-everything-you-need-to-know/>

Some of your teenagers looking to take their GCSE options soon may want to ask their schools if they will be offering this.

For those of you with little ones starting out on the journey in developing communication skills sign language is a very good tool. We all agree that every child should have the best-quality communication from the earliest age possible. Hearing loss can affect social, cognitive and educational development. Sign language used with speech (not to replace) can provide an additional communication method for learning language, communication, response and spatial skills.

Sign Language with your child could help promote:

- Larger expressive and receptive spoken language vocabularies
- Improved parent–child relationships
- A reduction in problematic behaviours like tantrums resulting from frustration
- More advanced mental development

Benefits to this include:

- An increased amount of joint visual attention during interactions with your child, which is known to improve language skills
- Empowering the child to have more focus and gain context of conversations
- Helping with clarification of concepts



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to shape Southwark's future

It is important to acknowledge that Makaton and BSL are different sign systems. **Makaton** is a unique sign system that uses symbols, signs and speech to enable people to communicate. **BSL** is a recognised language that uses a combination of sign, facial expression and lip patterns to communicate everything from simple chat to complex ideas.

With your baby the use of single signs will help develop communication in pre-verbal stages. BSL can help your child develop their language skills and increase their vocabulary. BSL skills can be taught before children use speech and can support speech development. The key to any language is using it a lot in your everyday routine, repetition and positive reinforcement.

To get you started there are resources, put together by Kevin, that you can access via the links below. They include vocabulary and songs for you to do with your child/ren.

Makaton signs: <https://youtu.be/xB47odDDwW0>

BSL Animals: <https://youtu.be/LkJmXHpHMZw>

Old MacDonald: <https://youtu.be/CptO5GuUKSk>



What's in the box activity: <https://youtu.be/aLDyv2NNN4M>

If you have an idea for a signed video...let us know what you want by emailing Kevin.Jewell@southwark.gov.uk

If you are interested in learning more there are ways you can access courses via the internet and in person.

National Deaf Children's Society offers information: <https://www.ndcs.org.uk/our-services/our-events/events-for-parents-carers-and-families/learn-british-sign-language>

There are lots of websites and apps available which offer online BSL lessons and tips. These can be a great way to practise the BSL you've learned in your class, or learn some basic BSL if you can't join a BSL class just yet. However, the standard of online BSL courses and BSL apps vary widely.

If you're thinking of signing up for an online BSL course, try to find out:

- if the course is designed or taught by a qualified BSL teacher
- if the course is accredited (officially recognised)
- if the video clips used in the course are signed by deaf people whose first language is BSL, or by qualified BSL translators or interpreters.

Some examples of online BSL courses are:

- [Doncaster Deaf Trust's](#) online Level 1 course
- [Signworld](#)
- [British-Sign.co.uk](#)

Some examples of apps to help you learn BSL are:

- [Bright BSL](#)
- [Lingvano](#)

If you are interested in learning to sign but are worried about costs there is a charity that can offer support of these BSL courses (as well as other resources!) It is called Chloe's and Sophie's Special Ears Fund. **Home - Chloe's & Sophie's Special Ears Fund** (vsntest.org.uk)

**SOUTHWARK HEARING
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We thought we would set you a little challenge. You should have the BSL alphabet from our last newsletter, but if not here is a link to a video.

BSL Alphabet: <https://youtu.be/nev3bXRQhLk?feature=shared>

Can you complete this wordsearch using your finger spelling skills?

WORDS ARTHUR | EMMA | HEATHER | KEVIN | SOUTHWARK



If you have any questions about the contents of the newsletter please do get in touch.

Best wishes

Southwark Hearing Support Service

A REMINDER OF HOW TO GET IN CONTACT WITH US

NAME	JOB TITLE	PHONE	EMAIL
ARTHUR CEFAL	Team Lead Qualified Teacher of the Deaf	07540 152 935	Arthur.Cefai@southwark.gov.uk
HEATHER LATTER	Qualified Teacher of the Deaf	07751 741 630	Heather.Latter@southwark.gov.uk
EMMA FORD	Qualified Teacher of the Deaf	07395 372 558	Emma.Ford@southwark.gov.uk
KEVIN JEWELL	Qualified Teacher of the Deaf	07849 311 926	Kevin.Jewell@southwark.gov.uk