

TRANSCRIPT: Sophia

Jess Carpenter

We believe that every child has a voice so, even if the child is unable to vocalise their wants or needs, we will put in a system that will help them communicate.

Sophia came in to us last September and she had few words. She could say, 'yes' and 'no' very clearly, but most of the time she'd rather use her face to communicate, which is very expressive. But we've really nurtured the friendships and relationships that she's built throughout the year in class and, with that, she's become more confident to use her voice because there's no wrong sound. Any vocalisation she makes is brilliant. So, for example, it doesn't matter if it's, at the beginning, if it's not a formed 'please'. It can just be the 'pl..', the start, the initial sound or even a 'mm'. It can just be the slightest sound. It's just encouraging her to use that voice.

She's very good at comprehending what you're saying and how to answer questions. So, because she does a split placement – she spends three days here and then two days in her mainstream setting – so we felt that she needed just that bit more support in communicating to give her that independence. So we set up the Tech/Talk for Sophia and she's just flew with it. She asks to use it. She will tell us which template she wants. She regularly sits with me on the laptop and helps me come up with new templates and she will tell me what she wants on them, what she doesn't want on them.

So for her review, we sat together and I just asked her, 'What do you like about school?' She told me. I said, 'What don't you like?' and she told me and so we had the child's view.

My next step for Sophia is to get her to continue using her voice because sometimes she can rely on the Tech/Talk that bit more because it's a novelty. She enjoys it and so you do find that she'll stop using her voice to press the buttons, and so I don't want it to become her voice I want it to support her voice.

But I see Sophia in the future using quite complex systems 'cause, as she gets older, her language won't necessarily develop so much more so and she'll find that more frustrating as she gets... you know, as a teenager she'll want to be voicing her opinion that bit more. So I think a communication aid. I can really see her using quite a complex one.