

**A theatre intervention to support communication,
confidence and wellbeing**

"I found a voice through making theatre and am proud to be the patron of
Speech Bubbles, which helps hundreds of children to do the same"

Mark Rylance, Speech Bubbles Patron.

www.speechbubbles.org.uk

What is Speech Bubbles?

Speech Bubbles is a creative intervention using drama to support 5-7 year olds with Speech, Language and Communication Needs (SLCN) to develop their communication skills, confidence and wellbeing.

Weekly drama sessions are led in school by a Speech Bubbles trained artist working with a member of school staff, usually a teaching assistant. The content of each session is built around stories told to by children in the group. Children are at various times authors, actors and audience. As well as promoting creativity, Speech Bubbles creates a safe and fun environment to practise receptive, attentive and expressive skills which form the basis of communication and help children to socialise and learn.

What is SLCN?

A child with speech, language and communication needs (SLCN):

- Might struggle to say words or sentences.
- May not understand words that are being used, or the instructions they hear.
- May have difficulties knowing how to talk and listen to others in a conversation.
- May present as withdrawn or isolated.
- May express their communication need as 'poor behaviour'.

Why Does SLCN Matter?

SLCN is a growing problem for children, schools and society as a whole. The Communication Trust reports that in some areas of social disadvantage as many as 50% of children are starting school without the communication skills they need to succeed.

Language is a major vehicle for learning and critical to children's mental, social and intellectual development. If SLCNs are not supported in the early years they may become increasingly difficult to address.

SLCNs are strongly linked in later life with mental illness, unemployment, relationship breakdown, and offending. Between 60-90% of young offenders have speech, language and communication needs.

How Can Theatre Artists Help?

Theatre Artists are uniquely placed to help children with SLCNs because of our whole body approach to communication. We recognise that developing communication includes an awareness of body language, proximity, gesture, facial expression, eye contact, sounds, humour, words and this leads to more complex language.

We use our understanding of performance to help children reduce their anxieties and find positive emotional states. We use our understanding of story and play to make Speech Bubbles sessions fun.

Why Speech Bubbles?

Best Practice

Speech Bubbles has been developed in collaboration with schools, theatre makers and speech and language therapists. The programme has been carefully designed, refined, and thoroughly researched by experts. We know what works, we understand why, and we have evidence to support those claims.

Artists in Schools

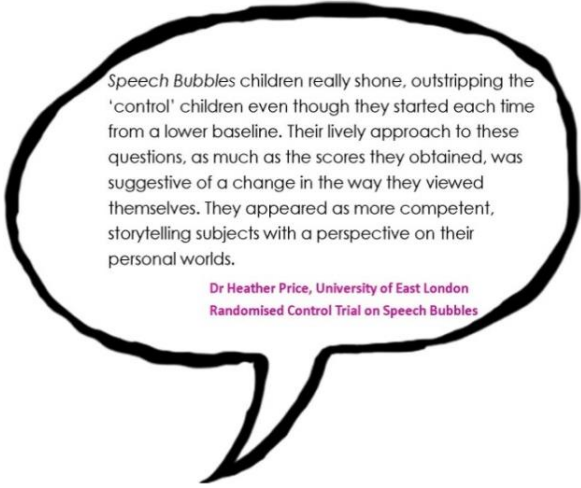
The relationships schools have with visiting artists is changing. Though many teachers appreciate the benefits of creative learning, they are increasingly being asked to justify its use in a concrete way. Speech Bubbles solves a pressing problem for schools and embeds creative learning in their improvement plans. The project is evidenced by several independent research institutions and each year our online assessment system produces an impact report for each participating school.

Developing Artists, Developing School Staff

Artists report that Speech Bubbles training feeds in to all their other arts facilitation work. Specialist input develops artists' confidence in facilitating difficult groups and helps theatre companies build a professional participatory arts workforce. An independent research study showed that Teaching Assistants working on Speech Bubbles reported enhanced job satisfaction, new roles in the school, increased personal confidence and capacity. Speech Bubbles training is CPD certified which means that schools can use their training budgets to fund it.

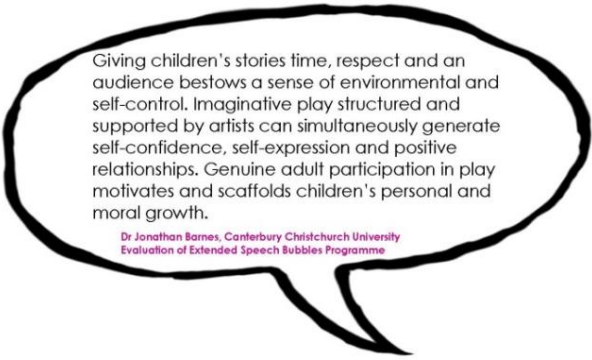
Sharing Costs

Arts and education funding are under increasing pressure so organisations need to adapt and collaborate. Speech Bubbles operates as a Partner Network which means we share many organisational costs. There are not multiple arts organisations having to reinvent the wheel and fundraise for set-up costs, research, accreditation, publicity design, national PR or resources. Speech Bubbles CIO searches for funding that benefits the overall project while theatre partners access pots of local funding so we can all charge less to schools and keep the project sustainable.



Speech Bubbles children really shone, outstripping the 'control' children even though they started each time from a lower baseline. Their lively approach to these questions, as much as the scores they obtained, was suggestive of a change in the way they viewed themselves. They appeared as more competent, storytelling subjects with a perspective on their personal worlds.

Dr Heather Price, University of East London
Randomised Control Trial on Speech Bubbles



Giving children's stories time, respect and an audience bestows a sense of environmental and self-control. Imaginative play structured and supported by artists can simultaneously generate self-confidence, self-expression and positive relationships. Genuine adult participation in play motivates and scaffolds children's personal and moral growth.


Dr Jonathan Barnes, Canterbury Christchurch University
Evaluation of Extended Speech Bubbles Programme

Who Makes a Good Speech Bubbles Partner?

We are looking for theatre companies and individual theatre practitioners to join us who are passionately committed to transforming the lives of children and who have:


- A commitment to participatory theatre.
- A track record of delivering drama and/or communication interventions.
- Experience developing relationships with, and working in, schools.
- Existing child protection processes or a willingness to put these in place.
- Experience in the monitoring and evaluation of programmes.
- A track record of securing funding for delivery of projects.
- An office, along with a communications and IT set up, including email address, contact telephone number and ideally an organisation website.
- The ability to travel to different schools.

Speech Bubbles CIO is the lead organisation and the programme is currently delivered by our theatre partners: Half Moon Theatre, Immediate Theatre, Kazzum Arts, London Bubble, Bounce Theatre, Mercury Theatre, M6 Theatre, Oldham Theatre Workshop, Trinity Theatre, Peoplescape Theatre and Northwest Drama Services.



'Not only is this project proving a great success but it is going to lead to other joined up thinking about how we demonstrate the potentially phenomenal impact of the arts.'

Jo Carter, Artistic Director, Immediate Theatre



Speech Bubbles is one of the most successful programmes I have seen offered in schools. It is carefully and efficiently managed, and every session manages to put a smile on my face. Every school should offer this programme to support the development of communication skills, and now with social franchise, that is becoming a distinct possibility.

Matt Wardle, North West Drama Services

The Practicalities

Annual Schedule

September	Class teachers use an online assessment system to refer 20 KS1 children to Speech Bubbles. They are split into 2 groups of 10. Theatre Artists and School Staff take part in full day training, led by Speech Bubbles CIO.	
October	Speech Bubbles provides supervision visits to schools.	8 Speech Bubbles sessions for each group. 4 either side of half term. 1 in-school session for KS1 staff.
November	Parents and teachers invited into session.	
December		
January	Schools staff and theatre practitioners come together for a half day Collaborative Learning Session led by Speech Bubbles CIO.	8 Speech Bubbles sessions for each group, 4 either side of half term.
February	Theatre partners run free taster sessions to recruit schools for next year.	
March		
April		
May	Schools are confirmed and contracted for next year.	8 Speech Bubbles sessions for each group, 4 either side of half term.
June	Parents and teachers invited into session	
July	Class teachers complete post-project assessments. Impact reports are created. Schools staff and theatre practitioners come together for a half-day evaluation.	

Update

In 2022-2023 we are also offering a shorter 'Bounce Back' programme in the Spring and Summer terms.

We have developed a bespoke Small Schools programme with Mercury Theatre.

Expenditure

The rates detailed below are fixed through to August 2025, made possible by generous support from Paul Hamlyn Foundation.

What you get	Cost	
Pre-training support	<p>One-off fee of £4875+VAT £2000+ VAT</p>	
Operation training with Operation Manual		
Visit to established Speech Bubbles session		
Fundraising support		
Partner agreement		
Practitioner training		
Exclusive rights to market Speech Bubbles in your territory		
Promotion on the Speech Bubbles CIO website		
Brand guidelines and use of the brand		
Marketing and PR templates for regional launch		
Speech Bubbles CIO facilitator for regional launch		
Other Set Up Costs You May Incur		
Computer and printer		
Travel and accommodation during training		
Printing and postage of marketing and PR materials		
Legal expenses to check franchise agreement		
Development of a Speech Bubbles page on your website		
Drama facilitator recruitment costs		
What you get	Cost	
Facilitator for full day CPD certified induction training.	<p>Annual fee of £5000+VAT £2000+VAT</p>	
Facilitator for half day collaborative learning session.		
2 supervision visits from Speech Bubbles supervisor.		
Resource pack for schools and practitioners.		
Access to annually updated resources and templates.		
Access to online assessment system and impact reports.		
Annually updated case for support document including external, national research results.		
Other Annual Expenses You May Incur		
Theatre Artist Fees for training and evaluation and 24 half day sessions per year, per school.		
Printing costs for marketing or some resources.		
Administration time.		
Travel to visit schools.		
Venue hire and refreshments for training days.		
General overheads.		

Income

The amount of income generated by your Speech Bubbles project will vary according to the number of schools paying for the programme. Speech Bubbles CIO currently charges between **£500 and £3750+VAT** per year per school. We think it is a realistic goal for a Partner to be working with 2/3 schools in their first year and 6 schools in their second year.

If you'd like to talk more about a Speech Bubbles Partnership, please get in touch.

Adam Power-Annand, CEO

adam@speechbubbles.org.uk

It's been great to be able to pick up an already packaged and tried-and-tested programme and deliver it using our own unique settings, using our knowledge of local children to further develop the model. London Bubble's support throughout has been excellent and we are confident that the partnership will develop and flourish as we continue to deliver the programme.

Beccy Allen, Young People's Producer, Half Moon Theatre

www.speechbubbles.org.uk

phf Paul Hamlyn
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Supporting cultural education, endorsed by Arts Council England



**speech
bubbles**