

Social Communication Disorder

Social communication disorder used to be termed as 'Semantic Pragmatic disorder' and is a communication disorder, which crosses the boundaries of both specific language impairment and autistic spectrum disorder. It may be diagnosed as one or other of these conditions or it may be identified specifically.

Children with this disorder are unable to process complex information in social situations. They have difficulties with social relationships and any situation involving communication. They are very inward looking and are usually unable to empathise or to demonstrate any perceptive responses. They often develop obsessive interests, which they love talking about, but find it difficult to understand that you do not share their enthusiasms. They have the triad of impairments that usually indicate the child is on the autistic spectrum – socialising, language and imagination – and social communication disorder is often described as the outer spectrum of autism. Children with this disorder may also have attention deficit disorder or dyslexia as well.

Key Characteristics:

A child with social communication disorder may:

- Speak in a grown up way.
- Not be able to make eye contact.
- Find facial expressions, body language and gestures confusing.
- Think and speak very literally and in concrete terms.
- Have difficulty with abstract concepts concerning time (e.g.next week) or motivation.
- Read early or late, but without comprehension.
- Be either very active or very passive.
- Be logical and inflexible in following rules and expects everyone else to be the same.
- Be either a loner or appear over friendly.
- Be poor at taking turns or taking part in team games or group activities.
- Have a dislike of crowds.
- Be easily distracted.
- Suffer from specific language impairment or dyslexia.

Strategies we use in the Classroom

We may need to:

- Give the child practical, hands on tasks.
- Provide a quiet, orderly environment.
- Use visual clues whenever possible.
- Break instructions into short sentences.
- Keep to classroom routines as much as possible and help them to cope when change is unavoidable.
- Avoid abstract concepts whenever possible.
- Give literal instructions e.g. put the puzzles in the cupboard rather than tidy away.
- Teach social communication strategies explicitly.
- Provide visual timetables.
- Explain sarcasm and jokes when they are used.
- Build on their special interests.

- Give constant encouragement and praise.

Specific Interventions that we may suggest for this difficulty at Claremont School are:

- Follow any given programmes from the Speech and Language service.
- Access support from the Speech and Language service by attending a Speech Surgery for advice and strategies.

Useful Websites:

www.afasic.org.uk