

Spirals

'Spirals' is a social skills programme being used by Communication and Interaction Specialist teachers and specialist assistants.

It is usually discussed by the Specialist teachers at planning with the SENCO, and then delivered into the school by the specialist Communication and Interaction assistant in conjunction with a member of the school staff.

'Spirals' was written by an Educational Psychologist, Marion Nash, in conjunction with a speech and language therapist Jackie Lowe and a mainstream teacher.

There are several Spirals packages available, for example, Science and Maths and the one most commonly used in Cambridgeshire schools is for Key Stage 1. The programmes are supplemented by books designed to be used in the home.

'Spirals' is based in research. It follows the principles that children learn best when facts and ideas are embedded in experience. The programme includes movement, balance and singing and repetition. Movement is key to learning with younger children (Restak 2003 = 85% of children are kinaesthetic learners)

The programme is for those children who are linguistically challenged, those who find instructions hard to understand and have little confidence.

It is for those children who find speaking in large groups hard or who have poor questioning ability.

It slows down the pace of language presentation, and is graded into levels of activity and concentration. There are plenty of opportunities for repetition and the small learning steps (Spirals) encourage repetition and over learning (rehearsal).

'Spirals' is a small group activity, once per week for about 20 – 30 minutes for 9 weeks.

There are 3 levels Early Years, KS1 and KS2. Each session builds on the previous one and there is steady progression to the next level.

There is an assessment form to be completed pre and post intervention which looks at thinking, language, social and listening skills and how the child transfers these into their everyday classroom activities.

The aims are to create a safe and relaxed learning environment along with building up positive and supportive peer relationships. It raises the child's self esteem via the adult's continuous positive attitude and non verbal communication. It aims to encourage self reflection and problem solving and to lower anxiety and increase the child's self confidence.