



**Meet Sophie**  
She is bright, ambitious,  
and sociable

But she can't hear  
everything that is being  
said and needs teachers  
and pupils to understand  
how to communicate  
with her so that she can  
be included in all that  
happens in school

## Deafness

### Facts

- One in five children at KS 1 will experience temporary deafness as a result of glue ear which can be mild or moderate.
- Deafness is described in four levels: mild, moderate, severe and profound. Deafness in one ear only is known as unilateral.
- Around 40% of deaf children have additional needs.
- No hearing technology replaces normal hearing. Deaf children use a variety of hearing technologies including digital hearing aids, cochlear implants, bone anchored hearing aids, personal FM systems or soundfield systems.
- Deaf children may use a variety of communication modes including Spoken English (or other languages), Sign Supported English or British Sign Language (BSL). Children may have communication support workers.
- Expectations for deaf children should be as high as those for other children.

### What to look for

- Does not respond when called
- Watches faces/lips intently
- Constantly asks for repetition
- Failure to follow instructions straight away or misunderstands/ignores instructions
- Watches what the others are doing before doing it themselves
- Inattentive and 'daydreaming'
- Makes little or no contribution to group or classroom discussions
- Frequently seeks assistance from peers
- Talks either too loud or too soft
- Complains of not being able to hear
- Tired, frustrated, solitary

Any concerns should be raised immediately with the child's parents to arrange an appointment with their GP.

All levels of Deafness can impact on:

**Listening skills** - a deaf child may not hear all the words that are spoken or all the individual sounds in any one word, and may also miss or misinterpret unstressed words in speech (e.g. prepositions).

**Language development and literacy skills** - may have a limited vocabulary as do not hear words being used in conversations around them. May also have difficulty with:

- words with several meanings (e.g. catch)
- word endings (e.g. 's', 'ed' )
- passive sentences (e.g. the car was stolen by the boys)
- idioms (e.g. red herring, over the moon)
- verb tenses
- phrasal verbs (e.g. put on, look into, get around)
- synonyms
- complex sentences

**Attention and concentration** – listening/ signing/lipreading for long periods of time can be very tiring.

**Working memory** – may have difficulty holding intermediate results in their head whilst thinking (e.g. long multiplication), or with processing new information to store in long-term memory and searching and retrieving information when it needs to be recalled.

- Auditory memory - can have difficulty retaining and interpreting large chunks of information or instructions given orally.
- Processing time – may need extra time to understand information given.
- Social skills – may not have age appropriate social skills. Participating in break time conversations/ games may be difficult.
- Self-esteem – may have low self-esteem and lack confidence, especially in larger groups or with new people.

## What to do

### Communication

- Make sure you have the child's attention before starting to talk, otherwise they may miss the first part of the conversation or instructions.
- Speak clearly, naturally and at a normal rate - shouting distorts lip patterns.
- Always face the child when talking to them and allow space between you and the child for signing or lipreading purposes.
- Do not cover your face with your hands or objects and do not walk around while you are speaking, as this will make it difficult for a child to read facial expressions or lipread.
- Repeat what the other pupils say, especially those who are sitting at a distance from a deaf pupil.

- Avoid having your back to a window as this creates a shadow and makes it difficult for a deaf child to read facial expressions, lipread or understand signing.
- Encourage other children to speak one at a time and raise their hand before speaking so that a deaf child is aware of who is talking.
- Use whole sentences and not single words - if a child does not understand a word, use a different word with the same meaning.
- Be familiar with a child's equipment and know how to undertake basic trouble shooting and maintenance.

### Learning environment

- Do not seat a child near noisy equipment such as computers or projectors.
- Minimise noise levels (both inside and outside the classroom) as all noise, including background noise, is amplified by hearing aids.
- Measures can be taken to improve acoustics and NDCS offers an acoustic toolkit. For more information please contact the free helpline on 0808 800 8880.

### Lessons

- Allow time for children to read or look at visual aids and/or instructions before starting to teach.
- Highlight when there is a new topic of conversation. Use key words, topic headings or visual aids to set context.
- Encourage the child to state if they do not understand.
- It is vital that lesson plans are discussed with support staff.
- Give homework at a quiet time during the lesson.

Remember - no two deaf children are the same.

## Where to find help

The school SENCo/ALNCO. Teachers of deaf children - employed by local authorities in a hearing impaired service or sensory support service

### Useful Websites

[www.ndcs.org.uk](http://www.ndcs.org.uk) - provides free resources specifically developed for mainstream schools, including the 'Deaf Friendly Teaching' booklets  
[www.earfoundation.org.uk](http://www.earfoundation.org.uk)

### Useful Suppliers of Specialist Resources

Forest Books [www.forestbooks.com](http://www.forestbooks.com)