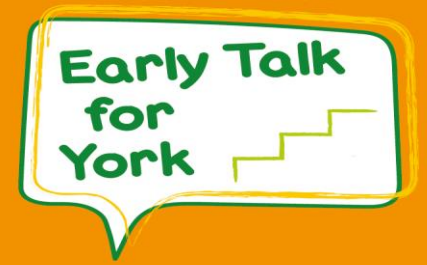


Early Talk for York update report September 2023



Introduction

Early Talk for York is an approach to improve speech, language and communication of children aged 0 to 5 years.

Good communication skills at 5 years of age are strongly linked with a range of positive outcomes in later life, including: reading and writing skills; employment and mental and physical health and wellbeing

More information about Early Talk for York, including previous reports on progress can be found at www.york.gov.uk/EarlyTalkForYork This report is an update on the progress of the roll out of Early Talk for York and latest impact evaluation findings.

Headline activity 2022 - 23

There are now 34 group-based schools and settings following the full Early Talk for York approach. These organisations between them serve a total of approximately 1700 children aged 2 – 5 years and many also serve more children aged 0 – 2 years. The majority of these settings have now achieved ‘Communication Friendly Setting status’ meaning that their whole staff team have taken part in accredited, quality assured training and that their practice and provision has been independently audited. The others are on track to achieve this during the course of 2023 and 2024. 20 childminders are now working either at or towards Step 2 or above of the approach, having completed significant training programmes and applied their learning in their practice and provision.

108 (93%) schools and group-based settings in York are now using the screening tool (WellComm) to universally screen children (the first step of Early Talk for York) with many childminders also doing the same via a library lending service. These settings serve nearly 4000 children aged 2 – 5 years and many also serve many more children aged 0 – 2 years. For the first time ever, data from this screening was collected by the Local Authority and used to better understand needs across the city and to target future resources accordingly. This will now happen on an annual basis.

The University of York generously funded an independent evaluation of ‘Step 1’ of the approach – the use of the screening tool – which has been completed by academics at the University of York. The full report will be available later in the autumn but shows overwhelmingly positive results with impact on practitioners and children evident.

Partnership working continues with the Heathy Child Service with the successful gradual roll out of the integrated 2 year review happening in those Early Talk for York settings that serve 2 year old children. The Family Learning team have continued to work with a growing number of schools and have now settled on a model of support that contributes to the overall aims of the approach. The University of York ‘Student in Schools’ programme continues to provide good coverage of student volunteers supporting work across the city with up to 40

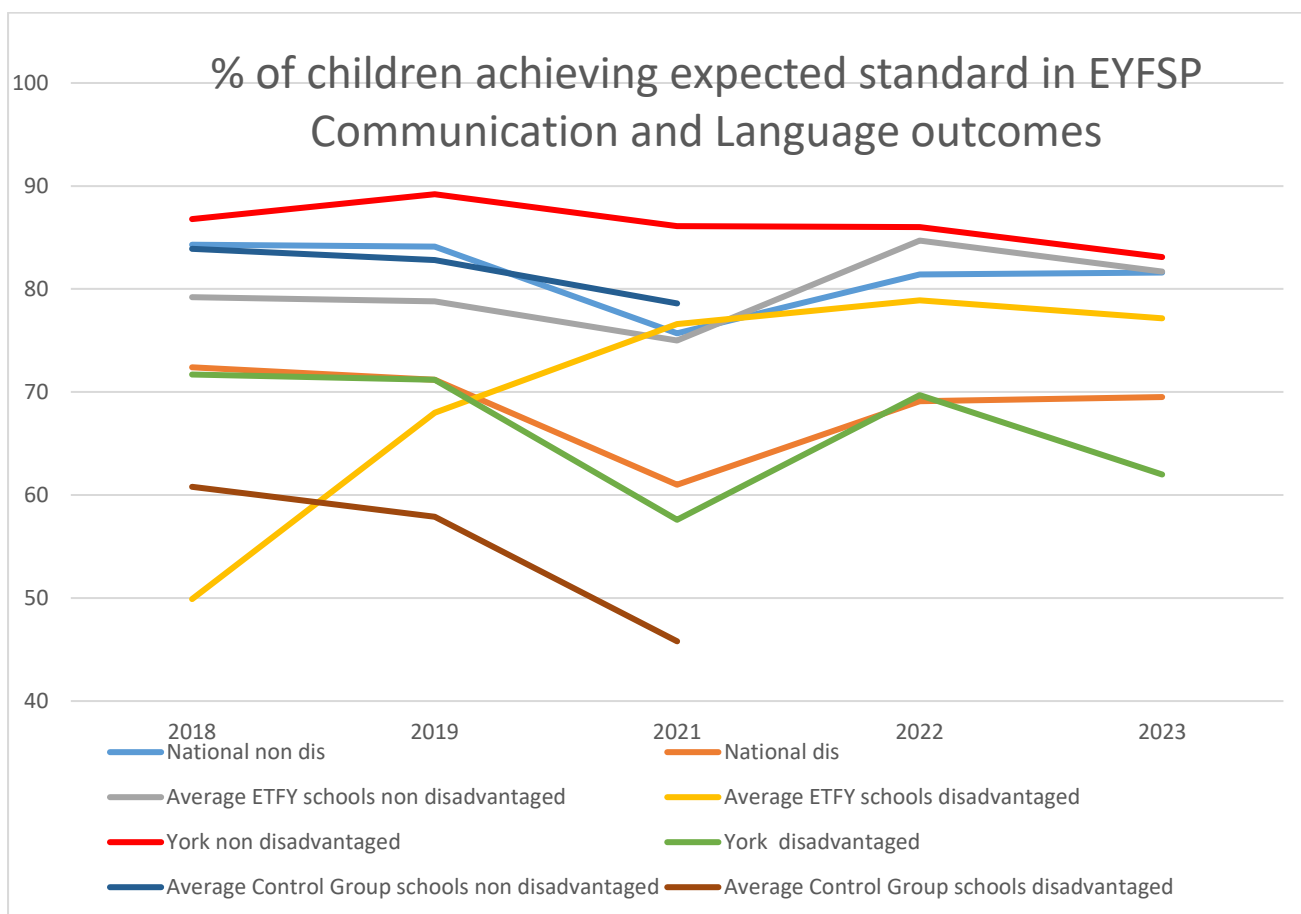
placements per term across the sector as well as responding to requests for bilingual support for some children.

The Early Talk for York team continues to work closely with specialist services at York Teaching Hospital to further develop ways of working to ensure best use of limited specialist support and resources. This has particularly helped develop the universal and targeted offers from the specialist team, for example by providing specific training on speech sounds.

Early Talk for York has been shortlisted finalists for three national awards (The MJ Awards and two categories within the Children and Young People Now awards, outcome of which is yet unknown).

Impact

We continue to track the impact of Early Talk for York using the statutory assessment of children's development at age 5 using the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile (EYFSP). This framework changed in 2022 and children were assessed against revised criteria. This has implications for exact year on year comparisons, however the trends and comparisons between groups remains useful for us to understand more about the impact that this approach is having.



The 'gap' between non disadvantaged children nationally and disadvantaged children in the ETFY area has reduced from 34.5% (2018) to 2.5% (2022) and remains small at 4.5% in 2023. This data provides further confidence that Early Talk for York is meeting its primary objective.



of improving outcomes in speech, language and communication for all children with a particular positive benefit for disadvantaged children in the city.

Next steps:

1. Continue the roll out and scale up of the Early Talk for York approach – in particular facilitating access to high quality training for a greater proportion of the diverse early years workforce and partner organisations.
2. Finalise and publish an updated speech, language and communication pathway for the city to help with consistency of approach in line with Early Talk for York.
3. Investigate ways in which the learning from Early Talk for York can be applied to improving outcomes for older children as well as other aspects of children's development in the early years.

