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Speech & LanguageLink

Speech & Language Support Practitioner

What you need to know about the Level 5 Apprenticeship



Supporting pupils with SLCN

According to the DfE, the **most common type of need** among pupils requiring SEN support is speech, language and communication needs (**SLCN**).

In the last year, more than 25,000 additional pupils have been identified as having SLCN across Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) and SEN Support provision.

As the number of pupils identified as having a speech, language and communication need continues to rise, schools need to develop in-house specialists to provide effective support and help create truly inclusive learning environments.

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About the apprenticeship

The Level 5 Speech & Language Support Practitioner Apprenticeship is designed to help schools build specialist expertise in SLCN within their existing support teams.

Developed in partnership with speech and language therapists at Speech & Language Link the programme supports: **TAs, SEND TAs, LSAs** and **HLTAs** to identify learning barriers earlier, support pupils with SLCN more confidently and strengthen inclusive practice across their school.

This programme is for those who have not yet gained their Level 5 Specialist Teaching Assistant qualification

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About the Level 5 apprenticeship

- Delivered across 18 months
- Virtual learning: online sessions, monthly coaching and dedicated support
- Designed for TAs, SEND TAs, LSAs and HLTAs
- Gain specialist knowledge and expertise in SLCN support
- Qualifications: Speech & Language Link Certification Level 5 Specialist Teaching Assistant qualification
- Fully funded through the Growth and Skills Levy



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Delivered in partnership with Speech & Language Link

Speech & Language Link are recognised experts in supporting children and young people with speech, language and communication needs, bringing evidence-informed approaches and practical strategies that are used in schools every day.

Their involvement ensures learners benefit from direct input from qualified speech and language therapists, grounded in real classroom application.

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Why does this partnership matter?

This programme combines specialist expertise in speech and language with Best Practice Network's experience in designing and delivering high-quality training and apprenticeships.

This partnership gives learners the best of both: Specialist clinical expertise alongside proven training delivery, resulting in a programme that is both academically robust and highly practical for schools.

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Programme delivery

Delivered over 18 months, the Speech & Language Support Practitioner Apprenticeship is delivered through a structured blend of:

- Facilitated online classes
- Monthly coaching
- Online resources for independent learning
- Workplace learning



Curriculum modules

Professional practice & development

- Embarking on the apprenticeship: First day of learning
- Wellbeing, resilience and safeguarding
- Professional learning, reflection and research

Learning, Development and Educational Practice

- Child development & how children learn
- Pedagogy
- Curriculum
- The learning environment

Advancing learning & Supporting Learners to Thrive

- Planning
- Assessment
- Learning resources and technology
- Advocating for learner needs
- Supporting individual needs
- Effective teamworking and partnership working
- Legal requirements and guidance
- Theories of learning

SLCN-specific learning

Introduction to SLCN (part 1 & 2)

Develop an understanding of SLCN, key identifiers and terminomal and its prevalence and impact in schools

Understand the challenges of SLCN within schools, recognise common communication difficulties and the link between behaviour and communication

Making a difference in the classroom (part 1 & 2)

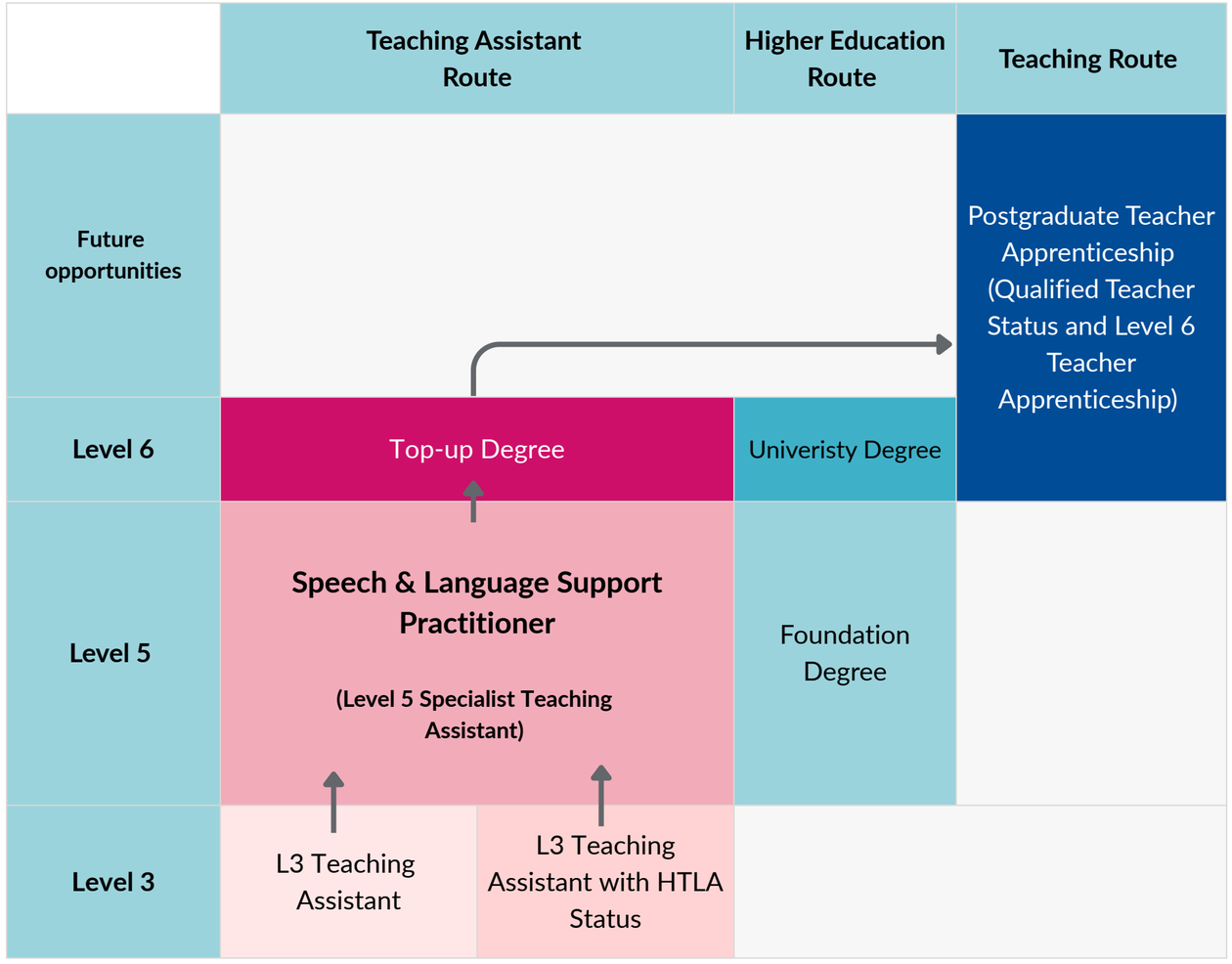
Understand the development of attention and listening skills and explore practical communication strategies to support understanding and interaction

Develop practical strategies to support understanding and learn how to adapt classrooms and use visuals to support understanding

Progression pathway: Where could this apprenticeship take you?

As a Level 5 apprenticeship, this programme is equivalent to foundational degree.

If you would like to take your career even further, you will be able to do a top-up degree to go on to gaining your Qualified Teacher Status.



Off-the-job training for your apprenticeship

Off-the-job training are flexible learning hours are completed alongside your day-to-day role and focus on activities that help you progress toward your apprenticeship goals.

Your **Apprenticeship Tutor** will work with you to identify opportunities for off-the-job training in your role, helping you balance learning with your existing responsibilities while staying on track with your apprenticeship.

Off-the-job training could be...

- Applying theory-based learning from online sessions in your role
- Shadowing qualified staff members
- Scheduled virtual classroom sessions and interactive learning
- Curriculum planning
- Coaching and mentoring meetings
- Networking & training events

Your Apprenticeship Tutor: Supporting you at every stage

Our team is here to support you on your apprenticeship journey.

A dedicated Apprenticeship tutor provides **regular support,** guidance and coaching. They **help learners connect their learning** to real pupils, real provision and day-to-day challenges they may face in school.



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What kind of support is offered? →

Support at every stage



Personalised learner support

Support is tailored to each participant's needs, and learners can ask for help at any point during the programme.



Dedicated tutor guidance

Tutors check progress regularly, identify barriers early and help learners stay confident and on track.



Additional Learning Support (ALS)

A specialist ALS team is available for learners who need extra support, strategies or reasonable adjustments.



Wellbeing & confidence

Learners are supported with both their development and wellbeing, with regular check-ins and open communication



Support in the workplace

Mentors are involved so participants can apply their learning effectively in their setting.

Who is the programme designed for?

Designed for	Teaching Assistants (TAs), SEND TAs, LSAs, HTLAs, support staff working in schools and are interested in speech, language and communication
Who want to...	Develop specialist expertise in SLCN Gain a Level 5 Specialist Teaching Assistant qualification
Ideal for those supporting...	Pupils with speech, language and communication needs

Benefits for participants

Develop specialist knowledge	Build a deeper understanding of speech, language and communication needs and how pupils with SLCN may experience school.
Grow confidence in practice	Learn practical strategies to support pupils with SLCN, and improve engagement and participation in the classroom.
Make a greater impact day to day	Apply learning directly in the classroom and wider school environment.
Progress professionally	Work towards a Level 5 Specialist Teaching Assistant while developing a more specialist role within your school's support team.
Advocate for pupils with SLCN	Develop confidence in sharing observations, supporting pupil voice and working with others to improve outcomes.
Free for the learner	The programme is fully funded through the Growth and Skills levy making it free for you as the learner

Benefits for schools

Develop in-house expertise	Develop existing support staff into confident Speech & Language Support Practitioners who can apply specialist strategies across the school.
Strengthen inclusive provision	Support pupils with SLCN to access learning, participate more fully and feel a stronger sense of belonging.
Improve consistency of support	Create a more joined-up approach between TAs, teachers, SENCOs, families and external professionals.
Support earlier identification	Equip staff to recognise barriers sooner and respond with practical, evidence-informed support.
Reduce pressure on SENCOs and teachers	Develop practitioners who can contribute more confidently to planning, observations, adaptations and pupil support.
Make the most of funding	The programme is £12,000 but fully funded through your school's Growth and Skills levy, helping schools develop specialist capacity without using standard CPD budgets. NOTE: Most schools can access funding through their local authority or MAT.

Our Level 5 Specialist Teaching Assistant Programmes

STA Level 5: developed with industry experts

Speech & Language Support Pracitioner

Deceveloped in partnership with speech & language therapists from Speech & Language Link

Combines practical, evidence-informed approaches to support autistic pupils' learning, participation and outcomes.

Autism Support Practitioner

Deceveloped in partnership with autism education experts from Liberty Academy Trust

Combines practical, evidence-informed approaches to support autistic pupils' learning, participation and outcomes.

Specialist Teaching Assistant Level 5: choose your pathway

SEND Support

Content focuses on SEND legislation, early identification, assessment approaches, adaptive practice and evidence-informed strategies that improve outcomes for learners with SEND.

Social and emotional wellbeing

Content focuses on developing expertise in self-regulation, wellbeing promotion, learner support strategies, effective signposting and interventions that enhance engagement, attendance and achievement.

Curriculum Provision

Content focuses on curriculum progression, planning sequences of learning, assessment within curriculum areas and promoting high-quality curriculum provision to improve learner outcomes.

What next?

Start your application	Visit **bestpracticenet.co.uk/speech-support** and register your interest to receive the application link.
We will arrange funding	Our friendly funding team will support the employer and manage the Growth and Skills Levy funding process. Remember: this programme is free for the learner. The cost of the programme is covered by your schools Growth and Skills Levy (for eligible schools).
Join our next cohort!	Start with support from day one. Learners receive induction, onboarding and guidance before beginning the programme.

Scan QR code to apply:

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Or contact: david.drewitt@bestpracticenet.co.uk



Questions?