The children with the most severe Speech Sound Difficulties are seen for Outreach when they are in Year One Class. These children typically have 4-6 processes operating and have highly unintelligible speech. They achieve less than 30% clarity (% whole word correct) on the Metaphon Screening. School provide a Teaching Assistant for 6 monthly sessions in school and are left activities to play 3x15mins a week. Parents attend sessions in clinic fortnightly for 6 months and are given activities to play 3x15mins a week. The initial assessment reveals which sound contrasts a child can be easily corrected on and this is the starting point for therapy.

Two models have been compared with parents attending sessions in school vs. clinic. Both models involve additional visits to work with a Teaching Assistant. Both models are successful and deliver comparable results. To introduce a screening appointment to check children still need this level of input before Outreach starts. To offer specialist second opinions and support to clinic therapists prior to offering Outreach.

“...through the phonology outreach programme. This took place at school, alternating with parents and our teaching assistant. This was a great success and enabled the modelled intervention, games and strategies, were continued in the classroom and at home each day. The child made such good progress that she found confidence to begin to contribute to class talk and develop friendships with her peers. The teaching assistant has also gained substantially in her confidence and skills to support other children with speech difficulties effectively.”

Recent school feedback given in April 2019

Myra Talwar/ Erin Hobbs
Specialist SLTs Phonological Disorders
Gloucestershire Care Services NHS Trust

Evidence of impact

An evaluation of 100 cases showed that:

- 80% achieved intelligible speech after 6 months
- 15% achieved intelligible speech after 12 months
- 5% achieved intelligible speech after 24 months +

This is powerful evidence to show schools as a way of getting them on board and committing Teaching Assistant time. These figures have been corroborated anecdotally by another 300 cases.