

Good Practice : Developing vocabulary in English and British Sign Language (BSL) for deaf children.

Teachers at Donaldson's School identified a need to support their environmental studies work more effectively for children who are British Sign Language (BSL) users. They wanted to enrich children's communication and language in both English and BSL through the use of rich vocabulary related to topics being studied in a form accessible to all. To do this effectively, teachers sought the support of the deaf studies department.

The department has been developing specific vocabulary cards for teachers, with the written word, and its associated BSL sign. They also make these vocabulary cards to go with children's books in the library. This gives teachers and children access to new signs quickly and easily when working on a topic or reading a story.

The deaf studies department has extended this work with the information and communications department (ICT). They now record on video a signed version of each vocabulary card. This video element is vital to the continuing development and understanding of the BSL sign.

This resource is available to staff through the school intranet or in DVD form. Each entry consists of the video element of the BSL version of the word, the word itself in written form and the symbol/graphic which best illustrates the word. There is also a link to a PDF document of the original updated vocabulary card for the user to print if they require a paper copy.

This resource provides very effective support for the learning and teaching process. The resource can also be used by teachers using their interactive whiteboards and symposium software. The DVD version of the resource is used by children and young people for homework and to support parents and carers.

Illustration concept of new 'vocab project'

The screenshot shows a web page for Donaldson's School. The main content area is titled 'Topic - Transport' and contains a table of 11 questions. Below the table is a graphic of a black car, followed by a video player showing a man in a white shirt and tie signing. A link at the bottom of the video player reads 'Click here to download the PDF card sheet'. On the left side, there is a vertical list of topics including 'Information Folder', 'Resources Folder', 'Teaching Resources', 'Shared Work', 'Staff List', 'Staff Photo Board', 'Primary Reports', 'Secondary Reports', 'Archived Reports', 'ICT / Multimedia', 'Copyright Info', 'HMIe', 'Marketing', 'ECF', 'Templates', and 'RNID TalkByText'. On the right side, labels with lines pointing to the page elements identify: 'Topic name' (the blue header), 'List of words within a topic' (the table of questions), 'Vocab word' (the word 'Car' in a blue box), 'Graphic describing the word' (the car image), 'BSL video of the word' (the video player), and 'PDF version of vocab card' (the link below the video).