



January 2026

RED FLAGS

Happy new year! The winter break can often give us chance to reflect, or people to start asking if we think their child will be ready for the next grade in September. While these questions are difficult because we can't predict the future, here are some pointers you can discuss with parents to encourage them to seek help. . Check the age of the child and the key things they should be able to do. IF you answer 'no' to any of these, please discuss with a member of teaching staff or one of our therapists.

Can your child...	By Age 3.6 years	By 4 years	By 5 years
 Sit and listen to an adult for:	5minutes during a favourite activity or story. They attend a 1:1 adult activity for 3 minutes.	10 minutes during stories. They attend a 1:1 adult activity for 4 minutes.	15 minutes during group/class activities directed by an adult.
 Understand:	Simple instructions E.g. get your shoes. They can place things in / on / under another item when asked.	They follow more complex instructions, and are starting to understand time, size and colour.	They follow complex instructions at home and at school.
 Use sentences:	Containing 3 words.	Containing 4-6 words.	Containing detail and explain their ideas and events.
They can be understood by adults 	75% of the time. Unfamiliar adults may need help.	80% of the time.	They are clear and understood by most people. Only the odd error present (e.g. th, or 'r' or s clusters)
Use the following sounds in their speech	P/b/m/n/w/k/g/t/d/f/ 	P/b/m/n/w/k/g/t/d/f/ PLUS /s/sh/ and beginning to blend sounds	
Play with others? 	In simple turn taking games for short periods.	Cooperative play with rules and games	Fully cooperative, play imaginative games with roles.
Do all this in more than one language?	Yes, may mix up languages and use words they know. Sentences can be muddled.	Skills are continuing to grow in both languages. Sentences muddled in word order.	Yes – can separate the languages and use them more clearly (depending on exposure)

If the answer is 'no' or you can't answer with a definite 'yes', then please have a conversation with one of the team. Parents can feel like they are failing their child and hope that in a few months they will catch up. Some children will and some need help. When it comes to guilt, those feelings are real. I have two young children with speech and language delay. They attend school in French, a language I do not speak well, so I do understand all the feelings or reluctance and excuses they might feel too. Let me reassure you that its normal to feel a million different feelings and our therapists are trained to help you, or please reach out to me if you want to understand how a parent might feel. Please reach out. Details below.