

## What is BSL?

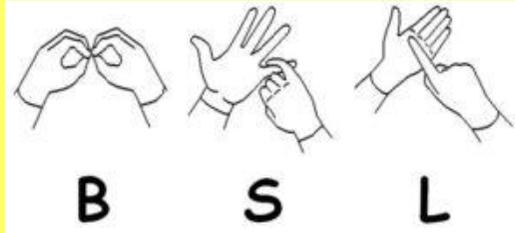
British Sign Language (BSL) is a visual language with its own structure and grammar and uses hand signs, body language, facial expression and lip patterns.

It is the language used by the deaf community in the UK and, as with any spoken language, is constantly evolving.

In Britain there are over 87,000 people whose first or preferred language is BSL.

It is predominantly used by people who are deaf or have hearing impairment.

BSL is recognised as an official minority language.



# BRITISH SIGN LANGUAGE

## Who can help?

- Level 1 & 2 BSL trained staff within school
- Teachers of the Deaf – 3 working within school plus specialist teacher service
- Specialist Speech Therapist working with pupils who are deaf or have a significant hearing impairment

## BSL at Foreland Fields School

- BSL users at Foreland Fields School will have access to a BSL 'facilitator' at all times to support communication and learning needs within the classroom setting.
- Pupils who are deaf or have a significant hearing impairment will have regular support from a Teacher of the Deaf.
- Those staff supporting BSL users will have opportunities to develop their BSL skills through regular accredited courses
- All staff will have opportunities to attend Deaf Awareness Training
- The "Sign of the Week" boards displayed across the school will also show the BSL version of a sign if different to the Makaton sign
- Whole school / department events will be signed in BSL from a position in the hall visible to the BSL users

## Systems used alongside BSL

### **Signed Supported English (SSE)**

SSE uses the same signs as BSL but they are used in the same order as spoken English. SSE is used to support spoken English, especially within schools where students with hearing impairments are learning English grammar alongside their signing.

### **BSL & Makaton within a Total Communication Environment**

Foreland Fields School is the local provision for pupils who are deaf or have a hearing impairment – pupils will also have additional Profound / Complex needs. Some pupils in this group have joined the school with a preference for BSL provision.

Across all areas of our school we promote the use of a Total Communication Environment to nurture and encourage communication in all forms. This may be through speech and gesture, symbol support (including PECS) and signing.

The majority of pupils at Foreland Fields School who use sign to communicate do so using Makaton. Makaton is a language programme for adults and children with learning and communication difficulties. Many of the Makaton signs are derived from BSL but there are differences to be aware of.