



Speech and Language Baseline Measures
Shelton/Cobridge/Hanley Sure Start

October, November and December 2005



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22 December 2005

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1) Executive Summary

The second assessment of the speech and language ability of children in the Shelton/Cobridge/Hanley Sure Start area has demonstrated that the target of a 5 percentage point reduction in children requiring specialist intervention has been achieved.

The key findings are:

- An improvement, by 8 percentage points, of children with comprehension and word finding delay within normal limits has been achieved.
- 24% of children in 2005 have language ability within normal limits, compared to 16% in 2002.
- The first language spoken by children has a direct influence on the levels of comprehension and word finding delay found.
- Contact with Sure Start can help to reduce the incidence of comprehension and word finding delay in children.
- A lower incidence of comprehension and word finding delay is found amongst children who have had contact with Sure Start.

Shelton/Cobridge/Hanley Sure Start should feel proud of the gains that have been made and continue to work towards further reducing the incidence of comprehension and word finding delay in children.

2) Introduction

In the year 2000 Sure Start set a national target to reduce, by 5 percentage points, by 2004, the number of children with speech and language problems requiring specialist intervention.

The drive behind reducing the number of children requiring specialist intervention from Speech and Language Therapists is to raise educational and social aspirations and abilities of children.

In Stoke-on-Trent the initial survey was carried out in the Stoke North Sure Start Area in 2001. This survey was used as a model for all those in Stoke-on-Trent which took place after it. The first Speech and Language Baseline Measures Survey in the Shelton/Cobridge/Hanley Sure Start area was conducted in 2002. In 2005 this was repeated to establish if there had been a reduction in the number of children requiring specialist intervention.

It had been recognised, by 2000, that there was an underlying 10% of children who had a need for speech and language therapy (Law, 2000) due to genetic or medical issues. This is significant as it establishes a minimum level of children who would be requiring specialist intervention.

Also of concern in Stoke-on-Trent is the high level of deprivation. That is, Locke and Peers (2002) demonstrated that children from an economically deprived background could be at considerable risk of language delay. This is significant for Stoke-on-Trent which, in 2004, was ranked as the 18th most deprived local authority out of 354, nationally (Office for National Statistics).

The consequences of Law's and Locke and Peers' work for the Shelton/Cobridge/Hanley Sure Start Speech and Language Baseline Measure are enormous. That is, the closer the number of children who are within normal limits is to 90% the better the support and assistance given to children is. This is important given that the 2002 figure for children who were within normal limits for comprehension and word finding ability was 16%. This means that if an improvement to 21% of children within normal limits for either comprehension or word finding delay in the Shelton/Cobridge/Hanley Sure Start area is gained then the programme has achieved a 5 percentage point improvement.

The 2005 survey was carried out in four settings: St. Peter's Catholic Primary School, Etruscan Primary School, Eastwood Neighbourhood Nursery and Shelton Nursery School. One setting in the Shelton/Cobridge/Hanley Sure Start area did not participate in the assessment, that is, Forest Park Primary School. This was due to the merger occurring between itself and North Primary School which, the school staff felt, was unsettling for the children.

3) Assessment Methods

The assessment methodology was consistent in each of the four settings.

All assessments were carried out on children aged no younger than three years and six months and no older than four years. The assessments were carried out on children who:

- Lived in the Shelton/Cobridge/Hanley Sure Start Programme geographical area, and
- Attended a nursery setting that fell in the geographical footprint of the Shelton/Cobridge/Hanley Sure Start Programme.

Parental permission was gained for all children who took part in the surveys.

The surveys were all carried out in the first term of the academic year. This is because it is suspected that spending time in a nursery setting helps a child to develop speech and language ability (Cooper, 2002).

Two tests were used to assess the language ability of children:

- The Reynell Developmental Language Scales 3 Comprehension scale was used to assess comprehension levels.
- The Renfrew Word Finding Vocabulary Scale was used to assess vocabulary levels.

These tests are able to assess a child's ability to understand language and look at expressive vocabulary.

The Reynell Developmental Language Scales 3 Comprehension scale and Renfrew Word Finding Vocabulary Scale were used in the initial baseline study in 2002. This means that the results of the two studies are comparable.

4) Results and Analysis

4.1) Results of 2005 Survey

4.1.1) Anonymity

The results show the findings from each of the four settings without reference to either the school name or children's name. This is to conserve confidentiality.

4.1.2) Setting 1

Setting 1 had an intake of 30 children, of whom ten fitted the criteria for assessment. Of the ten children assessed, six were boys and four girls. Translators to aid the assessments were provided by the Setting. The results of the assessment are held in Table 1.

Child	Actual Age	Reynell Comprehension Age equivalent	Renfrew Word Finding Age equivalent	Delay identified	1 st Language
M1	3;11	1;11	<3;03	Comprehension & Word Finding	Urdu
M2	3;11	2;03	<3;03	Comprehension & Word Finding	Punjabi
M3	3;11	2;10	3;03	Comprehension	English/Russian
M4	3;09	2;04	<3;03	Comprehension & Word Finding	Punjabi
M5	3;09	2;11	<3;03	Comprehension & Word Finding	Punjabi
F6	3;09	2;08	<3;03	Comprehension & Word Finding	Punjabi
M7	3;08	3;10	3;03	WNL	Bengali
F8	3;08	1;09	<3;03	Comprehension & Word Finding	Punjabi
F9	3;07	2;02	<3;03	Comprehension & Word Finding	Punjabi
F10	3;07	2;00	<3;03	Comprehension & Word Finding	Urdu

Table 1 – 2005 Survey results from Setting 1

NB

WNL = Within Normal Limits

M = Boy

F = Girl

The results from Setting 1 are summarised in Table 2.

4.1.3) Setting 2

Setting 2 had eleven eligible children from an intake of 30. Five of these were girls and six were boys. Table 3 holds the results from Setting 2. Where translation was required at Setting 2 it was provided by the Speech and Language therapist carrying out the assessment. This means that the

	Number	Percent
Intake assessed	10	33%
Boys	6	60%
Girls	4	40%
Comprehension delay	9	90%
Word Finding delay	8	80%
Comprehension or Word Finding delay	9	90%

Table 2 – Summary of results from Setting 1

translator was not familiar to the children and so, this may have an effect on the results.

Child	Actual Age	Reynell Comprehension Age equivalent	Renfrew Word Finding Age equivalent	Delay identified	1 st Language
F1	3;10	3;09	3;03	WNL	English
M2	3;09	2;02	3;03	WNL	Punjabi
M3	3;09	5;06	3;05 – 3;06	WNL	English
M4	3;08	2;03	<3;03	Comprehension & Word Finding	Punjabi
M5	3;08	3;00	<3;03	Comprehension & Word Finding	Punjabi
F6	3;10	Would not co-operate			Urdu
F7	3;11	4;03	3;07 – 3;08	WNL	English
F8	3;10	4;01	3;03	WNL	English
M9	3;09	Poorly on assessment day			English
M10	3;08	3;08	<3;03	Word Finding	Punjabi
F11	3;09	3;03	<3;03	Word Finding	Punjabi

Table 3 – 2005 Survey results from Setting 2

One child from Setting 2 would not co-operate during the assessment and one child was absent. This means that the results for Setting 2 are based on nine children, not eleven. The summary of the nine children assessed in Setting 2 is held in Table 4.

	Number	Percent
Intake assessed	9	30%
Boys	5	56%
Girls	4	44%
Comprehension delay	2	22%
Word Finding delay	4	44%
Comprehension or Word Finding delay	4	44%

Table 4 – Summary of results from Setting 2

4.1.4) Setting 3

Setting 3 had an intake of 31 children but only two matched the criteria for assessment. Of these two children one was a boy and one a girl. Table 5 holds their results.

Child	Actual Age	Reynell Comprehension Age equivalent	Renfrew Word Finding Age equivalent	Delay identified	1 st Language
M1	3;06	2;06	<3;03	Comprehension & Word Finding	English
F1	3;06	2;11	<3;03	Comprehension & Word Finding	English

Table 5 – 2005 Survey results from Setting 3

The summary of these results is in Table 6.

	Number	Percent
Intake assessed	2	6%
Boys	1	50%
Girls	1	50%
Comprehension delay	2	100%
Word Finding delay	2	100%
Comprehension or Word Finding delay	2	100%

Table 6 – Summary of results from Setting 3

4.1.5) Setting 4

Setting 4 had an intake of 45 children. Fourteen of these children matched

Child	Actual Age	Reynell Comprehension Age equivalent	Renfrew Word Finding Age equivalent	Delay identified	1 st Language
M1	3;10	2;10	<3;03	Word Finding	Punjabi
M2	3;07	Would not co-operate			English
M3	3;10	2;05	<3;03	Comprehension & Word Finding	Urdu
F4	3;07	4;04	5;10	WNL	English
M5	3;11	2;04	<3;03	Comprehension & Word Finding	English
M6	3;07	3;01	<3;03	Word Finding	Punjabi
F7	3;07	3;07	<3;03	Word Finding	Punjabi
M8	3;09	3;00	<3;03	Word Finding	Punjabi
M9	3;09	3;09	3;03	WNL	Punjabi
M10	3;07	2;03	<3;03	Comprehension & Word Finding	Punjabi
M11	3;11	3;10	<3;03	Word Finding	Punjabi
F12	3;11	Poorly on assessment day			Punjabi
F13	3;11	3;03 – 3;06	<3;03	Word Finding	Punjabi
F14	3;08	2;10	3;03	Comprehension	English

Table 7 – 2005 Survey results from Setting 4

the assessment criteria. Nine of the children were boys and five were girls. Translators to aid the assessments were provided by the Setting. Table 7 shows the results from Setting 4.

One child from Setting 4 would not co-operate during the assessment and one child was absent. This means that the results for Setting 4 are based on twelve children, not fourteen. The summary of the nine children assessed in Setting 4 is held in Table 8.

	Number	Percent
Intake assessed	12	27%
Boys	8	67%
Girls	4	33%
Comprehension delay	4	33%
Word Finding delay	9	75%
Comprehension or Word Finding delay	10	83%

Table 8 – Summary of results from Setting 4

4.1.6.1) Analysis

The four settings have different requirements for specialist help. The collective results are held in Table 9.

	Number	Percent
Intake assessed	33	24%
Boys	20	61%
Girls	13	39%
Comprehension delay	17	51%
Word Finding delay	23	70%
Comprehension or Word Finding delay	25	75%

Table 9 – Summary of results from all four Settings

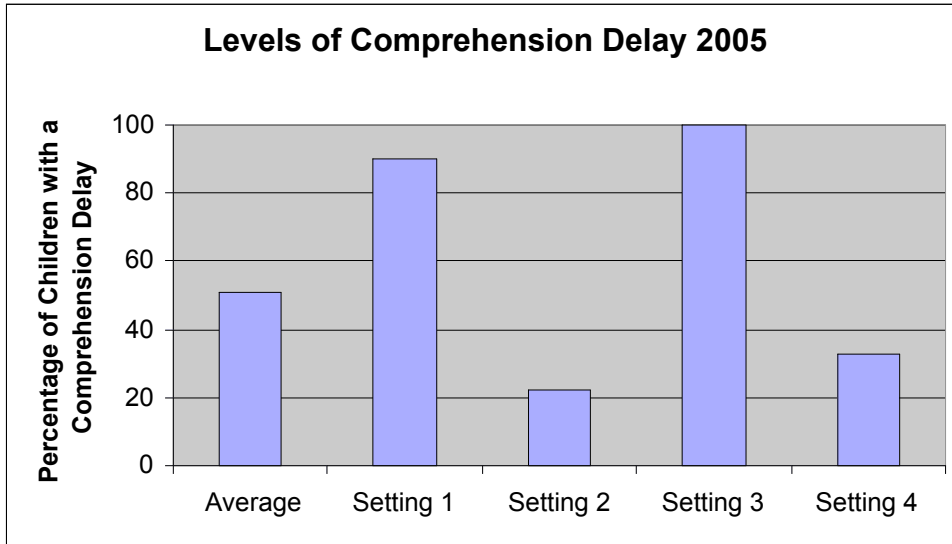
Eight children were identified as being 'Within Normal Limits'. Of these four were boys and four were girls. Within the population this means that 24% of the surveyed children displayed the comprehension and word finding ability that is consistent with their age. These figures also show that 20% of the boys and 31% of the girls were within normal limits.

4.1.6.2) Comprehension Delay

Seventeen children were identified as having a comprehension delay. Graph 1 shows how the four settings compare against each other and against the average.

The graph shows that two of the four settings have below average scores in terms of comprehension delay. However, the average of 51% is exceeded by two settings which have very high scores. That is, Setting 1 with a

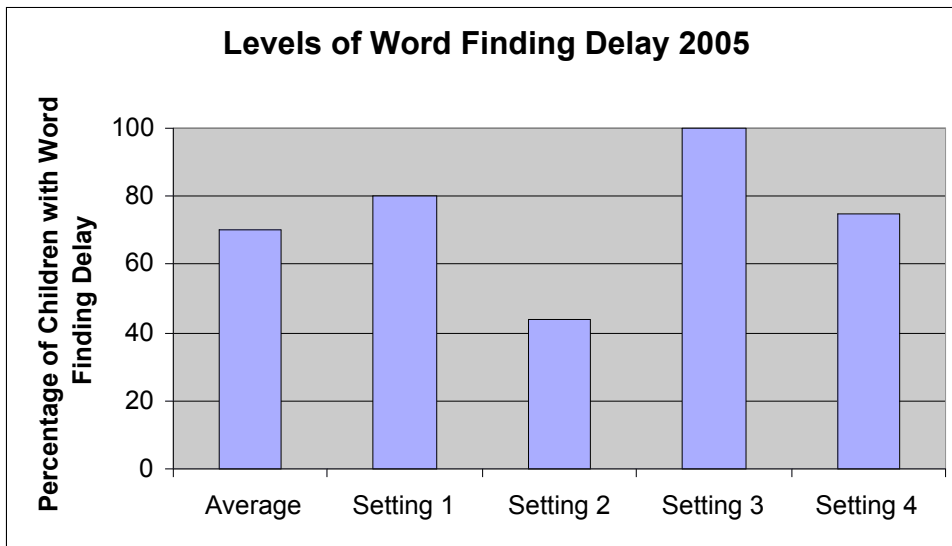
comprehension delay of 90% and a Setting 3 with a delay of 100%. These are very high scores.



Graph 1 – Levels of Comprehension Delay 2005

4.1.6.3) Word Finding Delay

Word Finding delay was identified in 70% of children. The 23 children which were in need of specialist help to increase their word finding ability came from all four settings. Graph 2 shows the levels of word finding delay found.



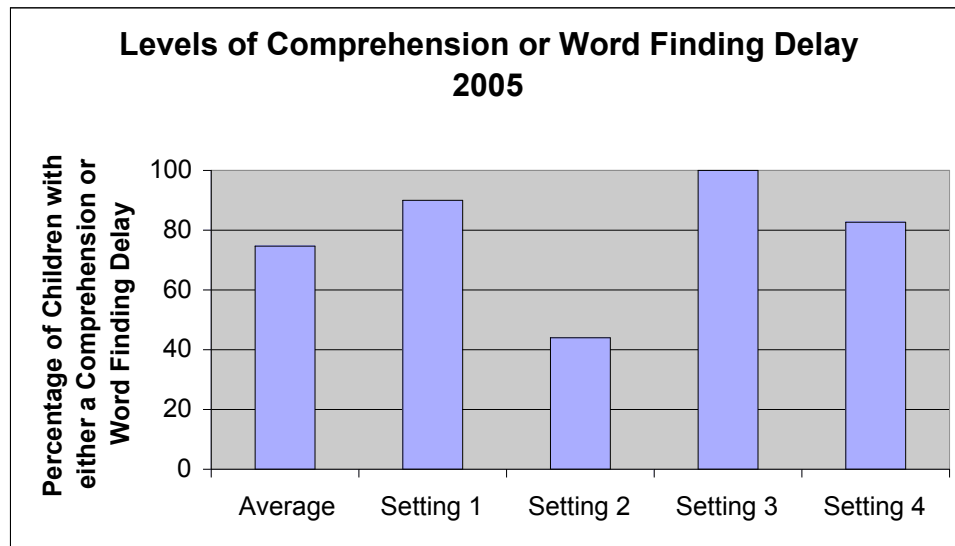
Graph 2 – Levels of Word Finding Delay 2005

The average of 70% for word finding delay is built up of scores ranging from 44% (Setting 2) to 100% (Setting 3). The good work found at setting 2 is influencing the results and bringing the overall averages down. If Setting 2

were performing at a similar level to the others then the averages would be far higher than they are.

4.1.6.4) *Comprehension or Word Finding Delay*

The level of children with either a comprehension or word finding delay is higher than that for either comprehension or word finding. The percentage of children who had delay was 75%. Graph 3 shows how the four settings compare with the average.



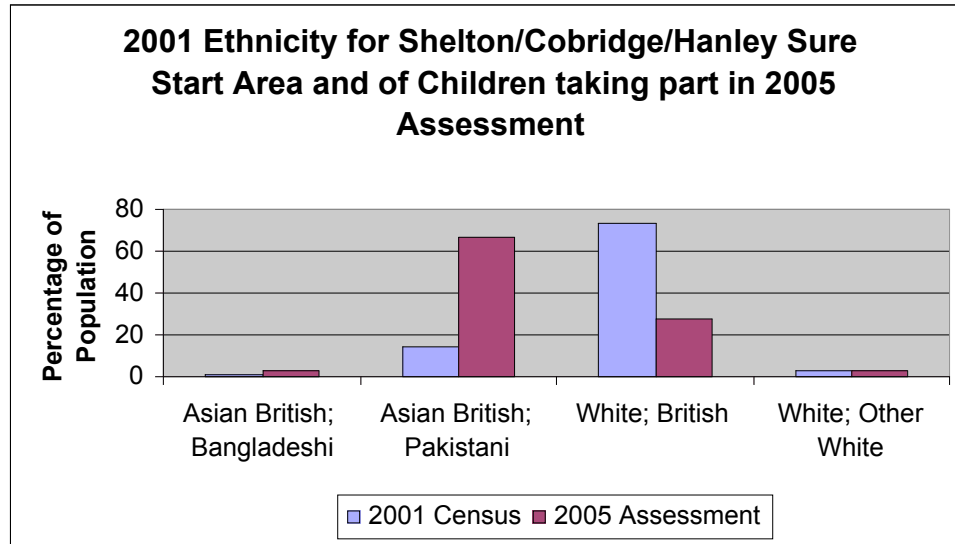
Graph 3 – Levels of Comprehension or Word Finding Delay 2005

The percentage of children exhibiting either comprehension or word finding delay is higher than for the individual categories but does follow the same pattern as for word finding delay. That is, the four settings are all sitting in the same positions, in terms of rank, at all three assessment stages.

4.1.7) *Ethnicity*

The high ethnic levels found in the Shelton/Cobridge/Hanley Sure Start area are reflected in the children assessed. However, the actual levels of ethnicity in the Shelton/Cobridge/Hanley Sure Start area are different from those found in the assessment. Graph 4 shows the ethnicity of the children assessed and the actual levels of ethnicity found in the 2001 census. The assessments are skewed in favour of Punjabi speakers who account for 58% of the children assessed.

Eight of the children assessed were within normal limits. Of these five, or 63%, had English as their first language. Punjabi speakers accounted for 25% of the children within normal limits and 12% spoke Bengali as their first language. Table 10 shows how all language groups fared in the assessment.



Graph 4 – 2001 Ethnicity for Shelton/Cobridge/Hanley Sure Start Area and of Children taking part in 2005 Assessment

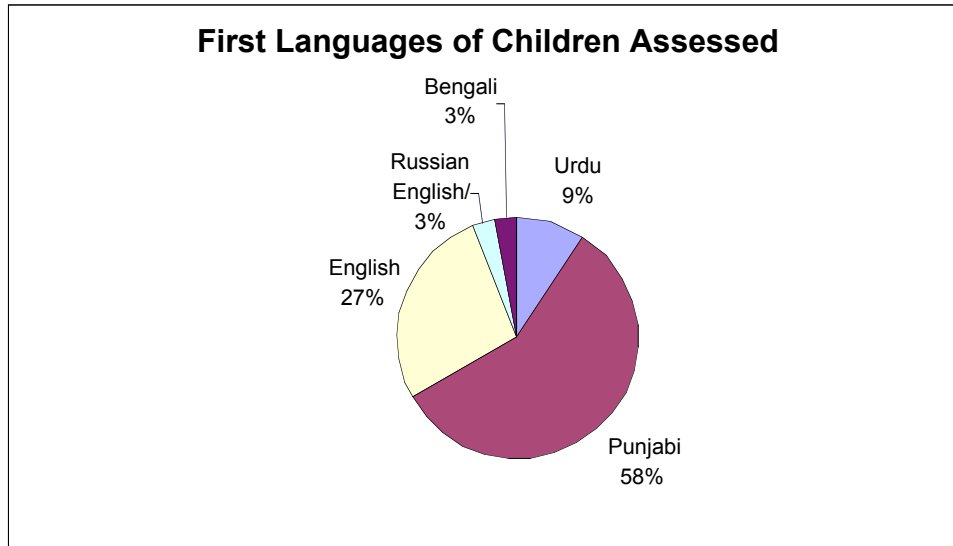
Comprehension and word finding delay was found in 75% of children. Graph 5 shows the first languages of these children. The levels of language delay in children vary depending upon their first language. Table 11 shows the

First Language	Urdu	Punjabi	English	English/ Russian	Bengali
Number of children	3	19	9	1	1
WNL	0	2	5	0	1
Comprehension Delay	0	0	1	1	0
Word Finding Delay	0	9	0	0	0
Comprehension & Word Finding Delay	3	8	3	1	0

Table 10 – Results of Assessment by First Language

percentage breakdown of results for children within their own language group. It demonstrates that English speakers have the highest incidence of children with word finding and comprehension ability within normal limits. It also shows that the single Bengali speaker was within normal limits. This is good for the child but does not give any information about Bengali speakers. The same can be said for the child speaking English and Russian. That is, a single result is not sufficient to give any real information.

Urdu speakers gained a result of 100% of children with both comprehension and word finding delay. Speakers of Punjabi were the largest single group, comprising 58% of the children assessed. 10.5% were within normal limits but there is a high level of word finding delay with 89.5% of children



Graph 5 – First Languages of Children Assessed

demonstrating a delay. Of these 89.5% of children 42.1% also had a comprehension delay.

First Language	Urdu	Punjabi	English	English/ Russian	Bengali
WNL	0	10.5%	55.6%	0	100%
Comprehension Delay	0	0	11.1%	100%	0
Word Finding Delay	0	47.4%	0	0	0
Comprehension & Word Finding Delay	100%	42.1%	33.3%	0	0

Table 11 – Percentage Results of Assessment by First Language

4.2) Comparison with 2002 Assessment

4.2.1) Analysis

The settings assessed in 2002 are not the same as those assessed in 2005. This prevents a comparison between settings. However, it is possible to compare the overall results of the two assessments. Table 12 holds the summary results from the two assessments.

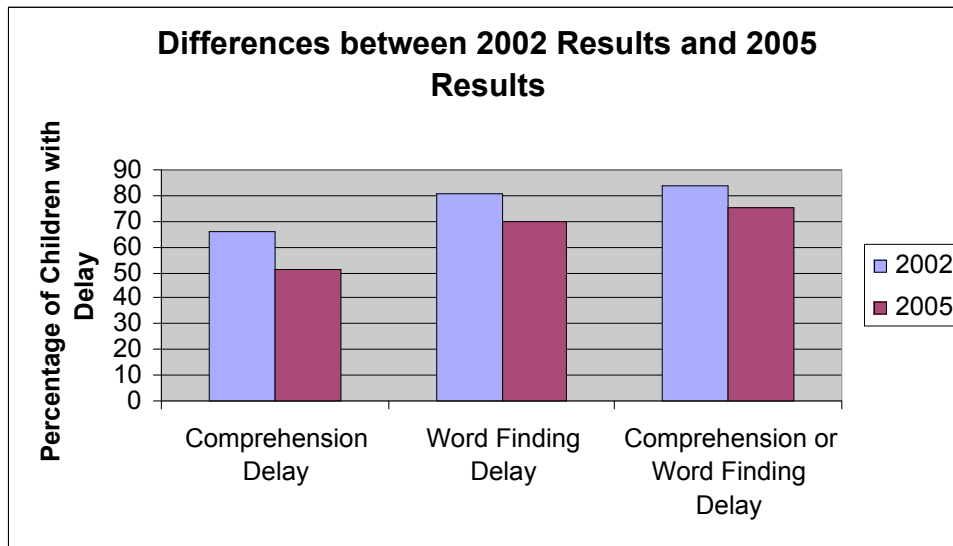
	2002	2005
Intake assessed	23%	26%
Boys	44%	61%
Girls	56%	39%
Comprehension delay	66%	51%
Word Finding delay	81%	70%
Comprehension or Word Finding delay	84%	75%

Table 12 – Summary of results for all settings 2002 and 2005

There has been an improvement in all areas between 2002 and 2005. It has seen improvements of:

Comprehension Delay	22.8%
Word Finding Delay	13.6%
Comprehension or Word Finding Delay	10.7%

Graph 6 shows the differences between the results gained in 2002 and 2005. It clearly shows that, in all instances, that there has been a reduction in the number of children experiencing delay in comprehension and word finding.



Graph 6 – Differences between 2002 Results and 2005 Results

In 2002 four children, or 16%, were identified as being within normal limits for comprehension and word finding delay. Of these, three were boys and one was a girl. This means that as a proportion of their populations 21% of boys were within normal limits and 6% of girls were. These results indicate

that there has been a 50%, or 8 percentage point, increase in the ability of children in the Shelton/Cobridge/Hanley Sure Start area between 2002 and 2005.

4.2.2) Comparison of Individual Settings 2002 and 2005

In the 2002 baseline measures four settings were assessed. Two of these were assessed again in 2005. This allows a comparison to be made between the results of the two years to identify what change has been achieved. The settings which were not assessed in 2002 cannot be compared as there is no baseline figure to compare their results against.

Settings 1 and 4 in the 2005 assessment were both assessed in the 2002 assessment. Table 13 gives the summary comparison of Setting 1 and Table 14 the comparison for Setting 4.

	2002	2005
Intake assessed	13%	33%
Boys	33%	60%
Girls	67%	40%
Comprehension delay	100%	90%
Word Finding delay	100%	80%
Comprehension or Word Finding delay	100%	90%

Table 13 – Summary of results from Setting 1 for 2002 and 2005

Setting 1 has improved in all areas. It has seen improvements of:

Comprehension Delay	10.0%
Word Finding Delay	20.0%
Comprehension or Word Finding Delay	10.0%

	2002	2005
Intake assessed	24%	27%
Boys	63%	67%
Girls	37%	33%
Comprehension delay	75%	33%
Word Finding delay	100%	75%
Comprehension or Word Finding delay	100%	83%

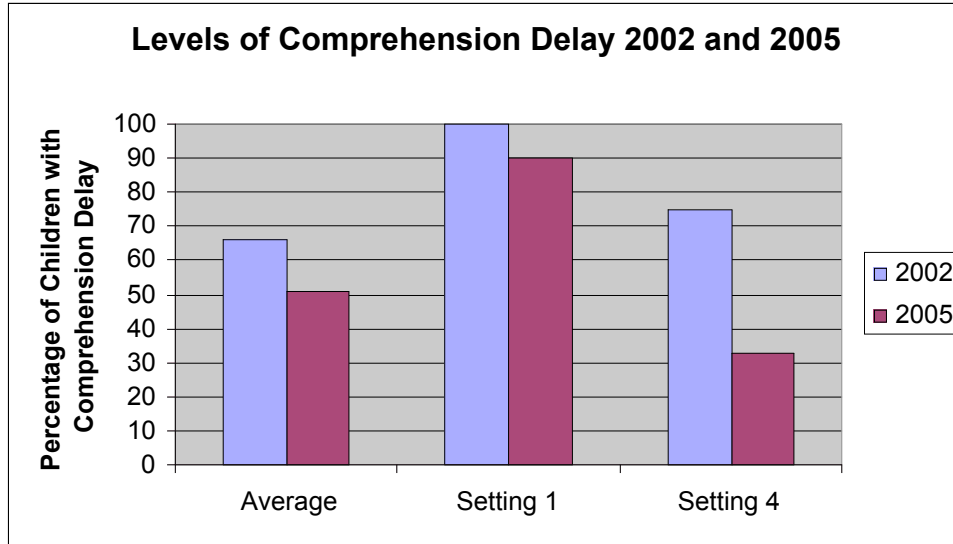
Table 14 – Summary of results from Setting 4 for 2002 and 2005

Setting 4 has improved in all areas. It has seen improvements of:

Comprehension Delay	44.0%
Word Finding Delay	25.0%
Comprehension or Word Finding Delay	17.0%

4.2.3) Comprehension Delay

The levels of comprehension delay found between 2002 and 2005 have, in all comparable cases, decreased. Graph 7 shows the figures from 2002 and 2005.

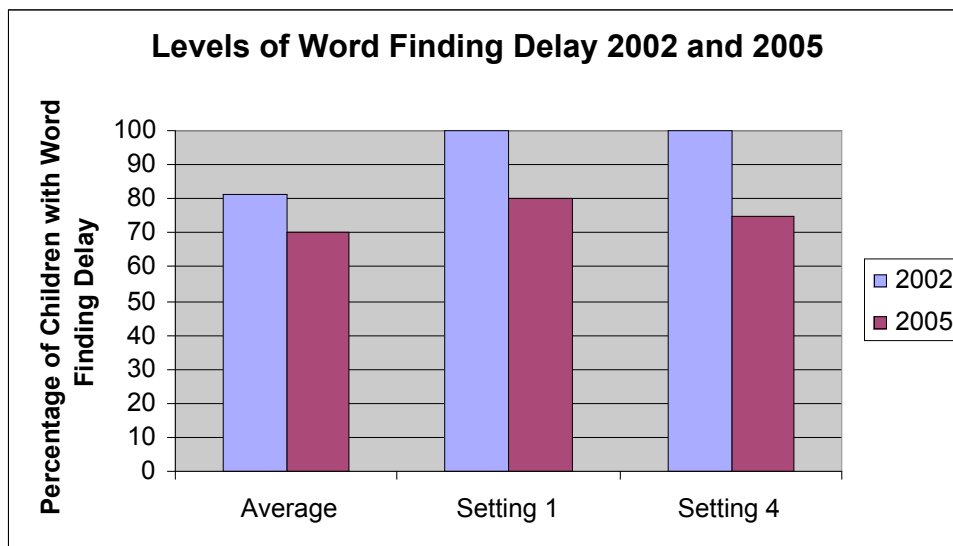


Graph 7 – Levels of Comprehension Delay 2002 and 2005

Setting 4 has achieved a 44% reduction in comprehension delay which is noticeably higher than the average reduction of 22.8%. This is a good result.

4.2.4) Word Finding Delay

The difference in word finding delay between 2002 and 2005 is not as high as that for comprehension delay. The average word finding delay in 2002 was 81% and in 2005 70%. This 13.6% difference has been bettered by both

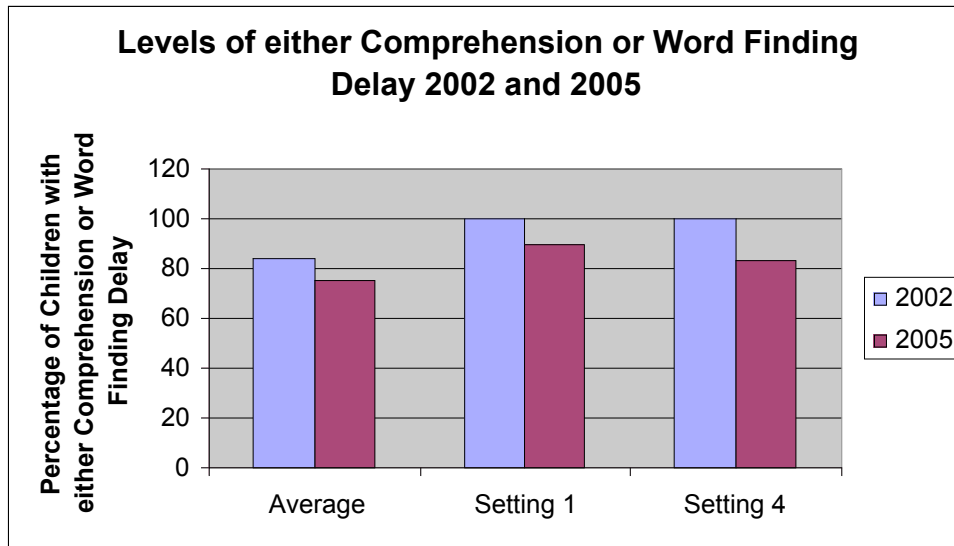


Graph 8 – Levels of Word Finding Delay 2002 and 2005

Settings 1 and 4 who achieved differences of 20.0% and 25.0% respectively. Graph 8 shows these differences.

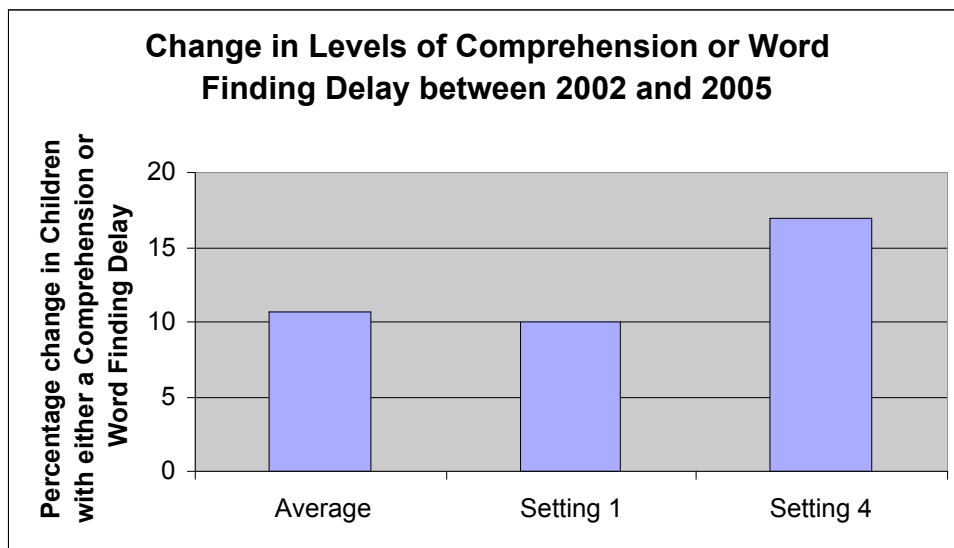
4.2.6) *Comprehension or Word Finding Delay*

The results demonstrate that the average comprehension or word finding delay has decreased between 2002 and 2005. The average improvement was by 10.7%. Setting 1 was slightly lower than average with a decrease of 10.0% whilst Setting 4 was higher, with a decrease of 17.0%. Graph 9 shows the comparison between the results of the two assessments.



Graph 9 – Levels of either Comprehension or Word Finding Delay 2002 and 2005

The difference between the two assessments is shown on Graph 10. It shows that all Settings 1 and 4 and the average score were in excess of the



Graph 10 - Change in Levels of Comprehension or Word Finding Delay between 2002 and 2005

5% improvement targeted.

4.2.7) *Sure Start Contacts*

After the assessments had been conducted it was decided to establish if the children assessed from had been in contact with Shelton/Cobridge/Hanley Sure Start. It was found that the higher the number of contacts a child had with Sure Start the greater the change in either comprehension or word finding delay was likely to be.

Table 15 holds the results of the investigation. It demonstrates that a higher number of contacts with Sure Start can produce a reduction in the number of children who have either comprehension or word finding delay.

	Number of Children	Number of Children in contact with Sure Start	Number of contacts with Sure Start	Average contacts per child	Change in Comprehension or Word Finding Delay
Setting 1	10	6	52	8.7	10.0%
Setting 2	9	8	69	7.7	N/A
Setting 3	2	0	0	0	N/A
Setting 4	12	12	319	26.6	17.0%
Average	11	9	185	20.6	14.0%

Table 15 - Number of Sure Start contacts per child in relation to changes in either Comprehension or Word Finding Delay

4.3) Direct Comparison

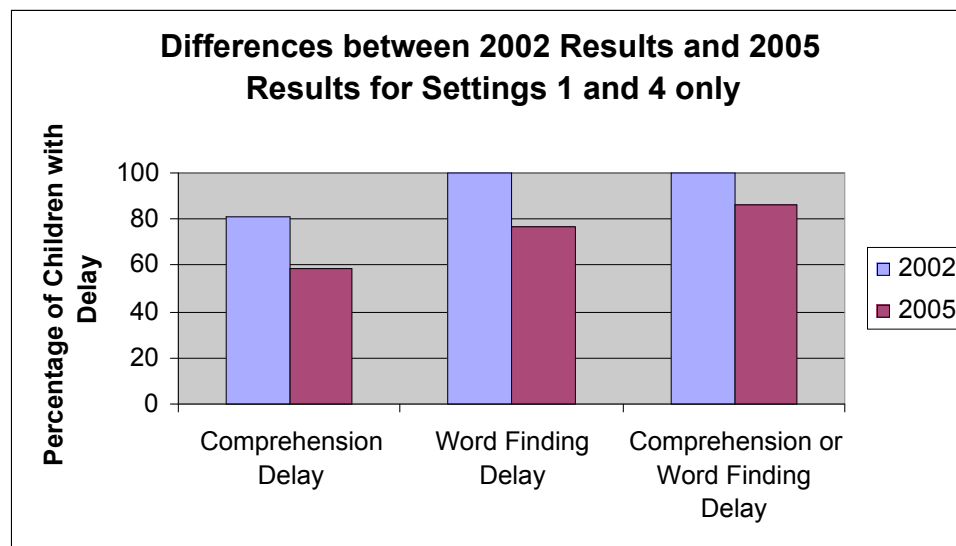
If the results are analysed using only the settings which were assessed in both 2002 and 2005, i.e. 1 and 4, the results differ. Table 16 shows the average results using data from the two comparable settings only.

	2002	2005
Intake assessed	19%	26%
Boys	55%	63%
Girls	45%	37%
Comprehension delay	81%	59%
Word Finding delay	100%	77%
Comprehension or Word Finding delay	100%	86%

Table 12 – Summary of results for all settings 1 and 4 only 2002 and 2005

Comprehension Delay	27.2%
Word Finding Delay	23.0%
Comprehension or Word Finding Delay	14.0%

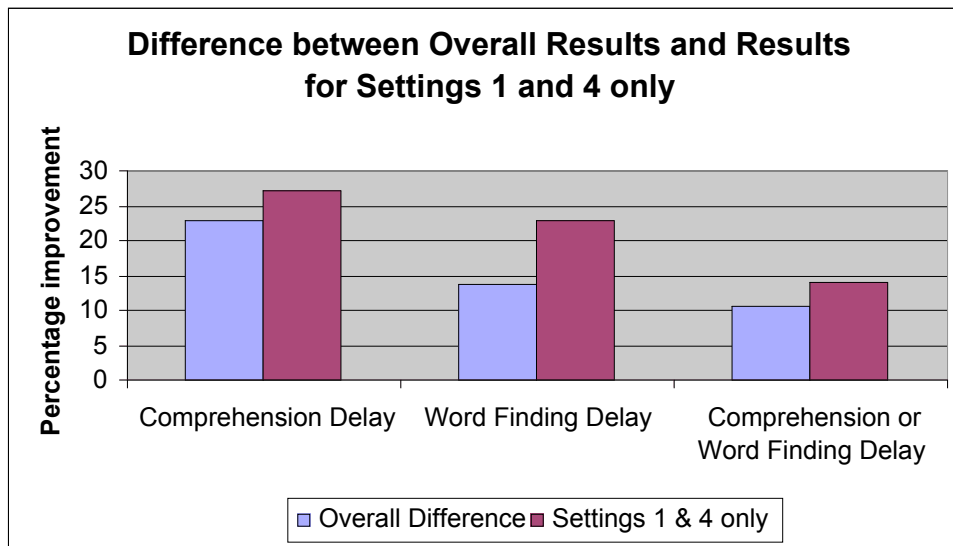
Graph 11 shows the differences between the results gained in 2002 and 2005. It clearly shows that, in all instances, that there has been a reduction in the number of children experiencing delay in comprehension and word finding.



Graph 11 – Differences between 2002 Results and 2005 Results for Settings 1 and 4 only

In 2002 no children in either Setting 1 or Setting 4 were identified as being within normal limits for comprehension and word finding delay. In 2005 three children were within normal limits. This represents 14% of children. This is a 14 percentage point increase in the ability of children in the Shelton/Cobridge/Hanley Sure Start area between 2002 and 2005. Of the 14% of children within normal limits 2 were boys and one was a girl. This represents 14% of the boys assessed and 13% of the girls.

Graph 12 shows how the overall difference between 2002 and 2005 compares to that for Settings 1 and 4 only.



Graph 12 – Difference between Overall Results and Results for Settings 1 and 4 only

Graph 12 clearly shows that the percentage improvement gained at Settings 1 and 4 is greater than that for the overall comparison of the two surveys.

5) Conclusion

The following conclusions can be made following the analysis of the results gathered in the four assessments of 2002 and 2005.

- There has been a 50%, or 8 percentage point, increase from 16% in 2002 to 24% in 2005, in the number of children with comprehension or word finding delay within normal limits in the Shelton/Cobridge/Hanley Sure Start area. It can, therefore, be said that Shelton/Cobridge/Hanley Sure Start has achieved its aim of reducing, by 5 percentage points, the number of children requiring specialist speech and language help.
- A direct comparison of settings assessed in both 2002 and 2005 (section 4.3) demonstrates that a 14 percentage point improvement, from 0% to 14%, has been made in the number of children within normal limits for comprehension and word finding delay.
- The tests used in 2005 assessment were the same used as those in the 2002 but the settings were not all the same. This means that a direct comparison can only be made for 50% of the settings. As illustrated above, though, this is sufficient to demonstrate improvements that are greater than those for the overall comparison.
- There has been a significant shift in the number of boys and girls who are within normal limits. That is, in 2002, 21% of boys were within normal limits. This can be related to a figure of 20% within normal limits in 2005. This is not a great change. However, in the same period the number of girls within normal limits increased from 6% in 2002 to 31% in 2005. This dramatic increase, by 517%, in the number of girls within normal limits brings the figures more into line with what would be expected, i.e., a higher number of girls with comprehension and word finding ability within normal limits.
- The overall reduction in the number of children with either comprehension or word finding delay by 10.7% from 84% to 75% also achieves the 5 percentage point reduction. Where a direct comparison is possible this decrease is even greater at 14.0% from 100% to 86%. Reductions in both comprehension and word finding delay have been achieved to enable these reductions.
- The first languages of the children assessed have had an impact on the age equivalent scores gained and the levels of comprehension and word finding delay. That is, both the Reynell and Renfrew assessment tools acknowledge that their norms are based on children who speak English as their first language. This means that the tests give an indication of the English language ability of the child but not their ability in the language they are accustomed to using. If only children who have English as their first language are considered then the level

of children with comprehension and word finding delay within normal limits is 55.6% in 2005. This is a massive change, of 343%, from the 2002 figure of 16% within normal limits. It is not known, though whether the 16% of children in 2002 spoke English as their first language.

- Settings 1 and 4 both display evidence of children having contact with Sure Start. These contacts can be seen to have contributed to the improved results at these settings. Indeed, where there are a greater number of contacts there is a greater reduction in the number of children experiencing comprehension or word finding delay. This suggests that the greater the number of contacts with Sure Start the lower the incidence of comprehension or word finding delay is likely to be.
- The results show that making use of Sure Start and the resources available can help to reduce the incidence of comprehension or word finding delay. The children from Setting 4 had the greatest number of contacts with Sure Start, with an average 26.6 each. These children also achieved a 17.0% reduction in comprehension or word finding delay which was higher than either the average or that for Setting 1, the other setting for which a comparison is possible. However, if the 2005 results are considered in isolation the setting which achieved the best results was Setting 2 with only 44% of children showing evidence of comprehension or word finding delay. It must be noted, though, that Setting 2 had a high number of children, 36%, who spoke English as their first language and that all of these children were within normal limits. It should also be commented that all of these children were in contact with Sure Start and averaged 10.0 contacts per child. This all confirms that contact with Sure Start improves children's comprehension and word finding ability.

6) Recommendations

It is recommended that:

- The work begun in the Shelton/Cobridge/Hanley Sure Start area needs to be maintained so that the improvements that have been gained can be built on.
- Work is needed to improve children's comprehension and word finding ability. This can be done by increasing the stimuli that children are exposed to. By enriching the experiences that children have and then talking about them to embed the vocabulary children should be able to improve both word finding and comprehension ability.
- Shelton/Cobridge/Hanley Sure Start should continue to have contact with as many children as possible. This is because it has been seen that a high number of contacts with Sure Start can help to reduce the incidence of comprehension and word finding delay.
- The correlation between Sure Start contacts and improvements in the number of children with comprehension or word finding delay is explored further to identify if there is direct relationship; and, if there is share this knowledge and act upon it. Work should also be carried out to identify which types of contact provide most benefit for children.
- An investigation is made to find if an appropriate tool exists to assess the language ability of children in their first language. If one can be found then it should be used to establish what the actual ability levels of children are.
- The assessment is repeated in 2008 to identify if further improvements can be made, and if so, by how much. The 2008 assessment should be carried out in the same settings as the 2005 assessment so that direct comparisons can be made.

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