

## A beautiful aide-memoire for new signers – Sally Sameroo

**Chatasign books are teaching aids that help children with speech, language and communication needs (SLCN) to learn the signs for everyday items.**

The front of each A5 page contains the photo of an object, together with the word in lower case and the symbol, while the reverse demonstrates how to make the appropriate sign by means of a diagram. Although the signs and symbols are all in Signalong, I believe the publisher is negotiating with Makaton to use its system in a Makaton version of the books.

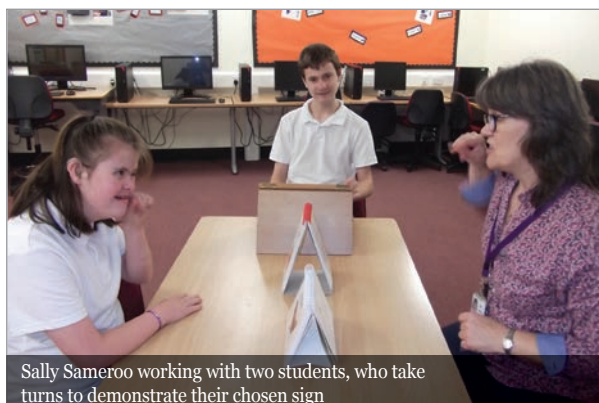
The pages are laminated to make them more robust and collected together in a handy ring-bound book, which stands upright on a table so that children can easily flick between the description and diagram when demonstrating a sign to their teacher or TA sitting opposite.

The school's senior leadership team was very taken with the books when they first came across the series. We have a copy of *Drinks, Snacks and Treats* in every class, which students can look through at snack time to find what they want. Then a member of staff standing opposite them will model the sign, using the graphics as a reminder, so that the child can practise

it themselves to the best of their ability. We also have a copy of *Farmyard and Zoo Animals*, which has become a favourite with our younger children.

What sets these books apart is the quality of the photography, reminiscent of that found in Dorling Kindersley books. The symbols are standard and therefore familiar to most people.

Even students who do not have SLCN enjoy flicking through the books. Some are better at reading than others and they use the books to practise signing among themselves, which helps them interact with friends who do have communication difficulties. Meanwhile, our communication specialist uses the books as a reference tool when students are practising making choices. One young girl she works with makes a game of it: she finds a picture she likes, studies the sign, hides the book and then the communication specialist has to guess what she is signing.



Sally Sameroo working with two students, who take turns to demonstrate their chosen sign

As teaching aids, Chatasign books are very user friendly.

**Chatasign books are published by Gestral Ltd at £12.50 each + £3 P&P. Titles in the pipeline include *At School, Transport, Home, Toys, and Colours and Shapes*. [www.chatasign.com](http://www.chatasign.com)**

*Sally Sameroo is an HTLA at Churchill Park School, a special school for children with complex needs from early years through to age 18*



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