

Speech, Language and Communication is the primary need for the students in Parayhouse, all with statements and EHCP plans outlining the need for regular Speech and Language Therapy (SLT) input. Accordingly, communication is at the heart of our curriculum and we employ five specialist SLTs to ensure all our students can access the curriculum.

In addition to intensive SLT, the Parayhouse school-wide therapy team includes an Occupational Therapist, Yoga Therapist and Art Therapist. The therapy provision is intrinsic to the development of academic skills, independent life-skills, and social and emotional well being. Our common focus is to 'remove the barriers to learning', in line with current best practice (SEND: Code of Practice) and to work together to promote the students' wellbeing and improve the quality of special educational provision (Section 25 of the Children and Families Act 2014).

As highlighted in our last Ofsted report, in reference to therapeutic input “*the students benefit from extra support from additional staff, who are well trained and highly effective in their role*”.

This document outlines the therapy provision in Parayhouse and explicitly identifies how it impacts on our students' learning and development.

Overview of  
therapy  
provision

SLT and  
Literacy

Makaton and  
learning

Language for  
Maths

EAL

Occupational  
Therapy

Yoga Therapy

Art Therapy

## Therapy provision

- As a rule therapy mainly takes place within the classroom, in small groups, which is a more naturalistic and functional environment that will encourage generalisation. Therapists prioritise students for 1:1 support when results show need for extra support or funding is designated i.e. Pupil Premium.
- Therapists collaborate with team members to share targets and together implement ways to help students access their learning. We have regular in-house training to share our knowledge and ensure consistency in our approaches to teaching.
- Therapists communicate regularly with parents, through home visits, parent workshops, and therapy newsletters, ensuring goals are shared. This leads to greater outcomes for our students, as measured by parent reports and overall results.
- In previous years, SLTs mainly planned and directed Reading lessons, however, following consultation with parents, SLTs now deliver speech and language groups in Maths, Literacy and Communication lessons. Most recent results show that students made more progress in Speaking and Listening following this change, evidenced in our Therapy Case study.

### Ofsted, 2014

*“staff are using the methods and instructions provided by the speech and language therapists employed by the school. Consequently, students benefit from extra support from additional staff, who are well trained and highly effective in their role”.*

## SLT and Literacy

- The SLT team introduced shape coding into Parayhouse in 2012 and it has since become an integral part of our curriculum, to facilitate both comprehension and writing development. Shape coding™ is a syntactic-semantic approach to language development. In this system, sentences are coded into shapes, colours and arrows to make the word order structures of English concrete, permanent and available for discussion with the students (by Dr. Susan Ebbels). This year we have introduced a new approach, 'Pacers' (by Dr. Libby Kumin) to further support the students' expression both verbally and in the written form.
- In July, 2014, Ofsted noted that *“Teachers’ marking does not always lead to improvement in knowledge and skills in writing, particularly for the most able students”*. In consideration of this, the SLTs have trained teachers in the use of visuals, i.e. Shape Coding™ and PACERS to support the students in identifying their errors in grammar and encouraging longer, more accurate sentences. This has been shown to lead to improvements in the students' writing, evidenced in students' books and increase in sentence length (see below).
- There is a robust, current evidence base that identifies the impact of speech and language disorders with reading and literacy development. In a recent study, evaluating the effect of speech sound disorder on literacy development, Skebo et al. 2013, found that phonological awareness predicted decoding abilities in reading in early key stages of school and overall language predicted reading comprehension abilities through to key stage 4.

## Makaton signing

- Makaton is a key word signing system that support individuals with communication difficulties with their comprehension and expression of language. Makaton, in Parayhouse, plays an important role in helping our students access our curriculum. Moreover, it is often part of our curriculum for the cohort of students with minimal verbal expression.
- Reading skills rely on learning the alphabet and Makaton signing is essential to this as a visual representation for such an abstract concept. Similarly, Maths lessons also employ Makaton signing to support the understanding and acquisition of abstract concepts such as 'more, take away, longer than'. In writing lessons, Makaton is used to support sentence structure, such as highlighting functional grammar markers such as 'is' in a Subject-Verb-Object sentence e.g. 'the boy is running'.
- All staff are trained and certified by our Head of Therapy who is a trained Makaton tutor. We also hold in-house Makaton training takes place every week.
- This year, we have held a parent/sibling day to support our families in developing their signing and communication skills, seven families were represented. This lead to an increase in signing and therefore will suport language development in the home. We will host another for Beginners module for parents in June 2017.

# Language for Maths

- Numeracy demands an extensive understanding of language concepts i.e. all/except, more than etc. In quantitative terms, approx. 50% of pre-national curriculum standards of Maths 'Shape, Space and Measure' is made of up language concepts, see Figure 1.
- We recognise that in order for our students to progress in Numeracy they first have to understand and use abstract numerical terms. The SLT and key teacher identify the students who are having difficulty accessing the language and place them in language groups that run alongside the learning in Maths.
- Some of our students progress to formal Maths examinations. The language of exam papers can be convoluted and abstract for our students who have primary speech and language needs. Therefore the need for SLT support continues at this level to enable our students to progress. Their success in these exams is dependent on the ability to first access the language used in exam papers.

Understanding Shape	Measuring
<p>Handling shapes describes them by number of sides and corners</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>triangle</li> <li>rectangle</li> <li>circle</li> <li>square</li> <li>pentagon</li> <li>hexagon</li> <li>octagon</li> <li>decagon</li> </ul> <p>Aware that shapes have names:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>circle</li> <li>square</li> <li>Find shapes in a picture</li> <li>Use shapes to create patterns</li> <li>Place shapes in inset trays</li> <li>Copy shapes</li> <li>Use play dough to make matching shapes</li> <li>Play a game using shapes</li> <li>Colour in pictures</li> <li>Uses material for junk modelling</li> <li>Use generic construction material</li> <li>Use shapes to make a picture in a box</li> <li>Models object - 2 given attributes</li> <li>Sort 2D objects in the cylinder container</li> <li>Identify shapes within objects</li> </ul>	<p>Talks about a line</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>straight</li> <li>curve</li> <li>corner</li> </ul> <p>Describe the movement of an object using the terms:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>forwards</li> <li>backwards</li> <li>quickly</li> <li>slowly</li> <li>down</li> <li>up</li> <li>Take about a line</li> <li>Describe the movement of an object using the terms:</li> </ul> <p>Uses comparative language:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>longer / short</li> <li>heavy / light</li> <li>thick / thin</li> <li>large / small</li> <li>before / after</li> <li>wide / narrow</li> <li>half empty</li> <li>day / night</li> <li>light / dark</li> <li>up</li> <li>Sequences a picture of daily events</li> <li>Makes a set with a given property</li> </ul> <p>Time of the day</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>morning</li> <li>afternoon</li> <li>mealtime</li> <li>bed time</li> <li>day</li> <li>night</li> <li>Notes certain days of week</li> <li>Shows an awareness that each day has a name</li> <li>Divide the day an appropriate name that they will be doing</li> <li>Discusses what they did before lunch</li> <li>Discusses what they will do after lunch</li> </ul> <p>Compares volumes of containers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>which holds more / less</li> <li>How many of smaller in larger</li> <li>Estimate number of cubes in container</li> <li>Count cubes in container</li> <li>Find object longer than</li> <li>Find object shorter than</li> <li>Find object heavier than</li> <li>Find object lighter than</li> </ul>

PE Space Shape and Measures - Pupils compare objects directly, focusing on one dimension such as length or height where the difference is marked and can indicate the long one or the tall one - for example, comparing two plants, placed side by side and indicates the tall one or comparing two spoons and indicating the long one. They show awareness of time, through some familiarity with names of the days of the week and significant times in their day, such as meal times, bed times, for example, ordering events in their day on a visual daily timetable, understanding and using names of days of the week, to schedule Saturday or Sunday, swimming on Wednesday. They respond to representational vocabulary such as straight, circle, larger to describe the shape and size of solids and flat shapes, for example, when shopping, pupils find boxes with straight edges to pack into the carrier bag, identify the larger circle when stacking toy cars. They describe shapes in simple models, pictures and patterns, for example, stamping shapes in sand and describing them, using a set of flat shapes to make pictures or patterns, naming some of the shapes used, identifying specific shapes from pictures, simple objects or patterns.

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Figure 1. Language concepts in Shape, Space and Measure.

## EAL

- Our family centred approach towards developing our students' cognitive, social, moral and spiritual development includes embracing and making specialist provision for our families who speak more than one language. In line with recent Rochford review recommendations we believe this is an area that demands specific focus and support.
- Currently in Parayhouse, approx. 40% of our students have English as an Additional Language. From a speech and language point of view the whole language system of a child needs to be addressed in order to support all communication needs. It is our professional advice to our EAL families to maintain use of all or both languages. Therefore, we strive to support all languages, we do this in various ways:
  - Our SLTs have specific training in working with families from diverse communities with Speech, Language and Communication needs.
  - We have ensured our students' other languages are included in EHCP plans.
  - An informal assessment of our students' home language is carried out, as needed.
  - We share Speech and Language targets with parents, who are advised and given strategies on how to incorporate these targets in their home language/s.
  - When required we translate for parents who have a preferred language in our meetings. This means our parents have a greater understanding of their child's progress and needs.

## Occupational Therapy

- Occupational Therapy (OT) focuses on helping people with a physical, sensory, or cognitive disability to be as independent as possible in all areas of their lives.
- How does Occupational Therapy(OT) impact on our students' learning ? For children at Parayhouse School, OT focuses on developing their physical, sensory and motor skills and in turn increase their self-esteem and independence. People sometimes think that OT is for adults as children do not have occupations, but for a child playing, learning in school and activities of daily living are a child's occupations. OT helps the child achieve their maximum learning potential and improve their quality of life.
- For example, one student, who has movement difficulties, was given help with Personal Activities of Daily Living (PADL) so that they can manage the fastenings on their clothes independently. They were also taught to use adaptive cutlery (with larger handles for easier gripping.) The child can now cut their food without adult help, boosting their self-confidence. Additionally by developing these skills it has increased their fine motor skills so that alongside we have been working to develop handwriting and computer skills so now the child can write and type their name.

## Yoga Therapy

- Yoga takes place alongside P.E. lessons to support students who need extra support in order to access the P.E. curriculum. Our yoga instructor also identifies the students who would benefit from various aspects of yoga to develop their 'readiness for learning'.
- There are many different schools, styles and practices of Yoga. Some are more physical than spiritual, whilst others are more meditative and spiritual but also with a great emphasis on the physical postures. However, all yoga has physical, mental and spiritual health benefits.
- Case Studies: one student who had difficulty with his physical co-ordination and motor skills so found it a real challenge to sit upright with his legs crossed, but after sessions of yoga, is now able to do so (easy pose). This has in-turn, improved his sitting posture so he is now, more ready for learning.
- Another student who presented behaviour patterns of extreme hyperactivity and agitation, excessive fidgeting and a great lack of concentration but with ongoing regular breathing exercise and yoga, these behaviours have not disappeared but have definitely decreased. This inevitably has improved his ability to maintain information therefore learn.

# Art Therapy

- Art Therapy sessions are one-to-one, with the art materials providing the child with safe, alternative and creative ways to express their thoughts and feelings. A child may choose to engage with painting, drawing, puppets, sand toys, clay, music, drama, stories, play or movement. For each session, the time is theirs, what we do is led by the child. However this is within the boundaries of the “therapeutic frame”. This means that Art Therapy sessions happen at the same time and place each week, are confidential, and that we agree to some basic ground rules.
- Children come to Art Therapy for a huge variety of reasons. All of us experience difficulties in life, and sometimes these difficulties can become overwhelming. For children, this can mean that their education is affected or that they struggle with their relationships at home or at school. Art Therapy can provide a child with a safe and supported space to explore their difficulties and learn to cope with their big feelings. Additionally, some children may simply benefit from a bit of extra time, space and attention.
- Art Therapy is centred around an empathic, therapeutic relationship. The Art Therapy we offer is an integrative psychotherapy, meaning that our therapist draws from various different theoretical models, underpinned by up to date neuroscience. The use of the art materials aids communication and makes it suitable for both more and less verbal children.