

Speech, Language and Communication is the primary need for the students in Parayhouse, all with 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 a part time Occupational 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, Literacy &  
Numeracy

AAC

Attention &  
Listening

Social &  
Friendship  
Skills

EAL

Occupational  
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 Literacy & Numeracy

- The SLT team introduced shape coding into Parayhouse in 2012 and it has since become an integral part of our curriculum. Shape coding™ by Susan Ebbels is a syntactic-semantic approach to verbal and written 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. Last year we introduced another approach, 'Pacers' (by Dr. Libby Kumin) to further support the students' expression both verbally and in the written form, this has shown to increase sentence length and improve sentence structure.
- 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.
- Numeracy demands an extensive understanding of language concepts i.e. all/except, more than etc. We recognise that in order for our students to progress in Numeracy they first have to understand and use abstract numerical terms. The SLTs and key teachers identify the students who are having difficulty accessing the language and place them in language groups that run alongside the learning in Maths.

AAC  
Augmentative &  
Alternative  
communication  
[AAC]

- Makaton is a key word signing system that supports 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. All staff are trained and certified by our in-house Makaton tutor.
- In April 2017, we held a parent/sibling day to support our families in developing their signing and communication skills, seven families were represented. Following the success of this we held two more parent signing workshops in June & October 2017. Parent and sibling involvement leads to more successful communicative interactions and therefore more learning opportunities in the home.
- In addition to Makaton, we support other students, where suitable, with other forms of AAC, including the use of Proloquo to Go, on the IPAD. One of our specialist SLTs has supported two students in particular to make huge strides in communicating and in accessing their curriculum through this alternative means. This approach has led to increases in communication output, in the classroom and in the home. The impact extends to reduced vulnerability & social isolation, and a reduction in challenging behaviours related to communication breakdowns.

## Attention & Listening

- We recognise that our students have complex needs, in particular in their 'readiness for learning'. Many of our students find it difficult to attend and listen as a consequence of their varied presentations. In addition, many have come from working 1:1 in mainstream settings and may have had little experience of attending in larger groups. For this reason we recognise the need to establish these as foundation skills for learning.
- One specialist approach that we have in place is Attention Autism, by Gina Davies. Our trained specialist SLT has established this approach in two class groups, for those students who require development of these skills. We have seen this impact on the amount of time for which these students can sustain focus and it has led to increases in vocabulary and language concepts. Some parents have reported increases in attention and play skills at home resulting from this approach.
- The senior leadership team recognises the benefits and outcomes, accordingly, the development of this Attention Autism is an important goal of our School Development Plan for 2017/2018. The goal is to design and implement a more robust assessment for this approach in order to capture all of the student outcomes.

## Social and Friendship skills

- The overarching goal for our students is to establish them as functional communicators in a variety of environments. For this reason, we employ specialist programmes that target development of social skills and team-working skills to prepare them for independent communication.
- SMILE approach is a programme designed to prepare students for communication interactions in the 'real world' and in particular how to deal with communication breakdowns. This approach has proved effective in helping our students to communicate their needs and apply strategies when there is a communication breakdown. For our students this can mean simply having the confidence to repeat themselves.
- 'Building buddies' is a highly motivating therapy programme that targets team working, turn taking, and conversational skills. This collaborative play approach, which involves the use of Lego bricks to create a set building project, provides the students opportunities to develop skills necessary for independence including: problem solving, dealing with breakdowns, sharing ideas and communication with peers. We have created our own assessment checklist to measure the impact on the targeted areas.

## 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, over 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. For children at Parayhouse School, OT focuses on developing their physical, sensory and motor skills and in turn increases their self-esteem and independence. 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.
- September 2017 saw the opening of our new Sensory Room, and this will be the first year we can measure the impact of this important resource. The OT works alongside teachers to identify students who require development of their *sensory integration system*. Difficulties in this area can lead to time out of the classroom in order to stabilise, the aim is to reduce this time by using the sensory room and therefore lead to increased learning time in the classroom.

# 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.