



FIVE ACRE WOOD SCHOOL
Growing and Learning Together

THERAPY NEWSLETTER

Term 5—2021

Speech and Language Therapy



This term we re-established our connection with local charity, Find a Voice.

Who are Find a Voice?

- Find a Voice support people who have speech, language or communication difficulties.
- They provide advice and free equipment loans to parents, teachers, speech and language therapists and various other professionals.
- Their resource library includes switches, switch toys, sensory toys, Makaton resources and other communication aids.

How does this benefit our students?

- Students who use switches can experience a wider range of accessible toys.
- Students are able to explore new items which may become preferred motivators and lead to increased engagement, joint attention with adults and communication opportunities.
- We can trial new communication and access methods with students.



Hedgehog class, one of the 6 classes who received equipment loans, used a specialist mouse and switch from Find a Voice to explore computer programmes in ICT.

For more information visit their website: www.findavoice.org.uk





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Makaton signing

Makaton signing is a system of signing developed in the 1970s using standardised signs taken from British Sign Language. Normal spoken language is used, with key words being signed. The words and signs can be combined with visual supports such as symbols. Makaton signs can be used to support both receptive and expressive communication difficulties.

At Five Acre Wood, key signs are used alongside speech throughout the day during lessons and other activities. Many pupils will join in with signs during daily songs and greeting activities, and some pupils use signs to support their everyday communication. 'More' and 'finish' are often among the earliest signs to be introduced.



The Five Acre Wood signing choir led by teacher Leanne Bowden is still being run virtually. This is an amazing opportunity for staff and pupils to practise their signing skills, as well as being great fun.

Parent training sessions are offered by the Speech and Language Therapists throughout the year including an informal 'Signing at Home' session and the Level 1 and Level 2 courses accredited by the Makaton Charity.

The Makaton Charity has a website with lots of useful information and ideas. See www.makaton.org for further information.



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Therapy Dogs



Luna



Benjy

Welcome to Luna and Benjy. Luna is a Cava-Poo and she was born on the 9th January 2021 and is based at our Palace Wood satellite site. She has had a very busy time getting to know everyone in Turtle and Whale class. She has loved greeting our pupils at the start and end of the day. Benjy is a Shih-Poo who was born on Halloween, but he isn't scary at all, in fact he is little and cute. He loves to be stroked, played with and even enjoys the occasional sleep on your lap. Benjy is based at our Loose site.

Parent Support Groups

Throughout this academic year we have still been able to run our Parent Support Groups. Due to the pandemic these were conducted online and covered:

- Behaviour
- Online Safety
- Visual supports within the home
- SCERTS
- Signing at home
- Meet the TEAM

If you have other areas you feel as a parent you would like covered please do not hesitate to contact us on:

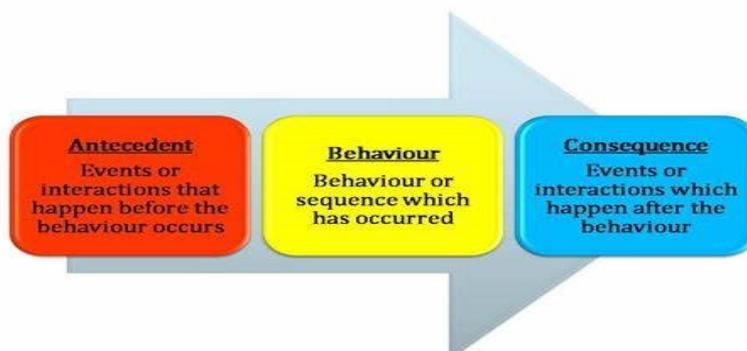
office@five-acre.kent.sch.uk

Behaviour Support



Currently I offer behaviour support to teachers and class teams around school in collaboration with other therapists and external agencies, where appropriate. I also work directly with parents, sometimes alongside TEAM, our family support group. I do ask that all requests are made through a referral form . This gives me some starter information and means we can log the support process. (Class teachers or the therapy team can send you a referral form).

During our first meeting or call I will establish when, where and with whom the challenging behaviour occurs. We also need to look at what is happening immediately before the behaviour occurs – the antecedents. This can help us understand the ‘function’ of the behaviour. In other words what is the need behind the behaviour – what does the behaviour communicate to us? At a very basic level it is useful to know what is gained, or what is avoided by using certain behaviour. We also try and look at what occurs immediately after the behaviour – the consequence. This is not always easy to spot, especially when you are managing a challenging situation. In short the consequence or result of the behaviour often dictates whether the behaviour works for the child. If the behaviour is successful in gaining or avoiding something, the child is likely to continue to use it, as it successful for them!



We can look at a range of strategies to help manage some situations – we can do this on a response sheet where we highlight what we say and do in each different situation. However, what is most important is looking at what new skill or behaviour the child can learn to replace the inappropriate behaviour. This is not always so obvious and we need to plan this on a completely individual basis and look in detail how we can teach this. In some circumstances we need to look at a very specific reward to help embed a new behaviour or skill. As always it’s not just about what we do, but how we do it!

On a practical level the details around a specific strategy or learning approach need to be detailed on a plan. Within school many pupils may have a Personal Support Plan (PSP), equally this could be adapted for the home.

I look forward to hearing from, and meeting hopefully in person as the lockdown is released!

Michael Garcia - Behaviour Lead Teacher



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“We will provide therapy in collaboration with teaching staff, parents and other relevant professionals through a holistic and integrated approach that places the pupil at the centre of everything we do.”



Music Therapy



Hello, I am Lib, the music therapist and this is an update on what I have been doing since last February - so much has happened since then! From mid-February I continued working with some individuals and small groups for music therapy sessions on-line. As one teacher said ‘they were very beneficial sessions in very unusual times!’ ‘Both students have really responded well and been focused and engaged throughout all the sessions.’ ‘Despite any technical difficulties encountered during our online music therapy sessions our children still thoroughly enjoyed and benefitted from their sessions and we were very grateful for them as it also gave them a change of scenery if only in a virtual way and a sense of continuity.’

Since the beginning of May I am now working face to face with all the students on an increased timetable offering sessions all day on Wednesdays and on Monday afternoons. Since the sessions have been taking place in school the difference working face to face has been wonderful. Being able to see their expressions first hand, to hear their smallest sounds and see the tiniest of movements as they play on the drum has high-lighted the wonders of making music directly with people!

As one support teacher said, ‘Now that the sessions are back in person I feel the difference is incredible! There are far fewer distractions for the pupils in the music room with just Lib and a member of staff - the excitement, the enjoyment, the enthusiasm and the benefits have already increased hugely. This week I saw in one pupil more focus and continued engagement than I have ever seen in him before. It was an absolute pleasure to see and experience with him’. With the increased timetable new students have been able to access these music therapy sessions. All the students have different needs - some have more profound learning and physical difficulties and others find it hard to access their feelings and emotions but making music together is an experience that is universal. After such a difficult year with Lockdown many of the students are responding to making music with a renewed vigour – so much was not accessible to them during that difficult time, but now possibilities are once again opening up! As a music therapist I believe that music making is for everyone and it is so exciting to know that we can once again do this directly with one another!



New Team Members



Hello, my name is Sian Williams and I joined FAW as a speech and language therapist in April. My background is working with adults with learning disabilities and I also have experience of working with children in schools and other settings. I have enjoyed getting to know some of the pupils and staff here, and look forward to getting to know more of you soon!

Important Dates

- **Dyslexia week: 7-12 October 2021**—Search the hashtag #DyslexiaCreates on Twitter to follow the conversation
- **World Autism Awareness Day 2nd April 2022**—<https://www.autismspeaks.org/what-autism/world-autism-awareness-day>
- **Think of how you help your child develop their independence during Occupational Therapy Week 2021 TBA**
- **National Sensory Processing Awareness Month—October 2021.**



BRITISH DYSLEXIA SOCIETY

<https://www.bdadyslexia.org.uk/>