

## Meet the Therapy Team

Our speech and language therapist (SaLT), occupational therapists (OT) and therapy assistants work alongside external professionals including physiotherapists, OTs, play therapists and an art therapist.

### **Therapy Provision at Five Acre Wood School**

SaLT and OT are fully integrated into the curriculum and across the school day.

If a pupil is experiencing challenges that cannot be supported by their specialist classroom team, a referral can be made to the Therapy Team.

### **How to receive support:**

Contact us on [therapy@five-acre.kent.sch.uk](mailto:therapy@five-acre.kent.sch.uk) or 01622 743925 Ext. 1161 (SaLT) 1146 (OT) 1311 (Therapy Assistants)

- Attend one of our Parent Support Groups

**Occupational Therapist &  
Multi-Disciplinary Team  
Lead**



**Gemma Byrne**

**Occupational Therapist**



**Hannah Willson**

**Speech and Language  
Therapist**



**Maddie Simmons**

**Therapy Assistants**



**Gemma Allen**



**Colette Parsons**



**Katherine Parfitt**

Physiotherapy, Eating and Drinking (Dysphagia) and Occupational Therapy (postural seating) are supported by the local NHS team based at the Heathside Centre in Coxheath.

Phone number: 0300 123 7004 Email address: [kentchft.ctwestkent@nhs.net](mailto:kentchft.ctwestkent@nhs.net)



FIVE ACRE WOOD SCHOOL

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# THERAPY NEWSLETTER

Term 1 2023

## Therapy Provision At Five Acre Wood

Advice, training and support is available to all members of the school community, through our Universal Provision as described below.

If a pupil is experiencing challenges that cannot be supported by their specialist classroom team, a referral to the therapy team can be made, the pupil may then be placed on our indirect or direct provision levels.

### Universal



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Support received within the pupils' class by their specialist teaching team. The class team will receive relevant training and advice throughout the school year and the Therapy Team are contactable should there be any concerns they would like more support with.

### Indirect



Should the need for further support be identified by the class team, a referral may be placed to the Therapy Team by the class teacher and they will then be observed and/or assessed by a therapist. If deemed the pupil would benefit from further support, a programme and targets will be written in collaboration with class staff, parents/carers and the therapist. Targets are worked on by class staff, with support from the Therapy Team as needed. These targets will be reviewed by the therapist at the end of a set period of time and next steps determined.

### Direct



If it is identified that the support required following observation/assessment would be best received via the Therapy Team, a programme and targets will be written in collaboration with class staff, parents/carers and the therapist. The pupil will be placed on the direct provision level and they will then be seen on a regular basis with a member of the team, usually a therapy assistant, for a set period of time. These targets will be reviewed by the therapist at the end and next steps determined.

## Occupational Therapy

# Sensory circuits

### What is a Sensory Circuit?

Sensory circuits are an active and engaging circuit designed to stimulate bodies and minds ready for the day.

#### Who are sensory circuits for?

Sensory circuits are great for all children but especially benefit children with sensory processing difficulties, ADHD and autism. Sensory circuits help to regulate the sensory system so it's ready to focus.

#### How to make a sensory circuit?

Sensory circuits take place in classes and in the school hall on Wednesdays and Fridays.

**Sensory circuits can easily be set up at home with little or no equipment.**

Every sensory circuits needs to be spilt into three sections and must be completed in this order

**Alerting, Organising and Calming.**





## Occupational Therapy

### Alerting

The first stage of the sensory circuit should always be the **Alerting**. This section aims to help release any pent up anxiety and energy, so that you are able to settle.

The alerting activities aim to provide vestibular stimulation (providing the brain with sensory information every time the position of the head moves in relation to gravity) Alerting activities include skipping, jumping, bouncing, running, jogging on the spot, star jumps.



### Organising

After Alerting, you should move to **Organising**, where we are challenged to channel our energy into an activity that requires skill and focus.

The organising activities require multi-sensory processing and balance. You need to organise your body, plan your approach and do more than one thing at once, in a set sequential order. Organising activities include climbing, hopping, balancing and throwing.



### Calming

The final **Calming** section is designed to help you complete the circuit feeling calm and focussed.

Calming activities include hugs, wrapping in a blanket, gentle massage, listening to calming music, exercise ball squash.





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## Occupational Therapy



# MOVE

Movement Opportunities Via Education



### MOVE at FAW

In September 2023, Gemma (OT), Hannah (OT) and Rebecca (EYFS Teacher) attended MOVE senior practitioner training to begin the reintroduction of MOVE to FAW. We are not in our first phase of rollout throughout the school.

### What is MOVE?

MOVE (Mobility Opportunities Via Education/Experience) is an activity-based program used in homes, schools, day programs and the community. Using a top-down approach, MOVE combines the individuals' present abilities with an instructional process during motivational activities to help the individual improve their mobility skills of sitting, standing, walking, and transitioning – leading to improved health, independence, dignity and inclusion of the individual in the family and community. **MOVE is a way of life!**

### Why MOVE?

Shifts the focus to the individual and family.

**For the individual:** we work to improve independent, access to learning and the community. Also focusing on improving health for the individual.

**For the families:** goals are set based on individual and family needs, working to improve family life and bring hope for better outcomes.

### Who is MOVE for?

Individuals who have not spontaneously developed the skills of sitting, standing, walking and transferring to the best of their ability/potential.





## Play Therapy

Hi, I'm Adina and I have recently qualified as a Therapeutic Play Practitioner.

It's been an incredible journey, which continues, as I am studying to become a fully qualified Play Therapist. I am based at the Snodland site, where I have transformed one of the rooms into a Therapeutic Playroom, with an extensive play kit formed of miniatures, sand and water, arts and crafts materials, books, musical instruments, dressing up, puppets and a wide selection of board games. I also have a mobile play kit which I take with me on my travels.



If you are wondering what Play Therapy is and how it can help children here are some hints:

- Play therapists help children to make sense of difficult life experiences, or complex psychological issues through play.
- Play Therapy can be a particularly helpful approach for children in need of therapeutic support.
- Play Therapy sessions aim to build a child's ability to develop healthy and resilient relationships, and to work through traumatic experiences which may be preoccupying them. Pre-occupying difficult feeling can make learning at school or managing feelings impossible. Addressing difficult emotions through play provides a layer of story or metaphor to what is being shared and felt. Metaphor can provide a degree of removal from experience for the child. It can feel safer and less intense for a child to express themselves or explore their experiences through play.
- Play is children's primary form of communication. It helps children to express themselves without using words as they might not be ready, or not have the understanding to do so. **Talking about problems can be hard for children.** A child may not have the words to describe how they are feeling, or why they are behaving as they do. A child may not be able to recognise what they find difficult or explain it to someone if asked. Play Therapy provides the expertise and time to do this through play.
- Through play, children can experiment with, process and master different skills and experiences such as being able to trust, respect, empathise, share and co-operate with people, etc.

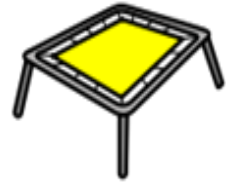
### Targets of Play Therapy

- The research has demonstrated that through Play Therapy children are learning to develop healthy coping strategies, to be more creative when it comes to problem-solving. They have an increased ability to express themselves and their feelings. They develop social skills, improve their fine and gross motor skills...
- Play therapy can help with a wide range of issues including trauma, bereavement, anxiety and depression. It may help children with ADHD and ASD or children whose behaviour and anger management becomes problematic.



## Rebound Therapy

Rebound therapy is used to facilitate movement, promote balance, promote an increase or decrease in muscle tone, promote relaxation and promote sensory integration. It can also be used to improve fitness and exercise tolerance, and even to improve communication skills.



We are now running two sessions a week and our first cohort of 7 students are already working very hard – and having great fun! In fact we have just awarded our first student, her Grade 1 certificate which is an amazing achievement. Well done!



## The Importance of Practice

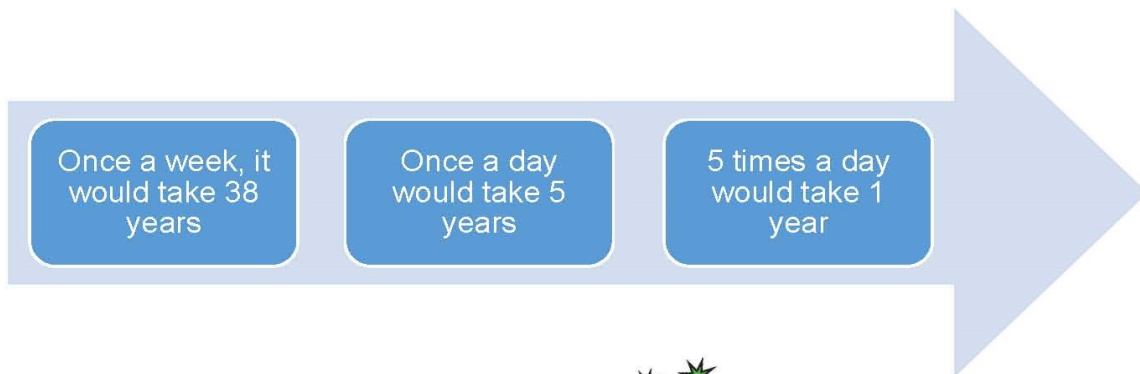
Practicing skills is very important in order to embed them as a mastered skill for life

It is known that it can take 200 practices for a neuro typically developing individual to master a new skill – if you drive a car, think about how long it took you to feel confident behind the wheel



For an individual with complex needs, this can multiply to 2000 practices!

To put that into context, if the individual was to practice...



That is 1 year to embed the skill for life!



Consider this when your child is trying to learn a new skill and the opportunities they will need in order to master this in a timely manner – have a chat with your child's teacher to determine how this could look for you at home



## Hydrotherapy



The Therapy Team were able to offer some 'Summer Holiday Hydro' sessions for the first time during the long 6 week break. These sessions were very well received by pupils, parents and PA's alike and meant that this invaluable resource could still provide some continuity of therapy.

The hydrotherapy pool was put straight to use once the children returned after the Summer. We receive referrals from both Physiotherapists and Occupational Therapists and the now full timetable that has been created means that 27 pupils per week can receive a session, which is fantastic. This includes pupils not only from our Sensory learning approach but from every learning approach, including our Snodland and Oxford Road sites.



## New Team Members



Hi, I'm Maddie, the new Speech and Language Therapist at FAW. This is my first role as a newly qualified therapist after having recently graduated from University College, London. I have always had an interest in working with children so I'm excited to meet all the wonderful pupils and get stuck into this role.



Hi, I am Harley, one of the new Therapy Dogs at FAW. I was born in June 2023 and currently in training to be able to support the Multi-Disciplinary Team in their sessions with the children here. I am very calm and friendly and always greet everyone with a wagging tail.





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## PARENT SUPPORT GROUPS 2023-2024



Five Acre Wood will be offering 8 parent support groups this academic year, which are aimed at supporting parents and carers whose children have specific needs. All sessions will be held in person at Five Acre Wood School on the Loose site.

Please see below a list of dates and subjects.

Any updates or changes will be listed on the school website and sent via email.

Dates	Time	Subject
Thursday 9 <sup>th</sup> November 2023	9.45am – 10.45am	<b>PECS</b> – alternative communication system that uses visual symbols
Thursday 7 <sup>th</sup> December 2023	9.45am – 10.45am	<b>Reluctant Eaters</b> - we'll provide top tips to support your child to explore a wider range of foods.
Wednesday 10 <sup>th</sup> January 2024	9.45am – 10.45am	<b>Introduction to AAC and Colourful Semantics</b> - AAC describes ways to support a young person to communicate with you by using a range of visual supports. Colourful semantics is a visual system intended to develop reading, writing, speaking, and listening skills.
Thursday 22 <sup>nd</sup> February 2024	9.45am – 10.45am	<b>Sensory Processing &amp; Sensory Circuits</b> – an opportunity to learn more about your child's sensory needs and how to support this at home.
Wednesday 20 <sup>th</sup> March 2024	2.00pm – 3.00pm	<b>PECS</b> – alternative communication system that uses visual symbols
Wednesday 24 <sup>th</sup> April 2024	2.00pm – 3.00pm	<b>Reluctant Eaters</b> - we'll provide top tips to support your child to explore a wider range of foods.
Wednesday 8 <sup>th</sup> May 2024	2.00pm – 3.00pm	<b>Sensory Processing &amp; Sensory Circuits</b> – an opportunity to learn more about your child's sensory needs and how to support this at home.
Thursday 6 <sup>th</sup> June 2024	2.00pm – 3.00pm	<b>Introduction to AAC and Colourful Semantics</b> - AAC describes ways to support a young person to communicate with you by using a range of visual supports. Colourful semantics is a visual system intended to develop reading, writing, speaking, and listening skills.

### FURTHER INFORMATION

- Please can you inform us of your attendance at least 1 week in advance of a Support Group and if there are less than 5 attendees for any one session then unfortunately it will not go ahead. Please confirm your attendance by emailing [vgeylani@five-acre.kent.sch.uk](mailto:vgeylani@five-acre.kent.sch.uk) or phoning us on 01622 743925.
- If a session must be cancelled due to unforeseen circumstances, or insufficient take up (less than 5 attendees) then we will endeavour to provide parents/carers with as much notice as possible.
- During a session, if there are other issues that you would like advice on, please feel free to raise them and we will do our best to address them at the time.

October 2023