

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 or 01622 743925 Ext. 1161 (SaLT) 1146 (OT) 1311 (Therapy Assistants)

- Attend one of our Parent Support Groups

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



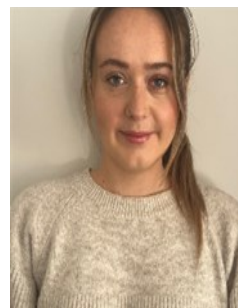
Gemma Byrne

**Occupational
Therapist**



Hannah Willson

**Occupational
Therapist**



Charlotte Wenham

**Speech and Language
Therapist**



Maddie Simmons

Therapy Assistants



Gemma Allen



Colette Parsons



Katherine Parfitt

School Counsellor



Jagdip Bhogal

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



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Growing and Learning Together

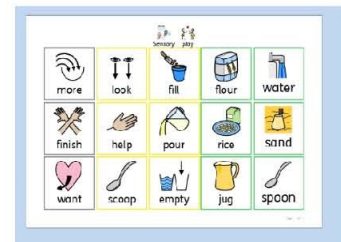
THERAPY NEWSLETTER

Term 3 2024

Speech and Language Therapy

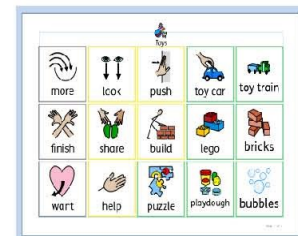
Communication boards

At Five acre, we work hard to support each pupil to reach his or her full communication potential. We encourage a Total Communication Approach using speech, signing and/or using alternative and augmentative communication (AAC) which includes using objects, photos, symbols and sensory cues. A lot of classes use communication boards to support pupils with their communication.



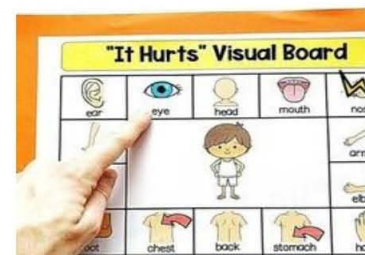
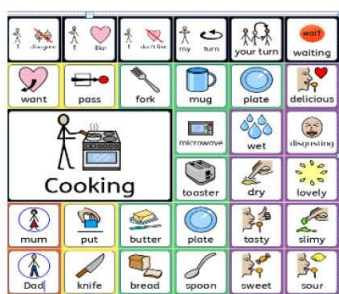
What is a Communication Board?

A communication board is a sheet of pictures, symbols, or photos that a child can point to, to communicate with those around them.



Why use a communication board?

Speech can be difficult for some children. They may find it difficult to make people understand what they are trying to say. They might say less than they want to because the words are hard to say. If they are able to show their listener as well as tell them what they are trying to say they are more likely to get their message across. They can also be used to model to the child how to make choices and how to develop their language further.







Occupational Therapy

What is 'Stimming'?

What is Stimming?

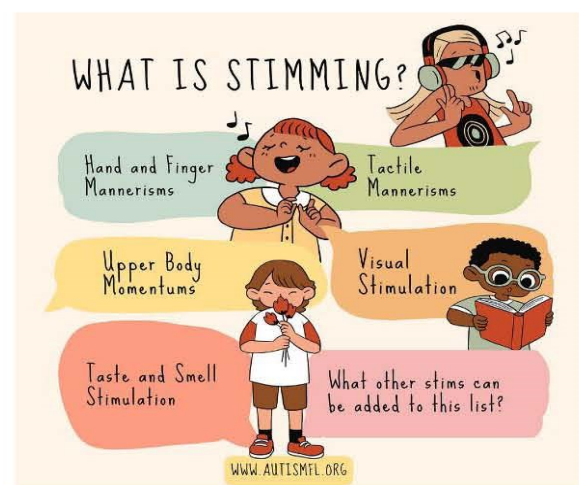
'Stimming' or self-stimulating behaviour may include arm or hand-flapping, flicking, repetitive noises, spinning, head-banging or complex body movements.

Why may someone stim?

- For enjoyment
- To attempt to gain sensory input e.g rocking may be a way to stimulate the vestibular system and hand-flapping may provide visual stimulation.
- An attempt to reduce sensory input e.g one, continuous noise may reduce the impact of loud noises or a distressing environment.
- To deal with stress and anxiety.

Should you intervene?

Stimming is often very enjoyable and a way to reduce stress and should not be stopped or restricted, unless there is a risk of injurious behaviour, such as head banging (in which physical prompts, redirection or equipment may be used). Some people may be judgemental and therefore it is important to support your child to accept themselves. It is often useful to address the emotions that an individual may be portraying through stimming.



Useful website: [Stimming \(autism.org.uk\)](https://www.autism.org.uk)

Occupational Therapy

Chewing and Oral Motor Behaviour

What is the oral sensory system?

Our oral system is made up of our touch, taste receptors and proprioceptive senses and allows us to communicate with others, to chew, swallow, and experience different textures and tastes. Sucking and placing objects in your mouth is a response for individuals to be able to explore the world. This behaviour typically stops at around 18 months, unless there are some sensory processing differences present. For example, you might notice that your child is constantly chewing and biting things (oral sensory seeking behaviours), or your child might avoid certain food textures, have problems swallowing, and be very reluctant to try new foods (oral sensory avoiding behaviours). Below are some examples of possible oral sensory seeking/ avoidant behaviours:

Oral Sensory Seeker	Oral Sensory Avoider
Nail biting	Avoiding toothbrushing
Trouble chewing or drinking through a straw	Gagging
Sucking or chewing objects	Resistant to certain foods/textures
Messiness when eating	A dislike to certain utensils
May make a clicking sound with their tongue	May prefer bland foods

Oral motor activity ideas to support the sensory system

- 1) Blowing bubbles
- 2) Adding straws to drinks or bottles
- 3) Playing musical instruments, such as whistles or harmonicas
- 4) Frozen fruit and ice cubes can be sucked
- 5) Touching and playing with a range of textures.
- 6) Crunchy foods, such as popcorn, cereal, dried fruit or raw vegetables
- 7) Eating a range of sweet, spicy and salty foods.
- 8) Practice drinking different consistencies, such as thick milkshakes
- 9) Blowing up balloons
- 10) Some children find vibrating toothbrushes helpful
- 11) Whole body sensory regulating activities, such as heavy work.



Make sure anything placed in a child's mouth is safe to be put in the mouth and not able to be accidentally swallowed.



Chewing:

Gives large feedback to the brain as the jaw muscle is one of the strongest in the body. This often supports an individual to self-regulate and support with calming.

- ✓ There are also many **chew toys** available on the market. As a general rule, you want to **look at where an individual is chewing** in their mouth before giving them a chew toy. If they chew and suck more at the front of their mouth, then round or wider chewy toys are often better. If they like to chew at the back of their mouth on their molars, then longer chew toys are helpful. If they like a bit of feedback then there are different textures and the slightly softer toys have more give. If they are really biting down and chewing through chews, a tougher chew will be needed.

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.

Rebound therapy has been continuing twice a week on a Tuesday morning and a Friday afternoon. We have had some new candidates beginning their sessions and they are already progressing very well.



Huge congratulations to this pupil who has achieved her Grade 1 certificate which is a fantastic achievement. Well done!





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Hydrotherapy

Hydrotherapy or Aquatic therapy refers to treatments and exercises performed in water for relaxation, fitness, physical rehabilitation, and other therapeutic benefit.

Despite a few problems this term which were beyond control (such as having no water!) hydrotherapy has continued to provide many children with their much needed and very well received sessions.





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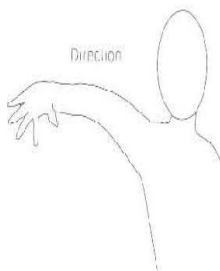
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Signing Choir

Signing choir is attended by pupils across the school. Some pupils join in the hall at Loose, and others via teams. They are currently learning to sign the song 'Reach'.

Some of the signs we use in the song are;

Reach



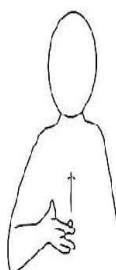
Stars



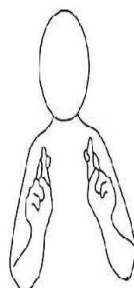
when



Feeling



Hopes



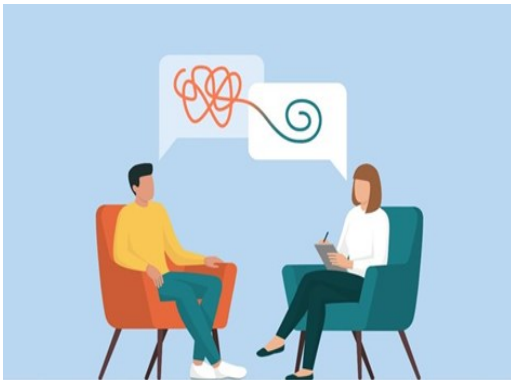
Dreams



Counselling

What is Counselling?

Counselling is a form of talking therapy with counsellors providing a safe, confidential and non-judgemental space for clients to explore their thoughts and feelings. Often people will seek support from counselling to help resolve emotional, psychological and relationship issues. Clients may have been through traumatic experiences in their lives such as bereavement, divorce, health problems and relationship issues. However, some individuals may seek counselling due to a lack of confidence/ self-esteem and wanting to have a better understanding of themselves. Clients can feel



isolated and not feel able to talk to friends and family members about their thoughts and feelings therefore speaking to an independent person can help a client to feel more comfortable sharing.

The in-house counsellor has a foundation in person centred counselling whilst also utilising other therapeutic modalities such as cognitive behavioural therapy or psychodynamic therapy when working with clients. It is a humanistic approach and is based around three core conditions of empathy, unconditional positive regard and congruence and promotes supporting the client to process their thoughts and feelings to heal rather than telling them what to do. The counsellor is based in the Loose site however travels between each of the sites offering support during the week. The counsellor is hoping to build resilience and develop self-esteem, confidence and increase self-awareness school wide.



Therapy Dog - Harley



Hello, my name is Harley.

I have been in school with the Therapy Team since September and I am enjoying getting to used to the environment. I always greet people with a wagging tail when I am walking around the corridors.

If you see me around school and want to say 'Hello', please ask the people that are with me if it is ok to talk to me.

The best way to greet me is to stand still show me your hand so that I can sniff your hand before you stroke me.

I know it can be very exciting when you see me, but please try not to run towards me or crowd me by leaning over the top of me as this can make me scared.



Sometimes you may see me wearing a 'Halti' across my nose when I am walking on my lead around school. This is to help me learn to walk nicely without pulling, as I am getting very strong!

Sometimes I may be training and will have an orange tag on my lead to let you know that I can't stop to see you at the moment.

New Team Members

Hello, my name is Charlotte and I have recently joined the team as an Occupational Therapist. This is my second role post graduating from the University of East Anglia. I have previously worked within acute adult services, however, I am very excited to be embarking on a new adventure working with the children at Five Acre Wood. I look forward to meeting everybody!



Hi, I'm Jag and I am the new school counsellor. I am a newly qualified and have been busy setting up the counselling service within the school. Currently I am offering sessions to staff members with a view to provide a service to children and young people in the near future. I look forward to offering a safe, confidential and non-judgemental space for people to share and process their thoughts and feelings.





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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 th November 2023	9.45am – 10.45am	PECS – alternative communication system that uses visual symbols
Thursday 7 th December 2023	9.45am – 10.45am	Reluctant Eaters - we'll provide top tips to support your child to explore a wider range of foods.
Wednesday 10 th January 2024	9.45am – 10.45am	Introduction to AAC and Colourful Semantics - 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 nd February 2024	9.45am – 10.45am	Sensory Processing & Sensory Circuits – an opportunity to learn more about your child's sensory needs and how to support this at home.
Wednesday 20 th March 2024	2.00pm – 3.00pm	PECS – alternative communication system that uses visual symbols
Wednesday 24 th April 2024	2.00pm – 3.00pm	Reluctant Eaters - we'll provide top tips to support your child to explore a wider range of foods.
Wednesday 8 th May 2024	2.00pm – 3.00pm	Sensory Processing & Sensory Circuits – an opportunity to learn more about your child's sensory needs and how to support this at home.
Thursday 6 th June 2024	2.00pm – 3.00pm	Introduction to AAC and Colourful Semantics - 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 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