

Occupational Therapy at Dawn House School

“Medicine adds days to life, occupational therapy adds life to days.” Unknown

Meet the team:

At Dawn House School we have three experienced occupational therapists and therapy assistants, including a specialist with post graduate training in sensory integration. Each student is provided with detailed assessment alongside an annual term block of therapy allowing a range of prescribed and bespoke interventions to be embedded into the school day. Together in partnership with the student, family and core team the physical, cognitive, psychosocial and sensory components of performance are assessed. A focus is held upon work, play, leisure, social participation, self-care skills (ADLs or Activities of Daily Living), and transition/ work skills.



Hannah Wheeler
OT



Nicole Khosla
DHO OT, SI practitioner
Maternity leave



Krissy Walker
**Maternity cover for
Nicole Khosla's post**



Sophie Edwards-Smith
OT



Kim Davis
OTA



Lynn Cole
OTA




Wendy Gardner
OTA

What do we do?

The team utilise meaningful activity to assess the physical, cognitive, psychosocial and sensory components of performance. A clear focus is held upon goal setting to overcome barriers to promote and support each student's success and level of independence.

Occupational therapy input is delivered by the occupational therapists and the occupational therapy assistants through direct one to one intervention, in small groups, a combination of both and in the classroom setting. The occupational therapy team deliver frequent training to the wider staff team and families to ensure taught intervention is consistent and embedded into each student's daily routine at home and in the classroom. Intervention areas include, fine motor skills, gross motor skills, self-care, independent living and sensory based strategies.

An example of an OT intervention:

 **The zones of regulation:** The colour rating system is embedded into school to support students to express emotions, thoughts and feelings in a non-judgmental manner. Zones of regulation boards are visible throughout the school with the addition of each student having their own bespoke board if they wish along with an icon to mark where they are feeling.

Students may also design an **alert programme**, this bespoke document considers the child's, family and core teams' perspective on how they feel during each colour and strategies which support them to regulate. This is key in ensuring consistency, embedding successful intervention and ensuring a deeper understanding of our students. Additionally, the

programmes can be attached to positive behaviour plans allowing the core team to consider and understand a range of behaviours/emotions that are presented dependent on what colour they recognise to be feeling.

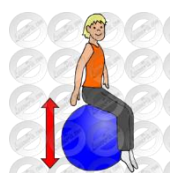
Examples of prescribed equipment and strategies:



A wobble cushion is a small round inflatable cushion, strong enough to sit or stand on. When sat on the cushion it provides a 'wobble' encouraging the student to engage their back and core muscles.

Why are they prescribed? The cushion works upon ones core stability and provides proprioceptive, tactile and vestibular movements that they may be seeking. In turn this is in place to support regulation allowing the individual to focus and attend to an array of tasks.

A sensory diet is a tailored activity programme designed to meet a student's specific sensory needs and to help them to achieve their full potential.



It aims to provide the "just right" combination of sensory input/ 'feeling green' to achieve and maintain optimal levels of arousal and performance in the nervous system.

Key points:

- Regular movements throughout the day at scheduled times.
- The child is an active participant and needs to enjoy doing the activities.
- Must be customised for individual needs and responses.
- Not every activity in the sensory diet has to be completed each time.

- Vary from 30 seconds to several minutes.
- Must be prescribed by the SI practitioner.

What do our students say:

Q: How OT has supported you?

A: Made me feel green by doing
sensory diet in a morning.

Going into the IT room or going in
the ball pit!!

