










Speech and Language Therapy at Dawn House School

“Communication is the essence of human life.” Janice Light

Meet the team:

				
Andrea Robinson Head of Therapy & Assessment Service	Sarah Throup Deputy Head of Therapy – Speech & Language Therapist	Joanna Gill Senior Speech & Language Therapist	Lisa Bradley Speech & Language Therapist	Molly Abrahams Speech & Language Therapist
				
Paisley Ward Speech & Language Therapy Apprentice	Debbie Kim Speech & Language Therapy Assistant	Jade Rawlinson Speech & Language Therapy Assistant	Keeley Truman Speech & Language Therapy Assistant	



What do we do?

Speech & Language Therapists are allied health professionals who have trained to degree level to assess and treat speech, language and communication needs to help people to communicate more effectively. We can also assess and treat eating, drinking and swallowing difficulties.

The Speech & Language Therapy team at Dawn House School provide this assessment, intervention, support and care to individual pupils, just as we would in any other setting.

We are also privileged and proud to work a little differently at Dawn House - through our collaborative work with teachers to embed specialist support for speech, language and communication needs across our curriculum and throughout the school day.

This means that, as well as offering one-to-one and group interventions, we also integrate speech, language and communication learning and support into curriculum planning, lessons and social times. As a result, we can really get to know and build strong relationships with our pupils, which is the foundation for any effective therapeutic work and enables us to provide holistic, person-centred and flexible support.

You'll find us working in all areas of school - in therapy sessions, in the classroom, on the playground, in the dinner hall, providing support to pupils on school trips & visits to our local community, on work experience, on residential trips, in meetings about our pupils and our school provision, as well as receiving and delivering training to ensure practice across school is evidence based and up to date.

Our aim is to work as specialists within the wider school team to support all of our pupils to develop their functional communication skills, to help them to access the curriculum and develop their confidence as successful communicators, in school and in their wider community.

How do we do what we do?

We work in 3 different ways across school. We consider the strengths, needs and current circumstances of every pupil on a termly basis to help us to decide what sort of Speech and Language Therapy support is needed for the following term. We consider any recent or upcoming transitions, the provision requirements in the EHCP and current motivation and engagement levels of pupils, as well as the evidence base for different approaches and the likely impact and outcomes.

Collaborative practice and core team support:

All of our pupils benefit from having a team of 'in house' Speech and Language Therapists, embedded into the school team. Our support for all of our pupils includes:

- **assessing** all pupils when they start attending our school, and at the end of each Key Stage, so that we have up to date information about speech, language and communication strengths and needs to inform provision and support transitions.
- **working collaboratively** with tutors, teaching assistants and the wider therapy team to contribute information about the speech, language and communication strengths and needs of all pupils to the annual review of their EHCP and termly communication targets.
- working collaboratively with subject teachers to **contribute to curriculum and lesson planning and delivery**.
- **whole school approaches**, including our 'word of the week', specific vocabulary teaching and the use of The Blank Model of Language Learning to ensure skilled questioning of pupils.
- **ongoing training, modelling, coaching and support in the classroom** for teachers, teaching assistants and the wider therapy team to ensure that strategies and approaches to support speech, language and communication needs are used by everyone and **embedded across the curriculum and throughout the school day**, including off site visits and school residential trips.



Specialist support:

Some pupils also benefit from **additional direct support from Speech and Language Therapy in specific areas**. This includes whole class or small group work to develop and support attention and listening skills, play skills, language skills, phonological awareness skills and social communication skills. We use a range of approaches and strategies as needed, including Makaton signing, Widget symbols, Attention Autism, Colourful Semantics, Narrative Therapy, Lego Therapy, the Newcastle Intervention for Phonological Awareness, Social Stories and Comic Strip Conversations.

Specialist intervention:

Some pupils also benefit from **direct specialist intervention from Speech and Language Therapy**. This includes small group or 1:1 programmes of therapy to develop and practise specific skills, for example understanding and / or using vocabulary and sentences, saying specific speech sounds and words, using augmentative and alternative methods of communication (AAC) and learning about social communication. We use a range of intervention approaches as needed, including Shape Coding, the Language for Behaviour and Emotions Programme, Dynamic Temporal and Tactile Cueing, paper based and electronic AAC.

What do our pupils and colleagues say?

"The school's helped me with...my speech – I've always been ok with talking but it's boosted my confidence with talking to new people more." Year 13 pupil 2022 – 2023

"Time spent in planning and preparing courses and materials is most beneficial for our students and the incidental sharing of expertise during this process is much underrated." Teacher, June 2023