

Speech and Language Therapy at Woodside School

Who are the Speech and Language Therapy team?

The Speech and Language Therapy team at Woodside School consists of 3 Oxleas NHS therapists: Corinna Dixon, Sarah Newton and Rebecca Davies. We work with children and young people with communication difficulties and support their needs by providing assessment, advice and therapy.

How do you work?

Our team is based at Woodside Academy and between the three therapists we cover every day of the week, so there is always a Speech and Language Therapist on-site that is accessible to the children and young people, teachers and school staff. We work closely together with the teachers and teaching assistants to get a holistic picture of the students' needs, provide advice, discuss support strategies and put in place interventions across the school.

What does Speech and Language Therapy support look like at Woodside Academy?

At Woodside, our therapists work in very close collaboration with school staff and our colleagues such as Occupational Therapists and Physiotherapists. We work as one large team and share our expertise, knowledge and resources to achieve our joint goal of providing customised support for each individual student.

Our work includes a mix of

- **direct work with the students**, where we see them individually or in small groups, and
- **indirect work**, where we observe students in the classroom, discuss students with school staff and parents/ carers and advise on Speech and Language Therapy techniques and strategies.

These ways of working include both *assessment* and *therapy*:

Assessment/ reviews: this may include observing students in their classroom and/ or working 1:1 with students so we gain the whole picture of their functional communication in their everyday environment. This allows us to put specific advice and recommendations in place to support their communication development.

Therapy: Speech and Language Therapy does not only take place in separate 1:1 sessions with your child. Our service is also integrated into the students' day and is implemented by teachers and teaching assistants throughout all lessons.

Therapy is provided in various ways, including:

- Creating and maintaining an environment that supports communication for everyone: Woodside Academy is set up to be a communication-friendly environment where visuals, such as pictures, symbols and gestures are in place and routinely used by all adults at the school. We work together with our colleagues to advise on the classroom and wider school environment and put in place customised communication support for all our students.
- School staff implementing therapy: As a specialist setting, Woodside Academy has highly trained specialist teachers and support staff. This means that many Speech and Language Therapy activities are often carried out by teachers and assistants in the classroom or in small groups, under the guidance and with advice from Speech and Language Therapists. Putting in place a supportive environment and ensuring that all adults know and use specific strategies and techniques to develop individual students' communication skills is a vital aspect of Speech and Language Therapy and is an essential part of our work.

- Teachers and Speech and Language Therapists implementing therapy jointly: therapists and teachers regularly provide whole-class intervention together, where we work on specific skills such as recognising and expressing emotions or social interaction skills.
- Speech and Language Therapists implementing direct therapy: Some students are seen for 1:1 or small group sessions run by the Speech and Language Therapists, often for “blocks of therapy” that may be 6-8 weekly sessions. This is the case when students need a specific type of therapy due to their clinical needs. Students are often seen for a half-term and then need time to practise the skills they have worked on and to use them outside of therapy sessions.

Alongside regular assessment and intervention, our team also provides regular training sessions to school staff on any aspects of communication and offer specialist advice, guidance and suggestions to customise approaches for each individual student.

We develop a customised care plan for every child on our caseload, review their targets regularly and contribute our expertise to Annual Reviews so that students’ communication skills are developed to help them towards achieving their aspirations.

When will you see my child?

Your child will be seen within the first half-term of starting at Woodside School. This may include a combination of direct and indirect assessment, as outlined above. We will then decide whether your child needs Speech and Language Therapy and if so, we set targets and decide what type and format would best meet the needs of your child. We then regularly review your child and put specialist support in place as long as they need it.

When your child leaves school at Year 11 or Year 13 they will be discharged from the Children’s Speech and Language Therapy Service.

How will the speech and language therapy targets fit in with what my child is doing in class?

We will discuss targets for your child with the class teacher and teaching assistants. Your child will also have communication targets which will be addressed throughout the school day.

How will I know what you are doing with my child?

You may be sent information or contacted by telephone at the following intervals:

- after the first assessment
- before a block of therapy
- after a block of therapy.

The therapist will also write a report for your child’s Annual Review, unless your child has been discharged.

How can you be contacted?

You can reach us via the
Oxleas Single Point of Access (SPA)
Telephone: 020 3004 0092
E: oxl-tr.bexleyscs-spa@nhs.net

Acorns
Speech and Language
Therapy Service
Children & Young People’s Services
Queen Mary’s Hospital
Frognaal Place
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Kent DA14 6LT
www.qmh.oxleas.nhs.uk