

## Speech and Language Therapy

Being able to communicate is one of the most important skills we need in life. Almost everything we do involves communication; daily tasks such as asking for food and drinks, learning at school, problem solving, making and maintaining friendships and having fun, these all rely on our ability to communicate with each other.

Brookside Academy has a speech and language therapist within Specialist Provision for 1.5 days a week. Speech and language therapy at Brookside provides support and care for children who have difficulties with communication and aims to encourage and further develop their communication skills within motivating and engaging activities.

A speech and language therapist (SALT) is an allied health professional. Our SALT works closely with the specialist teaching staff, Learning Support Assistants and other professionals involved to provide tailored support within each classroom that aims to be generalised throughout the school day.

**\*\*\*We also offer a termly Communication Café for parents and carers.**

Speech and language therapy can work on any of the following areas.



### **Attention Autism.**

Across provision we offer Attention Autism sessions. Attention Autism is an intervention model designed by Gina Davies, Specialist Speech and Language Therapist. It aims to develop natural and spontaneous communication through the use of visually based and highly motivating activities. Attention Autism 'offers the children an irresistible invitation to learn, offering activities that are engaging and inspires the child's attention' using fantastic activities and having a really good time while doing so.

### **A Total Communication Approach**

Within Specialist provision we promote a total communication approach. This means using a variety of modes of communication based on the needs and abilities of the individual child. Where appropriate this includes Augmentative and Alternative Communication systems (AAC). These include all forms of communication (other than oral speech) that are used to express thoughts, needs, wants, and ideas.

We aim to use Makaton signing throughout Specialist Provision. This is a unique language programme that uses symbols, signs and speech to enable children to communicate. It also supports the development of essential communication skills such as attention and listening, comprehension, memory, recall and organisation of language and expression. With Makaton, signs are used, with speech, in spoken word order. This helps provide extra clues about what someone is saying. Using signs can help children who have no speech or whose speech is unclear. We have sign and symbol of the week which is based on the core vocabulary or upcoming events such as bonfire night or Christmas etc.

We also use photographs or symbol systems to support children's understanding and/or as a mode of communication for who have limited speech and those who cannot, or prefer not to sign.

Some examples of total communication used across specialist provision include verbal language, communication books, picture exchange communication system (PECS), communication boards, Makaton signing, switches and eye gaze technology. We also use now and next boards and visual schedules to support the routine of the day. Colourful semantics is also used to support language and literacy development as appropriate.

