

Allied Health Team

Speech and Language Therapy

Hi there! My name is Adele McGaffin and I am the Speech Pathologist here at St James.

I work 1 day a week (Thursdays) supporting students with their speech and language skills. My roles may include classroom observations and educating teachers and running classroom, small group or 1:1 intervention sessions. The areas I support include:

- English as a second language (EAL students)
- Delayed language skills
- Difficulties with speech sounds
- Expanding vocabulary
- Teaching figurative language
- Explicitly teaching word concepts and supporting teachers to integrate these skills into their classroom activities.

Occupational Therapy

Hello, I am Ashley Whitelaw, the school OT at St James. I am onsite every Thursday supporting children’s participation and engagement at school. Basically the everyday things that they need or want to do.

This could include;

- Fine and gross motor skills such as sitting, ball skills, handwriting or using scissors
- Self-care skills such as eating, dressing and toileting
- Self-regulation skills such as managing emotions and being aware of your own regulation needs
- Social-emotional skills including play
- Executive functioning, such as attention, planning and organisation
- Sensory processing

Support could be educating those around a child (ie; teacher’s or parents) about how to help, or providing direct therapy support either to a class, group or child individually.

Activities to try at Home

Articulation:

- For younger students, when your child makes an articulation mistake, don’t correct them all the time. Instead, model the correct production of the word. For example, if your child says, “Look it’s a black tat!” you can say “You’re right! That is a black cat!” emphasizing the word “cat”.
- Go for a walk with your child and have them point out as many items as possible that have their speech sound in the name. Have them repeat the word twice and/or make a sentence with the word.

Language:

- Play the game Hedbanz (there are free options available for smartphones)! This is a great way for kids to expand their language by describing.
- Practice prepositions with your child by talking about random items around the house (i.e., the cat is UNDER the couch, the remote is BETWEEN the couch cushions).

Top tip - It all starts at the core!

Support your child by building up their core strength and postural stability. A child needs this strong base for everything they do.

You can do this through activities such as:

- Wheelbarrow or animal walks
- Homemade obstacle courses
- Laying on their stomach for everyday activities such as reading books, watching TV, playing board games.
- Going to the playground

Ensure they have access to a good seated position at your table at home. This includes:

- Feet flat on the floor. Use a footrest or other item if the floor is not reachable.
- Table at elbow height. Sit your child on a firm cushion if not.
- The backrest should provide support from the lower back to the shoulder blades.
- We want to aim for 90 degree angles at their hips, knees and ankles.



Figure 3: A good sitting position.

Contact Information

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