



# St Mary's School and College, Bexhill

*Residential and non-residential education, therapy and support for children aged 7-19 who have speech, language and communication difficulties and associated complex needs.*

**SPEECH AND LANGUAGE THERAPY**





## What St Mary's offers

St Mary's School and College includes dedicated buildings for school and college, the Aspire Vocational Centre, Interim Assessment and Placement Centre, and separate living areas. We have modern, adapted classrooms which include adjustable desks, specialist seating, interactive whiteboards, soundfield systems, technology and appropriate software to support learning.

Specialist provision includes Food Technology, Science and Design & Technology classrooms, computing suites, a well-resourced library, specialist gym, warm water pool and outdoor sports areas.

St Mary's offers a truly integrated approach that brings together education, therapy and care. Our on-site team includes speech and language therapists, physiotherapists and occupational therapists. We have a qualified nursing team, psychologists, wellbeing team and GP services, as well as a Child and Family Support Worker. As part of our core offer our facilities include: hydrotherapy pool, physiotherapy gym, sensory integration suite, medical, health and wellbeing services.

We have four residential houses (two of which are off-site) which are part of our programmes for extending independence skills. A dedicated care team provide support to our residential pupils.

All of our staff work together with the families and children to ensure the very best outcomes for pupils.

## Therapy, Health and Wellbeing

Our therapy, health and wellbeing teams and on-site facilities enable us to support pupils with a range of needs including: speech and language impairment, learning difficulties, sensory processing, physical needs, attachment difficulties, and eating and drinking difficulties.

Our therapy, health and wellbeing teams and on-site facilities enable us to deliver provision across the waking curriculum. Our model of integrated therapy means that the pupils' needs are planned, provided, and assessed in natural and functional settings. There is the opportunity to develop high levels of trust and familiarity leading to strong therapeutic relationships. We work as a multidisciplinary team to maximise independence levels and the development of 'tools for life'.

With child centred planning at the heart of our work we believe that through understanding what is driving a pupil's behaviours and anxieties we will be best placed to help them to be managed in an appropriate way. We work closely with families and carers, as well as the pupil to ensure we understand their personal goals and ambitions so that we can provide the support and evidence based interventions necessary to make these a reality.

The ultimate aim is for every pupil to achieve as much independence as possible so that they can live a fulfilled life.



**Natalie Edwards**

*Head of Therapy,  
Health and  
WellBeing*

BSc (Hons) Psychology,  
PGCE,  
HCPC, MSc  
(Educational  
Psychology)





Within the speech and language therapy team we have a range of specialist qualifications, knowledge and experience allowing us to deliver evidence based practice in diagnosis and approaches including:

- Augmentative and alternative communication
- Autistic Spectrum Disorders including PDA
- Brain Injury
- Building language through Lego
- Di George Syndrome,
- Down Syndrome
- Dysfluency
- Dysphagia
- Hearing Impairment
- PECS
- Phonology
- Selective Mutism
- Social language use
- Social stories
- Software and APPs
- Specific language impairment
- Talking mats
- Transition
- Verbal dyspraxia
- Vocabulary & grammatical development
- Voice
- Worster drought syndrome

### The Speech and Language Team

## Speech and Language at St Mary's

The Speech and Language Therapy team consists of Speech and Language Therapists, Speech and language therapy assistants, Signing tutors, and a Total Communication practitioner, who provide an integrated service across the Waking Curriculum. The team take a lead in training and modelling of techniques and approaches for the multidisciplinary team. Joint planning and delivery is also carried out with other professionals from the multidisciplinary team.

All of our Speech and Language Therapists are HCPC and RCSLT registered and offer a high level of expertise in working with pupils with communication disorders within the context of complex needs. The team is involved in the assessment, diagnosis and management of speech language and communication needs; social skills and pragmatic language development, and eating and drinking difficulties.

The nature and level of speech and language therapy provision provided to each pupil is determined through comprehensive, continuous assessment of need in order to provide individualised intervention. We seek to build on pupils' ability to act as confident communicators, with increased ability to access learning, levels of independence, and confidence and self-esteem. Delivery is through individual sessions and group work, with intervention taking place in a range of functional settings including the classroom, Vocational Centre, community, and residential houses. Therapists attend weekly multidisciplinary team meetings, and contribute to and attend EHCP Review meetings and meetings with external professionals. Contribution to setting and review of collaboratively written individual targets and goals is carried out throughout the year.



**Cassandra McDonald**

*Lead Speech and Language Therapist*

PGD, BA (Hons),  
RegMCRSLT, HPCR



**Lee-Ann Govender**

*Speech and Language Therapist*

BA (Hons), SLP, Reg  
MCRSLT, HPCR



**Caterina Bruce**

*Speech and Language Therapist*

BA (Hons), PG Dip, MSc,  
RegMCRSLT, HCPCR



**Julia Stallabross**

*Speech and Language Therapist*

BSc (Speech & Language  
Therapy), Hcpc registered



**Jo Price**

*Speech and Language Therapy Assistant*



**Dawn Ralph**

*Clinical Specialist  
Speech and Language Therapist*



## Total Communication

St Mary's advocates a Total Communication approach, and this is actively promoted by our team. Total Communication involves the use of a combination of verbal and non-verbal strategies to support expressive and receptive communication.

The range of strategies which may be employed include:

- Facial expression, gesture and pantomime
- Voice/speech
- Drawing/writing
- Signing (Sign Supported English)
- Low technology aids such as symbol books
- High technology aids including iPads and Speech Apps

Our team of Signing Tutors, Total Communication practitioner and Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC) specialists are based on site allowing them to offer ongoing support to pupils, staff and parents.

## Signing

The signing tutors work with all pupils and staff in weekly groups, and offer weekly lessons to parents as well as offering integrated support to promote the functional use of Sign Supported English. Signing is used to reinforce concepts and vocabulary, and to support processing, learning and retention.

Provision includes:

- Weekly tutor signing group for all pupils
- Signing support within specific lessons, assemblies and key events, Vocational Centre, and residential houses.
- Supporting pupil voice.
- Assemblies (signing support to staff and / or pupils)
- Signing buddies scheme
- Fun Sign groups

## AAC

For those pupils who require (AAC) systems to support our stand in place of speech we are able to offer Specialist assessment and ongoing support. Systems used may range from personalised communication books to hi-tech voice-output technology. A wide range of resources using picture communication symbols are also used throughout the day to support communication, learning and independence. Training in relation to specific Applications and approaches is provided to the multidisciplinary team. Our Total Communication Practitioner & Speech & Language Therapists are based on site and are able to respond to issues and support progress in a timely manner. Core vocabulary linked to curriculum areas is added to devices, and content is developed to support full participation.



**Annie Langley**

*Sign Language  
tutor*

BSL Level 1, 2, 3



**Rachael  
Gildersleeve**

*Sign Language  
Tutor*

BSL Level 1, 2, 3



**Tina Owen**

*Sign Language  
Tutor*

NVQ Childcare  
and Education



**Caroline Matthews**

*Total Communication  
Practitioner*

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