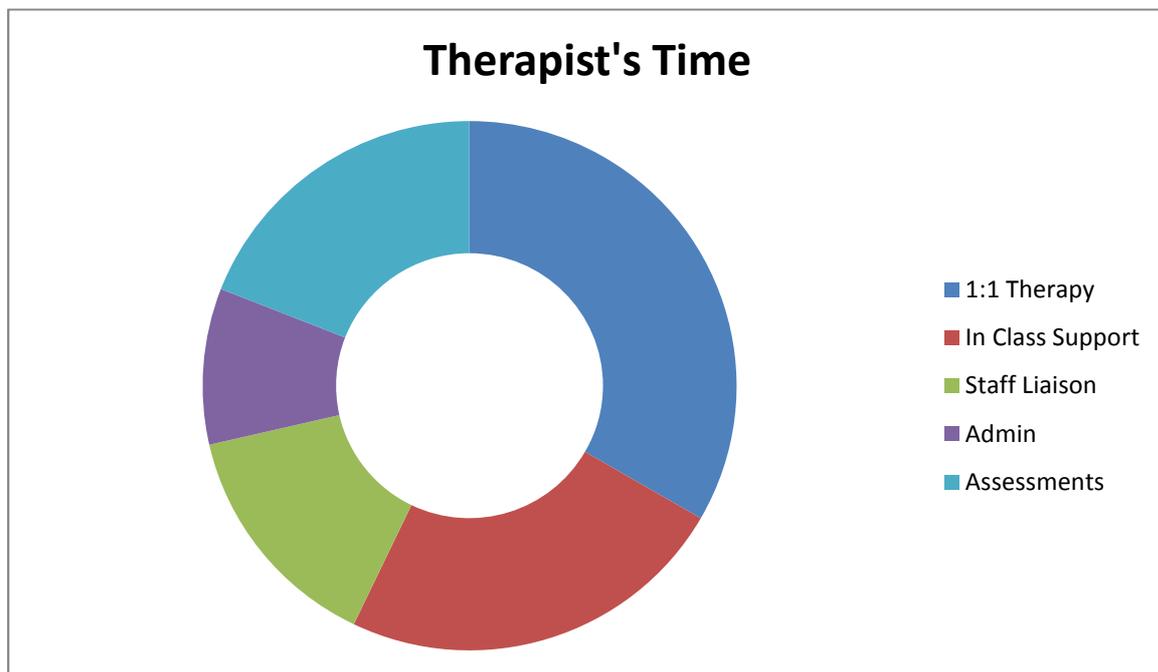


Speech and Language Therapy at Bowden House School

I have been working as a speech and language therapist at Bowden House School since February 2013. I am contracted to the school via The Lighthouse Clinic, the contract is to spend one morning a week providing direct intervention to the boys at the school and one afternoon a week working indirectly (writing reports, developing programmes, planning, liaison, staff training etc.) .



1:1 Therapy is provided during lesson times in the library.

In Class Support usually takes place during tutor time at the beginning and ends of the day.

Staff Liaison takes place during team briefing at the start of the day and during break and lunch times.

Admin involves writing up notes, writing reports, preparing for therapy sessions and preparing activities for teaching staff to carry out during the week.

Assessments have been carried out on all of the boys with “speech and language” needs listed on their statements, they have also been carried out on new boys entering the school as part of their baseline profiles. In addition I plan to reassess the boys on my caseload each year to measure progress.

How are the boys referred?

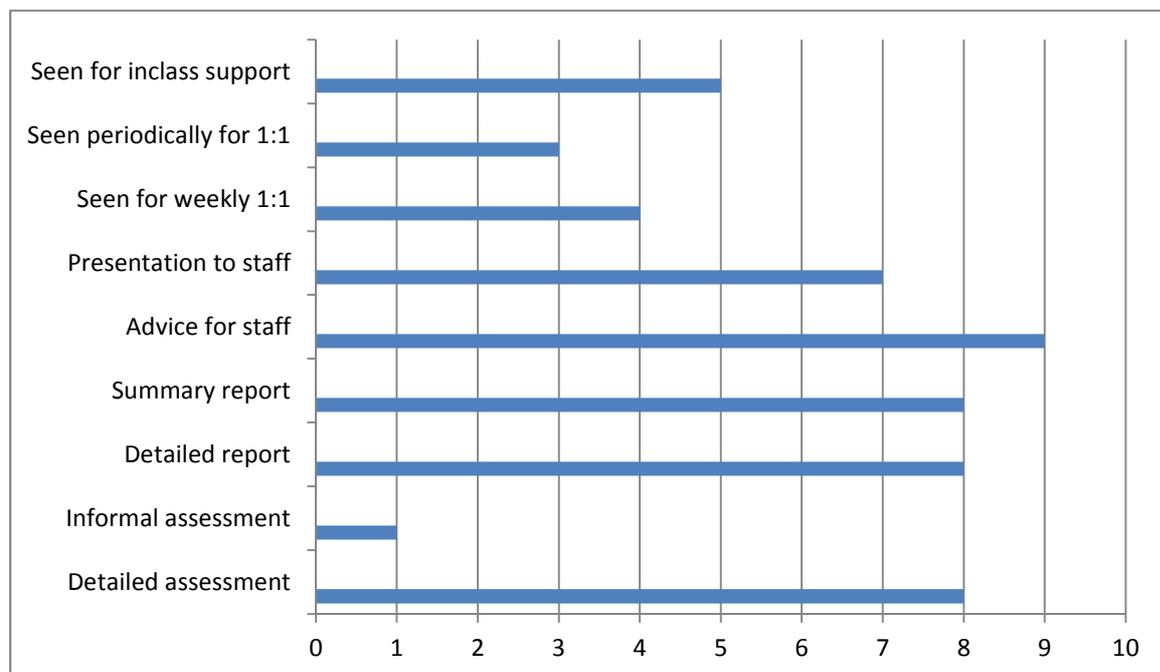
Potentially any one can refer to me. Most of the boys I have seen have Speech and Language Therapy listed on their statement as a special educational need. Some boys have been referred because of concerns by teachers; one boy was referred after an Educational Psychology assessment and one boy self-referred.

Now that I am established at the school my assessment will form a part of the thorough battery of assessments that all boys undergo when they enter the school. This will be used for a baseline measure from which to gauge progress.

What happens after referral?

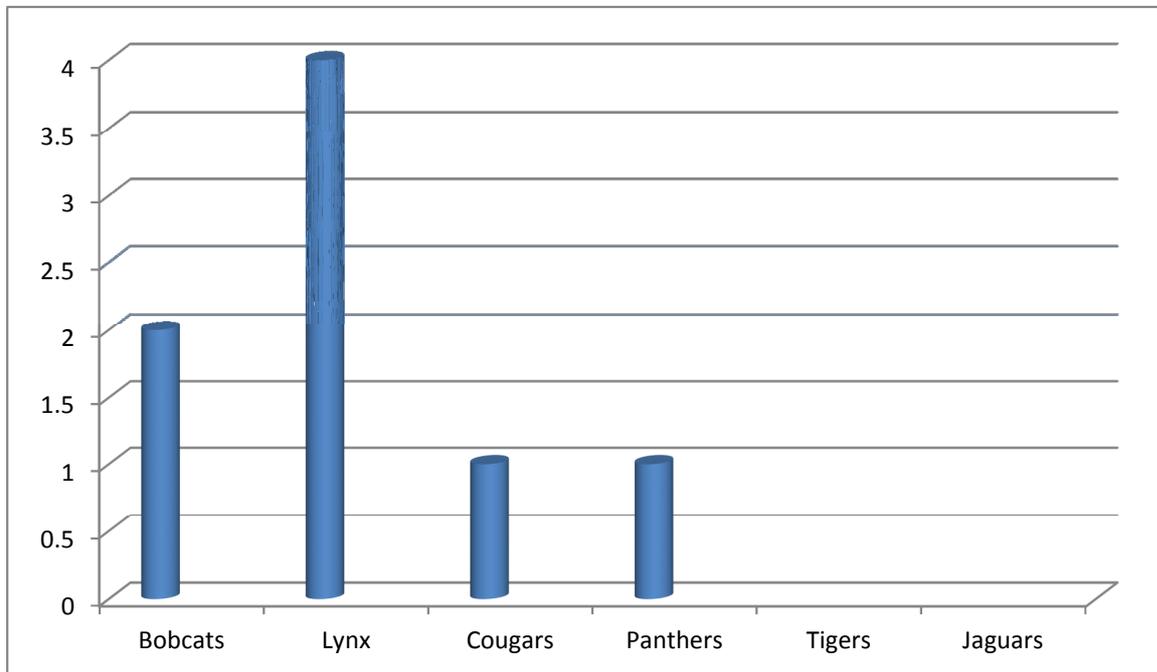
I have seen 8 boys for full speech and language assessments, and 1 for informal assessment, following which detailed reports have been written (stored in the shared area of the computer system), summary reports and advice have been provided for school staff (stored on the shared area, and given to all staff). Some of the boys have been offered direct weekly 1:1 speech and language sessions, others are seen in the classroom during tutor time, or offered 1:1 periodically. I have provided support and advice to school staff and delivered a presentation in the staff meeting on each of the boys I have assessed.

Type of Intervention



Who have I worked with?

I am available to work with all age ranges with in the school, but often the older boys have been more resistant to coming to see me.



What do I work on?

I work on a wide range of speech, language and communication difficulties:

Attention and Listening skills

- Concentration
- Sitting still
- Engaging

Speech

- Articulation
- Phonology
- Oro-motor skills

Receptive Language Skills

- Auditory memory
- Vocabulary
- Understanding of concepts

Expressive Language Skills

- Vocabulary
- Word Finding
- Sequencing of words, sentences, ideas
- Use of grammar

Social use of language

- Turn taking
- Pragmatic Language
- Awareness of difficulties
- Asking for appropriate clarification

Fluency

- Stammering
- Cluttering

written language

- spelling
- reading
- writing

How effective is the speech and Language Therapy Service?

Progress is measured in a number of ways:

- *How readily the boys engage in the therapy offered*

Most of the boys have got to know me as a result of my time spent in the classroom. As long as they have been warned in advance about proposed plans they have almost always agreed to come and see me for assessment.

Of the boys on my caseload for direct 1:1 therapy:

- 3 come happily each week (2 of those argue about who can be seen first and 1 has even asked to continue working into his break time).
- 2 boys were seen for a terms block of weekly therapy in the spring term: 1 is currently refusing to re-engage and 1 is consolidating his skills on his own for a period.

- For 1 boy, who is new to the school, we have given him a period to settle before withdrawing him for 1:1 work.
- 2 other boys are seen periodically as/when timetabling allows. They usually (but not always) come readily when sessions are offered.

- ***Improvement in Communicative Confidence***

I have not put in place measures to assess this specifically, but when I started at the school most of the boys avoided eye contact with me, did not speak to me directly (e.g. asking other adults “who’s that?”). They almost all communicate readily with me now, both in my sessions and around the school.

- ***Increased awareness about their own strengths and weaknesses***

1 boy asked to come and work with me because as he said he “sometimes can’t speak”, this boy has a stammer. We have spoken about what a stammer is, factors that can positively and negatively affect it and explored strategies to improve it. This is work in progress, but he undoubtedly has a greater insight into his difficulties. With regards to overcoming dysfluency insight and awareness is the first stage in therapy.

1 boy (working on articulation of consonant clusters) asked to practise “fr” as he said “I can’t say frog”. This ability to identify the specific area of weakness demonstrates an advanced level of self-awareness.

Another boy (working on literacy development) specifically asked to focus on “ar” saying “I always get that wrong”. This is evidence of a mature attitude to learning and a good awareness of ability. This had not previously been seen with this boy.

- ***Change in attitude to learning***

As noted above, on the whole the boys now engage readily with their therapy. They often ask to work on specific areas, taking control for their own learning.

1 boy (with severe dyslexia) who has experienced many years of educational failure, spent the first 2 terms going over and over the same area of work (refusing to attempt tasks that he was unfamiliar with). In the third term he began to attempt work on new more challenging areas.

- ***Improvement in ability to focus in 1:1 and class settings***

The length of the 1:1 sessions, for many boys, is slowly increasing; In one case from 20 minutes to 1 hour.

At the end of a long session 1 boy said “45 minutes! I’ve never worked for as long as that in my life before”.

- ***Improvement in speech intelligibility***

We have worked on speech production of “s” and “s-blends” with 1 boy. He is now able to produce the sounds when focused and is trying to remember to use the correct sounds during spontaneous speech.

Another boy is making steady progress with improving speech intelligibility both in 1:1 and generally, he is able to produce more sounds and his speech is clearer.

After a presentation I gave at a staff meeting a TA reported that she had been practising a specific sound in a specific word with 1 boy and was excited to report the progress.

- ***Improvement in ability to express themselves verbally***

In 1:1 sessions I have noted progress with vocabulary development, use of grammar and ability to sequence words, sentences and narratives.

- ***Improvement in ability to process and understand the language directed at them***

In 1:1 sessions I have noted progress with increased use of strategies to aid auditory memory (e.g. visualisation and rehearsal) and with an increased ability to ask for clarification/repetition when appropriate.

- ***Increased awareness around the school about speech, language and communication difficulties; likely impacts and strategies to aid teaching***

As reported above I have received comments from staff after presentations about their increased awareness and about strategies they are implementing.

Several of the boys at school have asked about the different things I do with their peers.

Potential Areas for Service Development

- Providing more liaison, support and advice for parents and cares.
- Developing the school dyslexia programme: being involved with assessment and target setting for more boys.
- Being involved with the school's bid to achieve the BDA Quality Mark.
- Running small speaking and listening groups.
- Assessing, advising and working on social skills with appropriate boys.
- Offering 1:1 sessions to more boys.
- Assessing all boys to provide information on language levels to help staff with differentiation in class.

Jane Richards

Speech and Language Therapist