

Job Description

Title: Drama Therapist

Grade: Band 6

Relationships

Responsible to: Principal and Vice Principals

Responsible for: Delivering a high-quality Drama Therapy service to children and young people with Severe Learning Difficulties (SLD), including individual, small-group and whole-school approaches where clinically indicated.

Reports to: Vice Principal

Purpose of the Role

The Drama Therapist will provide specialist, evidence-informed drama therapy assessment and intervention to children and young people aged 4–19 with Severe Learning Difficulties and associated communication, sensory, social, emotional and behavioural needs.

Working as an integral member of the school's multidisciplinary team, the post holder will use drama, movement, play, story, role, creativity and therapeutic relationships to support pupils' emotional wellbeing, communication, relationships, self-expression and participation in school life.

The post holder will work collaboratively with teaching staff, therapists, families and external professionals to ensure that therapeutic approaches are appropriately embedded within the pupil's wider educational and care environment. The Drama Therapist will work within professional, ethical and safeguarding frameworks and will be accountable for their own clinical practice, caseload and continuing professional development.

Main responsibilities:

Clinical Practice and Assessment

- To provide specialist Drama Therapy assessment and intervention for pupils with Severe Learning Difficulties and associated communication, social, emotional, sensory and behavioural needs.
- To use a range of formal and informal assessment approaches, observation and professional judgement to identify pupils' therapeutic needs and establish appropriate intervention.
- To manage an allocated clinical caseload independently, prioritising pupils according to clinical need and school priorities.
- To plan, deliver and evaluate individual and group Drama Therapy interventions.
- To use drama, movement, role play, storytelling, music, sensory and creative approaches appropriately to support pupils' emotional development, communication, self-expression and relationships.
- To adapt therapeutic approaches to the individual communication, cognitive, sensory and physical needs of pupils, including those who communicate through alternative and augmentative communication systems.
- To develop safe, predictable and emotionally containing therapeutic environments that enable pupils to participate at their own level.
- To recognise and respond appropriately to signs of distress, trauma, anxiety, emotional dysregulation and behaviours of concern.
- To work within a Positive Behaviour Support and trauma-informed framework and contribute to the development of appropriate strategies for pupils where required.

- To monitor, record and evaluate the outcomes of therapeutic interventions and adapt provision in response to pupil progress and changing needs.

Multi-Disciplinary and Educational Working

- To work collaboratively with teaching staff, Speech and Language Therapists, Occupational Therapists, Physiotherapists, Psychology, PBS, Mental Health and Wellbeing teams and other professionals as appropriate.
- To contribute to a holistic understanding of pupils by sharing relevant clinical observations and information with the multidisciplinary team.
- To contribute to EHCP assessments, annual reviews and target setting where Drama Therapy input is identified as appropriate.
- To contribute to pupil support plans and other relevant documentation.
- To support teaching teams to understand pupils' social, emotional and communication needs and how therapeutic approaches can be incorporated into the school day.
- To provide advice, modelling, coaching and informal consultation to education staff where appropriate.
- To contribute to the development of a therapeutic and emotionally supportive school environment.
- To support staff to understand the role and potential benefits of Drama Therapy within a Severe Learning Difficulty school.
- To contribute to transition planning where therapeutic information is relevant, including transitions between classes, key stages, school sites and preparation for adulthood.

Working with Families and External Agencies

- To work collaboratively with parents, carers and families to promote consistency between therapeutic interventions and the pupil's wider support network.
- To communicate appropriately with families regarding the purpose and progress of Drama Therapy interventions, within professional boundaries and confidentiality requirements.
- To work with external agencies and professionals where appropriate to support continuity of care and effective multi-agency working.
- To contribute to meetings involving families and external professionals where Drama Therapy input is required.

Safeguarding and Pupil Wellbeing

- To maintain a high level of awareness of safeguarding and child protection responsibilities.
- To respond promptly and appropriately to safeguarding concerns and follow the school's safeguarding procedures.
- To understand the additional safeguarding vulnerabilities that may affect children and young people with Severe Learning Difficulties and communication needs.
- To ensure that therapeutic practice promotes pupils' dignity, rights, choice, autonomy and emotional safety.
- To work within relevant principles of consent, confidentiality, capacity and information sharing.
- To recognise professional boundaries and seek appropriate support, supervision and advice when required.

Record Keeping and Professional Practice

- To maintain accurate, timely and confidential clinical records in accordance with professional standards, school procedures and relevant legislation.
- To maintain appropriate records of assessment, intervention, outcomes, reviews and professional communication.
- To ensure that information is shared appropriately and securely, in accordance with data protection and confidentiality requirements.
- To be accountable for own professional actions and recognise the limits of own professional competence.
- To maintain professional registration with the HCPC and membership of an appropriate professional body where applicable.
- To adhere to HCPC standards, professional codes of conduct, relevant clinical guidance and school policies.

Staff Development and Whole-School Practice

- To contribute to staff training and development in areas relevant to Drama Therapy, emotional wellbeing, communication, relationships, regulation and therapeutic practice.
- To provide advice and guidance to staff regarding the use of drama-based and creative approaches within everyday school practice.
- To support the development of a whole-school culture that promotes emotional wellbeing, inclusion, communication and positive relationships.
- To contribute to relevant school training, INSET and professional development activities.
- To explain the role and value of Drama Therapy to pupils, families, education staff and other professionals.

Supervision, CPD and Clinical Governance

- To participate in regular clinical and professional supervision in accordance with service requirements.
- To reflect critically on own practice and use supervision to develop clinical effectiveness.
- To maintain a personal Continuing Professional Development (CPD) record and undertake relevant training to maintain and develop professional knowledge and skills.

- To identify personal and professional development objectives through the school's appraisal process.
- To participate in relevant audit, service evaluation, research and clinical governance activities.
- To contribute to the development and evaluation of the Drama Therapy service within the school.
- To support students on Drama Therapy placements where appropriate and where this falls within the post holder's level of experience and competence.

Health, Safety and Behaviour

- To comply with school health and safety procedures.
- To work safely with pupils who may present behaviours of concern, following agreed school procedures and relevant training.
- To participate in appropriate de-escalation, Positive Behaviour Support and physical intervention training where required by the school.
- To undertake manual handling training where relevant to the role and pupil population.
- To ensure that the Drama Therapy environment and resources are appropriately risk assessed and maintained.
- To report accidents, incidents, safeguarding concerns and environmental risks in accordance with school procedures.

General Responsibilities

- To attend relevant school meetings, multidisciplinary meetings, training and professional development activities.
- To contribute to the wider life of the school where appropriate.
- To work across school environments and sites as required by the needs of pupils and the service.
- To participate in school events, parent meetings and other activities where appropriate to the role.
- To undertake other duties of a similar nature that are consistent with the responsibilities of a Band 6 Drama Therapist and within the post holder's professional competence.

Person Specification

The person specification shows the abilities and skills you will need to carry out the duties in the job description. Short listing is carried out based on how well you meet the requirements of the person specification. You should mention any experience you have had which shows how you could meet these requirements when you fill in your application form. Priority 1 criteria are essential on appointment. Priority 2 criteria may be acquired after appointment. If you are selected for interview, you may be asked also to undertake practical tests to cover the skills and abilities shown below:

Qualifications and Professional Registration

Essential

1. Recognised professional qualification in Drama Therapy / Dramatherapy at Master's level or equivalent.
2. Current HCPC registration as an Arts Therapist (Drama).
3. Evidence of ongoing professional development relevant to the role.
4. Knowledge and understanding of professional standards, ethics, safeguarding and confidentiality.

Desirable

- Additional training or experience in working with children and young people with Severe Learning Difficulties.
- Training or experience in Positive Behaviour Support, trauma-informed practice, attachment, sensory approaches or communication.

Experience

Essential

5. Experience of providing Drama Therapy assessment and intervention.
6. Experience of working with children, young people or adults with complex needs.
7. Experience of managing an allocated clinical caseload.
8. Experience of delivering both individual and group therapeutic interventions.
9. Experience of working collaboratively within a multidisciplinary or multi-professional team.
10. Experience of assessing therapeutic needs and developing appropriate interventions.
11. Experience of evaluating and recording outcomes of therapeutic intervention.

Desirable

- Experience of working within a special school or specialist educational setting.
- Experience of working with pupils with Severe Learning Difficulties, Profound and Multiple Learning Difficulties, Autism or complex communication needs.
- Experience of working with pupils who present behaviours of concern.
- Experience of using creative, sensory, movement-based and play-based approaches with children and young people with complex needs.

- Experience of contributing to EHCPs and annual reviews.

Skills and Knowledge

Essential

12. Ability to provide effective Drama Therapy assessment and intervention.
13. Ability to adapt therapeutic approaches to meet complex communication, cognitive, sensory and physical needs.
14. Ability to establish positive, safe and therapeutic relationships with children and young people.
15. Ability to communicate effectively with pupils, including pupils who use non-verbal or alternative forms of communication.
16. Ability to communicate effectively with parents, carers, education staff and other professionals.
17. Ability to work effectively as part of a multidisciplinary team.
18. Ability to manage and prioritise a clinical caseload independently.
19. Ability to maintain accurate and confidential clinical records.
20. Ability to evaluate the effectiveness of interventions and use outcomes to inform future practice.
21. Ability to reflect on own practice and make effective use of supervision.
22. Ability to identify risk and work within safeguarding, health and safety and professional frameworks.
23. Ability to work within professional boundaries and recognise when advice or additional support is required.
24. Ability to contribute to staff development through training, coaching, modelling and consultation.
25. Ability to work flexibly and respond to changing needs within a complex school environment.

Desirable

- Knowledge of Severe Learning Difficulties and their impact on communication, learning, emotional development and participation.
- Knowledge of Positive Behaviour Support.
- Knowledge of trauma-informed and attachment-informed approaches.
- Knowledge of sensory processing and regulation.
- Knowledge of Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC).
- Understanding of the role of creative arts within education and therapeutic environments.

Personal Qualities

- Warm, compassionate and emotionally attuned.
- Able to build trusting relationships with children and young people with complex needs.
- Calm and resilient when working in challenging or emotionally demanding situations.
- Creative and flexible in responding to individual pupil needs.
- Able to work independently while recognising the importance of collaborative practice.
- Reflective and open to professional challenge and learning.
- Organised and able to prioritise effectively.
- Committed to inclusion, dignity, equality and pupil voice.
- Able to demonstrate a commitment to person-centred and rights-based practice.

Other requirements of the post

- The post holder will work with children and young people who may present behaviours of concern. They must therefore be able to participate in relevant school training and follow agreed procedures to maintain the safety and wellbeing of pupils and staff.
- The post holder may be required to undertake basic manual handling training and use appropriate techniques where required.
- The post holder may be required to work across different areas of the school and, where appropriate, in community settings.
- The post holder must comply with all school policies and procedures, including safeguarding, health and safety, equality and diversity, confidentiality and information governance.
- The post holder must maintain appropriate professional registration and undertake sufficient CPD to remain professionally competent.
- The post holder may be required to attend occasional school events, parent meetings, training days or other activities outside the usual timetable where these are directly relevant to the role.
- No annual leave should normally be taken during term time, subject to the school's employment policies and contractual arrangements.

- This post involves working with students who may exhibit behaviours of concern. In order to ensure the safety of the post holder and others, the post holder must be able to participate fully in training provided in de-escalation and physical interventions and be able to carry out agreed Physical Intervention procedures at work and to respond to challenging behaviour in accordance with college/schools policies and procedures to minimise potential risk.
- Given the nature of the client group, the post holder may be expected to undertake basic manual handling training provided by OHCAT and carry out manual handling techniques as required.
- The post holder should be prepared to work in all school sites, schools and affiliates within OHCAT within own scope of practice (as well as other community spaces such

as student's work experience and leisure venues & student's homes) and be willing to undertake competency development to work in various clinical areas.

- May be required to attend residential trips and / or college open days that fall on weekends once a year
- No annual leave to be taken in term time.

Training can include:

- Attending all whole School INSET days /weeks and twilight sessions.
- Training will include enrolment on our tiered CPD programme (Manual Handling, First Aid, Basic Safeguarding, National College, Positive Behaviour Support, Team Teach).
- Attending external training courses which relate directly to the role. As directed.