

Sensory Integration Therapy

Sensory integration is the process by which the brain takes in and interprets information. This information is then used to control and organise the body so that a person can interact with the environment effectively.

For many of our children sensory processing is difficult so by directing and controlling the input of different senses through vision, hearing, touch and body movement children are able to learn and organise behaviour more effectively , then and for sometime afterwards . This is called sensory integration therapy.

Through play we are able to observe and guide a child towards equipment that will help the brain to organise itself. Due to the way the brain works this also has an impact upon communication and many children demonstrate improved language skills, others improve significantly in their attention and learning as the brain begins to function more effectively.

At Sunningdale children are offered continual access to a range of sensory equipment within their daily learning in and outside of the classroom. We use our specially designed outdoor equipment e.g. wheelchair swings, roundabouts to allow children the movement they need for brain stimulation. We may work within the pool e.g. rocking backwards and forwards, or side to side, may work within soft play e.g. finding positions where the head is lower than the body and intensely with staff in the sensory integration room. Here the child directs the activity with staff observing, recording and making adjustments depending upon the child's responses. The amount of sensory opportunities each child has depended upon their ongoing needs and for many these are daily experiences. Staff are careful to embed many sensory experiences into the children's tasks to enrich their learning and provide ongoing stimulation e.g. the use of props within a story, a foot roller under a table, different tactile balls within PE.

Melanie (our occupational therapist) is often found in the sensory integration room working intensively with identified children. Due to the links with physical development and communication the speech and language therapists and physiotherapists also often use this room. Anne Oliver holds regular sensory integration workshops to inform parents/carers about sensory processing and dysfunction.

We hold a parent and child sensory club every Tuesday evening from 3.20-4.20 , whilst we can't accommodate brothers and sisters, grans, granddads, family friends, child minders, etc. are more than welcome to come with your child and make use of the sensory resources on offer .

Footnote:

Occupational therapists work with children to observe their occupation – things they need to do to be able to live their lives and fulfil their role in family, play, self help, learning and friendships. They help children to restore and maintain those skills, behaviours and relationships necessary for independent living.)

Physiotherapists work alongside school staff and their role is the treatment of any condition by physical intervention which may marginalise physical development and interfere with a child's functional development for living and learning. They hold regular appliance clinics for e.g. adapted footwear, splints, gaiters, wheelchairs etc and work with family and school to maintain and improve children's physical skills.