

Class Organisation

Organisation

The way in which we allocate staffing and group pupils is central to the effective delivery of the curriculum. Our system of grouping is based upon an underlying structure of chronologically organised classes throughout the school community. Within this broad structure the operative criterion is the creation of cohesive and interacting Family Groups.

Assessment Nursery:

The Foundation Family group caters for up to 8 children approximately aged between 2 and 4 years who, through early identification, display developmental difficulties. Children are offered either morning or afternoon sessions (up to 4 children per session) for 5 days a week. Some of the children may also attend local community Early Years groups. The main aim of this class is to carry out educational assessments and establish baselines for individual teaching programmes. The curriculum offered recognises not only their age but also the fact that it is an assessment class for children who are displaying a wide and often complex range of learning difficulties. Therefore, throughout the school week each child will work on specific teaching objectives in priority curricular areas together with being offered stimulating group activities and structured play opportunities. Teaching methods, therefore, are prescriptive and diagnostic in nature.

Key Stages 1 and 2:

The primary part of the school consists of the 1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th, 5th and 6th Family Groups. The children are grouped by age with careful consideration of individual and group needs. The children follow a timetable which enables focussed time on important areas such as Language and Communication, Intellectual and Reasoning Skills and Numeracy, balanced with an opportunity to encounter the foundation subjects as part of a rolling programme. In addition to timetabled lessons, the children all have the opportunity of working one to one with an adult to carry out work specifically aimed at helping them to meet their educational targets. Every primary class is linked to a local mainstream school, and our pupils are involved in weekly curricular-based inclusion opportunities for 0.1 of the teaching week.

Key Stages 3 and 4:

As the students move from the primary to the secondary part of the school, there is a tangible shift in the teaching style and atmosphere of both the classrooms and recreation areas. This is important as it parallels the move from primary to secondary school which is made by most children in mainstream schools, and enables the students to see themselves as moving from childhood to adolescence. The 7th, 8th, 9th and 10th Family Groups constitute the secondary part of the school and, within these classes, the students are encouraged to become more independent, and take greater ownership of their learning and development. The balance of the timetable alters to accommodate a slightly larger proportion of P.S.H.E., considered to be of increasing importance as the students reach adolescence. The students have the same opportunities to carry out focussed work in one to one situations as they would in the primary part of the school. Every secondary class is linked to a local mainstream school, and our pupils are involved in weekly curricular-based inclusion opportunities for 0.1 of the teaching week.

Key Stage 5: The emphasis on independence is further increased in the Griffiths Centre and combined with teaching to foster the development of functional skills. For this reason, much of the learning takes place in contextual situations across the local community. The students are given greater autonomy over their learning and the staff facilitate this, ensuring each student achieves the highest possible level of independence in everyday situations.

Principles underlying the organisation

Throughout the school, the composition of every Family Group is inevitably heterogeneous, based on the principle of grouping by age, that is, they are likely to contain pupils whose patterns of behaviour and needs differ significantly. In rejecting selective grouping, each Family Group is likely to contain some pupils with Profound and Multiple Learning Difficulties and also one or more pupils requiring a considerable amount of individual adult supervision to encourage positive behaviour. We appreciate that by grouping in this way great care has to be exercised to ensure balanced teaching loads. The loading in every class is carefully and evenly distributed otherwise the alternative is a designated group whose only reason for being placed together is a perceived label or category of need which would risk not treating each pupil as an individual. Such an alternative would be incompatible with the overall aims of the school and unacceptable as it could seriously affect the progress of pupils' learning.

The fundamental resource for effective teaching and learning is high quality staffing. For the curriculum to work it requires small groups with adequate numbers of well qualified and highly motivated staff. Therefore, each group consists of at least four adults, one of whom is a qualified teacher and the others are classroom support officers working as a whole team. In practice all staff members of the Family Group undertake an essential teaching role. An additional classroom support officer may be needed to meet a particularly heavy teaching load. The balancing of needs within each Family Group is given very careful consideration to ensure every class is an effective learning group and that no teaching team of four adults is placed under undue stress leading to a serious loss of teaching effectiveness. The overall picture across the whole school community is analysed to form the basis for making decisions about admissions, transfer and placement of pupils.

Our school community is formed of pupils from widely differing backgrounds and stages of development and showing very different patterns of skills, attainments, emotional adjustment and performance. Staffing resources are also finite, therefore, it is improbable that any designed grouping framework and its underlying principles will prove totally adequate in practice. Our own principles, like most proposed solutions to complex problems, remain the anticipated best in the foreseeable circumstances. Agility is essential. Through experience and constant evaluation we shall continue to develop, enhance and improve our organisational structures so that they will continue to meet the needs and educational challenges our children present within our ever changing society. Children have only a brief time at school, therefore, we believe they deserve the best possible education we can give.

Reviewed by: Matt McArthur

Date: February 2023

Approved by Governors:

Date: February 2023

