

SEN Information Report (Autistic Unit)

Fellgate Primary School is unique in South Tyneside in that it is a mainstream primary school with a 30 place additional resource base for pupils with an Autistic Spectrum Disorder, known as Fellgate Autistic Unit. While the Unit is in a separate building to the mainstream of the school, we are an inclusive school community with shared values and ethos. We strive to create a sense of that community and belonging in all our pupils. We are committed to equal rights, mutual respect and shared responsibility. We have high expectations and set suitable targets within a broad and balanced curriculum for all our children.

The governance, policies and principles of the Unit are generally the same as with mainstream (see main report) but, as is applicable, some of the practices differ.

ADMISSION to the Unit is decided by the Local Authority. Children will have a diagnosis of ASD and a Statement of Educational Needs or Education, Health, Care Plan. Admissions usually happen at the beginning of the school year but may occur at any point in the school year. Pupils are generally admitted in the Early Years but can transfer in at any stage in the primary age range.

CLASS ARRANGEMENTS Pupils are grouped chronologically which means a class can vary greatly in developmental levels as well as cognitive ability and performance, therefore, planning and teaching approaches are established for each pupil individually, allowing their varied needs to be met effectively.

The child:adult staffing ratio in the Unit is 2:1 with each class of six pupils having an experienced Teacher and two Senior Educational Practitioners (SEPs) allowing for a high level of 1:1 focussed teaching to gain optimum attention and learning.

THE PHILOSOPHY of the Unit is underpinned by two approaches in particular:

The **SCERTS** Model is an educational framework based on longitudinal research which was published in 2006. The primary domains within the model are **Social Communication**, **Emotional Regulation** and **Transactional Support**. Its primary aim is to enhance a pupil's desire and ability to communicate, by understanding what they need to regulate their behaviour and putting support in place so that these needs are no longer a barrier to effective, spontaneous communication. It is not a stand alone method as the assessments will indicate what is needed but not, necessarily, how to put this in place. It can be used as support for a range of strategies and in the Unit was introduced to enhance the good practice which already existed

TEACCH is an approach to learning which focuses on the **Treatment and Education of Autistic and related Communication Handicapped Children**. The TEACCH principles include: (1) understanding the culture of autism; (2) developing individualised planning; (3) structuring or modifying the physical environment; (4) using visual supports to make daily activities predictable and understandable; and (5) using visual supports to make individual tasks understandable. The five principles underpin the ethos of the Unit.

Outcomes Staff teams meet twice daily, initially to discuss the objectives of the day and at the end of the day to evaluate the learning outcomes of each pupil. Pupils are assessed using a range of tools, targets set are holistic, realistic and challenging and pupil progress is good to outstanding. This is measured using PIVATS (Performance

Indicators for Value Added Targets Setting) and externally evaluated and moderated by the Centre for Evaluation and Moderation Centre, Durham.

INCLUSION Each pupil has opportunities every week with their mainstream peer group. There is a session of reciprocal integration when a group from the mainstream come to the class in the Unit building for social, creative and/or physical development. There is an integrated Key Stage assembly for all each week and regular opportunities for all pupils to join inclusive sports coaching sessions. Additionally some pupils, for whom it is suitable and beneficial, have an individual programme of integration based on their strengths and needs. Inclusive activities are also an important element in the social development of the pupils in mainstream.

PARENTS The role parents play in the education of their children is vital to the success of the Unit. Close relationships are maintained through a daily Home/School diary, regular Coffee Afternoons which include informal discussion on specific topics and more formal Parents Meetings. At the beginning of each term parents are given an information sheet which contains key objectives that their child will be working on that term, including a "Parents can help by ..." section. As all pupils have either a Statement of Special Educational Needs or an Education, Health Care Plan there is a formal annual review of their progress and needs to be addressed. Where possible, pupils are invited to contribute to these meetings.

OTHER AGENCIES: All pupils are on the caseload for the Speech and Language Therapy Service, receiving varied input from direct therapy to jointly setting targets with school staff for class-based interventions. The Unit's Communication Champion liaised closely with the SaLT service and also sets her own targets for the pupils' interventions. The Children's Continence Practitioner from the Bowel and Bladder Service holds a clinic for pupils (if necessary), parents and staff to coordinate strategies for toileting training for those who require it.

There is currently no direct Occupational Therapy into the Unit but staff do refer pupils when there is an identified need.

The Head of Unit will also coordinate referrals for Short Breaks, the Children with Disabilities Team and respite care through the Common Assessment Framework system.

Day to day management of the Unit is designated to the Assistant Head as the Head of Unit. They are also the SEN coordinator and work closely with the SENCO in mainstream. This post is currently held by Moira B Smith, MA (Autism)