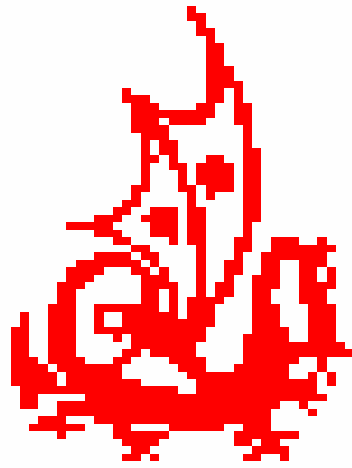


Newbold Verdnon



Autism Unit

Prospectus

Contents.

Welcome to the Unit

Unit Staff

Mission Statement.

Our statement of Aims.

Teaching Approaches.

Teaching Styles.

Curriculum

Assessment and Recording and Reporting.

Admission

Absence Procedure

Inclusion and Aims of Inclusion.

Partnership with Parents.

As part of a whole School.

Useful Telephone contacts.

Mission Statement.

“Every child matters!”

The Unit strives to promote the spiritual, moral, cultural, intellectual and physical development of every child. A child's experience of the unit should be one of education, care, support and encouragement. The work carried out should maximise the child's potential, promote self esteem, independence and be delivered in such a way as to ensure mutual trust and enjoyment in learning. Every child's needs will be met fairly and equally regardless of gender, race or culture.

Our Statement of Aims.

1. To help each child acquire the language and communication skills necessary for expressing, his or her needs, ideas, choices and opinions.
2. To help each child to become motivated, interested and independent through enjoyable learning experiences.
3. To help each child progress in his or her overall development.
4. To help each child to take responsibility for his or her own behaviour and to understand the effect it has on others.
5. To help each child learn to value themselves, other people and their environment.
6. To provide a broad, balanced and relevant curriculum that meets individual needs.
7. To help each child develop strategies to cope with adult life.
8. To allow each child to integrate as far as possible into the community.
9. To help the wider community understand and become more tolerant of the difficulties our children have whilst ensuring they appreciate the value and very positive contribution these youngsters can make to society.

The Unit Staff

Cath Capell Unit Leader and class 5 Teacher.

Sam Carter Teacher of class 4.

Pauline Deacon Nursery Nurse class 5.

Wendy Armsden Nursery Nurse class 4.

Debbie Gaskell Nursery Nurse class 4.

Wendy Sylvester Learning Support Assistant.

Michelle Earp Learning Support Assistant.

Karen Leeson Learning Support Assistant.

Gemma Haines Learning Support Assistant.

Other Professionals

Thelma Jones Educational Psychologist.

Bernie Speech and Language Therapist.

Welcome to the Unit.

The Unit for children with Autism opened in September 1999. It comprises of two classes one for children at Key Stage 1 and the other for Key stage two. There are currently ten children attending the unit, five in each class.

The Unit supports children who have Statements of Special Educational Needs denoting severe autism. The children attending the Unit will also have additional learning difficulties but autism will be their biggest “block” to learning. Children are always regarded as individuals with their individual needs being kept in focus in every activity.

The Unit is an integral part of Newbold Verdon Primary School. All staff, governors and children see the Unit and the main part of the school as a whole. Opportunities are given throughout the day for the children to be included with the main part of the school.

The Unit offers two classrooms, a withdrawal room, playroom, multi sensory room and soft play room. There are also a number of facilities shared with the main school for example, hall, library and ICT suite.

Teaching Approaches.

The needs of the “whole” child are recognised, with an emphasis placed on addressing communication, language, social development, independence and the child’s emotional well being.

Individual teaching is seen as the most significant teaching approach, with each child having a carefully planned learning programme. We avoid assumptions that a child will “pick things up” , planning our work in such a way that we specifically teach new skills.

The Unit adopts no single method. We take an eclectic approach to teaching and offer a wide range of learning experiences as appropriate for the individual child. We have selected approaches that are known successful methods for our children but have a commitment to keeping up to date with research, training and new initiatives.

The Unit maintains planned timetables to ensure that a broad and balanced curriculum is offered to the children. Structure is important as it offers children security and predictability. However we balance this with the need to help children develop flexibility and tolerance to change. We do not wish to allow the organisation of the day to become so dominant that children become over dependent on it and it blocks new learning.

Teaching Styles.

Individual Teaching.

It is acknowledged that individual teaching sessions best meet the needs of our children in their learning. This allows them to focus on what is being asked and can be delivered to the level that is most appropriate to them. All children in the Unit will have a daily individual teaching session that concentrates on numeracy and literacy skills as well as communication and language. This will be carried out either at their work station or withdrawal room dependent upon the needs of the child. All objectives and recording are reflected in their individual education plans for these sessions.



Independent work.

All children will have the opportunity to learn to work independently. We have adopted the TEACCH method of independent work boxes. Each child has an independent box with four tasks in baskets within it. The child then works through each task. The baskets give the child a "concrete cue" of what is expected of them and supports their organisation of tasks. To reinforce the concept of "finish" the child places the completed task in the basket and then into the box. At times musical cues have been given to reinforce this specific learning time.



Visual Timetables

All children in the Unit need structure and visual cues to help make sense of their world, understand and predict what is expected of them. Each child has a visual timetable of events and activities of the day. These are tailored to the individual needs of the child. Some will be written labels, photographs, symbols or even real objects dependent upon the understanding of the child. Some timetables may reflect the whole day others just morning and for some children just the concept of "first this.....then this...." The visual timetable allows the child to gain understanding and make sense of what is happening but also allows independence so they can monitor their own timetable. They place the photo of a completed activity into the "finish pouch" and then take themselves off to the next session. At times to teach a child flexibility and tolerance to change we may include for some individuals a session of "surprise". This then gives opportunity to introduce an unexpected activity to that child. We also support parents with advice or resources to implement such visual timetables at home

if
parents
wish.



Picture Exchange Communication System.(PECS)

Communication and language is at the forefront of all we teach. PECS is invaluable as it teaches the child communicative intent and allows them a tool to initiate communication as opposed to merely responding to requests. Many of the children use PECS and have their own communication book or communication board. Opportunities are given throughout the day for children to make their choices and communicate through this method. The teaching and children's use of PECS is addressed in formal 1-1 time, snack time, choosing time, specific language groups, to reinforce reading and basic skills time. It should encompass all curriculum areas.



Language Levels.

It is recognised that the children's understanding of spoken language is limited. All staff are aware of this and therefore keep their language level to a minimum, using key words where possible and appropriate.

Interaction.

As a characteristic of autism all the children in the Unit have difficulty with language and communication. Some of the children may have no "spoken language" at all, others will have some words, which may be learnt set phrases, while others will have a good range of vocabulary. However it is recognised that all children will have difficulty in their use of this language and may only use it on a demand basis. Interaction and social use of communication is a key objective in our work. The emphasis is on fun and shared enjoyment and always as a two way process starting with the child and the adult taking their lead.

The Interaction work is again based on individual need, ability and takes place in a variety of settings.



Individual sessions: For some children early interaction approaches are used, lap play, singing and chasing games. This helps build relationships and can form the beginnings of communication. Other more able children will have sessions based on their imagination and drama.

Language groups: Each class has timetabled language groups. These are drawn up in conjunction with the speech and language therapist. The main emphasis of the group is interaction and specific language targets.

Paired Play: Play sessions and turn taking games are structured to encourage children to share space and equipment. This then leads to staff taking opportunities to support the children's ability to interact with one another.



Tutor time: As part of our inclusion work each child in the unit is paired with a child from a the year 6 mainstream class. Each week the two will have a half hour "tutor time". During these sessions the mainstream child leads play activities with the unit child, encouraging him or her to forge relationships, direct and motivate play activities and build on interactive skills. Often children find a common ground and play level that adults miss.



Whole class groups.

As stated much of the work in the unit is carried out in individual teaching sessions or small groups. However it is recognised that there is an importance in being "part of a group". Whole class teaching includes: music, singing, story and the start and end of set teaching sessions. For some of the children "being" part of the group and tolerating sitting for a time may be the main learning objective.

Assemblies.

Daily assembly is often carried out in class. The Unit children do participate in some whole school assemblies but is dependent upon the understanding and relevance to the children.

Freetime.

The timetable in the Unit is very structured and relies heavily on routine. The demands on the children are generally in short bursts and quite intensive. We acknowledge that most of the children will have "special interests" or an absorbing repetitive behaviour. Although these can often lead to isolation and can block learning activities the children may need time in the day to indulge in these activities in order to provide security and reward. However, this will be carefully planned and monitored by staff.

Sensory room and massage.

We endeavour to maintain an atmosphere of calm in the unit. Many of the children can have sensory integration difficulties and find the school and classroom a noisy, busy and distracting environment. This can lead to anxieties. We respect our children's difficulties by keeping the class where possible as calm and distraction free as possible. If a child has certain touch sensitivities we can include sensory work as part of their individual programme.

If as happens a child does become stressed or very anxious we use the sensory room as a calming place. A child's comfort, for example a specific toy, book or piece of music can be used to help in this process.

We also use simple massage of feet or hands to teach the children to relax and help with their sensory integration. This is again decided upon on an individual basis.

Snacks.

The majority of children travel from around the county. They are picked up by special needs transport, have a longer journey to school and consequently earlier start to their day than their mainstream peers. A drink and snack is therefore built into their morning timetable before going out to play. This also allows social learning and language opportunities.

Curriculum.

The children in the Unit have access to a broad, balanced and relevant curriculum that encompasses the National Curriculum.

The teaching of Maths and English takes place in the children's individual teaching time and each day.

Other subjects are taught through specific programmes of study. The programmes of study are modified to meet the needs of the children and ensure relevance in its teaching. It is recognised that for some of the children the Programmes of Study are used as a tool for teaching basic skills or addressing the Triad of Impairment.

The children will work to a two year cycle which gives a programme encompassing all areas of the National Curriculum but not all subjects will be taught in a particular term. These sessions may be taught in small groups or whole class but will have differentiated outcomes and activities dependent upon the individual needs of the class and the individual children in them. The child's strengths and interests will also be taken into consideration in our delivery.



Progression is ensured throughout the Unit with the content and delivery of the curriculum reflecting the ages of the pupils. Where possible we have aligned the programmes of study to correspond with the planning in mainstream classes to allow more opportunities for inclusion.

Weekly community visits include a walk to the library or public transport trip to town. This is to develop the children's social, language and independence skills. We work on specific targets discussed with parents of any particular difficulties their child may be experiencing. For example, going into specific shops, escalators or waiting in queues.

Swimming: The children swim on a fortnightly basis.



Assessment.

Teacher assessment is the major measure of pupil attainment and is carried out on an ongoing basis. Where appropriate the children are assessed using the Statutory Tests for National Curriculum. However these are looked at on an individual basis and where it is deemed inappropriate to use the tests the child will be disapplied. This decision is made in consultation with the parents.

Recording and reporting.

Pupils are assessed initially on joining the Unit using the Autism Baseline. This assessment is then used in setting the Individual Education Plan (IEP).

The child's IEP addresses the areas key to his or her autism as well as literacy and numeracy targets. Other targets may be set that are felt to be a priority in the child's development, e.g. fine motor or self help skills. Targets are set in collaboration with the speech and language therapist. The IEP is reviewed every half term, scored and new targets set or modified for the next half term. The child's IEP is sent home to share with parents and their contribution is welcome.

The children are assessed and progress recorded using the QCA P Scales.

Admission.

Subject to there being a place, admissions may be made at any time during the year but mainly take place in September. All children will have a Statement of Special Educational Needs that names the Unit as a result of assessment undertaken by Leicestershire County Council's Children and Young People's Service.

We like to offer a period of transition for our children to ease their start into the school. We would contact the child's current placement at nursery or pre school and organise a series of visits. These can be made with the parents at first, accompanied by pre school staff if possible, leading to unaccompanied visits.

At year 6 the child will have an Annual Review in the first few weeks of that academic year, during which any future placement will be discussed.

Absence Procedure.

Regular attendance is important if pupils are to benefit from the full range of opportunities on offer at our school. We ask that pupils are only kept away if they are ill. Obviously and in accordance with policy in the rest of the school if your child is unwell or likely to infect others they should not be in school. In such circumstances please telephone the school. You should also notify the transport department to avoid them making an unnecessary journey. Individual taxi companies will no doubt give you their personal numbers however the transport section in the County is : 0116 2570494.

Inclusion.

We feel every child can learn from one another and has a valuable contribution to make to the life and community of the school.

Each child will be assessed individually and, if appropriate, included in mainstream classes. P.E. in particular is a lesson where we feel the child benefits from inclusion with their mainstream peers. Where it is deemed a child can access work at a level below their actual year group and will gain from inclusion with a main stream class, at times they may join such lessons.

Aims of Inclusion.

- To establish and practise normal patterns of language use and behaviour in the classroom.
- To establish and practise normal social language by working with others or sharing an activity.
- To provide opportunities to extend social integration by developing friendships with mainstream peers.
- To consolidate and generalise skills learned in the unit in another setting.
- To extend listening and attention skills in a larger group.
- To establish tolerance of working in a busy, noisy environment which a mainstream class would provide.
- To provide access to the appropriate level of the curriculum for their year group.
- To provide a "normal" educational setting to assess the pupil's functioning compared with others of their age.
- To provide transition to return to mainstream education.
- To benefit mainstream children in promoting sensitivity towards children with special needs.
- To build confidence and self esteem for mainstream children through supporting and forging relationships with the children in the Unit.

The main emphasis of inclusion for the children in the Unit is that for social interaction. This takes place at specific times during the week.

- Dinner time. Each child will eat in the hall with the main school.
- Buddies. Children from the mainstream classes will be invited to volunteer to sit with a child from the Autism Class at dinnertime and play with them on the playground.
- Playtime. The children share the playground with the main stream classes and are encouraged to join in as much as they wish.
- Tutor Time. Each child is paired with a year 6 pupil who will have a weekly session of interaction and play. Direction will be given by Unit staff, but much of the work will be through the relationship built by the two children.
- Whole School days and events. Children in the unit classes will participate in sports day, whole school events and Christmas Activity Day, fully integrated with the main school.
- Year Group performances.



Partnership with Parents.

We believe that it is vital to establish close links with parents. We wish parents to feel they can contribute to the child's education plan and can highlight difficulties or approaches they have found work with their child. Shared approaches when addressing both learning and behaviour strategies allows consistently and can only help the child. We encourage parental involvement in the following ways:

- Any parent or carer is welcome to come to the school to discuss their child's progress. We advise that you telephone to make an appointment in advance so we can make sure someone is available to talk to you.
- Home/School diaries are written and sent home daily. They keep parents informed of activities done in the day, the child's behaviour or indeed any unusual behaviour and any great achievements or progress made. It is hoped these serve as a two way point of contact for parents to inform school of matters arising from home.
- Three parents evenings are held each year. These are offered on a half hourly appointment system. From time to time meetings have been organised with specific speakers of interest.
- An Annual Review will be held in the month the Statement of Needs was written for the child. Parents are invited to attend this review where a report is submitted on the child's progress.

As part of a whole School.

Although the unit has different teaching styles and curriculum delivery we do see ourselves as very much a whole school.

For additional information on whole school policies and additional school information please refer to the Newbold Verdon Primary School Prospectus.

USEFUL TELEPHONE CONTACTS.

Newbold Verdon Primary school	01455 822362.
School Transport	0116 2570494.
Special Education Needs Service	0116 2656621.
Miracles to believe In. Parent support Group with Charitable Status. Marianne Martin	01530 249998
Family Support Worker Anne Lewis	0795 8235015
Leicestershire Autistic Society	0116 2916958
Specialist Teaching Service	01530 513600

