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School Background & Information

Thank you for enquiring about working at our Hospital School; we hope the information presented here gives you a flavour of our history and the way in which we work. You will also find plenty more examples of our work on our website <https://www.goshschool.org/>

The Children's Hospital School at Great Ormond Street and UCH is a group 4 foundation, special, hospital school, teaching pupils from nursery up to nineteen years plus, as well as some under 3 years with Statements of Special Educational Need. Children of all abilities and all nationalities are taught.

Aims

We aim to provide an enriching and enjoyable experience for all our pupils, which ensures normality through education, and helps to prevent anxiety about school. Where appropriate, we will provide continuity of education within the framework of the National Curriculum. Education and play are an intrinsic part of each child's medical treatment.

We are committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children. Please see our Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.

OFSTED

The School's most recent full **Section 5** inspection was in February 2014 when we were judged "Outstanding" in all areas. Ofsted has returned twice in June 2018 and November 2023 for short inspections and on both occasions judged that the school continues to be outstanding.

Accreditation

The School's achievements have included:

- Arts Council's Gold Arts Mark
- Camden's OSCA for Outstanding Service to the Community
- The Chance to Shine, Special Recognition Award for Educating through Cricket
- The eLearning Foundation's Home Access Award – Highly Commended
- The International Schools Award
- Fair Trade Award
- National Inclusion Mark
- National Healthy Schools Award

The Hospital Trusts

Great Ormond Street Hospital is a tertiary referral paediatric-only centre: it only accepts patients referred by other consultants from other hospitals all over the UK and indeed the world. The pupils therefore have a huge range of severe medical and/or psychological conditions and hence special needs, although not always in the normally accepted educational sense.

University College Hospital is a tertiary and secondary referral (more local) adult and children's hospital. There are two floors, where adolescents (T12 floor) and younger children (T11 floor) are treated and taught.

Premises

The school premises at GOSH are located in the hospital's Southwood Building and comprise several multi-purpose offices, two fully equipped kitchens for staff and two open plan schoolrooms adaptable for use by pupils of all key stages and for staff and governors. In addition, we have a small, outside patio area for play and teaching when the weather permits. There is an offsite storage room.

Our current space is restrictive; however, we are excited to be part of a new build at GOSH where a new school will feature on the ground floor; this will offer us considerable additional space and should be completed by 2027. We are also renting temporary office space in a building close to Russell Square.

The two purpose-built schoolrooms at University College Hospital are very well equipped, with a shared office and are within easy reach of the paediatric wards. GOSH and UCLH are linked on a shared school network system.

Teaching at GOSH and UCH is carried out:

- in the 2 schoolrooms within the Southwood Building, ground floor (GOSH)
- in the purpose-built schoolrooms on T11 and T12 (UCLH)
- at the bedside, in cubicles (GOSH and UCLH)
- in transplant suites (GOSH)
- At Proton Beam Therapy Unit and Macmillan Cancer Centre (UCLH)

Governors

As a Foundation Special School, the Governors are the employers of all our staff. Governors play a crucial role in planning the strategic direction of the School's work and in monitoring its effectiveness. Currently, we have ten governors comprising the Headteacher, one staff governor, two parent governors, three partnership governors, one Local Authority appointed governor and two co-opted governors.

The Governors meet once per term for the full Governing Body. In addition, governors visit regularly according to our Governors' Visits Policy.

Staff

There are 45 staff across both sites with a range of experience and skills. The teaching team come from primary, secondary and special school backgrounds. A copy of our staffing structure can be shared if you are invited to visit the school for interview.

Admissions

The School operates a system of priorities with long-stay and recurring pupils aged 3-19 given the most time and the highest priority. We may also teach siblings of long-stay patients who are unable to attend their home schools for at least two weeks.

The staff and the Governing Body regularly review the Admissions Policy alongside the changing demands within the NHS Trusts.

School Roll

The School's roll fluctuates daily but on average we see around *120 pupils each day**. Each teacher is responsible for:

- teaching all school-aged pupils according to our Admissions Policies
- ascertaining the special educational needs of pupils on the wards and in the schoolroom according to our Special Educational Needs Policy
- encouraging mobile pupils to attend schoolroom activities, so that children wherever possible have the advantage of working alongside peers and so that the ward teacher's time can be devoted to those pupils who are immobile and/or in isolation
- ensuring that those unable to join a group easily still have the opportunity to come to the schoolroom, with the extra support of the ward teacher, parent or ward staff, whichever is the most appropriate.

Pupils' Hours

Our current schoolroom hours are:

10 a.m. – 11.30 a.m.

2 p.m. – 3.30 p.m.

For children who are too unwell to attend the schoolroom, or who must stay in isolation for medical reasons, teaching on the wards takes place any time between 9.45 a.m. and 3.30 p.m. The length of teaching time each individual pupil receives is variable and depends on many factors including:

- medical / psychological condition
- length of stay
- pupil's special educational needs, including exam requirements
- type of ward
- teacher availability etc.

Mobile pupils who are able to attend the main schoolrooms are able to take advantage of full-time schooling, although in practice attendance is interrupted and often constrained by medical needs, which must always take priority. Pupils on the wards are usually taught for up to an hour each day, however if their health permits, this may be increased.

The Curriculum

The School is not legally obliged to follow the National Curriculum but certainly makes every attempt to do so and recognises the importance of keeping abreast of curriculum developments to be consistent with our core aims.

Long-stay and recurring pupils are prioritised and a Personal Education Plan is devised to ensure, if possible, they maintain their education to the highest possible standards.

We do all we can to make learning engaging and enjoyable- as one pupil said coming to our school was the *'best of times at the worst of times'*. Technology and the Arts are often used as an ideal way of introducing or developing activities, which might otherwise be too daunting for a sick child. Similarly, educational games, maths puzzles, model-making etc. can all be good "ice-breakers" and if worked with skilfully can be a means of developing literacy and numeracy etc. We liaise with the Play Departments in both GOSH & UCH; it is their role to provide all types of play for inpatients, leaving the School to concentrate on education. There are, naturally, areas of overlap, particularly for the younger child.

Literacy and numeracy lessons are vital and are timetabled at the start of the morning and afternoon in the main GOSH schoolroom for Key Stage 1/2 pupils. For pupils on the wards this will be a priority too, although we also attach great importance to an enriched, creative curriculum that will engage and motivate our pupils. Many schoolroom sessions are video linked to pupils based on the wards.

Key Stage 3/4 pupils are taught core and foundation subjects by subject specialists and their timetable also allows for a daily, personalised learning session. Young people are encouraged to complete their home schoolwork and maintain links with teachers and peers via their online Managed Learning Environment (MLE) or equivalent.

There is a strong emphasis on digital literacy and technology across the curriculum. Our pupils have access to the very latest technology e.g. iPads, iPods, laptops, interactive whiteboards and plasma screens, video- conferencing, and an excellent range of age-appropriate, motivating online resources and software including the latest appropriate apps.

Personal, Social, Health, Education (PSHE) and Citizenship Education are vital in supporting the psychosocial needs of our pupils and to help them develop resilience and self-confidence. Every attempt is made to take the planned work onto the wards, perhaps by encouraging pupils to write for the School magazine/ website or blog or by taking a schoolroom-based pupil's work onto the ward for bed-bound pupils.

We also use the EYFS Framework to ensure that children receive a quality experience that not only provides an enriching/exciting play opportunity but also supports development and learning wherever possible.

Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)

The School aims to meet the needs of all children with special educational needs and disabilities. All teaching staff can potentially work with all pupils. We ensure access to our curriculum, plan for all long-stay/recurring pupils and incorporate foundation and extension plans for the diversity and continuum of need. We also have specialist teachers who work with pupils with, for example, visual/ sensory impairment, moderate/severe/ profound/ social/ emotional needs etc.

The Staff and Governors review the School's Special Educational Needs Policy, Equality and Accessibility Plans annually.

Tracking Pupil Progress

The School has developed a bespoke Pupil Information System (database), which records essential pupil information, for example, work plans, objectives, outcomes and next steps. The database holds Summative Reports and communication streams with a pupil's family/home school as well as with other professionals and agencies. This information conforms to the requirements of the Data Protection Act.

The database is central to our work as it enables the School to track pupils' progress efficiently and effectively.

Planning and Assessment

Teaching staff plan for the unknown and short-term plans are in place so as to be prepared for most eventualities. Assessment is undertaken, whenever possible and when appropriate, by liaising with parents and Home Schools but informal teacher assessment and access to online assessment tools is also ongoing.

We have specialist staff able to assess specific educational needs e.g. pupils with Profound and Multiple Learning Difficulties and Specific Learning Difficulties, e.g. dyslexia.

Staff Training

Staff are encouraged to attend courses regularly to keep at the forefront of both mainstream and special needs' developments. Courses are planned according to the specific needs identified in the School Improvement Plan. Teachers feedback information at staff meetings and complete written evaluations. We evaluate the long-term impact on the School and Centre of training, courses and visits undertaken. We have a programme of regular, mandatory, Safeguarding training.

Home / School Links

We work hard at developing good, professional relations and communications with parents. We are fortunate in having direct, often daily, contacts with parents who are encouraged by us, and the hospital, to stay with their children, if appropriate. We often work in partnership with parents: at times parents will wait for the teacher to arrive in order that they may have a break, secure in the knowledge that their children are receiving safe, non-invasive educational attention. Sometimes pupils with special educational needs are taught while a parent is present so that the teacher can benefit from

the expertise and advice of the person who knows the pupil best. Parents are invaluable in helping us make the rapid assessment of a pupil's needs.

Parents are often the best link with the pupil's home school: recurring pupils are encouraged to bring work into hospital with them; parents can collect schoolwork or ask for work to be emailed to us for access in hospital. We will always ask parents' permission to contact the home school when continuity of work is necessary. We attach great importance to obtaining a speedy assessment and current, relevant curriculum plans from home schools. Occasionally it is necessary for relevant staff to visit the 'home school' to ensure continuity or assess the suitability of new placements or to ensure successful reintegration.

We actively disseminate advice and support to mainstream schools through national and international conferences, mentoring, online support groups, email groups and school visits.

Visitors*

The School regularly welcomes professionals from around the world as well as from local and national links made by staff which helps us benchmark our practice. There is also a real emphasis on bringing the outside world inside the hospital and we have excellent links with museums, theatres, businesses, and creative organisations who add to our curriculum throughout the year.

**We adhere to NHS guidance on visitor access in line with Infection Prevention and Control guidance especially in response to the pandemic.*

Thank you for your interest in our School and we hope you have found this information helpful.