

Setting Arrangements at Sharples School

Purpose

At Sharples, we use a range of grouping arrangements, including mixed-attainment teaching, banding and setting, depending on the subject and year group. These arrangements are informed by educational research, school experience and the needs of individual cohorts, with the aim of maximising student progress and achievement.

The school is committed to providing all students with an appropriate level of challenge and support through effective grouping arrangements. Grouping decisions are designed to maximise student progress while ensuring equality of opportunity and access to the curriculum.

Principles

The school uses a combination of mixed-attainment teaching, banding and setting, depending on the subject, year group and curriculum requirements.

Grouping arrangements will:

- Support high-quality teaching and learning for all students.
- Be informed by reliable assessment information and professional judgement.
- Be reviewed regularly to ensure students are appropriately placed.
- Promote equity and inclusion, taking account of factors such as disadvantage, SEND, gender and prior attainment.
- Ensure that all students have access to an ambitious curriculum and appropriate pathways to examination success.

Initial Grouping

When students join the school, grouping arrangements may be informed by:

- Key Stage 2 prior attainment data.
- Transition information from primary schools.
- Reading and literacy assessments.
- Baseline assessments completed on entry.
- Information relating to SEND and other learning needs.

Review of Grouping Arrangements

Student placement within sets or teaching groups is reviewed periodically throughout the academic year.

Reviews may be informed by:

- Internal assessment outcomes.
- Examination and PPE performance.

- Teacher assessment and professional judgement.
- Engagement, effort and learning behaviours.
- Curriculum and examination pathway requirements.

Movement between groups may occur where there is clear evidence that a different placement would better support a student's progress, learning needs or curriculum pathway. Setting reviews are led by the relevant Director of Subject. Any changes to teaching groups are reviewed and overseen by the Deputy Headteacher responsible for Curriculum and Standards.

Students may move to a different group at any point during the academic year. Such movement may be to a higher, lower or equivalent attainment group where this is judged to be in the student's best interests.

Subject-Specific Arrangements

The extent to which setting is used varies between subjects and year groups.

- Core subjects may use attainment-based grouping where this is considered beneficial to student progress and curriculum delivery.
- Many foundation subjects operate mixed-attainment groups, although some subjects may use setting where curriculum delivery or examination requirements make this beneficial.
- In Key Stage 4, option choices and examination pathways may influence group structures.

Detailed operational arrangements are reviewed annually by curriculum leaders and may vary between cohorts.

Equality and Inclusion

When creating teaching groups, the school will seek to maintain a balanced distribution of students wherever possible. Consideration will be given to:

- Prior attainment.
- Disadvantaged students.
- Students with SEND.
- Gender balance.
- Pastoral and behavioural considerations.

No student will be denied access to an ambitious curriculum solely on the basis of their group placement.

The school recognises that grouping arrangements can have a significant impact on student outcomes. Curriculum leaders and senior leaders will therefore review the composition of teaching groups periodically to ensure that disadvantaged students, students with SEND and other key groups are not disproportionately represented within particular sets without clear educational justification, and that no student group is unintentionally disadvantaged by the school's grouping practices.

Communication with Parents and Carers

The school does not routinely notify parents and carers of every change to teaching groups. Many group changes are administrative or involve movement between parallel classes rather than changes in attainment grouping.

Where a change has a significant impact on a student's curriculum pathway, examination tier entry or educational provision, parents and carers may be informed as appropriate.

Parents and carers may contact the school at any time to discuss the rationale for their child's current teaching group.

Recording of Set Changes

From September 2026, the school will maintain a centralised record of changes to attainment-based teaching groups. Records will include the date of the change, the groups involved and the rationale for the decision. This information will support the monitoring of student movement between groups and help ensure that setting arrangements are applied consistently, fairly and in the best interests of students. Records will be reviewed periodically by curriculum leaders and senior leaders as part of the school's quality assurance processes.

Any queries regarding teaching groups or setting arrangements at Sharples should be directed to office@sharplesschool.co.uk. Queries will be forwarded to the appropriate member of staff and we aim to respond within two school days.