



**CHEW STOKE CHURCH SCHOOL ~ A Primary Academy**  
SCHOOL LANE, CHEW STOKE, BRISTOL, BS40 8UY  
TELEPHONE: 01275 332354 E-MAIL: [office@chewstokeacademy.org](mailto:office@chewstokeacademy.org)  
HEADTEACHER: Ben Hewett

## **Class Organisation Information**

### **Purpose**

This procedure sets out how children are allocated to mixed-age classes when it is necessary to combine year groups in one class.

### **Criteria**

Class arrangements are dictated by the professional judgement of teachers, taking the following criteria into account:

- the needs of individual children academically;
- the needs of disadvantaged pupils;
- the needs of pupils with Special Educational needs (SEND);
- the need for siblings and close relations to be taught in the same class or to be separated;
- the possible need to separate children with dysfunctional relationships;
- the maturity of the child
- the requirements of maintaining balanced class sizes across the school

### **The Process**

- Teachers draw up potential class lists using the criteria above
- Staff spend time reflecting on the proposed combinations
- Adjustments may be made at this stage
- Final numbers of pupils joining the school are received from the Local Authority at the end of June/beginning of July
- Classes and allocation of teachers and pupils are then finalised by the SLT
- Parents will be informed by letter in July
- Classes will not be changed after this point unless the number of late applications received from the Local Authority make this essential. If this is the case the head teacher will explain the reasons to all children and parents or carers affected.

### **Parents' and carers' contribution**

It is not possible to allow parental preferences for particular teachers or classes to be taken into account and it is our policy not to change the class lists once published unless there are extenuating and exceptional circumstances. We ask parents to trust the school to make the best choice for each individual child. Where siblings or close family members, for example twins or cousins could be placed in the same class, parental requests will be considered and accommodated where possible.



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### **Class organisation**

The school will tell parents and carers about how classes will be organised at the beginning of July.

### **Do mixed age classes make a difference to children's progress?**

Ofsted's publication (May 2012) Mathematics Made to Measure which was based on evidence gathered between January 2008 and July 2011 found that for primary schools 'no marked difference in learning and progress was noted between mixed age and single age classes.' Teachers at Chew Stoke pride themselves on their inclusive and reflective teaching practice; to ensure all children make good progress during each academic year

### **How is work organised within the classes?**

Within our classes, be they mixed-age classes or not, work is planned to suit the needs of each and every pupil. We work on a two-year rotation in both Key Stages 1 and 2 in order that no child repeats work covered previously (although, repetition and reinforcement are essential elements of certain subjects, particularly mathematics). Work is differentiated according to the children's abilities. Each year group has its own personal objectives. Challenge and motivation are built into the curriculum. As is normal practice, children are taught the relevant curriculum in each class and the work is adapted and pitched to meet the needs of all children.

### **Late applications**

The school is required by the Local Authority to accept late applications which arrive during the summer holidays unless our pupil admission number is exceeded. In exceptional circumstances, the Local Authority may require us to accept children beyond this number. This could lead to late adjustments to classes

## **Frequently asked questions**

### **What is a mixed age and split year group class?**

This is a class in which there are children from more than one year group.

### **Why are mixed age and split year group classes formed in some schools?**

They are formed in schools where the PAN (Published Admission Number) is either less or greater than the recommended class size of 30. Key Stage 1 children have to be taught in classes of 30 or fewer. We have approximately 185 children accommodated in 6 classrooms.

### **What happens at Chew Stoke?**

All of our classes are split at Chew Stoke with the exception of Reception and Year 6 this academic year.

### **Why is it different in other schools?**

Chew Stoke is classed as a small village school so it is necessary to have mixed classes. All schools have to group children according to the PAN and the number of classrooms.



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A small, village school with fewer than 100 children, may have only 3 classes in the whole school which will have to be mixed.

An average-sized school, with a PAN of 30, would have one class per year group in 7 classrooms which would not have to be mixed.

Bigger schools may have a PAN of 60 enabling them to have 2 classes per year group in 14 rooms which would not have to be mixed.

### **How does it work for my child?**

The staff at Chew Stoke Church School will plan and deliver a curriculum to match the needs of mixed-age learning. We will be operating a 2 year cycle of cross-curricular themes so that children do not repeat topics. Children work towards age-related expectations and are challenged and supported according to individual needs. Some aspects of work are undertaken as a whole class; others in small groups. Some tasks are carried out individually. Small group work may be according to stage or age and maybe organised across classes so that different groups visit different rooms. The children really benefit from this variety especially when they are invited to work in social groups of their own choosing. We also have a number of treat days and theme weeks where all children work together across all phases.

### **Are there any benefits of mixed classes?**

We aim to create an environment in which our children can learn and feel happy and their teachers know them well enough to be able to meet their individual needs. The children can have more than one year with the same teacher and this provides a perfect opportunity for the teacher to develop a deeper understanding of a child's needs and strengths and is therefore in a stronger position to better support the child's learning. In turn the child knows their teacher well, understands the expectations they have, and can build upon a level of trust that encourages them to 'have a go' or try something new. The arrangements also allow for new peer groups to form giving the children the opportunity to work with others.

### **Will my child be held back if placed in a mixed-age class?**

Definitely not! The ways in which learning and teaching are organised in primary schools means that teaching and work is tailored to the needs and current achievement levels of individual pupils. Furthermore, the school will plan the educational experiences for pupils in all classes in ways that ensure good progression and continuity, whichever year group or class they are in.

### **Will my child's friendship group be split up?**

Although care is taken in allocating pupils to classes, friendships are not a deciding factor. In general terms, it is likely to be good for children to experience classes with different classmates so that their circle of friends and acquaintances can be extended beyond the traditional age boundaries. Where new classes are formed opportunities will be created beyond the standard curriculum for pupils to maintain contact with friends who have been allocated to other classes (such as at lunchtimes, special activities, PE etc.). Certainly when children transfer to secondary school, new friendship groupings in different subject areas become a fact of life, and this situation is generally welcomed by many children.



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