



ROTHBURY FIRST SCHOOL

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Tuesday 12 June 2018

Dear Parents/Carers

As you may be aware, the financial climate in which our schools operate is very difficult and has been for the last few years. Our school has faced rising costs combined with a number of external pressures over which we have little control. Our Governing Body and our school leadership team have looked at many, many options over the last few terms, however we have not been able to absorb the rising costs and falling income without having to make some changes. To date, this has taken the form of reducing our day-to-day running costs where possible, and, in the last year, we had to cut staff hours for teachers and teaching assistants whilst still maintaining separate year group classes as far as we could.

However, because of the continuing reduction in numbers into our nursery, the reducing class sizes overall in school and the overall rise in costs, we now have to take the step of consolidating our classes for the academic year 2018-19 in order to keep our budget from being in continued deficit. This means that at the end of this term, we will be losing a valued member of our teaching staff, Ms Gladston, as we move forward to the new class structure. We are sure that you will understand how difficult this is for our school and for everyone involved.

From September 2018, our class structure will be as follows:

Early Years Unit	Mrs Brotherton
Year 1	Mrs Duffield
Year 2/3	Mrs Robinson
Year 3/4	Mr Grimes

Mrs Walton will be teaching in all classes and will be leading on Science and Forest School.

In September, the split of children in our Year 3 class will be made by age in accordance with current educational research and advice received from other schools in a similar position. Many successful small schools in Northumberland have mixed age classes and our teachers have experience of teaching mixed age groups. We cannot, at this point, simply combine our Year 1 and Year 2 classes as this would exceed the maximum amount allowed of 30 children in a Key Stage 1 class. We explored the option of combining our Year 3 and Year 4 classes, however this would create a class size of around 40 which we felt was too great.

Our teachers are in the process of devising a curriculum which ensures that the Year 3 children in both classes receive the same educational content. We will be sending out letters to you shortly to confirm which class your child will be in from September 2018. Children in the current Year 2 class who have their birthdays on or before 31st March will be in the Y3/4 class and those with birthdays on or after 1st April will be in the Y2/3 class.

We have a good school with a great curriculum. We have wonderful teachers who put the education and welfare of your children first and foremost. We only wish that our school was better funded so that we didn't have to make these difficult choices. If you would like to discuss any of this further with the Governing Body, please come to a meeting on Monday 18th June at 6pm in school.

Yours faithfully,

Robert Famelton (Chair of Governors) & Nicki Mathewson (Headteacher)
on behalf of the Governing Body of Rothbury First School.