

# St Joseph's Catholic Primary School

## Mixed Year Group Policy

### Introduction

As a result of its size, St Joseph's Catholic Primary School has mixed age classes throughout the school. The aim of this document is to provide information about why we have mixed age classes and how children are allocated to them. The position is reviewed each year by the staff and a number of criteria are applied to determine how pupils are allocated to each class.

### Why do we have mixed age classes?

Essentially the school has seven years of age groups but is only able to finance a 'five class' structure due to its size. Pupil numbers can fluctuate resulting in varying sizes of year groups. Each year the Local Authority (Devon) publishes an admissions number for all schools. Our Published Admission Number is currently 30 for Reception and 32 for KS2 year groups. At Key Stage One there is a legal limit of 30 children in a class. At Key Stage 2 there is no legal limit to the size of each class.

The position can also vary from year to year. There are some year groups that remain together anyway such as Reception and Year 6, but we also try to keep other year groups together as much as possible.

### Principles

- The arrangements for class structure are based on the professional judgements of Class Teachers, the Senior Leadership Team and the Headteacher.
- We will always consider what is in the best interests of individual children and classes as a whole when making decisions.

### Factors that we consider when organising children into classes\*:

- That no class containing KS1 pupils will go over 30 children in keeping with national guidelines.
- That there are a minimum of four children from a single age group in a mixed-age class.
- Gender – No one girl or boy should be separated from their year group/ previous class group. We try to create a balance between the number of boys and girls.
- Date of birth/ Maturity – inevitably, some children will be asked to be in classrooms with older pupils and some will be assigned to classes with younger children. Staff will make a professional decision about where a child ought to be placed for educational, social and emotional reasons.
- Ability – we will try to create, as far as possible, a mix of abilities.
- Siblings
- Special Educational Needs
- Classroom size and capacity

\*The 2020/21 academic year is exceptional. As a consequence of Covid-19 and its impact on pupils' learning and time in school, this year the teaching staff and Headteacher have had lengthy discussions about each child in a split year group and which class, in our professional judgement, best meets the needs of the child.

### **Factors we do not consider:**

We do not take into account requests from parents about which class they would like their child in or if they can "be with their friends". This is because it would be impossible to take all requests into account and we must make a decision that is in the best interests of all the children in the school both educationally, socially and emotionally.

### **How are children taught in a mixed year class?**

- Teachers will ensure that all children work within programmes suitable for their age, aptitude and ability. Your child will not be 'held back' or 'struggle to keep up' in any class.
- All our teachers are trained to work with mixed ability classes whether in a straight year group or in a mixed year group class.
- In all primary classes there are wide ranges of abilities and all children will learn in different ways, responding to a variety of methods and resources. Teachers are able to adapt to the different needs within any class and plan accordingly.
- Programmes and schemes of work are compiled to suit the development needs of all learners in different groupings.
- There is no evidence to support the view that the performance of children in mixed age classes is either above or below that of pupils in single-age classes. There is however some evidence to show that pupils in mixed year classes gain socially.

### **When are classes formed?**

Classes will be formed in the summer term for the coming school year and pupils and parents will be informed as quickly as possible.

### **Will the classes remain the same over a number of school years?**

Not necessarily. Each year, the Headteacher has to consider the whole school roll, year group numbers, staffing allocations and continuity of learning.

### **Will there be opportunities for children to mix with friends in other classes?**

Yes. Opportunities exist at break times, lunch times and during extra-curricular activities.

**What if I am concerned about the class to which my child has been allocated?** Concerns should be shared with the Headteacher, who will be able to reassure you about your child's allocated class.

### **May I refuse to have my child in a class?**

Generally, no. However, whilst there is no formal right to appeal against a decision on a child joining a mixed age class, we will always provide parents with the reasons for the establishment of the mixed age class and the Headteacher's rationale as to how pupils were allocated to a class.

If a parent feels that the school has not adhered to the Mixed Year Group Policy they can raise this in the first instance with the Headteacher and, if still not satisfied, they should raise their concerns with the school's Governing Body.