



Ely St Mary's C of E Junior School

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Monday 28th June 2021

Dear Parents/Carers,

The time will soon be upon us to announce the new classes for Year 6. We have been watching with interest the progress and class make-up of Year 5 since they have been in Year 4 and, after careful consideration and positive experiences as a result of this approach in previous years, we have chosen to mix up the classes ready for Year 6 once again.

For some of you, this news may come as good tidings whilst, for others, the news may hold some valid concerns. The staff will of course talk through this change with the children in class, but we also hope that the following information will answer any questions which you might have regarding the process.

Why are we doing this now?

We are aware that Year 5 children have been in the same classes for most of the key stage. Over the last couple of years we have seen some classes become unbalanced as children have moved in and out, in terms of ability, gender, SEND and Pupil Premium, and we wish to redress this to give an even make-up to each class, insofar as we are able. This will allow all children to continue to succeed.

In addition, with an experienced Year 6 team, we are applying our secure knowledge of the processes for both SATs and Year 7 transition, so as to use this as a chance to ensure that all children have optimal opportunities.

How will this move impact my child?

Obviously there will be a change in terms of who is in his/her tutor group. A pupil's tutor group is the class to which he/she goes to register, and where he/she will learn for all lessons initially. Although, we are resourced to offer flexible grouping and intervention as appropriate as well. Staff prioritise getting to know the children thoroughly late in the summer term and early in the autumn term to make this move a smooth process – how the children learn best, areas in which they feel less confident, their wider interests, etc.

Will my child be with his/her friends?

Where possible, we have taken friendships into consideration, but this has not been a deciding factor. We must stress that, in the class mix-up, our aim is to ensure that children have the correct environment in which to fulfil their potential, whilst developing the skills of social interaction by working with different people, in readiness for Year 7. Often, we see children having an extended friendship group after such a move. To reassure the children, even throughout lockdown restrictions this/last year, the pupils have been able to see *all* of their year group friends during playtimes regardless of class base.

Can we request a change of class if we are unhappy with your decision?

As much as we would like to, we know we can't please everyone. We will take all concerns seriously, but would ask that you give us the first half term to see how things settle down. If, after that time, you have continued concerns, then we are more than happy to meet and discuss possible solutions.

How will my child get used to his/her new class?

On 9th July 2021, the children will all experience a more traditional 'Move Up Day' where they will work with their new class and teacher for the day. Either side of this experience, staff work together to ensure a smooth handover - should you feel there is anything you are keen for the new teachers to be aware of,

please do get in touch with your child's current teacher via Dojo so they can pass this on at the appropriate time.

This change may cause my child anxiety, particularly after a difficult year nationally with school closures. What support have you got in place for them?

Of course we understand that any change can cause a degree of anxiety, and we will all be on hand in September to support the children on their return to school. In the meantime, all children will have received a summer activity booklet in their report envelopes which offers activities to support well-being and positive mindset at what we know is a difficult time for some. In the autumn, teachers will also prioritise PSHCE opportunities within the curriculum, and staff will be happy to talk with any child who we feel may be feeling anxious about what the changes will mean.

Has the school considered all other options?

We have taken our time to assess the situation, and to look carefully at the dynamics of each class, as well as considering each child as an individual. We have used the experience and knowledge of the Year 5 teachers, as well as calling upon the knowledge of teachers who have taught your children in the past. We have considered the pros and the cons of our decision, and the positives for all children far outweigh any concerns. Your child's best interests, alongside those of the other children within the year-group, are at the heart of our thoughts and actions.

What should we do now?

Class Dojo continues to be available for communication as we feel this is an important vehicle by means of which to build positive working relationships between parents, teachers and children. However, we appreciate you may have questions about the class changes, and would ask that you send these in writing either to the office email address (office@esm.school) or by letter via Reception. We will do our best to get back to you as quickly as we can, but please be aware that we aim to acknowledge receipt of your communication within 2 working days, and to respond within a further 5 working days where possible.

Finally, thank you for your support during this time of change, especially this year – it is greatly appreciated.

Mrs Rebecca Ireland-Curtis
Headteacher