

ANNECY CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

"Inspiring hearts and minds to grow"

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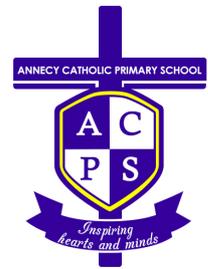
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Frequently Asked Questions

Why are Years 1, Year 2 and Year 3 being mixed?

The government funds schools according to pupil numbers. A fall in our roll, coupled with the additional impact of revisions to the NI and Pension contributions has meant that the school is no longer in a position to financially support a 7 class structure. We have considered a range of options and have balanced these against factors such as infant class size limits. Following research, and after taking advice from the Local Authority, having discussions with colleagues in other schools and undertaking a number of meetings involving the IEB and school leaders, we feel that the best option to allow the school to continue on its improvement journey is to combine children from Year 1 and Year 2, and Year 2 and Year 3 from September 2018.

How will two year groups be taught alongside each other in one classroom?

All children develop at different rates. It is not automatic that the oldest child in a class will achieve better than the youngest child. Children will be taught to their individual academic needs and not simply to their age. All classes in the school have a large range of abilities. The teachers at Annecy are skilled at teaching classes which include children working on curriculum content from a number of different years. Teachers will choose work appropriate to the level a child is working at, ensuring that all needs are catered for. For example in a Y1/2 lesson about addition, all children might learn to add two numbers together, some children will add a single-digit number to a two digit number and some may work on adding two, two-digit numbers. In the majority of lessons, the children will start the session together with the teacher targeting questions at individuals or groups of children at an appropriate level. Children will then be provided with appropriate activities to consolidate or practise what they have been taught, with the teacher and Teaching Assistant working with children who require additional assistance or who need to be pushed on and explore concepts in greater depth or learn something new. On occasion, groups of children may be removed from whole class teaching in order to facilitate this.

How will teachers plan, ensuring coverage of both years, and prevent repetition of content?

Foundation subjects and topics will be organised to ensure that content is not repeated unless it needs to be built upon. There will be a rolling content which will offer the children a broad and balanced curriculum. In the case of Maths and English, the two curricula are completely aligned, with the majority of Year 1 objectives being matched with a similar but slightly trickier objective for Year 2. For example, Year 1s are expected to count forward in multiples of 2, 5 and 10, Year 2 are further expected to do this backwards. This would be the same in a Year 2/Year 3 mixed class. Ensuring coverage of national curriculum objectives for both year groups in the same classroom will therefore be easily facilitated by normal classroom differentiation.

How will we ensure the highest academic expectations for all children?

Both national and local data for performance of children at the end of KS1 and KS2 suggests that being placed in a mixed age classes has no negative impact on children's academic achievements. This is supported by educational research, with some studies suggesting that children often perform better when placed in classes with a bigger age range. A mixed age classroom means that the children will have greater flexibility to learn with children of their own abilities. Children who find aspects of the curriculum more challenging will be supported in the same way they have been in single year classes. Children working above the expected standard will be provided with work which both deepens their understanding and moves them on to explore new concepts. With our move towards a maths mastery curriculum, learning will be focussed on explaining reasoning and problem solving both of which extend children's understanding without them having to access a separate curriculum. In English, quality texts will be carefully chosen ensuring that they are easy to learn but contain the relevant sentence structures and vocabulary to stretch children at the appropriate level.

How will we ensure that children cope socially and emotionally with changes in their current class structures?

Speaking to colleagues with previous experience of mixed age teaching (and having personally taught in a mixed Year 5/6 class) shows us that children thrive in a mixed age class. Children learn to form wider friendships and relate to broader groups of children, creating a classroom atmosphere where children are enjoined to help others and seek support from their older peers rather than simply relying on adult support. We will put a number of strategies in place to support children in their move to new classes. For example: spending a whole day in their new classes, getting to know each other, their classes, and their new teaching team before the end of term.

How will we ensure that Year 1 children cope with the transition into a more formal classroom environment?

The EYFS and KS1 teachers will be working closely together to ensure that EYFS children are well prepared for the formalities of a KS1 classroom. Children in the EYFS have been provided with opportunities to sit down and work independently at a table, this will continue into the final term. During the first few weeks of Year 1 they will be expected to sit and work at a table independently or in a group for a short period in each session before being provided with less formal activities which will move their learning on in the same way they have been used to in EYFS. During this period, class teachers will spend focussed time working with Year 2 pupils, moving on their learning.

How will we create the new classes?

We will consider a number of factors when creating classes for next year. In order to ensure equity of provision for all children, we will be creating 2 mixed classes. In doing this we will consider pre-existing friendship groups, the abilities of children and any other social or emotional concerns. This will be done in close liaison with class teachers, who have a strong understanding of how different groups of children work together.

How will we manage statutory testing across both Year Groups?

As you may be aware, children in both Year 1 and Year 2 are subject to statutory testing, with Year 1 children undertaking the Phonics Screening Check and Year 2 undertaking SATS. At Annecy we are committed to achieving the best possible standards for our children without teaching to the test. Year 1 children will be prepared for the Phonics Screening Check in the same way they would be every year, with high quality

phonics teaching enabling the children to confidently decode when it comes to the assessment. Equally, preparation for SATS in Year 2 will not sit outside of normal classroom practice. Year 1 children will not be expected to sit the Year 2 papers and they will be taught their usual curriculum during KS1 SATS week, with Year 2 children being removed in groups to sit the papers. The learning of Year 3 children will also be unaffected by the SATS.