

COTON PRIMARY SCHOOL
Mixed Age Class Policy – Information for Parents

Introduction

As a result of its size, Coton C of E Primary School has always had mixed age classes throughout its history. 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 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 (Cambridgeshire) publishes an admissions number for all schools. Our Published Admission Number is currently 16 for Reception and 17 for the other 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, eg in 2014 Year 4 children were together in a mixed Year 4/5 class. On the other hand Year 1 children were divided into a Reception/Year 1 class and a Year 1/2 class.

Our main aim is to organise children into class groups of approximately equal size and this leads to mixed age classes.

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.'

How do we organise children into classes?

Teachers and the Head Teacher discuss and place children into registration groups based on a number of criteria.

The first and main criterion is the child's date of birth.

However there are other factors that are considered as follows:

- Individual educational and social needs of the child
- Siblings
- Friendship groups (each child will have at least one friend in the class to which s/he is allocated)

- Special needs (for example a child with mobility issues may require a classroom that is accessed by ramps or handrails without the need to negotiate steps)
- Parents of twins may want their children separated or kept together (if possible)
- Classroom size and capacity

In each class it is also desirable to have an approximately equal mix of boys and girls if possible.

The oldest children in one year group come together with the youngest of the year group above to form a new class.

Although all classes are primarily organised by age, there may be occasional exceptions to this in which case the parents of these children are invited to discuss the teacher's decision before it is made final.

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.

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, as you will be aware, 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 targets. Challenge and motivation are built in to the curriculum.

When are parents informed?

Once the school has heard from the County Admissions Team in mid-July about any additional children joining the school in September, parents are informed of their child's future class towards the end of the summer term.

The Head Teacher makes the final decision.

Conclusion

As with all decisions we make, the one to have mixed age classes and the way those classes are organised, is taken in the context of both the human resources and the teaching spaces the school has at its disposal. We are always willing to listen to parental concerns bearing in mind our responsibility to do our very best to ensure that every child achieves as well as s/he is able within a safe and happy environment.

We believe that having mixed age classes and organising them in the considered manner that we do is the best current solution available to us. As with all aspects of school life we will continue to monitor and review this policy.

Farah McPhee, Head Teacher