

Coleham Primary School



Policy on Mixing Classes

Date: April 2019



Mixing Classes

From September 2019-20 we have decided that, moving forward, we will be mixing the reception classes and children in certain year groups (not every year group) at the end of each academic year.

Each year the School Leadership Team will discuss year groups and make a decision. Reception children will always be mixed and ideally we would like to mix classes at regular points such as Year 2 and Year 4, however there may be other factors we need to consider with regard to other year groups and teachers.

The mixing of year groups is normal practice for a school of this size and with two class entry. Our reason for deciding to mix classes throughout school is to improve relationships, so that over a child's journey through school they would be mixed on average three times and be given the opportunity to connect and re-connect with all of the children in their year group, building strong, positive connections.

Reasons for Mixing Classes

We have previously seen the positive impact of mixing classes in the past, we feel that regular, routine mixing of classes will help the children's relationships, help to balance the classes and limit any ongoing friendship issues within classes which is not conducive to learning, allowing children to develop better resilience and develop broader friendships in a **safe and comfortable environment**. We have also seen that children appear to develop a strong class identity and tend not to mix with children in the other class. We feel that by mixing the year group, the children will have the opportunity to make friends across the year groups and see themselves as a year group team rather than just a class, thus building a stronger school community and pride in our school.

Benefits for the children:

- To create opportunities for children to learn and play with a wider variety of peers.
- To enable greater social interaction between children as they move through the school.
- Better resilience in developing friendships in a safe, comfortable environment – arguably even more important in the older year groups when they will be moving to secondary school soon and be taught in various groups.
- Being part of a year group team and not just a class.
- Building more relationships and connections with children in their year which will benefit them throughout their whole school journey and in the wider community.
- Enabling new children to settle better into school.
- To promote a greater sense of community in a large two-form entry primary school
- Strengthening the whole school community as families will also have the opportunity to develop relationships with other families within the year group.

Principles

- The arrangements for class mixing are based on the professional judgements of Class Teachers, the Phase Leader and the Head teacher.
- We will always consider what is in the best interests of individual children and classes as a whole when making decisions.
- We will communicate the criteria for class mixing in an open and transparent way

- We will always consider the happiness and welfare of the children and will take into consideration existing friendship groups when we create new classes.

Deciding new class lists

We want children to make maximum academic progress and develop well socially and personally and we do not want to put any child in a position where they have a setback. Each year the current class teachers who know the children very well, will work together to draw up the classes for next year. These will be finalised with the Phase Leader and Head teacher. There will be consistent criteria for teachers to consider in order to harmonise the classes for the maximum benefit of the children:

- Children's views on friendships
- Teachers views on friendships
- Range of educational, social and personal needs
- Age and level of maturity
- Balance of Gender
- Balance of Special Educational Needs
- Balance of English as additional language
- Balance of Ability
- Family relationships such as in year siblings/staff children

Including the children in the decision

The children's opinions are important to us at Coleham so we will involve the children themselves in our decision. We will ask them which friends they would like to stay with and ask if there are pupils they wish to be apart from. It is not our intention to separate good friendships and, of course, the children will still be spending valuable time together out on the playground at break and dinner times. The children's responses will be taken into account when we decided the class lists and every child should have some close friends in their new class. Parents are also most welcome to talk, confidentially, to current class teachers, to let them know their views too, should they wish to do so. Each child will be with approximately half the children from their existing class and may know other children in their year group. Some children already have friends in the other class and may request the opportunity to work with those friends. The class teachers/Phase Leaders will talk to the children beforehand to explain the process and to reassure the children of any worries they may have.

Routine mixing at the end of Reception year

The Reception classes will always be mixed at the end of the year. The reason for mixing at the end of the reception year is because we are much better placed to decide the best groupings of children for year 1. When the classes are originally decided for our reception children the teachers are working with limited information from our induction process and the various pre-school settings that our children can come from (over 20 different pre-school settings) By the end of the year the teachers know their children and families very well and so are better able to decide on the best groupings for the children. The children are still so very young, developing at different rates and making progress very quickly so by the end of the year we have a much clearer picture on special educational needs, abilities, individual personalities and relationships.

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The children in our reception building already work as one year group very closely together, something we would like to achieve for all year groups. The RX and RY classrooms are interconnecting and the children work throughout these in a variety of groups and choose which resources they would like to use in either classroom, during child initiated time. As the children are used to working so closely with all of their peers in the year group, they should settle well into their year 1 classes.

Parents notification

Parents will initially be told early in the summer term of the classes that will be mixed. Parents will be informed of the class lists for next academic year later in the summer term, with a good notice period before the new classes' transition day, where the children spend time with their new teacher and class mates.

