

Information for parents - Mixed age classes and split year groups

What is a mixed age and split year class?

A mixed age class is defined to be a class in which there are children who are from one or more year group of the primary school. In most cases, a mixed age class will comprise of pupils at only two stages (Key Stage 1 Infants and Key Stage 2 Juniors). However, it is possible in smaller schools, that a mixed age class may contain pupils from more stages (EYFS, KS1 and KS2) and on occasions year groups will be split between classes.

Why are mixed age and split year groups formed?

Mixed age classes are formed in most schools partly because of the way in which pupil roll is configured in any given year (the numbers of pupils in each year group). It is not uncommon for the situation to change from year to year; as the sizes of year groups can vary quite dramatically.

Will my child be held back if she/he is placed in a mixed age or split year group class?

No. The ways in which learning and teaching are organised in primary schools means teaching is tailored to the needs and current achievement of individual pupils. The exceptional teachers at St Peter's are experienced at differentiating planning and delivering work. The two year rolling curriculum ensures no topic will be repeated by children. The teachers and teaching partners provide challenge for more able children and support for those needing more help whichever year group they are in. Furthermore, the school plans educational enhancement and enrichment opportunities which ensure progression and continuity striving for a beyond expectation education, whichever group or class they are in.

I am concerned that forming a mixed age class or split year group class may mean that my child's friendship grouping is being broken up.

In general terms it is likely to be good for children to experience classes with different classmates so that their circle of friends can extend beyond the traditional age boundaries. Where new classes are formed, opportunities are created beyond the standard curriculum for pupils to maintain contact with friends in the same academic year group who have been allocated to other classes (such as playtimes, lunchtimes, PE sessions, music, residential by year group, enrichment days, lining up, school clubs...). When children transfer to secondary school, new friendship groupings in different subject areas become a fact of life, and the situation is generally welcomed by many children.

What are the benefits to the arrangements?

Children benefit in many ways from the opportunity to become an 'expert' for the younger children and a positive role model which the younger children often aspire to. This 'vertical' grouping often nurtures thinking and problem solving skills, vocabulary and social competences. There is often a greater sense of cooperation and opportunities to work with a wider circle of peers.

If a mixed age or split year group is formed, how are decisions taken about which children should be allocated to which class?

A number of influences are taken into consideration to make a professional judgement. Split classes are considered depending on the cohort of children. These include (and are in no order of preference): gender and age (balance of class and year group), additional needs and class size. Reviewing your child's needs with their Class Teacher will always be an option for parents. Parent partnership is a key element in your child's personal development. These factors have been taken into consideration by the Head Teacher, Senior Management and Class Teachers. However, it is the Head Teacher who makes the final allocation based on their professional judgement of where the child will best flourish in their personal, social, moral, spiritual and academic achievements.