# Amblecote Primary School

# Mixed Age Classes Policy

| Item | Detail |
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| Policy Owner | Headteacher |
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| Signed | Headteacher |
| Signed | Chair of Governors |

**Introduction**

At Amblecote Primary School, we have an admission number of 45 pupils per year group. This means that it is not possible to organise classes as single-age classes with approximately 30 pupils in each class throughout the school. As a result, mixed-age classes are a necessary and well-established feature of our school organisation. We are committed to ensuring that all pupils receive a high-quality education regardless of the class structure in which they are taught. Through careful curriculum planning, effective assessment and high-quality teaching, we ensure that every child is appropriately challenged, supported and able to make progress.

To give our youngest children the very best start to their education, the Reception cohort is organised into two smaller classes. Smaller class sizes enable staff to provide a nurturing environment, develop strong relationships with children and families, and ensure that pupils receive the support they need as they begin their school journey. As the Early Years Foundation Stage curriculum differs significantly from the National Curriculum introduced in Year 1, it is also educationally beneficial for Reception children to be taught separately.

**Rationale**

The school's class structure is based on the following principles:

- As the admission number each year is 45 pupils, it is necessary to organise pupils into mixed-age classes.
- The school can only operate effectively within its allocated budget if classes are organised with approximately 30 pupils in each class.
- Reception classes are kept smaller to ensure that children make the best possible start to their education and receive teaching that is tailored to the Early Years Foundation Stage curriculum.
- It is educationally appropriate for Reception pupils to be taught separately from Year 1 pupils because the Early Years Foundation Stage curriculum is distinct from the National Curriculum.
- In Key Stage 1, statutory infant class size regulations mean that classes cannot normally contain more than 30 pupils with a single qualified teacher.
- In Key Stage 2, the school aims to keep class sizes at or below 30 pupils wherever possible, balancing educational effectiveness with staffing and budget considerations.

**Principles and Processes for Organising Mixed Age Classes**

- The arrangements for class structure are based on the professional judgements of class teachers and the Senior Leadership Team;
- Staff will always consider what is in the best interests of individual pupils and classes as a whole, when making decisions;
- No pupil will be socially isolated by splitting a year group unless there are significant higher priorities;
- Pupils' views will be collected. They will each choose four learning friends, of which they will be placed with at least one;
- Arrangements will be made, where possible, to ensure all pupils have opportunities to socially interact with others in their year group. For example, break times, lunch times, clubs, sporting events;
- There will be occasions where the structure of the curriculum will be organised into stage not age groupings for some lessons. For example, Phonics sessions;
- There may also be other curriculum areas and enrichment events, where greater numbers of pupils can be accommodated, and year groups can work together;
- Parents will be notified of their child's next class in the end of year report.
- Parents are welcome to speak to their child's class teacher regarding friendships and class groupings. However, once class lists have been finalised, changes will not be made. It is not always possible to share the full decision-making process in individual situations due to pupil confidentiality. Please be assured that the new class lists are based on the professional judgement of our staff team, with the best interests of all children at heart. We ask for a positive and supportive approach from parents to help ensure a smooth and successful transition for every child. The Headteacher's decision is final. In extreme and exceptional circumstances, and only on very rare occasions, the governing body may consider individual cases.

**How the Classes are Organised**

Staff spend a lot of time organising mixed age classes and will consider the following information:

- Protected Characteristics – create a balance of the number of pupils in each class;
- Ability – as far as possible, a mix of abilities will be in each class;
- Social - staff will make a professional decision about where a pupil should be placed for educational, social and emotional reasons;
- Other specific needs.

This approach ensures that classes are organised in a way that supports high-quality teaching and learning, makes effective use of resources, and meets the needs of all pupils across the school.

Staff base the final decisions on what is best for all pupils educationally, socially and emotionally. As the decision about which class a pupil goes into is based on confidential information, the school cannot explain the full decision about class setting to parents or children as this would mean discussing confidential matters. No pupil is disadvantaged by which class they are in.

| **Reception** | | **Key Stage 1** | | | **Phase 3 & 4** | | | **Phase 5 & 6** | | |
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| **Class A** | **Class B** | **Class 1** | **Class 1/2** | **Class 2** | **Class 3** | **Class 3/4** | **Class 4** | **Class 5** | **Class 5/6** | **Class 6** |
| 23 pupils | 22 pupils | 30 Year 1 pupils | 15 Year 1 pupils & 15 Year 2 pupils | 30 Year 2 pupils | 30 Year 3 pupils | 15 Year 3 pupils & 15 Year 4 pupils | 30 Year 4 pupils | 30 Year 5 pupils | 15 Year 5 pupils & 15 Year 6 pupils | 30 Year 6 pupils |
| **45 pupils** | | **90 pupils** | | | **90 pupils** | | | **90 pupils** | | |

**How the Curriculum is Planned**

The curriculum is planned so that all pupils have the same experience and access:

- Maths and English – is planned weekly within each phase (Early Years, Years 1 and 2, Years 3 and 4, Years 5 and 6) and is adapted accordingly for the needs of pupils within each class;
- All other subjects are planned within a two-year rolling programme which is also adapted according to individual, or class needs. It also means that pupils do not repeat any learning.

**Working Together with Parents and Carers**

- During all New Intake Open Evenings and parent tours, mixed age classes are clearly explained and parents/carers are encouraged to consider this arrangement before making a decision about attending Amblecote Primary School;
- A copy of this policy is on the website for all parents/carers to access.

**Complaints and Appeals**

- Initially, any concerns should be shared with the class teacher and Phase Leaders who will be able to reassure parents/carers about their child's allocated class. The organisation of classes is carefully considered to enhance the best chances of educational success for all pupils at school. The motivation when organising classes is to protect the academic, social and emotional interests of the whole school, making the best decision in the interests of all pupils, not one pupil or one year group;
- Parents cannot refuse to have their child placed in any class at Amblecote Primary School. This is a managerial decision based on this policy;

- The Governing Body has delegated the responsibility of day-to-day management of the school to the Headteacher and Senior Leadership Team. If there are extreme and exceptional circumstances regarding a pupil, on a rare occasion, the governing body may consider an individual case;
- If a parent feels that the school has not adhered to the Mixed Age Classes Policy, they can raise this in the first instance with the staff at school, and if still not satisfied, they should raise their concerns through the Complaints Policy available from the school's office or on the school website.