

Ashby Hill Top Primary School



Policy for Setting Classes

Signed on behalf of the Governing Body _____

Date : May 2018
Review May 2019

At Ashby Hill Top Primary School, we have an intake of 45 pupils per year group. This means that there are too many children for one class per year group, but not enough to form two full classes. Consequently, most children at Ashby Hill Top will be in a mixed age class.

Class Setting in Foundation Stage

In 2018/19 there will be two classes in Foundation Stage, these classes are situated in an open plan base in the main building. Staff work with the children, visit their pre-schools and homes prior to them starting school. We check that everyone has someone else to work with so that no child becomes an isolated learner. We also consider the gender makeup of the class.

Class Setting in Key Stage One

The Key Stage One (three mixed Y1/2 classes) children are in three adjacent classrooms sharing an outdoor learning area.

The Year 1 and 2 classes are divided up using the following criteria:

- Pupils are listed by age and gender and then allocated amongst the three classes using “*one child in class A, the next in class B*” type system, this ensures a fair range of age and gender. We check that everyone has someone else to work with so that no child becomes an isolated learner and that every child either has at least one friend and other children that they are familiar with.
- Further consideration is then given to pupils with SEN to ensure they are in a place where they will learn best and to ensure there is not a significant number of pupils with additional needs in any given class.
- We also consider multiple births (some siblings need to be together, but some are better apart). This is the one *exception upon which we may consult parents*.
- Consideration is also given to behaviour issues and the impact this may have in specific circumstances

We do not set classes by friendship groups alone, but by the importance of where they will learn best.

Class Setting in Key Stage Two

In Key Stage Two, children are in 6 classes. Currently this comprises: Three classes of Year 3 & 4 children and three classes of Year 5 & 6 children

Key Stage 2

The year groups are divided into boys and girls and listed by age. We do this because we have several year groups that have a very uneven mix of boys & girls. We then allocate them to the classes using age bands to ensure a mix of age and gender.

Entering year 3 we also **use pupil voice** where children provide a list of friends, setting the classes takes this into consideration to ensure that every child is with at least one friend on their list. The three classes in each team will work together and follow the same curriculum.

We then consider if ***any exceptions may apply*** to children being in the class that they are in. Exceptions **may** include:

- Multiple births (some siblings need to be together, but some are better apart). This is the one exception upon which we may consult parents.
- Number of boys & girls in the class
- Behaviour– pupil clashes/groups of pupils clashing
- Special Educational Needs - SEN
- Exceptional circumstances that will affect a child’s emotional or educational well being

Requests from Parents

We do not take into account requests regarding preferences from children or parents about which class they would like their child in or if they can “be with their friends”. This is because, it would be impossible to take all requests into account and we must make a decision that is in the best interests of all the children in the school both educationally, socially and emotionally.

As the decision about which class a child goes into is based on confidential information, we do not explain the full decision about class-setting to parents or children as this would mean discussing confidential matters about other children.

Mixed Age Classes

We are aware that having children in a mixed age class or in a class where a child is not with all of his/her friends can be a concern for parents. We work hard to ensure that children are not disadvantaged by which class they are in. For example:

- Teachers in ALL key stages plan topics in teams and our curriculum is skills based to ensure all children are working at the appropriate level for their ability.
- Within the age groups – year 3/4 and year 5/6 Children in Key Stage Two are set by ability for mathematics and may have a different teacher for maths than their usual class teacher
- Some year groups have specific events that they participate in for example:
 - ☑ Year 3 have SoundStart lessons (instrumental music lessons for a year)
 - ☑ Year 4 have swimming and go on a residential visit to Beaumanor Hall
 - ☑ Year 6 have a residential visit; they have Year 6 “jobs” around school.

In addition, teachers arrange special days and topics throughout the year when children from different classes get the opportunity to work together. Our school merit team system allows children of different year groups in different classes to sometimes get together too. Each teacher has a cross phase buddy class with which they plan a range of activities throughout the year e.g. shared learning during book week.

In order to ensure parents are aware of the way we set classes:

- We explain it to parents when they are shown round school before making the decision to apply for a place at Ashby Hill Top
- We explain this system when we discuss transition to our parents (Yr F to Yr1, Yr2 – Yr3)
- We have a copy of this policy on our school website and available to parents upon request.

If parents have a question about the class their child is in:

- They should make an appointment to see the headteacher, who will answer the question to the best of her ability. Parents must, however, be aware that explaining classes is very difficult without talking about other people’s children. We are unable to break confidentiality and so it may not be possible to answer parents concerns fully.
- If parents are unhappy with the explanation from the headteacher, they should direct their question to the Chair of Governors or follow the schools complaints procedure.
- Parents must, however, be aware that class setting is a professional decision and parental “preferences” will not be taken into account.