



Hotham Primary School

Mixing Classes Guidance (Academic Year 2021-22 onwards)

The following guidance applies to year groups where there is no longer a Bilingual and Open class stream system, i.e. cohorts which started at Hotham from September 2019 onwards.

Mixing Classes

Each year the leadership team will discuss year groups and make a decision. Children will always be mixed at the end of Reception and we also consider mixing classes at regular key points of transition such as the end of Year 2 and Year 4.

The mixing of year groups is normal practice for a two-form entry school. Our main reason for mixing pupil classes throughout school is to improve relationships, so that over a child's journey through school they are given the opportunity to connect and re-connect with all of the children in their year group, building strong, positive connections.

Rationale

The reason we mix classes is:

- 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 leadership team
- We will always consider what is in the best interests of individual children and classes as a whole when making decisions.
- We will always consider the happiness and welfare of the children and will take into consideration existing friendship groups when we create new classes.
- We will communicate the criteria for class mixing in an open and transparent way

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 leadership team. There will be consistent factors for teachers to consider in order to harmonise the classes for the maximum benefit of the children:

- Pupil 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

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.

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.

The children in our reception already work as one year group very closely together. 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, before the new classes' transition day, where the children spend time with their new teacher and classmates.