

Parents' questions and comments about class organisation and benefits in mixed classes within key stages.

Logistics

1	Will there be room in assembly for all the children?	Yes, the hall was expanded by the LA to take into account the additional numbers.
2	What would be the Teacher/TA make-up of the class? How many teachers will be teaching the 45 children? How many teachers in each year group?	Each class (of up to 30 children) will have a teacher and either a full-time or part-time TA. There will be 3 teachers and 3 TAs in 3 parallel classes of up to 30 children.
3	Would all 45 children be taught in one classroom? Transitioning – What's going to happen and when? How will classes be organised? E.g. Years 3&4?	No, there would be up to 30 children per classroom. Classes will be organised within key stages (Early Years Foundation Stage, Key Stage 1 – Y1 & Y2, Lower Key Stage 2 – Y3 & Y4, Upper Key Stage 2 – Y5 & Y6). There will be a gradual transition to the new structure starting in September 2018 when Years 3 and 4 will be formed into 3 parallel classes – each with their own teacher and TA.
4	How will classes be chosen? What are the assessment criteria for reorganisation? E.g. If splitting by ability how will they be assessed?	No additional assessments will need to be made. Current Teacher Assessment which is informed by daily formative assessment, marking, weekly and termly summative assessments and the results of external testing (Phonics Screening Check / Key Stage 1 SATs / Key Stage 2 SATs). The classes will not be split by ability and there will be no top / middle / bottom class.
5	Is the school big enough to accommodate all the children?	Yes. The hall has been expanded. There is a new Early Years building which provides 65 additional places daily. A room on the 1 <sup>st</sup> floor has been converted into a classroom. The existing Nursery and Reception classrooms have been refurbished and are now used by Key stage 1. Playtimes and lunchtimes have been 'staggered'. Morning registration has been extended ('Fix-It' time). The children are now used to these routines.

Groups of children

6	Frees children from labels such as "low" or "high", giving constant motivation to improve.	This will be constantly stressed to the children.
7	The ones who are struggling can receive more intense assistance.	Where appropriate additional provision to support quality first teaching will be made – as it does at the moment. The progress of all children across the school is carefully tracked and monitored throughout the year. The school takes a flexible but considered approach in deciding how best to support and/or challenge pupils to ensure that they reach their potential and our high expectations. This will continue.
8	If they are split by ability they will be with children of the same ability. The higher ability can assist those struggling. How will the classes be split?	The balance of abilities in classes can be taken into account. For example, almost half of all children in the school who have identified special needs are in just 2 classes. Class structure can be decided on by more than just age. Another example is gender. Some classes in school have very few girls compared to boys. This can also be addressed. We will create 3 balanced, parallel classes. We have raised the bar for all children and expectations are higher now than they have ever been. Having listened to your concerns/questions, we will take into account (in no particular order of importance) the following criteria: Gender Year of birth Term of birth Friendships Ability SEN EAL
9	Children extend friendship groups across year groups. We had mixed classes at Primary School – I felt it was a good thing; we had more friends when we got to high school, as the year 6 friends were already there. Greater diversity and responses in lessons. Team building skills developed more. Setting classes to ability could stretch and challenge gifted and talented children	We will have 3 parallel classes with no hierarchy.
10	Impact of how children would cope with having different abilities?	This is already the case. Children are used to being part of a mixed ability class and teachers are used to planning for mixed abilities within their classes.

11	<p>Mixed class – perhaps more able children and more competition so concern about less able children.</p> <p>Will classes be flexible for children to move up or down mid-year?</p> <p>Will there be any mid-term/year child movement between classes? Assess, promote, demote?</p>	<p>There will be no 'promotion' / 'demotion' as there will be no ability hierarchy between the classes.</p>
12	<p>Will children be split for core subjects? And will children be split by ability?</p> <p>How are different curriculum lessons going to work?</p>	<p>Children will be taught in their class groups as they are now for all subjects apart from Maths. All children will be taught the objectives from their key stage group and are expected to 'master' the learning objectives.</p> <p>In English, science and other curriculum areas, the National Curriculum sets out learning outcomes to be achieved by the end of key stages (Y2 – Key Stage 1, Y4 – Lower Key Stage 2 and Y6 – Upper Key Stage 2)</p>
13	<p>Is it streamlining classes back to one class per year?</p>	<p>No. The pattern described above will continue unless the Local Authority change our Admission Number from 45 children per year.</p>
14	<p>If the children are mixed in to different classes next year will they stay with the same class/children for the rest of their school years?</p>	<p>It is expected that children will remain in the same year/cohort group.</p>
15	<p>The impact of the size for children with additional needs?</p>	<p>There will be an opportunity for each class to have a balance of all children. This includes those with additional needs. The provision for SEN children across the school will not change</p>
16	<p>Different children to mix will lead to the potential for new friends.</p> <p>How will the transition be managed among children? E.g. if by ability, child is highest achieving in class then goes to "bottom" of mixed year?</p>	<p>Ability will not be the deciding factor. Sound educational decisions will be made which also take into account friendships.</p>

#### Children's Self Esteem

17	<p>Children in current Year 1 don't mix with Reception children so how will you build friendships?</p> <p>Will children stay with friends?</p>	<p>Children do mix together; assemblies, playtimes, lunchtimes, phonics, school council, sports day and special friends. There are also additional enrichment and engagement activities, before and after school clubs and activities. There are many friendships across the age groups. Additional provision will be made for children to mix together when new classes are agreed.</p>
18	<p>Increases older child's level of independence.</p> <p>Older children have the opportunity to become leaders.</p> <p>Self-esteem will grow working with peers of varying ages.</p> <p>More able children become role models and gain satisfaction from helping others – builds confidence</p> <p>Mixed classes might develop team building skills.</p>	<p>We cannot admit fewer than 45 children per year. That isn't the school's decision. We cannot build any more classrooms on the site. The suggested class structure meets the demands of the increase in pupil numbers.</p> <p>All children in school have the opportunity to show leadership qualities through the varied opportunities that we offer (including support for new children, peer-support and play-leaders) through our broad and balanced curriculum.</p>
19	<p>Will there be an opportunity to appeal the class structure if we/the children are unhappy?</p>	<p>We cannot go back to admitting less than 45 children per year (a Local Authority decision). We can't build any more classrooms on site. The suggested class structure meets the demand of the increase in pupil numbers.</p>

#### Parents' questions and comments about the curriculum in mixed classes within key stages.

#### Logistics

20	<p>Rolling curriculum planning – so no overlap in theme?</p> <p>How do you stop a child going into a mixed class repeating their previous year?</p> <p>What extra training and support will be given to teachers? How will this be funded?</p>	<p>The school has been working towards this for the last 3 years in staff meeting and INSET time and with an external consultant. No additional training required now other than that provided in our current staff meeting and INSET pattern. We have already developed and introduced a rolling 2-year curriculum programme which ensures coverage of the whole national curriculum for all subjects.</p> <p>English and science programmes of study are already grouped in the national curriculum into Key Stage 1 / Lower Key Stage 2 and Upper Key Stage 2. The management structure of the school has been amended so that there is a member of the Senior Management Team in each key stage with responsibility for that key stage. Assessment arrangements will remain the same.</p>
21	<p>How will current class teachers be briefed so they can answer our questions?</p> <p>Class teachers have continually been briefed as to the progress of the expansion</p>	<p>Class teachers will be integral to determining the next classes as they are the ones who have the most detailed knowledge of the children. We expect to answer all the questions raised by parents through this consultation process.</p>
22	<p>Are you going to give teachers and TAs extra time for planning and differentiation as they will be affected by changes? Will staff get extra training?</p>	<p>Staff planning, preparation and assessment time (PPA) will be amended so that all teaching staff in a key stage have their PPA together. Staff already have above their entitlement with additional time being given for assessment.</p>

23	How are the school going to mix the classes? E.g. 1/2 2/3 3/4 or just in the key stage?	Classes will be Key Stage based as described earlier. There are no plans to have cross-stage classes e.g. for Reception +Year 1 or Year 2 + Year 3.
24	Are classes mixed again each September? How does this work with Y5 & Y6 when Y6 leave?	The classes will be reviewed every year. When Year 6 children leave the children in the Year 5 / 6 class will stay together and the children in Year 4 will join Upper Key Stage 2.
25	In terms of classroom size are teachers going to be able to teach efficiently with so many children squashed in?  Classroom space – 45 children in one classroom?	No classes should be above 30. Some of our existing classes have 32 children and have been bigger. This is not ideal and the changes will address this.  Some classes are too small with just 17 and 20 children. This is not financially sustainable and doesn't provide for balanced classes as it can restrict opportunities for developing friendships.

#### Children's self esteem

26	How are you communicating this to children?	This will begin next half term. We will explain why we need to mix classes and how we have made our decisions. We have planned opportunities for children in the new mixed-age classes to get to know one another before September.
27	How will Gifted and Talented provision continue?	There will be no change.
28	Are class splits going to create division between pupils?  Are any children going to feel held back?  Children not labelled according to ability.  Mixed classes may hold back some children and single out others. Will children know if they have been moved up or down?	As there will be no hierarchy in ability in the classes, there will be no 'moving up' or 'moving down'
29	How will it affect children's friendship groups?	The changes will allow for children to extend their friendship groups whilst at the same time maintaining existing friendships.

#### Progress

30	Careful differentiation for all children's abilities and ages – how will you meet this?	We will continue to monitor each child's individual progress closely. Within each class, each teacher already differentiates for a very wide range of abilities. This will not change.
31	How will P.E. classes be grouped? Will the older children be challenged physically?	Children will take part in PE with their class. Many of the competitive sports we take part in are directed at year groups so the children will still have some opportunity to be 'challenged'. However, more of the competitive sports are now organised for Key Stage groups (Key Stage 1 / Lower Key Stage 2 / Upper Key Stage 2).

#### Parental concerns

32	What about SEN children? Communication and transition?	There will be no change – children with SEN will continue to be well supported.
33	What input will teachers/parents/pupils have in this decision?	Parents were originally invited to a consultation about the proposals in 2013. We cannot change the LAs decision to increase the admission number to 45. This has been a positive decision for the Cale Green community. It means that an additional 105 children and their families can go to their local community school. The whole process has been transparent and the views of all stakeholders have been listened to.
34	What mechanisms will be in place for feeding back issues/concerns following transition?  What if parents feel children are being held back?	Parents will be asked to follow the usual process if they have a concern by talking to their child's class teacher in the first instance.
35	How do you propose to communicate changes to parents? Playground gossip isn't good enough.  Communication needs to be clearer.	We agree that playground gossip isn't good enough, which is why parents have been informed that the changes were necessary right from the start of the process in September 2013.  We have had an open meeting for parents, we have requested parent questions and views at Parent Consultation and will be holding another meeting to discuss and answer these. The head teacher has met with parents as requested.
36	Will it cause division between parents? Rivalry between the ability classes?	The classes will be parallel classes not streamed.
37	Can resources be made available to parents? E.g. not just curriculum but how implemented in classes?  What if parents don't agree with how the children are placed?	Parents will have a theme overview (similar to what we have now) for each Key Stage – published on the website. Parents are able to visit classes 4 times a year. They have recently observed maths lessons. The school's curriculum is on the website, as are links to the national curriculum. When parents request it, teachers meet with them before or after school. There are 3 parent consultations each year. Children's books are always available.

**General Comments**

38	<p>I feel lucky that we have had 2 years of small class sizes where children have had a great foundation Class tree names is a lovely idea - reduces hierarchy.</p> <p>Better communication – feel worse now after meeting, no answers given, very confused and anxious.</p> <p>Feel lucky that school have not rushed this.</p> <p>Feel as a school that mixes in general this can work well.</p> <p>Thank you for today.</p> <p>Thank you for all your hard work and providing such a fantastic environment for our son.</p> <p>Thanks you for everything you do for our children. We can tell you genuinely care about them.</p> <p>Keep up the good work. I would never send my children to any other school.</p>	<p>Children currently in Year 3 have been taught from class sizes of 22 or below for Nursery / Reception / Year 1 / Year 2 / Year 3. We will still have 2 teachers for our 40 place Nursery and 2 teachers for our 45 place Reception class.</p>
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Thank you for your comments and questions – these have helped to shape and formulate our decisions about school organisation in future years.