



5<sup>th</sup> March 2020

Dear Parents/Carers

As we are now in spring term II; we have reflected on our children's learning journeys so far, as well as the amazing ones to follow and with this in mind, we feel that it would be beneficial for year 3 classes to split as they move forward into year 4.

The year 2 cohort that is due to join us in September 2020, is of a lower number; therefore, we will be mixing our current year 3 children with the year 2 cohort to create five classes of mixed Y3 and 4.

Whilst I appreciate that this may be daunting, it can also be very advantageous, mixing children of different ages together.

Many schools in Rotherham and nationally have mixed classes and as part of our curriculum development this year, all staff will be working together to ensure that we have a progressive two-year programme for all our children to thrive and achieve.

I know that you will have numerous questions; many of which I have tried to answer below:

## Frequently Asked Questions:

### ***How will two year groups be taught alongside each other in one classroom?***

All children develop at different rates; therefore, the oldest child in the class may not achieve better than the youngest one. We always aim for all our children to be taught to their individual academic needs; tailoring the curriculum to ensure that support is given when needed or challenging further to explore concepts in greater depth or learn something new.

### ***How will teachers plan, ensuring coverage of both the year group curriculums, and preventing repetition of content?***

With the exception of maths, English and science, the curriculum content is not split into separate year group content; it is determined by the end of the key stage. Currently, subject leaders are developing a progressive curriculum for the children to work through in each year group. History and geography, for example, will be taught on a two-year cycle, ensuring that concepts are progressively built upon.

For maths, English and science, the objectives will be closely matched, whilst deepening learning for the older children, where appropriate. All curriculum plans will be aligned with the National Curriculum expectations.

### ***How will we ensure the highest academic aspirations for all our children?***

Both national and local data for the end of KS2 outcomes highlights no negative impacts on children's academic achievements, learning in mixed aged class teaching. This is supported by educational research, with some studies suggesting that children often perform better when placed in classes with a bigger age range.

Please be reassured that any children, who find aspects of the curriculum more challenging will be supported in the same way they have been in single year classes. Children, working above the expected standard, will be provided with work which both deepens their understanding and progresses their learning further to explore deeper concepts. As part of our mastery curriculum, learning will continue to be focused on explaining reasoning and problem solving knowledge, extending our children's understanding without them having to access a separate curriculum.

***How will we ensure that children cope socially and emotionally with changes in their current class structures?***

We believe that the children will thrive, forming wider friendships, benefiting from interacting with a broader group of children, creating a purposeful classroom atmosphere of collaborative learning – naturally developing children’s social and emotional skills.

***How will we create the new classes?***

Each of the five classes will be a Y3/4 mix, which will ensure a consistency and equity of provision across the cohort and enable teachers to plan, deliver and share excellence.

We will consider a number of factors when creating the classes, both from the year 2 children coming to us and for when the year 3 children transition into year 4. Pre-existing friendships will be a common thread, as will the gender mix of pupils, the current attainment of children and any other learning, social or emotional needs. This will be done with close liaison with both our staff and the infants.

We also want to work with you as well to consider the children’s preferences; whilst learning is key, we value children’s opinions too and want them to feel happy and safe in their new classes. Therefore, I will be writing to you again later this term, to ask your children to identify three friends they wish to be with, endeavouring to guarantee a minimum of one of these choices.

I will make every effort to inform both you and your child of the class groups at the earliest opportunity once this is decided. As I’m sure you can appreciate, this will take time, because we want to ensure that these new groupings are right.

During the summer term, we always plan a thorough transition programme to fully orientate the children into their new classes, familiarising them with their new adults and peers.

If you would like to discuss this further with myself, please feel free to get in touch. We have a very open door policy and I want to continue the strong relationships we have with you, which I greatly value.

Yours sincerely



Mrs L Robson  
Acting Headteacher