

different classes and teachers work together on a number of topics throughout the school year - and this is particularly encouraged where composite classes are formed.

You should be confident that the professionalism of the staff in your child's school will ensure that your child will always work within a programme appropriate for his/her age, ability and aptitude. Similarly teachers will always wish to support pupils in forming and developing friendships.

When will we know that a composite class has been formed?

Classroom organisation and staffing is a complex matter. However Head Teachers will make every effort to finalise class organisation and inform parents as soon as the information is available in the Summer Term.

More Information

If you require any more information about class structures in your child's school or about composite classes in general, please contact your child's school in the first instance. Your child's Head Teacher will be happy to meet with you to discuss class structure and your child's progress.

This leaflet is issued by

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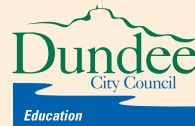
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A Guide for Parents on Composite Classes



What is a composite class?

Groups of pupils who begin primary school together during a single school year are referred to as a stage. Stages are normally referred to as Primary 1 to Primary 7. Classes are formed in two ways -

A single stage class contains children from one stage - for instance all from Primary 4. Within each stage there will be a range of ages, abilities and stages of development.

A composite class contains children from more than one stage - for instance a class with some Primary 4 pupils and some Primary 5 pupils. You should know that the range of ability and age in a composite class will be the same (and perhaps smaller) than in a single stage class.

Why are composite classes formed?

Schools are staffed to agreed standards, mainly based on the number of pupils in the school. However, the number of children in each stage will vary. For example there may be 17 Primary 4 pupils and 39 Primary 5 pupils. National agreements on class sizes mean that it would not be possible to form a Primary 4 class of 17 and a Primary 5 class of 39. Instead the school might form a composite class containing 17 Primary 4 pupils and 8 Primary 5 pupils with one teacher and the remaining 31 pupils would become a Primary 5 class with another teacher. This means that Head Teachers are making decisions to organise the classes to make best use of available staff, resources and space to meet pupils' needs.

Some children are never part of a composite class during their primary school career. Others, particularly in small schools around the country, may never experience anything else.

Throughout Scotland, composite classes have been in place in schools for over thirty years.

How do schools ensure that each pupil is working at an appropriate level?

The national guidelines 5-14 require that every pupil should have learning experiences which are appropriate to their own level of development. Every pupil follows a planned programme of learning that aims to help them progress and achieve their potential. This applies whether your child is in a composite class or a single year group class.

The school will also provide opportunities for pupils from the same stage to work together. In this way pupils will continue to identify with their own year group especially at important times such as transfer to secondary school.

You should know that research commissioned by the Scottish Executive concluded that "there is no evidence to show that composite classes affect pupils adversely. It is possible that pupils may gain socially from the experience." This is borne out by the findings of HMIE inspections of schools.

How many pupils are in a composite class?

The conditions of service for teachers set a maximum class size for a composite class of 25 pupils. For single stage classes the maximum is 33 (30 in P1-P3). It should be remembered that this is a maximum - there may be fewer children in a class.

How are composite classes formed?

Dundee City Council has issued guidance to Head Teachers on this matter.

Normally a composite class will be formed on the basis of language and / or mathematics working groups. This means that pupils working at broadly the same level and pace in language and / or mathematics are grouped together.

Are friendships taken into account?

You should be reassured that Head Teachers will take this into account when deciding how to form a composite class.

Children, and particularly young children, usually make new friendships very quickly and can cope far better with change than adults imagine!

In addition it should be remembered that children do not spend all of their time in school as a class unit - they spend time in the playground mixing with all of the school's other pupils. Additionally