

# Busby Primary School – A Guide to Composite Classes



## **What is a Composite Class?**

Primary Schools have pupils at seven broad year stages, Primary 1 to Primary 7. A year stage is defined as a group of children entering Primary education at a common date.

Composite classes are those where children of more than one year stage are grouped together to form a class.

## **Your Child in a Composite Class**

Some children are never part of a composite class, whilst others never experience anything else. You should be confident that the professionalism of the staff in this school will ensure that your child will always work within a programme appropriate for his/her age, ability and aptitude. At both school and Education Authority level, assessment procedures exist to ensure that your child is making good progress within the nationally agreed curriculum guidelines.

National Guidelines on the curriculum indicate that children should proceed through learning experiences tailored to fit his/her personal level of attainment. This means that children in all classes will follow programmes designed to help them progress at his/her own level. This applies to all children regardless of whether or not they are in a composite or single year class.

In addition, the school will make every effort to involve children of any one year group in activities which bring the whole year group together. In this way children will be able to continue to identify with children of the same age especially at important times such as transfer to High School. At the same time the school will also try to ensure that the natural identity of each primary class group is maintained.

## **Why are Composite Classes formed?**

Schools are staffed to agreed standards based on the total number of children, however, the numbers of children at each year stage will vary. This means that Head Teachers are required to take management decisions to organise classes to make best use of available staff, resources and space.

Balancing up the various factors involves both educational and organisational considerations.

## **How are Composite Classes Formed?**

In line with the Teachers' Contract and the statutory requirement the maximum class size in P1 is 25, P2-P3 is 30 and in P4-P7 it is 33.

The maximum number of pupils in any composite class is 25.

The Head Teacher will structure classes based on advice given by the Education Authority.

Our composite classes will normally be formed on the basis of core curricular working groups. This means that children working at broadly the same pace and level. Such an arrangement will make for the most efficient use of teaching resources.

We also take into account social factors that will support children's continuous development. Every child will have a least one friend they have identified in their class.

# Busby Primary School – A Guide to Composite Classes



## **When will a Composite Class be formed?**

Normally such classes will be formed before the start of a new school year so that all involved know what class structures exist for the new school session.

In certain circumstances class restructuring may have to take place during the summer break or after the session has started. However, such occurrences will be very exceptional.

## **Consultation with Parents/Carers**

Parents/Carers will be kept informed on annual class review arrangements.

If you are concerned about decisions being made, please contact the school. We will be happy to meet with you to answer questions regarding class information and how it might affect your child.

## **Frequently asked questions**

### **Why do schools have composite classes?**

Schools have composite classes for a number of reasons.

- There can be too many children at one stage to be taught in one class but not enough for two classes.
- The school roll as a whole is not large enough to provide staffing to teach each stage separately due to low or high numbers of children at one or more stages

### **Will my child be held back a year if he/she is in a composite class?**

- No. Our curriculum and assessment guidelines provide a framework for pupil centre learning and all children experience a curriculum suited to their age, ability and stage.

### **Will my child always be in a composite class?**

- The need for composite classes changes as the roll of the school fluctuates.

### **Will my child be able to interact with the rest of his/her stage?**

- Yes. Our staff will timetable opportunities across the curriculum which will enable all pupils of one stage to have time together.

### **How will my child be taught in a composite class?**

- Teachers will ensure that all children work within programmes suitable for their age, aptitude and ability. Your child will not be 'held back' or 'struggle to keep up' in any class.
- All our teachers are trained to work with mixed ability classes whether in a straight year group or in a composite class. In all Primary classes there are wide ranges of abilities and all children will learn in different ways, responding to a variety of methods and resources. Our teachers are well able to adapt to the different needs within any class and plan accordingly.
- There is no evidence to support the view that pupils in composite classes perform either above or below that of pupils in single-age classes.