 Townhead Primary 

Composite classes and how they Work

In this leaflet we have attempted to answer some frequently asked questions about how we organise classes. However, if you require more information, or would like to discuss this further, please contact a member of our Management Team through the school office.

**What is a Composite Class?**

In Scotland, primary schools organise classes from Primary 1, through to Primary 7. A composite class is made up of pupils from more than one year group or stage. For example a Primary 5/4 class will have pupils from Primaries 4 and 5 both working with the same teacher in the same class. In some small schools there may be pupils from three or more stages working together. In Townhead Primary we could have composite classes throughout the school each year.

**Does North Lanarkshire Council have the right to form composite classes?**

Yes. The Scottish Government acknowledges composite classes as a valid method of class organisation that is available to the Head Teacher to ensure the school functions within the limits if the law.

**Why are composite classes necessary?**

There are three main factors that affect class organisation within any primary school in Scotland.

1. **Staffing**

The number of teachers allocated to a school is set by the local authority and is generally directed related to the number of children on the roll.

1. **Class Size**

Class sizes in Scotland are restricted as follows:

Primary 1- 25 pupils

Primary 2 and Primary 3- 30 pupils

Primary 4, 5, 6 & 7- 33 pupils

Composite Classes

All stages- 25 pupils

1. **Accommodation**

The number of classes formed can be affected by the number of classrooms available.

**How are children identified for a composite class?**

In forming a composite class, staff working closely together to discuss the year group as a whole, taking into consideration academic ability and social cohesion. It is normal practice to identify a group of learners within one year group who are similar working ability and who work well together. This helps to reduce the range of different abilities within the class. When creating a Primary 1 composite class, information from nursery is used as an indicator of friendships, maturity and confidence.

**How are children taught in a composite class?**

 Exactly the same way they are taught in a single-stage class. No matter the class, our teachers are trained to teach pupils in ability groups, or individually, according to their needs. We are committed to getting it right for every child, regardless of their classmates. Every class has children working at different ability levels. In every Scottish school, the curriculum is guided by a series of experiences and outcomes within a Curriculum for Excellence. Progress through this curriculum is determined by each child’s stage of development, not by their class.

**My child is in Primary 2 and is going into a P.2/1 class. How can a teacher settle the new intake without disadvantaging my child?**

In this case, Mrs Ferguson has committed to ensure that additional adult support is allocated to this class in order to help the new pupils settle, whilst ensuring the Primary 2 pupils do not waste any time in pushing on with their learning. The class teacher will make use of grouping arrangements to ensure your child’s educational journey is uninterrupted.

**Can I refuse to have my child taught in a composite class?**

No. The management of class organisation is the responsibility of the Head Teacher. As previously explained, class structure is decided after full consultation with teaching staff and all options considered before making a final decision on what is best for your child’s educational development. Where there is a specific concern about a child’s learning or progress, we have systems in place for consulting and communicating with parents on a more frequent basis if necessary

**When will I be informed if my child is to be in a composite class?**

 We will inform you of our proposed classes for the coming session as soon as our staffing and class organisation has been finalised. Normally this will be in June, however, circumstances may arise where the school will need to adjust classes to accommodate an unexpected intake of pupils. This can happen at any time of the school year and, by law, the school must provide places if there is capacity in the school. If my child is in a composite class, will they continue in that class throughout their entire primary school education? We cannot guarantee whether your child will remain in a composite class for successive years or not. The overall school role, staffing complement, class size limits and accommodation available can all change over time, thus affecting long term planning.

**Will my child have opportunities to work with other pupils from their year group?**

 Yes. We will take every available opportunity to allow your child to maintain peer group and social relationships. Your child will continue to play and socialise with friends during breaks when circumstances allow. In addition, teachers from the same stage work together on planning a range of lessons throughout the year.

**How do teachers feel about composite classes?**

Composite classes have existed nationally, in North Lanarkshire and here in Townhead for many years. Teachers are trained to cater for a range of ability, maturity, personal and social needs within any one class. Looking at our current and projected rolls, we will have composite classes at Townhead for the foreseeable future. Our staff are familiar with this way of working and plan closely with their stage partners to ensure pupils from the same stage are progressing at an appropriate pace. The key benefit of composite classes is that numbers cannot exceed 25 pupils, unlike straight classes which can have a maximum of 33 pupils.