



Composite Classes in Primary Schools

Information for Parents and
frequently asked questions



What is a composite class?

A composite class is defined to be a class in which there are pupils at more than one stage of the primary school. In most cases, a composite class will comprise of pupils at only 2 stages e.g. P4 & P5 = P5/4 but it is possible, particularly in smaller schools that a composite class could contain pupils from 3 or more stages.

The school makes every effort to involve pupils in any one-year group in activities which bring the whole year group together. In this way, pupils will be able to continue to identify with children of the same age, especially at important times such as transfer to secondary school. At the same time, the school ensures that the natural identity of each primary class group is maintained.

What is the maximum number of pupils in a class?

Renfrewshire Council's normal maximum number of pupils in a single-year class is 25 for P1, 30 for P2 and P3, and 33 for P4-7. The maximum number of pupils in a composite class is 25. Within these classes, pupils are organised into 'working groups' with peers from their own year group who are working at broadly the same level and pace in literacy and numeracy. This arrangement ensures teaching resources are used most effectively while supporting appropriate progression for all pupils.

How are pupils selected to be in a composite class?

Where a composite class is being formed, specific criteria has been provided by the council. In forming new classes, full account must be taken of existing successful groupings of pupils.

"A number of pupils with broadly the same attainment levels who show the capacity for working well as a learning group"

*Renfrewshire Council
Structuring Classes in the Primary School
A guide for parents*

At Dargavel Primary, we use literacy and numeracy groupings as well as consideration of the best mix of pupils to support positive class dynamics and children's wellbeing. Please note that these learning and working groups are always kept within the child's own year group; children are never grouped by ability across different year groups.

Where a single year class and a composite class are being formed at the same stages, the Senior Leadership Team, class teacher and support staff (and where appropriate Pre-5 colleagues) will make use of their professional judgement and all available information, including friendships groups or wider needs of pupils, where appropriate to form the two classes.



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What is a typical age range within any composite class?

The age range in a composite class is typically around 2 to 2.5 years at most, which is only slightly wider than a standard single-year class.

It is helpful to know that within *any* single year group in Scotland, there is already a natural age span of up to 18 months (for instance, a P1 class can have a child who turned four in February working alongside a child who is nearly six). Because our composite classes only ever bring together two consecutive stages (like P1/2 or P2/3), the children remain within a very tight, natural peer age group.

Will my child be working at the appropriate level within a composite class?

Absolutely. The national guidelines on the curriculum indicate that pupils should progress through learning experiences tailored to fit their individual level of attainment. This means that pupils in all classes will engage in work appropriate to their own level and will be supported and challenged to make progress. Please be confident that the professionalism of the staff in Dargavel Primary will ensure that your child will always work within a programme appropriate to his/her age, ability, strengths and support needs. At both school and local authority level, quality assurance procedures exist to ensure that your child is making appropriate progress within the nationally agreed curriculum guidelines. Curriculum for Excellence is about the totality of experiences which are planned for young people through their education. This means that children in all classes will move through *Experiences and Outcomes* to help them progress at their own level. This applies to all pupils regardless of whether they are in a composite or single stage class.

Keeping you informed

We always aim to share our annual class structures with families as early as we possibly can. However, finalising these arrangements relies on receiving confirmed staffing allocations from Renfrewshire Council. Because this information can sometimes take time to come through, it can be late June before we are in a position to share final classes. Please be assured that we closely monitor this and endeavour to let you know the arrangements as soon as everything is confirmed so that everyone feels prepared for the new school session.