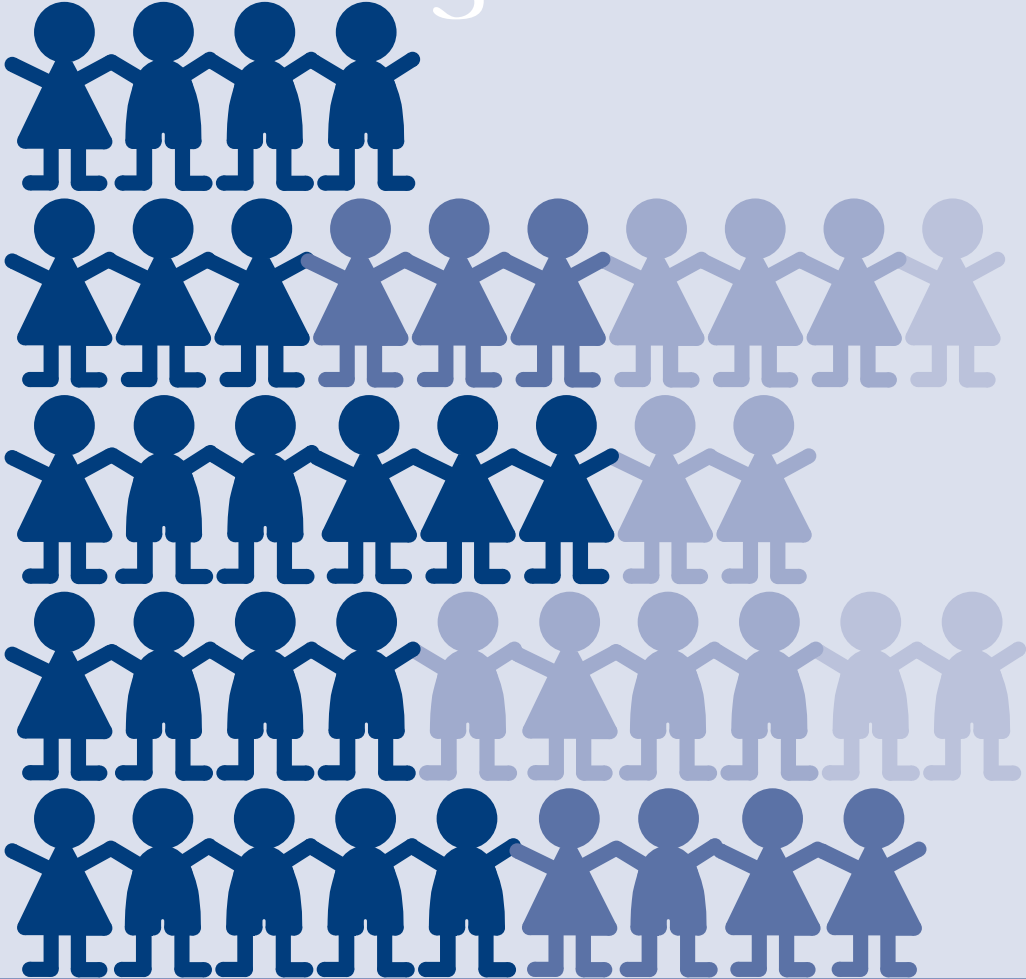


Classroom organisation



For the purposes of this document:-

- Parents will be taken to mean all parents and carers.

At the end of each school session, one of the questions often asked is.....

"What class is my child going in to next year?"

Schools are staffed to agreed standards based on the number of classes which require to be formed within the Government's class size maximum legislation (see below). In May/June each year Head Teachers are advised of the number of staff to which they are entitled, taking into account the number of pupils who transfer to secondary and the number of children who will form the new intake in August.

This means that Head Teachers are required to plan and organise classes based on the new roll of the school, the number of teachers and the accommodation within their school.

This leaflet has been prepared to explain classroom organisation and the different types of classes that are found in primary schools.

Class sizes

When planning the organisation of classes, the Council and its schools adhere to related legislation, national guidance and South Lanarkshire Council policy. These are -

- Primary aged pupils normally attend school for seven years
- Maximum class sizes ...
 - 25 for Primary 1
 - 30 for Primary 2 - 3
 - 33 for Primary 4 - 7
 - 25 for composite (multi-stage) classes
 - 19 for single classes which span Primary 1 to Primary 7

Curriculum organisation

Implementation of the national agreement 'A Teaching Profession for the 21st Century' provides the opportunity to further enhance the curricular experience for children within primary schools.

From August 2006 teachers have been allocated an additional 2.5 hours for the preparation of lessons and correction. There will be no change to the length of time children spend within class. This arrangement means that your son or daughter will be taught for about 2.5 hours each week by another teacher or teachers who will focus on a specialist area such as art, physical education, music, drama, religious education or modern languages.

How classes are formed

The national guidelines on the curriculum indicate that pupils should proceed through learning experiences tailored to fit their personal level of attainment. This means that pupils in all classes will follow programmes designed to help them progress at their own level.

Head Teachers have to consider many factors when forming classes:

- Roll (number of pupils in school)
- Staff allocated following agreed standards
- Class size limitations
- Accommodation available
- Efficient deployment of teaching and management staff

Head Teachers are required to organise classes to make best use of available staff, including staff who job-share, resources and space. Most schools have a mixture of single stage and multi-stage (composite) classes. Normally 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 a school session has started.

Class formations

The outcome of any classroom organisation is to ensure effective learning and teaching throughout the school.

Most primary schools have the following formations:

- Single-stage classes
- Composite (multi-stage) classes
- Group teaching

Research indicates that there is no significant difference in attainment levels across these different types of class formation. The characteristics of each of these types of grouping are as follows:

Single stage classes

Single-stage classes consist of pupils who have entered primary at a common date. The pupils will be roughly the same age but there may be up to around a year of difference between pupils in the same class. There is likely to be a wide range of attainment represented within the class. Most of the teaching will be done in groups, some of which, usually language and mathematics, will be formed according to the attainment of the pupils in those areas of the curriculum. This will enable the teacher to work with a group of pupils of roughly the same ability level.

Composite (multi-stage) classes

Composite or multi-stage classes consist of pupils who entered primary at different dates. Usually there are two single stages represented in a composite class but it is not uncommon, especially in rural areas, to have more than two stages represented. The range of attainment in a composite class is likely to be similar to that in a single-stage class since groupings will have been made on the basis of educational attainment across the different stages represented. Composite classes are normally formed on the basis of language and/or mathematics working groups. This means that pupils working broadly at the same pace and level in language and/or mathematics are grouped together. In addition, such an arrangement should make for the most efficient use of teaching resources. The maximum class sizes for composite classes are:

- 25 for most composite classes
- 19 for single classes which span Primary 1 to Primary 7

Groups

Children can also be taught in groups. The decision to arrange working groups within any class rests with the Head Teacher and staff of each individual school.

These include:

- ability groups (children working at the same attainment level)
- mixed ability groups (children of various attainment levels working together)
- social groups (chosen by pupils or for specific social interaction)
- whole class
- individuals

In some schools setting may also be used. A set is a group of children, usually drawn from different classes, with a common level of academic ability. They may or may not be taught by their own class teacher in a setting situation. Setting would take place during specifically timetabled parts of the day.

Setting is used to reduce the number of attainment groups which the teacher may teach at a given time, thus ensuring effective teaching and efficient use of staff resources. It is normal for sets to be formed for various areas of the curriculum, so that a pupil may be in different sets for language and mathematics depending on their attainment.

Other terms you may hear are:

- Team teaching - where more than one teacher works with a class for a specific area of the curriculum.
- Co-operative teaching - where a teacher's expertise is used in a specific curricular area with a group or class other than their own.

In school, teachers will ensure that your child will work within a programme appropriate for his/her age, ability and aptitude. At both school level and education authority level quality assurance procedures exist to ensure that your child is making good progress within the nationally agreed curriculum guidelines.

Further advice

The views of parents are important and if you feel you want to find out more about:

- why classes have been formed;
- your child's progress; or
- the sort of work programme your child will follow
- then please contact the Head Teacher of your child's school.

For more information or if you want this information in a different format or language, please phone 01698 454545 or email education@southlanarkshire.gov.uk

Learning and teaching November 2010

www.southlanarkshire.gov.uk