

La Moye School Mixing Classes Policy 2018

We believe our children learn best in an inclusive and supportive environment. From time to time we may decide there is a need to mix the two classes in a year group. As a two form of entry school this is an option that smaller schools do not have, and offers a range of benefits. We will not mix classes as a matter of course, but reserve the right to mix classes if we feel the need arises. In life, we are often thrown into new groups in almost everything we do (work, clubs, societies, families, friends). Coping with changes to our social groupings and learning to adapt ourselves to this change is normal and an important life skill.

Why might we decide to mix classes?

As children grow up and develop, friendships often change and mixing classes enables us to help children widen their friendships by mixing with new people. In addition, due to the way children enter our school, (one Nursery into two Reception classes, joined by new children from other Nursery provisions) and the way children come and go from time to time, this sometimes leaves us with two classes in a year group that are significantly different in one way or another.

These are some of the main reasons we may decide to mix classes:

- Significantly uneven gender split
- Significant difference in attainment between classes
- Significant difference in other key factors (English as an Additional Language, Special Educational Needs, Behavioural Needs etc).
- Significant difference in class numbers
- Significant and ongoing friendship issues or the need to widen friendships.
- Significant difference in the 'character' of one class compared to another due to the combination of personalities (one class being very quiet, another very spirited).

How will we mix classes?

- We will adhere to this policy in our process and approach.
- We discuss this as a team and decide on the rationale for mixing the classes. The class teachers lead the discussion because they know the children best.
- We inform children and parents in good time and consider their views (although we will make the final decision as we have to consider every child's needs).
- We use tools such as a 'sociogram' to find out more about children's friendships and views to aid our planning.
- We review the 'new' mix and see how this solves the issues identified.
- We will have a planned transition process so that children can get used to their new classes BEFORE the Summer holiday.

What if it does not work initially?

It will take time for a new class community to form and for new friendships to develop. This will be the first role of the new class teacher. It is natural for some children to have a few worries or feel a bit anxious at first. If a parent has significant concerns about their child, they should:

- Monitor their child, talk to them and reassure them. Explain that things will likely improve very quickly and settle down.
- Talk to the class teacher and see what support can be set up in class (for example moving places, setting up a buddy, encouraging a new friendship to develop, talking to the child.)
- If after two weeks the situation does not improve, speak to the Phase Leader, Deputy Headteacher or Headteacher to see what other options can be explored.

- Except in exceptional circumstances we will not consider another class move for this child- this usually does more harm than good and creates further unsettled feelings for all. We will not move a child because of a preference for one class teacher over another, all of our teachers are skilled professionals and have a responsibility to meet the needs of all children in their care.
- We understand change can be tricky and will listen and be supportive through the transition process.

A decision to mix classes will not be taken lightly. It will require considerable planning and preparation by class teachers and senior staff. It will also need consultation with both pupils and parents.

We hope that by being explicit about the process and rationale for mixing classes, parents and pupils will understand our thinking, and even if they ultimately do not agree with our decision, appreciate our openness and honesty.