



Cuckney Church of England Primary
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Dream, Believe, Achieve

'Nothing will be impossible with God' Luke 1:37

Tuesday 11th June 2024

RE: Class arrangements September 2024

Dear Sherwood Parents / Carers,

I have been contacted by a few parents from Sherwood class this week regarding the class arrangements for September 2024.

As your children move into Key Stage 2, concerns have arisen regarding the mixed age class containing 3 year groups.

Firstly, I would like to explain that Cuckney is a small rural primary school running 4 classes. There are 7 National Curriculum year groups which automatically makes mixed age classes necessary. Crudely, funding is allocated at an amount per pupil. The most accurate pupil number projection for next year is 120 on roll. This means we have enough funding to run 4 classes of approximately 30 children. This is a good position compared to some other primary schools who have to run classes that are much larger. At Key Stage 1, legally we have to adhere to a 30 pupil class size limit, whereas at Key Stage 2 classes are 'allowed' to be larger. At Cuckney we do all we can to ensure, where sensible, classes remain fairly even to ensure all children have similar access to 'teacher time'.

Many schools have a stable intake number called a Pupil Admissions Number (PAN). In a 1 form entry school this is usually 30 giving 1 whole class per cohort (academic school age year group). Our PAN is 20, which doesn't work easily, then this is further complicated by smaller year groups (our smallest at 9) and the larger year groups (largest 28)

Our current classes (23/24) are currently made up as follows –

Holbeck	R & Y1
Sherwood	Y 2
Langwith	Y3, Y4 & Y5
Welbeck	Y5 & Y6

In short, we have to respond to the, sometimes wildly, different cohort numbers. In the current case the year 2 children are in the largest cohort, meaning they are most likely to be split and the year 3 pupils are the lowest meaning they are most likely to be in 3 year mixed class. This year both of those cohorts feature in the same class. If you look at the illustration above you will see that the school has had to organise classes with the year 5 cohort split between 2 classes, as well as a 3 year mixed age class. I appreciate parental concerns as this would seem to be the first time this has impacted on your children.

To reassure you –

- Historically, Cuckney runs on mixed age classes. We have always operated with 2 years groups in a class, and often 3. It is rare to run a sole age class, as is the current set up for year 2
- Our curriculum has been designed to cater for mixed age classes and is available on the school website. Subjects are taught through 'topics' (substantive knowledge) where possible but the skills progression (disciplinary knowledge) is progressive each academic year. As a staff team we have worked hard to refine our curriculum to ensure it meets the needs of pupils however classes are arranged.
- Staff are highly skilled and experienced at catering for mixed aged classes, whether that be for 2 year groups or 3. Medium term plans detail all objectives for all year groups and adaption in learning take place to ensure all pupils continue to make progress.
- Where the curriculum requires single age cohorts, such as Relationships and Sex education, we use our Grade 4 TAs to deliver the curriculum to individual cohorts. Teacher and Teaching Assistants rotate.
- All pupils are assessed against their cohort specific objectives.
- In terms of magical moments, such as the Tooth Fairy and Father Christmas, we regularly have conversations with our older pupils about their role in this and request they do not spoil the magic. This said, if conversations were to happen, they are more likely to have them during the freedom of playtime and lunchtime than in the classroom.

In summary, Cuckney has always run with mixed aged classes. This is dictated by whole pupil numbers and subsequent budget allocations. When pupil numbers expand, funding allocations increase and we employ a fifth teacher. This was the situation, temporarily, for the previous few years. As the birth rate falls and numbers on roll fall the school has to respond appropriately.

I do hope this information provides you with a little background knowledge on why classes are arranged as they are.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any further queries about your child's potential move next year. I will endeavour to work with staff and organise pupil class allocations as soon as we can, to ensure you have accurate information moving forward.

Kind Regards

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "L.C. Crossland".

Lisa Crossland

Headteacher