



Ellwood Community Primary School

Policy on split-class and class allocation

Policy on Class and Classroom Allocation

Introductory Statement:

This policy was formulated as a result of a collaborative approach between the Head Teacher, Staff and Governors.

Link to School Ethos:

Ellwood Primary school is committed to enabling children grow and develop into confident, mature adults with high self-esteem. We also strive to ensure children maximize their academic and social potential.

Rationale:

This policy ensures that all Staff Members, Pupils, Governors and Stakeholders are aware of how the pupils are allocated to classes.

Aims and Objectives:

- To make it clear how classes within Ellwood School are allocated and the reason for some year groups having to be split
- To help share the decision behind the way in which pupils are allocated to the different classes
- To facilitate the smooth, efficient running of the school
- To ensure children are taught the curriculum appropriate to their year groups and needs
- To ensure all staff, pupils and parents/carers understand the policy

Policy Content

Class Allocation:

- Ellwood Primary School has 5 classes, made up of 7 year groups; EYFS and years 1 -6, with on average 20 pupils in each class. Consequently this results in two year groups having to be divided and split amongst other classes, (parents are aware of this when their children join the school).
- The current arrangement is as follows: Oak - EYFS, Chestnut - year 1 and 2, Beech - year 2 and 3, Sycamore - yr 4 and 5 and Willow - year 5 and 6. Subsequently the year groups split applies to the year 2 pupils and the year 5 pupils.
- When allocating the year 2 and 5 pupils to a class the following criteria will apply;

The age of the pupil/s. The older year 2 children will move across to join the year 3's in Beech Class and the younger ones will remain in Chestnut class and the older year 5's will move across to join the year 6's in Willow, with the youngest remaining in Sycamore.

- The number of children that will move across will depend on the number of pupils in each class and year group at the time. If the year group is full, it will normally be approximately 10 pupils. However, other factors may also need to be considered for example; allocating fewer pupils in the infants, striving to make the class numbers relatively equal or the number of pupils in each year group equal. The decision on the exact numbers of pupils moving will be the decision of the Head Teacher in consultation with staff.
- The age cut off will also vary depending on the birth dates of the older children and the number of pupils being allocated. For example; it will be the first 10 children moving regardless of the month of their birthday. Therefore some years it may be summer born children who may change class.
- At the present time, Maths and Science is taught in discrete year groups and frequently come together for activities such as swimming and gymnastics.
- Year groups may also be brought back together for certain events and trips.
- There may be occasions where pupils with an SEND in a particular area e.g. Maths may join a different year group, this is rare and is decided by the Head Teacher and SENCO in consultation with the parents and class teacher.
- Class allocation and split-class groupings are completed in June each year.

Reasons for splitting by age:

- Clear set criteria
- Consistent approach and understood by all
- The ways in which learning and teaching are organised in primary schools means that teaching and work is tailored to the needs and current achievement levels of individual pupils. The Staff at the school are very experienced at planning and delivering work to match the needs of mixed age learning. They provide challenge for the more able children and support for those needing more help, whichever year group they are currently in.
- Even range of abilities within each class e.g. not all high attaining pupils or the lower attaining in one class
- All pupils benefit from working with other children of differing abilities
- There is no evidence to prove that pupils working in mixed aged and abilities hinders progress
- Helps to eliminate children's confidence being hindered by the perception of being "left behind" due to lack of academic ability
- Pupils could be higher attaining in one curriculum area and not in others e.g. maths not english
- The aspirations and expectations of all pupils are high regardless of attainment
- Learning and attainment is relatively fluid and a continuum, children at a young age are not necessarily set in their academic achievements, they develop at different rates
- The school will plan the educational experiences for pupils in all classes in ways which ensure good progression and continuity, which ever year group or class they are in.

- There are also different views on ability: - achievement, capacity to learn and develop or natural ability.
- How is ability measured ? There is not a clear cut answer
- If set in classes by academic achievement - sometimes children can rote learn information but that does not mean they necessarily have a deeper understanding and can apply in other situations.
- There could be disagreements between parents and staff about a child's ability
- We also need to protect pupils self- esteem and self-efficacy - some perceptions could be "you stayed behind because you are lower ability ". This is very hard to label young children. Also for the children who move "you are bright" but then if they can't sustain their level of learning they become disheartened. It also may give them a false sense of achievement.
- Research also suggests routine setting or streaming arrangements undermine low attainers' confidence and discourage the belief that attainment can be improved through effort.
- By ability, it could also lower aspirations of the pupils and adults.
- If all the pupils with additional learning needs and children with behavioural difficulties all remained in the same class, there would be an imbalance in the cohort and this could impact on the whole class and the TA support available for other classes.
- More able children learn from explaining and demonstrating their learning to others
- Ability is not set, pupils develop and learn at different rates, it is not linear, some children may be deemed to be more able and talented but then plateau, while others mature and take off.
- Other countries who achieve high performance educationally, often teach in mixed ages and mixed ability.
- The way in which the 2014 curriculum is set out does not require children to race through the stages, objectives, Curriculum and year group expectations e.g. More able yr 2 will not necessarily start to work on yr 3 objectives or yr 5 working on year 6. Particularly for core subjects. This is no longer a requirement. Children need to deepen and master the skills of the year group they are in. They would not move to the next year group's objectives. They would deepen, master and apply greater depth. With the old curriculum, setting by ability may have worked better, as the more able pupils would be taught the next years objectives but this is not the case now.
- All pupils are tracked carefully based on their starting points and all are monitored carefully to ensure they are meeting their full potential regardless of class
- The school's data demonstrates that classes make similar progress and there is no evidence to suggest that by splitting by age has impacted on the progress and attainment of pupils.

- If the higher ability pupils moved across to the next class, they would be in the same position the following year, when back to their original year group, without the possibility of being taught alongside the next year group above.

Roles & Responsibilities:

All staff, under the guidance of the Head Teacher participates in and contributes to the implementation of an effective class allocation policy. Grievances are dealt with at a Head Teacher level, however the allocation of pupils to classes will not be changed unless there are extreme circumstances.

Success Criteria:

This policy will be monitored through a number of ways e.g. lesson observations, pupil conferencing, learning walks, book scrutiny, behaviour, pupil progress, pupil attainment and discussions with staff and Governors.

Timetable for Review:

An ongoing informal review will be conducted based on the success criteria outlined above. It will be reviewed formally every two years.

Ratification and Implementation:

This policy was originally ratified by the Governing Body in October 2016.

It was updated in March 2021 and will continue to be updated as and when any changes needed.