



St Monica's Catholic Primary School

Mixed Classes Arrangement Policy

Status	School's own
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Rationale

Loving to learn; Learning to love like Jesus.

At St Monica's, the number of pupils in our year groups fluctuates over time, based on the needs of our community and affected by the national and local declining birth rate. The aim of this policy is to detail the processes around the mixing of year groups to create our class structure.

1. Mixing Classes within a year group

Due to a declining birth rate in Warrington, and the impact that this has on admissions numbers at St Monica's Catholic Primary School, this policy has been created to guide how our classes will be mixed. Each year the Headteacher and Governing Body will discuss pupil numbers with the Local Authority and Diocese before deciding how to structure our classes for the following academic year. The mixing of year groups is normal practice for a school of this size, where cohort numbers are around 20, and allows the school the greatest flexibility to address the needs of our typical admissions number.

From experience, we know that mixed classes in our school improves the depth and diversity of children's relationships. Over a child's journey through our school from Reception, it is likely they will experience being part of a split year twice, and be given the opportunity to connect and reconnect with all the children in their year group, building wide, positive relationships.

2. Benefits for the Children of Mixing Classes

Children in mixed classes:

- have opportunities to learn and play with a wide variety of peers.
- develop greater social interaction between peers as they move through the school.
- develop social resilience in a safe, comfortable environment – particularly helpful in preparing children as they get older and before moving to secondary school, where being taught in various groups is the norm.
- build a wide social circle with children across their year and other years.
- settle more quickly and confidently when they are new to our school.
- feel a greater sense of community.

- learn from their older peers during years where they are the younger year group in that class.
- experience mentorship as part of their personal development when they are the older children in their class.

3. Policy Principles

- The arrangements for class mixing are based on the professional judgement of Class Teachers in consultation with the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) and the Headteacher.
- We will always consider what is in the best interests of individual children and classes when making decisions, to ensure the highest quality of education is delivered to all children.
- We will always consider the happiness and welfare of the children and will take into consideration existing friendship groups when we create new classes.
- The School's decision is final and only in circumstances where a safeguarding concern is present will the school consider moving a pupil to a different class.

4. Factors Considered When Organising Classes

We aim to place children where they will achieve maximum academic progress and develop well socially and personally. Each year the current Reception and Year 3 class teacher, who knows each child very well, will work to draw up the split cohort for the mixed classes for the following year. Key factors considered in this process are outlined below. Please note, these are NOT hierarchical as the demographic makeup of each cohort can vary significantly and all must be considered along with the policy principles.

- Teachers views on friendships*
- Pupil view on own friendships
- Range of educational, social, and personal needs
- Age and level of maturity
- Balance of gender based on gender identity
- Balance of Special Educational Needs
- Balance of English as Additional Language
- Balance of ability
- Family relationships, such as in year siblings

**Friendships: Over the course of their Primary years, children will have a range of friendship experiences. Some of these can be fluid, whilst others stand the test of time. Moreover, children often choose to socialize with different children in school to those their parents may observe them with elsewhere. As we prepare to draw up the class lists, we will use our observations of the children in the classroom and at playtimes and lunchtimes to inform decisions. We will ask pupils for the name of a small group of friends from their cohort, and use this whilst planning to ensure at least one of their list is in their group.*

We will always endeavour, where possible, to ensure the mixed classes in each key stage are balanced in numbers. Throughout the year, school manages in-year transfers with the Local Authority (eg.pupils who move into the area), and within the mixed class structure we will have a maximum number of pupils we will admit which is communicated with the LA. Where a maximum class size is reached in one class but there is space in the other, we reserve the right to move a child between classes to rebalance the groups, in consultation with the parent.

5. 'Quality Assurance' & Ratification

- Class Teachers and Teaching Assistants observe the children's friendships at work and play.
- Class Teachers meet to ensure a good balance of friendships, range of educational, social, and personal needs, gender and maturity are represented in each class.

- SLT meets with Class Teachers to discuss and finalise groupings.
- Headteacher and Deputy Headteacher meet and approve classes.
- New classes are shared with parents and children in June/July.

6. Timescales

- Class Teachers and Teaching Assistants (where applicable) discuss their observations of friendships in the HT4/HT5 Terms.
- Observations are considered along with the criteria listed above in HT5.
- Class lists are drawn up by teachers and shared with SLT (end May/end HT5).
- Classlists approved by the Headteacher before transition days. Please note transition days vary each year but usually occur in the first week of July to coincide with secondary transition.