



Policy Number

**Haxby Road – School Specific
Mixed Year Groups Policy**

Signed:

Date: June 2023

Review Date: June 2026

Review Period: Every 3 years

Mixed Year Groups Policy

At Haxby Road Primary Academy, our reception admissions have been increasing each year. The school has a Pupil Admission Number of 45. This means that it is sometimes necessary to have mixed age classes within the school, as single year group classes are not possible.

Every year we review the numbers in each year group, as well as the individual needs of pupils in the group, the staffing and classes we have. Key Stage 1 classes are limited to 30 pupils per class but the rule does not apply to Key Stage 2 classes where pupils are generally more independent and require less adult support in lessons. It is important to note that the organisation of classes may vary from year to year in order to accommodate the differing numbers in each year group. We have to consider the best ways to meet the needs of all year groups. There is never one simple answer but a key factor is that we do not prioritise the needs of one year group above the needs of another.

Principles

The arrangements for class structure are based on the professional judgements of the Headteacher, Senior Leadership Team and Class Teachers.

We will always consider what is in the best interests of individual children and classes as a whole when making decisions.

How does the school decide which children should go into each class?

At Haxby Road our class lists are given very careful consideration. We make a wholehearted attempt to do what is best for every child within our care.

During the summer term class lists are finalised for the following academic year. All of the school's teachers, including the school's senior leaders, carefully review class lists for the next academic year. Many factors are considered in these discussions, such as friendship groups and learning styles. Age is considered but greater emphasis is placed on the needs of every individual child. Every decision is made while keeping in mind the fact that the development of the child is of paramount importance.

The final decisions about class lists are therefore based upon our thorough and accurate professional observations and understandings of every child's abilities (both academic and social).

The overall goal is to balance the needs of *all the children*, and staff, in the school in the best possible way.

As the decisions about which class a child goes into is based on confidential information, we do not explain the full decision about class-setting to parents or children as this would mean discussing confidential matters about other children.

Will my child make progress if they are in a class with younger pupils?

Pupils who remain in the same class for more than one year are not taught the same things over again, nor do we have any different expectations for them in terms of their academic progress and attainment. We assess the progress of pupils against the National Expectations of pupils in each year group, irrespective of which class they are in. We know from analysing several years of data that pupils in the same year group but in different classes make the same progress in younger and older classes.

There is always a range of children's abilities in every class and teachers focus on what each child knows, what they can already do and what they need to be taught next. All learning activities are differentiated to challenge the needs of individuals wherever they are on the learning continuum. Teachers are able to adapt to the different needs within any class and plan accordingly.

We work hard to ensure the following benefits are created:

- Planning and preparation can be shared and approached together across classes with children in the same year group.
- Children have a great opportunity to build independence in their learning. In this way, children do not always rely on adult support to access a task and become more confident independent learners.
- Mixed grouping can enhance and nurture deeper thinking and problem solving skills across all subject areas.
- There can be a greater sense of cooperation and opportunities to work with a wider circle of peers and opportunities to build friendship from across the different year groups.

The National Curriculum

The current Primary Curriculum, which was implemented in 2014, applies to children in Year 1 to Year 6 and covers all subjects from Maths and English through to Art and Computing. We have looked carefully at the new curriculum and set out 'two year rolling programmes' which show when we will teach each part of the curriculum over the course of two years. This ensures children in mixed ages classes are taught everything set out in the curriculum whichever class they may be in. We have linked the subjects as much as possible in each term to allow the children to learn through a creative curriculum approach to learning.

In September 2021 a new Curriculum was introduced for the Early Years Foundation Stage. This will be implemented, with the areas of learning being linked by staff to the National Curriculum wherever possible.

The topics on the rolling programmes are a starting point for each topic and may change or be adapted, often based on the children's interests, to make the learning inspiring and engaging as possible. Please visit the Progression of Skills and Knowledge page on our website to read how teachers at Haxby Road ensure that children's skills are developed appropriately over time and across the curriculum.

Will staying in the same class affect my child's confidence?

Sometimes children can be disappointed that they are staying in the same class without some of their friends but we have always noted that there are advantages too. Pupils often grow in confidence when they become one of the eldest in the class. They can show the new children in the class how things are done and become role models for them. They learn to make new friends and still play with their old friends at playtimes and lunchtimes. If they are in Early Years and Year 1 they will also learn through play with their friends in the areas of provision and in curriculum areas.

The aim is for the mixed age class to be smaller in number to support the implementation of the curriculum effectively.

Research based benefits to mixed age classes

A study by Simon Veeman titled 'Cognitive and Noncognitive Effects of Multigrade and Multi-Age Classes: A Best Evidence Synthesis' found that there is no empirical evidence that students learning

suffered in any way in multi age (mixed age) classrooms. Children in such classrooms did not learn more or less than students in single age classes. In fact, students in multi classes scored higher on attitudes towards school, personal adjustments and self-concept than students in single age classes

When are children and parents told about their new classes?

We understand that pupils and their parents want to know about their new class as soon as possible. Admissions for each year group are not finalised until the end of June, at which time we work out who will be in each class and let everyone know in July.

Complaints

Initially, any concerns should be shared with the headteacher who will be able to reassure you about your child's allocated class. The organisation of classes is carefully considered to enhance the best chances of educational success for all pupils at school. The motivation when organising classes is to protect the teaching and learning interests of the whole school, making the best decision in the interests of all pupils, not one pupil or indeed one year group.