

HONEYWELL JUNIOR SCHOOL'S RATIONALE FOR MIXING CLASSES

The underpinning ethos for this strategy is a quality education for all pupils, regardless of the class a pupil is in. Moving forward, we aim to be able to mitigate changes in circumstances which can result in classes becoming imbalanced over time. We will continue to use ongoing assessment and progress analysis [we know that a pupil's attainment and progress is not linear] to address possible gaps in learning and find the best way to plug gaps in the shortest possible timeframe for every pupil. By making these changes we can better ensure that the deployment of staff, our biggest and best resource, is equitable and impacts positively on all children across the year group (cohort).

Staff see changing classmates as a positive part of schooling, especially in two and three form entry schools – one form entry schools do not have the opportunity - and the positive benefits to learning and progress over time.

Benefits to the pupils and their learning that the mixing will bring:

- Creation of more opportunities for children to learn and play with a wider variety of peers, make new friends, mix with children of all differing experiences
- Enabling greater social interaction between children as they move through the school
- Better resilience in developing broader friendships in a safe, comfortable environment, with supportive, known adults
- Limiting any ongoing friendship issues within classes, including cliques, which are not conducive to learning
- Being part of a year group cohort and not just a class, promoting a greater sense of community in a three-form entry school
- Enabling new children to settle and integrate better
- Coping well with the transition to secondary school, coping with changes to social groupings and learning to adapt as an important life skill
- Balancing a range of educational, social and personal factors, age [term born] and level of maturity, gender, Special Educational Needs, English as additional language, ethnicity, prior attainment, prior class (one third or 10 children will be from the previous class), number of in-year places, those children entitled to disadvantaged funding, and fostering pupil development and inclusion
- Family relationships such as in year siblings'/staff children
- Strengthening the whole school community as families will also have the opportunity to develop relationships with other families within the year group.

Principles

- We will always consider the best interests of both the group and individual children and are not proposing to stream or set, we would continue to teach mixed ability classes
- The arrangements for class mixing will be based on the professional judgements of Class Teachers and additional adults, Phase Leaders, Inclusion Team and the Head Teacher
- The Inclusion Team will have a key role in supporting those pupils with additional needs in the placement of a new class
- We will mirror the national curriculum and stages of learning and mix the children on entry to Phase 3, for year 3 and on entry to phase 4, for Year 5, however reserve the right to identify any other year group where there are specific issues that need to be addressed at that particular time e.g. mobility from one class, number of pupils with an EHCP for example
- We will not single out special cases – all classes will be full in Year 3 so moving one child would invariably mean moving another
- We will ensure there is equity in the deployment of additional adults and resources

NB: When 90 pupils start in Reception, the classes are balanced out as much as possible taking into account a range of factors such as prior nursery experience, special needs, EAL [English as Another Language], age and gender. As the children progress through the school, the classes can become less balanced for a variety of reasons: mobility, Special Educational Needs – children develop at different rates and it is not always apparent when joining Reception that at some future point a level of support may need to be put into place.

Every year we will mix the pupils Year 2 into Year 3 (phase 3) and then again from Year 4 into Year 5 (phase 4). As a result all pupils in the Junior school will experience 2 class mixes over 4 years.

PROCESS

Step 1 – please see Rationale

Initial criteria to even out the classes, not in priority order:

- **gender and age** –(i) preserve an equally mixed school
- **ethnicity**
- **prior class** – each class will retain close to one third [10 pupils] of the previous class
- **numbers of pupils leaving in each group** to have slightly smaller classes for more focussed teaching in September and beyond then an opportunity to ease new pupils in
- **attainment**
- **additional needs**

Step 2 – Please see Rationale

Inclusion Team to look at specific needs of specific pupils

Step 3 – Consultation with current class teachers [including Year 2 teachers] in terms of positive work partners and friendship groups

Step 4 – Pupils to identify key friends, guaranteed to be with at least one of them

Step 5 - Communicate new classes to families before the mix up activities

Transition

Cohort activities will be planned over the Summer Term, mirroring the cohort groups already established by teaching and support staff.

Once the pupils know their new classes and teachers, we will start the transition. The aim of this is to support the pupils with making the step to a new year group with a new teacher. The following will happen during the Summer Term:

- A detailed handover will take place between the current class teacher and the new class teacher
- ALL pupils in the year groups to be mixed will be asked to complete a one page profile of themselves which would be given to their new teacher
- Pupils will visit their new classroom and spend time with their new teacher(s)
- Some pupils find transition particularly difficult, this can be because of an education or medical need or that they are anxious or worried. Teachers and the Inclusion Team will design personal transition plans for these pupils.
- In September 2021 the teachers will plan explicit team building and “getting to know each other” activities to build cooperation and cohesion and a positive learning environment

