

ST. FRANCIS' CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

Whyteleafe Road

Caterham

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Mixing Classes Policy



Reviewed: Summer 2024

Next Review: Summer 2027

St Francis Catholic Primary School

Class Mixing Policy

Mixing Classes

At St Francis Catholic Primary School we will review classes each year. Decisions on whether the school needs to mix classes will vary from year to year and classes will only be mixed dependent on needs of the school and children.

All decisions on mixing classes will be made with the best interests of the children in mind and considering the professional judgements of Class Teachers, the Senior Leadership Team and the Head Teacher.

Consideration is given:

- To ensure that the classes remain balanced in response to pupil transfer and transition during phases
- To allow opportunities for children to learn and play with a wider variety of peers
- To enable greater social interaction between children as they move through the school
- To promote a greater sense of community

General Principles for Mixing

To allow:

- opportunities for children to learn and play with a wider variety of peers
- greater social interaction between children as they move through the school
- that classes remain balanced in response to pupil transfer and transition during phases
- what is in the best interests of individual children, groups of children and classes
- a greater sense of community

Entry to St Francis Reception Classes

Children enter St Francis Catholic Primary school in Reception. During the summer term, once we are given confirmation of the children who will be attending the school in September. The mixing process for deciding the Reception classes are made on the variety of information we have regarding the following:

- Date of birth
- Gender
- Ability levels
- Range of special educational, social and personal needs
- Nursery settings information/home visits/"Stay and play" sessions at the school
- Information given by parents on application forms and in discussions

Final decisions about classes are made by Senior Leaders in consultation with the EYFS Leader and Reception Team. Parents will be informed of classes on “stay and play” days in the summer term.

Class Mixing Points

The Class Mixing points for St Francis’ will be at the main transition points in a school:

- End of Reception
- End of Year 2
- End of Year 4

Class Mixing will vary year on year, depending on the needs of the school and there may be years when mixing is not needed.

Each year the School Leadership Team will discuss year groups with staff and decide whether to mix or not, based on a variety of factors and with the intention of maintaining good pupil relationships through a child’s journey through the school. All decisions on mixing classes will be made with the best interests of the children. Class mixing points for St Francis and timescales for class mixing are detailed below.

Mixing at the end of Reception

When the classes for our Reception children are originally decided, the Teachers are working with limited information from our induction process and the various pre-school settings that our children can come from (over 20 different pre-school settings).

By the end of the school year the Reception Teachers know their children and families very well and so, are better able to decide on the best groupings for the children, considering; individual personalities, relationships, special educational needs and abilities. Our detailed school assessments will also have enabled us to group the children into classes that will enable them to work well together in Year 1.

Mixing in Year 2 and Year 4

We will use the following criteria when mixing classes:

- Children’s views on their friendships (they will choose 5 friends and are guaranteed to be with at least one of them)
- Teacher’s views on friendships and learning needs
- The range of educational, social and personal needs
- Age and level of maturity
- Balance of Need across the class including SEND, EAL and abilities
- Family relationships such as in year siblings/staff children

The children’s opinions are important to us at St Francis, so we will involve the children themselves in our decision. Class Teachers will discuss talk to the children beforehand to explain the process and to reassure the children of any worries they may have. They will consider the children’s responses in deciding the class lists, so that every child will have at least one close friend in their new class.

It is not our intention to separate good friendships, but sometimes this will happen. Over the course of their Primary School years, children will have a range of friendship experiences. Children’s friendships can be very fluid – some children often change their mind about who their ‘best friends’

are and some friendships are strong and other friendships will be strong and stand the test of time. On occasions, best friends may also need separating to support wider learning needs. It should be remembered that the children will still be spending valuable time together out on the playground at Break and Dinner Times.

In all instances of transition from one year-group to the next, whether or not class mixing has occurred children will be supported by the staff.

Changeover Day

There will be a 'Change Over Day', when the whole school goes to visit their new class and Teacher for an afternoon. Some children will need a little more support with the change and they will be given opportunities for additional visits to their new class and a longer transition period to enable them to feel relaxed and confident about the next phase of their journey at St Francis'.

Timescales for considering changes

Staff observe and discuss class mixes across the year as many changes will naturally happen within this timescale. and their observations with the SLT across the year as a matter of course,

- Discussions will begin more formally with the SLT the Summer term and observations are considered along with the criteria listed above.
- Decisions are made on whether to mix and if so which year groups will be mixed after May half-term.
- Class lists are drawn up by teachers and shared with SLT (June)
- Class lists approved by Headteacher (July)
- Class lists communicated to parents and children in July as part of the end of year arrangements.

Other circumstances for changing classes

There may be an occasion where due to circumstances at school, or because of a parental concern, a child may need to change class. This would be in special and exceptional circumstances and will only happen at the discretion of the Headteacher. Parents will need to make an appointment to discuss the individual circumstances.

The Headteacher will consider:

- the individual circumstances
- the wider needs and implications for the whole school and pupils
- the discussions with Senior Leaders and Class Teachers
- the current class numbers and legal requirements surrounding these - the class PAN.