

Mixed Age Class Policy

North Leigh CE Primary School



Valuing Everyone in our school, in our community, in our world.

This Policy was adopted in July 2025

The Policy must be reviewed and updated at least every 36 months.

All children are provided with equal access to the curriculum. We aim to provide suitable learning opportunities regardless of gender, ethnicity or home background.

The impact of this Policy on staff workload has been considered.

Signed

Ben McPherson
Headteacher

Sophie Warner
Chair of Governors

Date

15 July 2025

Mixed Age Class Policy

Adopted: July 2025

Review date: July 2028

Rationale

Due to falling pupil numbers and increased funding pressure, North Leigh CE Primary School changed its class structure from 7 to 6 with effect from September 2025. The intention was to maintain 6 classes with some requirement to mix across year groups where pupils numbers are low. Mixed age classes are now very common across the country, including over 100 schools in Oxfordshire. School funding, the lower birth rate and fewer admissions locally mean that traditional single-year classes are not always sustainable. To maintain financial sustainability in a challenging funding environment for schools, we need to bring different age groups together in one class.

The school is funded per pupil. Currently we are in a transition period with typical intakes in Reception of around 22 children. Schools are financed on a model of 30 children per class. In Key Stage 1 schools are not permitted to have class sizes above 30. This is, however, permitted in Key Stage 2. Therefore, there may be times when the school must consider an organisational model which includes mixed age classes.

Governors have agreed that there will be a need for mixed age classes in some cohorts.

Principles and Process for Organising Mixed Age Classes

- The arrangements for class structure are based on the professional judgements of class teachers and the Senior Leadership Team.
- We will always consider what is in the best interests of individual children and classes as a whole when making decisions.
- No child will be socially isolated by splitting a year group unless behaviour factors are a higher priority.
- Arrangements will be made where possible to ensure children have opportunities to socially interact with children in their own age cohort eg break and lunch times. There may also be occasions where the structure of the curriculum will be organised into stage not age groupings for some lessons. There may also be other curriculum areas and enrichment events, where greater numbers can be accommodated, to access the year group cohort.
- The aim is for the mixed age class to be smaller in number to support the implementation of the curriculum effectively.
- The decision of the Headteacher is final. Children will not be moved once the class has met their new teacher since this would inevitably involve moves of other children to accomplish this.

Children Will Be Assigned to Classes Using the Following Criteria:

- Age - primarily, we will use age as a skeleton structure for mixed age classes although it will not be solely based on pupils' ages;
- Gender – we will try to create a balance between the number of boys and girls;
- Ability – we will try to create, as far as possible, a mix of abilities;
- Maturity – inevitably, some children will be asked to be in classrooms with older pupils and some will be assigned to classes with younger children; staff will make a professional decision about where a child ought to be placed for educational, social and emotional reasons.

We do not take into account requests from children of parents about which class they would like their child to be in or if they can “be with their friends”; it would be impossible to take all requests into account and we must make a decision that is in the best interests of all the children in the school for educational, social and emotional reasons.

As the decision 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.

We are aware that having children in a mixed age class where a child is not with all of his/her friends can be a concern for parents. We work hard to ensure that children are not disadvantaged by which class they are in.

When children are placed in mixed age classes they will follow the same National Curriculum through a variety of themes and levels appropriate to their individual ability. Children will not be “held back” or “struggle to keep up” in any class.

All teachers are trained to work in mixed ability classes whether in a straight year group or in mixed age classes. All tasks are adapted to challenge the needs of individuals wherever they are on the learning continuum. In all primary classes there are a wide range of abilities and all children will learn in different ways at a different pace, responding to a variety of methods and resources. Teachers are able to adapt to the different needs within any class and plan accordingly. Programmes and schemes of work are compiled to suit the development needs of all learners in different groupings. Opportunities are made for children from the same year group to mix together during break and lunch times, after school activities, sports teams etc.

Complaints and Appeals

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 within North Leigh CE Primary school. Classes are organised 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.

Parents cannot refuse to have their child placed in any class at North Leigh CE Primary School. This is a managerial decision based on this Policy. The Governing Body has delegated the responsibility of day-to-day management of North Leigh CE Primary School to the Headteacher and Senior Leadership Team.

If a parent feels that the school has not adhered to the Mixed Age Classes Policy, they can raise this in the first instance with the staff at school, and if still not satisfied, they should raise their concerns through the Complaints Policy available from school or on the school website.