



Mixed Age Learning

How we are 'Creating the future today' in Year 1,2 and 3

Rationale

- We **must** deliver a high quality provision to all of our learners
- We **must** balance income and expenditure
- Schools usually work on an average class size of around 30 pupils with no more than 30 in an infant class (apart from in very exceptional circumstances)
- For 2021/2022, we are expecting 56 pupils in total in Years 1,2 and 3
- Per pupil funding for Stockport schools is low and the school gets very little additional income from Pupil Premium or other additional funding streams
- The Covid pandemic has generated significant additional costs to fund the necessary actions to keep people safe and the school open and functioning well – these have not been funded by the Government. This has eaten into the school reserves
- In order to balance the budget, it is necessary to teach Year 1,2 and 3 pupils in two mixed age classes.

What is mixed-age learning?

A mixed age class is a class in which there are children who are from more than one-year group within the same classroom. In some very small schools, they can include children from three or even four year groups, although it is more usual to involve mixing children from just two year groups.

The facts – the scientific bit!

Evidence suggests that pupils do not perform less well when they work in mixed age classes than when they work in single age classes.

There is evidence to suggest that in mixed age classes:

- There is a positive impact on collaborative learning
- There is a positive impact on peer interaction, feedback and peer coaching
- There is a positive impact from individualised approaches
- There is a positive impact from the use of flexible grouping options

(taken from a meta-review led by Pete Boyd in 2020)

Benefits

- There are increased opportunities for flexibility in ability groupings, enabling learners to work with the appropriate ability, regardless of age
- Teachers will only need to get to know learners who are new to them at the start of the year, reducing the time it takes for the children to start to make accelerated progress. As we come out of Covid – this will be a significant positive
- The better you know a learner, the more you can support their individual needs. Mixed age classes can allow opportunities for learners to spend more than one year with a teacher.
- Children are viewed as unique individuals. We aim for this in all classes, but a mixed age class lends itself specifically to this approach.
- As there are fewer classes in school, a greater share of TA support time can be allocated to mixed age classes, without reducing the allocation for other classes.

Benefits (cont.)

- The teacher focuses on teaching each child according to his or her own strengths – learning is highly personalised.
- Mixed-age classes encourage a spirit of co-operation where learners are more likely to support each other than compete.
- Once learners stop comparing themselves to their peers, they start to see themselves as unique individuals with their own strengths.
- Giving older learners the chance to support younger learners socially builds their confidence and leadership skills. The younger learners also benefit as they see their older peers modelling positive, mature behaviours.
- Older children model more sophisticated approaches to problem solving, and younger children are able to accomplish tasks more effectively because of the modelling by older children. This dynamic also increases the older child's level of independence, confidence and competence.

Challenges and solutions

- Teachers of mixed age classes face the challenge of responding to a wide diversity of learners within their classroom
 - This is the norm in any primary classroom and high quality teaching and learning successfully addresses the full range of diversity
- Doesn't this take a lot of additional time and effort from leaders and teachers?
 - Yes, absolutely. SLT have been looking in detail and evaluating different models for some time now. The whole teaching team, including all subject leaders, are currently developing detailed plans for teaching and learning. This support will continue into next year and beyond.

Challenges and solutions

- Parental preference – Some parents have a negative perception of mixed age classes and are concerned about possible negative social, emotional and academic impact on their children
 - Inform – challenge misconceptions and share information
 - Continue to build trust – our children come first, always
 - Communicate – the right information, shared at the right time in the right way
 - Listen to ideas and concerns and address them in a constructive manner
 - Celebrate success
 - Show parents that their children are happy, cared for and learning well in school. That's what all parents want!

Challenges and solutions

- Many widely available schemes of work focus on content for single age classes
 - The scheme we use for English and Maths already suggest plans that cater for mixed age learning.
 - In other subject areas, teachers skilfully weave the curricula together to cater for all learners, creating a bespoke experience that is tailored to the class and the individuals within it.
- How will you make sure that knowledge and termly topics and themes aren't repeated?
 - We will work on a rolling programme of topics and themes. This will be monitored and tracked to ensure full coverage is achieved.
 - Foundation subject expectations are set out over a key stage, with the additional flexibility to deliver content earlier or later, based on the learners' needs. The content taught will be aligned fully with the National Curriculum for each age group.

Challenges and solutions

- What about English and Maths?
 - Areas of learning are regularly revised and revisited in English and Maths
 - Most themes having significant overlap between year groups (eg addition in maths and prefixes in spelling taught across all year groups groups, but at different levels. This is the case with most of the Maths and English curriculum.
 - Where there is no overlap, specific year group content will be planned delivered separately (an example of this might be - one year group works with the Sports Coach on PE while another year group works with a teacher on specific content and the third year group completes a Computing activity with a teacher in the computer suite)

How will we achieve the best outcomes?

By doing what we already do well every day

- The teacher is a facilitator and a coach, in addition to being an instructor – building relationships
- Differentiated instruction : Learners in each age group engage in learning tasks appropriate to their level of learning, as appropriate
- A socially collaborative classroom is encouraged: Supportive classroom climate; students help each other and collaborate flexibly
- Flexible grouping is skilfully used: Learning is flexibly organized in the whole class and includes adult-led groups, individuals within groups, collaborative groups, and individuals under the supervision and knowledge of the teacher. We will also be building in times for adults to have professional conversations to communicate about the progress and next steps of children in their groups

How will we achieve the best outcomes?

By doing what we already do well every day.

- General learning topic: The same general topic/theme in the same subject is covered for all learners
- The quality of the learning tasks is high: There will be a range of opportunities for open-ended, explorative, and problem-oriented learning and well as acquiring factual knowledge
- Formative assessment is used well: To observe and diagnose how a learner is learning and is intended to improve teaching and learning
- Opportunities created for working with single age groups: Where this is appropriate, both socially and academically

Who will be the Classteachers?

- The Year 1/2 class will be taught by Mrs Callaghan
- The Year 2/3 class will be taught by Mrs Hancock
- The teachers will work closely together when planning and organising the children's learning to make sure there is a high level of consistency and that the children get the appropriate opportunities.
- Support staff will be allocated to work across both classes

How will the groups be sorted?

- The primary method for sorting the current Year 1 children who will join the current Year 2 cohort (Year 2/3 for next year) will be by age.
- Friendship groups will also be considered to ensure the best fit.
- Parents of the children will be informed and this will be discussed with them.
- The remainder of Year 1 and all of Reception will make up the Y1/2 class for next year.

What will a typical day look like in Y1/2?

YEAR 1/2 AUTUMN 1 2021

	9:00/10 – 10:00		10:15 – 10:30		10:45 – 11:40		12:40 – 1:45			2:05 – 3:10	
Monday PPA AM	Morning Task Number facts 20 mins	PE	Assembly	10:30 – 10:45 - Break Time	Maths	11:40 – 12:40- Lunchtime	Phonics	English	1:50 – 2:05 - KS1 Break Time	Computing/Individual reading	
Tuesday	Morning Task h/writing 20 mins	English	PSHE		Maths		Phonics	Science		Art	
Wednesday	Morning Task Spelling 20 mins	PE	Singing Assembly		Maths		Phonics	English		Individual reading	Science
Thursday	Morning Task Key skill revision 20 mins	English	PSHE		Maths		Phonics	Topic		Individual reading	Music
Friday	Morning Task Topic challenge 20 mins	English	Celebration Assembly		Maths		Phonics	RE/PSHE		Topic/PSHE	

What will a typical day look like in Y2/3?

YEAR 2/3 AUTUMN 1 2021

	9:00/10 – 10:00		10:15 – 10:30	10:45 – 11:40		12:40 – 1:45		2:05 – 3:10	
Monday	Morning Task Number facts 20 mins	Maths	Assembly	English		Phonics/ Spelling	Science	Individual Reading	Computing
Tuesday	Morning Task h/writing 20 mins	Maths	PSHE	Individual Reading	English	Phonics/ Spelling	Topic (History/ Geography)	Spanish	PE
Wednesday PPA PM	Morning Task Spelling 20 mins	Maths	Singing Assembly	English Reading Focus		Phonics/ Spelling	Science	Music	RE
Thursday	Morning Task Key skill revision 20 mins	Maths	PSHE	English		Phonics/ Spelling	Topic (History/ Geography)	Spanish	PE
Friday	Morning Task Topic challenge 20 mins	Maths	Celebration Assembly	Individual Reading	English	Phonics/ Spelling	Topic	Topic (Art)	PSHE

10:30 – 10:45 – Break Time

11:40 – 12:40 - Lunchtime

1:50 – 2:05 - KS1 Break Time