



Mixed age classes and split year groups – information for parents

What is a mixed age and split year group class?

A mixed age class is defined to be a class in which there are children who are more than one year group of the primary school. In most cases, a mixed age class will comprise of two year groups together such as Year 2 and 3 children or Year 5 and 6 children. However it is possible, particularly in smaller schools, that a mixed age class may contain pupils from three or even four year groups such as a Year 3, 4, 5 and 6 class.

A split year group is when a year group of children have been split and make two or more classes.

Why are mixed age and split year group classes formed?

Mixed age classes are formed in most schools partly because of the way in which the pupil roll is configured in any given year (i.e. the numbers of pupils in each year group). It is not uncommon for this situation to change from year to year as the sizes of the year groups can vary quite dramatically. This is the case at Dishforth Airfield Primary School, which predominantly serves the regiment based on the Airfield. Due to military postings, year group sizes vary across the school and can change significantly throughout the academic year, which results in the class structure having to be reviewed on an annual basis with the Governing Body of the school.

Will my child be held back if she / he is placed in a mixed age or split year class?

No. The ways in which learning and teaching are organised in primary schools means that teaching and work is tailored to the needs and current achievement of individual children. The staff at Dishforth Airfield are experienced at planning and delivering work to match the needs of mixed age learning. They provide challenge for all children based on secure assessments and support for those needing more help whichever year group they are currently in.

Much work is undertaken in small groups that contain children from 1 or 2 year groups of those of similar needs. Furthermore, the school plans the educational experiences for pupils in all classes in ways which ensure good progression and continuity, whichever year group or class they are in.

But forming a mixed age or split year group class may mean that my child's friendship grouping is being broken up?

It is likely to be good for children to experience classes with different classmates so that their circle of friends and acquaintances can be extended beyond the traditional age boundaries. Where new classes are formed, opportunities are created beyond the standard curriculum for pupils to maintain contact with friends who have been allocated to other classes (such as at lunchtimes, playtimes, special activities, trips, school performances.)

There will be occasions whereby the children are taught in ability groups across different classes and subjects. When children transfer to other schools through military postings, or transfer to secondary school, new friendship groupings become a fact of life, and this situation is generally welcomed by many children.

Why is the situation different in my child's school from that in other schools?

There are challenges in all schools. However, the majority of schools in North Yorkshire have under 170 pupils and therefore most schools have mixed age classes – it is the norm for the county. Even many large schools in North Yorkshire have formed mixed age classes, and there is absolutely no evidence to suggest that being in a mixed age or split age class has any detrimental effect whatsoever on the education of the children in that class.