

WEST JESMOND PRIMARY SCHOOL

CLASS ORGANISATION POLICY

Revision Record of Published Versions			
Author	Revision Date	Version	Status
West Jesmond Primary	27/6/14	1.0	Staff / Governor consultation
West Jesmond Primary	12/12/16	1.1	Annual Update HoS

Introduction

At West Jesmond Primary we make a decision in the Summer term every year as to one of the following options:

1. Leave all classes as they are and transfer up to the next year group
2. Mix up the three classes in only certain year groups to transfer up to the next year
3. Mix up the three classes in all year groups to transfer up to the next year

This is a strategic pupil organisational issue for the school, informed by the professional judgement of staff, grounded in education research^[1], linked to the topic. It is not considered an issue for wider consultation, as there is no universal agreement from parents on this issue. The decision to re-organise or not, is taken through consultation with all members of staff, in every year group and then with the Governing body at a 'Pupil Support' sub-committee meeting.

Rationale for class re-organisation:

1. Children start Reception at our school from over 30 different pre-school settings. The decision to create three classes is based on the best available information at the time, but given the wide range of settings Reception children join the school from, there is limited face to face prior knowledge of the children, friendships, attainment, learning needs, support required, progress, capability and aptitude. By the end of Reception there is a very detailed knowledge of the children in all areas of learning, which can inform our decision making.

2. Promotes opportunity for children to form new friendships and work with others.
3. Allows school to review the balance of children in each class following a number of children leaving and starting the school in every year group. This avoids classes becoming uneven in a range of pupil characteristics (such as gender).
4. Ensures the matching of pupil needs to available additional teaching assistant support using current resources.
5. Allows teachers to make a professional decision about learning groups for next year and also where particular relationships between pupils are not conducive for learning to re-distribute children between the new classes.
6. Allows school to support the most vulnerable and able pupils by reviewing progress and achievement in this academic year.
7. Helps us to ensure every class has the broadest range of pupils from different backgrounds, faiths, home languages etc. to support our inclusive ethos.
8. Learning experience for the children and helping children to start the next academic year with a universal equality, whilst opening up the possibility for new friendships and collaborations.
9. Mixing classes can also help prepare children for their next stage in their learning, where they may be grouped into 'sets' within the school, or secondary school, where the children form new and different cohorts with children from other primary, first or preparatory schools.

Should classes be reorganised, the following factors will be taken into consideration:

1. First consideration is always given to grouping children in classes or sets that will benefit them educationally, i.e. in the teacher's professional judgement the children will learn / work well together within the classroom environment.
2. Class teachers will also give consideration to friendships and always ensure as children move they have at least one friend with them to support them in the early days before new friendships emerge in the first week of the new term. In rare instances where 'friends' don't work well together in class, adversely affecting educational outcomes, teachers may make the decision not to place children together in any new class.
3. Regardless of the outcomes of any class reorganisation staff will always ensure that children continue to play together and that at social times, including lunchtime, children operate as a whole year group and then can form any grouping they wish from the current or previous classes.

[1] A research study was commissioned by the school in 2007 and carried out by Dr Bill Dennison (then Head of Education at Newcastle University) to investigate the impact of mixing classes. In his final report Dr Dennison stated: *'The class organisation system at West Jesmond has become one of its strengths; the school utilises its size to good effect and can offer pupils a range of additional experiences and development opportunities, denied to children in a one form entry school while, at the same time, helping assimilate the relatively large number of pupils moving into the area.'*