

Headteacher - Justin Bartlett

Castle Primary School  
Castle Street  
FAREHAM  
Portchester  
PO16 9QQ

[www.castleprimaryschool.co.uk](http://www.castleprimaryschool.co.uk)

☎ 02392 375324

✉ [office@castle.hants.sch.uk](mailto:office@castle.hants.sch.uk)



Dear Parents,

10<sup>th</sup> June 2024

### **Year 3 and Year 5 class reorganisation**

As we approach the latter part of the school year, the process of planning for the new school year in September has begun. At this point, teachers consider the best organisation for classes with the aim of ensuring the best outcomes for children.

After much discussion and consideration, it has been decided that the current Year 3 cohort and Year 5 cohort would benefit from being mixed as they move into Years 4 and 6 respectively in September. As we are a school which has two classes in each year group, the opportunity to mix classes is considered at the end of each year. Mixing classes enables:

- Expanding opportunities for children to develop their friendship groups across a wider group of children
- Increased social interaction across the year group
- Balance across the two classes in terms of pupil development - both social and academic
- Increased sense of community

When classes are mixed, decisions are based on:

- The professional judgement of class teachers
- The best interests of the children in the cohort
- A consideration of the welfare and happiness of the children

Class teachers then:

- Observe children's friendships in the classroom and at play
- Engage in lengthy discussions and meetings between teachers to ensure balance in terms of friendships; learning strengths and needs; gender balance in terms of numbers
- rest assured - these take hours!
- Generate the new classes before transition days.

We aim to ensure, following mixing, that there is a balance of abilities across the two classes. We also know that some children work well together - others do not - so we aim to ensure that the mix provides a positive learning environment for each child to do their best. We also know that some children feel really secure with certain friends - so this is considered as well... likewise after much time together, we know some children simply don't get on very well with each other and this can cause real challenges and, putting it bluntly, need a break from each other - this is also considered.



When mixing does take place, experience shows us that some parents worry a great deal about how their child will cope with a new class - questions arise such as: isn't this disruptive and might it be upsetting for my child? But others feel that the benefits of a well-mixed class outweigh any negatives and actively request class mixing. I have already received a number of requests from parents for classes to be mixed for next year. On balance, we feel the positives considerably outweigh the negatives - in our experience, mixing enables children to reinvent themselves if they wish after becoming established within a class group identity and an opportunity for their children to make new friends as well as remain friends with established ones - classes still work together across the year group and of course share social times such as break and lunchtimes. We have also found that children are better prepared to cope well with the transition to secondary school where of course they are in new classes and a new school, with multiple different subject groupings, tutor groups and different subject teachers.

Having spoken to parents of pupils following mixing of classes in the past, we thought parents might be interested to read the following thoughts:

"Mixing in year 5 gave my daughter the chance to mix with more friends and helped with the transition to secondary. She was nervous before the mix but was absolutely fine once it had happened!"

"As parents of a year 5 pupil going into year 6, we were initially a little concerned about how this would affect our child and the year group as a whole. However, we were aware that the dynamics of the year group were not ideal for some children and for school staff in managing some of the resulting situations.

The class mixing was thoroughly well thought out and carefully planned. It had a positive effect in the new year more or less straight away and any fears concerning a negative effect on friendships and learning proved unfounded. Our child went on to have a very successful final year at Castle."

I am very much aware that some parents may be concerned, and this will provoke discussions within our community. I am asking for your support please - in our experience, parents that discuss this news with their children in a positive way are far more likely to have more relaxed and less anxious children. And of course, we know that resilience to change is a vital skill that children need to develop in preparation for the challenges of secondary school and beyond. Should you have any concerns, I politely request that these are raised directly with the school.

We will of course provide transition support to children so that they are fully prepared for the move into their new class in September.

Yours faithfully

Justin Bartlett  
Headteacher

