**Class Structure**

In a small school like Bishop Wilson, mixed year group classes are a way of life. The school currently has 3 classes for the 7 year groups. Each year group has the potential to have 15 children in. When most of the year groups are full single year group classes are not possible.

Our pupils spend 7 years in the school: moving from their first year in Reception, through 2 years in Key Stage 1(infants) and then 4 years in Key Stage 2 (juniors) before moving onto secondary school.

How does the school work out the class structure each year?

We work out the structure by starting at the top and bottom of the school and then working back into the middle. So we allocate our Year 6s to Eagles Class and our Foundation Stage pupils to Robins class, from there we spread the rest of the year groups out across the available space in each class.

Robins class runs the Foundation Stage curriculum and the start of the key stage 1 curriculum. Reception and year 1 are currently taught in the same class.

Next, we look at the top end of the school by allocating all the Year 6 pupils to the eldest class (Eagles) which leaves spaces for the Year 5 pupils and, for the coming year, our Year 4 pupils. This then leaves Year 2 and Years 3 to make our Owls Class. Sometimes, depending upon numbers, this class make-up of the year groups can vary.

Key Stage 1 classes are generally limited to 30 pupils, the rule does not apply to Key Stage 2 classes where pupils are generally more independent and require less adult support in their lessons. However, as a school, we always aim to have 30 or less in a class.

How does the school decide which children should go into each class?

We put all of the pupils into a list based on their date of birth. We then work our way down through the list and allocate the children to classes as we go until we are happy that there is a good balance of class sizes. The allocation is largely based on each pupil’s age, not on their ability.

The exact size of each year group varies from year to year which determines where the split for each class is made. Sometimes a year group may need to be split between two classes.

When are children and parents told about their new classes?

We understand that pupils and their parents want to know about their new class as soon as possible. Admissions for the reception group are finalised in mid-June, at which time we work out who will be in each class and let everyone know in time for ‘Move Up Day’ at the beginning of July.

Will my child make progress if they are in a class with younger pupils?

Pupils who remain in the same class for more than one year are not taught the same things over again, nor do we have any different expectations for them in terms of their academic progress and attainment. We assess the progress of pupils against the national expectations of pupils in each year group, irrespective of which class they are in. We know from analysing several years of data that pupils who are in the same year group but in different classes make the same progress in younger and older classes. So for example, we know that in general, if pupils in year 2 were to be split between Robins and owls they would make the same academic progress.

There is always a wide spread of children’s ability in every class and teachers focus on what each child knows, what they can already do and what they need to be taught next.

Will staying in the same class affect my child’s confidence?

Children can be disappointed that they are staying in the same class without some of their friends but there are advantages too. Pupils who are the youngest in their year often grow in confidence when they become one of the eldest in the class. They can show the new children in the class how things are done and become role models for them. They learn to make new friends and still play with their old friends at playtimes and lunchtimes.

If my child stays in a younger class will they move to secondary school at the same time as their friends?

Yes they will. Pupils move to secondary education at the end of Year 6, irrespective of which classes they are in, or have been in, during their time at primary school. At our school Year 6s always spend their final year of primary school together in Eagles Class.

Does the class structure change from year to year?

The structure does change a little from year to year depending on the number of pupils in each year group.

How does the school decide which teachers and teaching assistants will be in each class?

This decision is based on a combination of each teacher’s experience and skills. Some teachers are more suited to teaching older or younger pupils and some teachers have developed a specialism in certain year groups or key stages. If teachers move from teaching a younger class to an older class it is inevitable, in a small school like ours, that they will be teaching the same children for several years.

Teaching Assistants are also placed in classes where their qualifications, skills and experience are best suited. The number of hours of teaching assistant support allocated to each class depends on the age of the class and any specific needs of the pupils in the class.

If you have any further questions please let us know.