



Mixed-Age Classes & Class Allocations Policy

(including Frequently Asked Questions)

At Greasley Beauvale Primary and Nursery School, the Governors recognise the importance of ensuring equal opportunity for all children and adults. The Governors will continue to ensure that this is an essential element of all school policies and actions.

The right to develop, learn and work in an environment free from discrimination is implicit in our school's ethos and embodied in its Vision.

Our Vision:

At Greasley Beauvale Primary School, our vision is for everyone to **reach their true potential, nurture their talents** and foster a personal **love of learning** through a **safe, engaging and challenging curriculum**. **We take notice of each other** and **strive to be healthy and happy in body and mind**. We **champion physical, emotional and mental wellbeing** to **promote the best outcomes for everyone** to **build a healthy future together**.

At Greasley Beauvale Primary School, you are "Learning for Life" to "Paint Your Own Rainbow"

This latest update of this policy was written and approved in June 2025.

The policy has Full Governing Body approval.

Nominated Senior Leadership Team (SLT) member responsible for policy: Mrs Bates

Next review date: May 2026

Introduction

At Greasley Beauvale Primary and Nursery School, we are committed to delivering high-quality education for every child at any age. While we aim to organise classes by single year groups, wherever possible, there are times when mixed-age classes are necessary.

When allocating children into classes, whether that be a mixed-age class or within the same year group, the needs of the children and wider contexts will be considered.

This policy explains why mixed-age classes may be used and how children are allocated into new classes.

Whatever the scenario, we always ensure that every child continues to thrive in our setting and the views of everyone are heard.

Mixed-Age Classes at Greasley Beauvale Primary and Nursery School

What is a mixed-age class?

A mixed-age class includes children from more than one year group learning together with the same teacher. For example, a class may include both Year 1 and Year 2 children, or a mix of Year 3 and Year 4 pupils. This may also apply in the Early Years Foundation Stage (such as across our Rainbows Nursery and Reception classes).

Why do we use mixed-age classes?

We may create mixed-age classes when:

- Pupil numbers do not allow for evenly sized, single-year-group classes across the school
- We need to manage class sizes within our Pupil Admission Number (PAN)
- We need to meet statutory requirements (such as a maximum of 30 pupils in Key Stage 1)
- Budget and staffing levels require us to use our resources as effectively as possible
- Our school accommodation and staffing require flexible class organisation

We currently have 14 classes, plus our Foundation Stage 1 (Rainbows Nursery). We admit up to 55 children into Reception each year, and this continues through to Year 6. Rainbows Nursery (F1) can accommodate up to 39 children per session.

All class sizes are currently below 30.

How are children allocated in mixed-age classes?

When allocating children into classes, we carefully consider:

- Children's age, needs, and maturity

- A balanced mix of boys and girls
- An equal spread of Special Educational Needs and/or disabilities (SEND)
- Pupil Premium eligibility
- Behaviour and learning attitudes
- Academic ability and learning needs
- Friendship groups and social development
- Insights from teachers, historical contexts and professional judgment
- Parent and carer voice (via our annual consultation, messages and discussions)
- Pupil voice (friendship slips and preferences)

We believe splitting children by academic ability alone is not in their best interests.

Research from the Education Endowment Foundation (EEF) supports this, stating:

"The impact of setting and streaming is 0 months' progress, on average, with worse outcomes for lower-attaining pupils... Schools may consider other approaches such as small groups..." (EEF, 2025)

We always aim to place children in a class where they will flourish academically, socially, and emotionally.

What does teaching and learning look like in mixed-age classes?

Our teachers and support staff (both Learning Support Assistants and Teaching assistants) work closely in teams to ensure consistency across mixed-age classes. In these cases, we use a **two-year rolling curriculum**, meaning all children experience the full programme of study, for their key stage, without missing or repeating content.

In mixed-age classes, we ensure:

- Shared topics or themes are used to unite the class, with learning outcomes tailored by the Key Stage
- Lessons are planned to meet the needs of all learners
- Children are supported through small group work, targeted interventions, and some one-to-one support
- Planning and teaching are carefully scaffolded and adapted based on age and ability
- Children are assessed against the expectations of their year group
- Assessment for Learning (AfL) helps identify gaps and guides personalised support for all learners

This approach ensures that all children meet their curriculum goals and make strong progress, whatever class they are in.

Class Structure for 2025–2026

Our planned class structure for the next academic year is as follows (subject to change depending on pupil numbers):

Rainbows Nursery (F1):

- 1 x Nursery class (up to a maximum of 39 children per session)

Reception (F2):

- 2 x Reception classes

Key Stage 1 (Years 1 and 2):

- 3 x mixed Year 1/2 classes (evenly and fairly split)

Key Stage 2 (Years 3–6):

- 2 x Year 3 classes
- 2 x Year 4 classes
- 2 x Year 5 classes
- 2 x Year 6 classes

Class Allocations at Greasley Beauvale Primary and Nursery School

When and how we decide to allocate children to new classes

Every spring term, teachers and the senior leadership team (SLT) begin reviewing our class structures for the following academic year. This also includes deciding whether children need allocating into new classes. These decisions are based on how the current year has progressed and what is best for the children moving forwards.

While the decision to create mixed-age classes is often driven by staffing and budget considerations, decisions to allocate children to new classes are based on specific imbalances that may have developed.

What we consider when allocating children to new classes

If we do decide to re-organise a year group into two new classes, we carefully and thoughtfully consider many factors, including:

- **Age:** A balance of older and younger children
- **Special Educational Needs and Pupil Premium:** An even distribution of support needs
- **Gender:** A fair mix of boys and girls
- **Behaviour and attitudes to learning:** To ensure positive and equal classroom dynamics
- **Academic ability and learning needs:** So that each class is balanced and inclusive
- **Friendships and social development:** Guided by both pupil voice and professional judgment
- **Historical issues or context:** To avoid repeating known problems
- **Parent/carer feedback:** Taken from the annual consultation, messages and informal discussions

- **Pupil preferences:** From friendship slips and pupil voice
- **Teachers' knowledge of the children:** Taken from professional judgement across the course of the year and in all areas
- **Mobility:** Changes to class dynamics and sizes due to children leaving and entering school

Again, our aim is always the same: to ensure every child is placed in a class where they will thrive academically, socially, and emotionally.

Any new class allocations are reviewed and confirmed by the Head Teacher, the Behaviour and Inclusion Team and the Senior Leadership Team before being shared with children and parents. Once the lists are finalised, changes are very unlikely, as moving one child would mean rebalancing the class.

Children are not allocated into new classes every year. However, in extreme cases there are times when a child may be individually allocated to a new class for reasons personal to the child. Under these circumstances, there will need to be a justified reason, and this should be discussed in full between teachers, parents, the Head Teacher and appropriate member of the SLT (e.g. the SENDCO or pastoral lead).

Why allocating children to new classes can be beneficial

At Greasley Beauvale, we see many benefits to reorganising classes:

- It provides a **fresh start** for all children, which we feel can help to reset classroom relationships and routines
- It allows us to **rebalance groups** after natural changes in peer dynamics over time
- Children can **build new friendships** and work with a wider range of peers
- It builds **resilience and adaptability**, which we believe are essential life skills

Keeping Parents and Carers Informed

When a new class allocation (or mixed-age class) is planned, we will:

- Explain the reasons for the decision.
- Share how children will be allocated.
- Reassure you about how teaching and learning will be organised.

We keep families informed about our class structures through:

- Conversations during **school visits**
- A copy of this policy on our **school website** and available upon request
- **Clear communication** each year when new class allocation letters are sent out

We encourage parents and carers to ask questions or raise any concerns. A helpful list of **frequently asked questions**, based on real conversations and feedback, is included in **Appendix 1** of this policy. Our Transition sequence and plan is also shared in **Appendix 2** of this policy.

We are committed to ensuring every family feels informed, listened to, and supported.

Monitoring and Review

The Head Teacher, SLT and governors regularly monitor how well our class structures are working by looking at:

- Pupil progress and attainment
- Feedback from staff, pupils and parents/carers
- Children's wellbeing and engagement
- Monitoring and evaluation from learning walks, planning reviews, behaviour monitoring, and more

We make changes when needed to make sure our class arrangements continue to support all learners.

Complaints and Appeals

Decisions about class allocations are made in line with this policy and are part of the school's day-to-day strategic and operational management. The Head Teacher's decision is final and, as such, there is **no formal right to appeal** a decision about class allocations and/or mixed-age classes. However, if a parent feels that we haven't followed this policy, they should:

1. Raise the concern with the **Head Teacher** in the first instance
2. If still not satisfied, contact the **Chair of Governors**, following our school's complaints and vexatious complaints policy and procedure

Final Thoughts

Differences in ability between children have always existed in same-age classes, regardless of mixed-age groupings. Our new mixed-age classes will be no different.

Same-age classes, of chronological year groups, are separated by just a few months, or even weeks, rather than years. However, the ability differences in every class across school currently is very varied and this can become wider, and more obvious, as the children move throughout the school.

What is important, is that we are confident that teachers are sufficiently skilled and diligent in planning and delivering the curriculum to meet the needs of mixed-age and mixed-ability children.

We understand that change can feel unsettling, especially when it involves your child. Please be assured that every decision is made with great care, based on evidence, experience, professional judgement and our deep knowledge of your children.

We remain fully committed to providing the very best education for every child at Greasley Beauvale Primary and Nursery School.

Related Policies

- Assessment Policy
- Complaints and Vexatious Complaints Policy and Procedures
- Communication Policy
- Equality Information and Objectives Policy
- Home-School Communication policy
- Parent and Carer Code of Conduct
- Transition Policy



Appendix 1 - Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs):

Mixed Classes

We understand that changes to class structures can raise worries and questions. Therefore, these FAQs aim to explain the rationale behind introducing mixed-age classes for the next academic year, what it means for your child, and how we are ensuring that all children continue to receive the highest standard of education and care.

Why are you introducing mixed Year 1 and Year 2 classes?

We are introducing mixed-age classes to:

- Address financial pressures due to small class sizes (4 class currently averaging 19/20 children per class)
- Make best use of staffing and classroom space
- Retain the level of staffing that we currently have
- Ensure we can continue to offer a broad, high-quality curriculum
- Promote peer learning and support social development

This structure still allows us to continue to meet legal infant class size requirements and respond to changes in pupil numbers effectively.

Will my child still be taught at the right level?

Yes. Teaching will be based on individual learning needs, not just age or year group. This is the same for every teacher currently in each class across school, where the individual need is so varied. Our teachers are highly skilled in scaffolding lessons accordingly, and supporting children, to ensure each child is appropriately challenged, developed and nurtured.

Teachers manage this effectively across all Teachers' Standards by:

- Matching learning to need
- Identifying gaps
- Setting appropriate targets

- Ensuring appropriate provision maps, B-Squared and Boxall Profiles are used for SEND children (where required and appropriate)
- Providing a good handover to new teachers
- Planning closely matched learning objectives
- Planning and delivering programmes of study for mixed-age children taught over a two-year cycle and closely matched to need and level
- Regular identification of need
- Deploying Teaching Assistants (TAs) and Learning Support Assistants (LSAs) effectively
- Providing extra support for core subjects and phonics where required
- Some current staff transitioning with the children for consistency
- Teachers will be experienced in their Key Stage
- Extra support with teaching, where possible, for Autumn 1 transition into the next year group

How will you deliver two curriculums in one class?

The Key Stage one curriculum will be carefully planned over a two-year cycle to ensure complete coverage for both year groups. Some sessions will be taught together with scaffolded tasks, while others (like phonics) may be delivered in targeted groups. The curriculum is carefully planned so that all children access age-appropriate learning across the two years.

Will Year 1 children be expected to do Year 2 work too early?

Not at all. Year 1 children will follow their Key Stage 1 curriculum at a pace appropriate for them, including the use of continuous provision where needed. We will carefully support their transition from Reception to Year 1 learning.

Will Year 2 children repeat work they've already done?

No. The rolling programme ensures that no child repeats learning unnecessarily. Content is sequenced to build on what they already know, allowing for progression and challenge over the course of the year.

How will you ensure fairness for Year 2s, who are preparing for end of KS1 assessments?

Teachers are experienced in preparing any aged children for their assessments through targeted support and focused teaching. Mixed-age classes will not impact children's readiness for assessments, and additional support will be provided where needed. All year groups do end of year assessments and SATs at the end of Key Stage 1 no longer exist. Both year 1 and year 2 children will be appropriately assessed at the end of every term and then again at the end of the Key Stage.

How are teachers supported in teaching mixed-age classes?

Teacher Workload - Managing two year groups, with varying needs in one class, places an increased burden on teachers, which could ultimately affect the quality of

teaching and teacher well-being if not managed well and effectively. Therefore, teachers receive planning time to manage mixed-age provision effectively. Teachers work collaboratively to plan the curriculum and ensure continuity, progression, and balance across both year groups. They will be provided time for any CPD required and time to liaise and network with other schools locally, where necessary, who have mixed-aged classes.

Teachers will be provided extra time throughout the summer term to plan for the mixed-age classes and for the pending change.

Planning will be shared across two year groups, not one, and therefore more adults. Once the curriculum is in place, the planning time per teacher will be shorter and the workload and any initial pressures will be shared evenly and fairly.

How will class allocations be made?

- Parental consultation to share any issues and friendship considerations (including historic information)
- Children have a slip of paper and are asked for friends they want to be with (3-4). They are guaranteed at least one friend of their choice
- Teacher knowledge of friendships and needs
- TA and LSA observations and knowledge of friendships and needs
- Class list devised by teachers
- Shared with previous teachers for another 'eye' (especially to check on any previous issues)
- Shared with Senior Leaders (including behaviour teams, SEND and pastoral teams)

What support will there be for children with social, emotional, or learning needs?

Support for children's social, academic and emotional wellbeing remains a top priority.

Support includes:

- Tailored SEMH and SEND support - we have waves of intervention to support all areas
- Small-group interventions
- Access to an extra dedicated classroom space for focused learning and support. This is guaranteed to only be used by the year group mixes, and it will not be used by any other year group. The extra space will be used for small, focussed group work, interventions, emotional support and waves of intervention on offer for SEND and SEMH. The extra space will also be used for continuous provision for those who require it.
- Regular monitoring
- Parental contact
- Familiar TAs and LSAs providing consistent support
- More scope for wider and developed friendships over time
- Learning from wider group of children and role models

- Phonics boosting and targeting will also be happening, and this will be across all classrooms and extra spaces

Will my child have the same opportunities as children in a same-age class/year?

Absolutely. Children will access the same enrichment opportunities, trips, performances, and events as their peers. All planning, provision, and assessment will be equitable across all classes. All opportunities will be linked to the curriculum planned over the two-year cycle.

Is this a temporary arrangement? What happens after 2025–2026?

We will review the mixed-age structure from the outset (September 2025) and continue to monitor throughout the year. The decision to allocate children to new classes (or not) will always be taken on a year-by-year basis and will always be based on staffing, need and budget.

While this new model helps manage current pressures, we cannot guarantee future arrangements yet. This arrangement will be monitored closely over the next academic year and a decision will be made by the start of the summer term.

Parents and carers will be notified of the decision at the start of June every year.

Will my child fall behind or feel overwhelmed?

Our approach ensures:

- Teaching is matched to learning needs, not age alone
- Teachers use daily assessment to monitor progress
- Intervention happens quickly when needed
- Classrooms are nurturing, inclusive and supportive

Will there be additional staffing support so that my child does not fall behind or feel overwhelmed?

Yes. Although class numbers are increasing, in the 3 mixed age classes, the overall number of adults (teachers and TAs) is being retained and reorganised for better coverage:

- TAs and/or LSAs will join the team with experience in this Key Stage, complex needs and phonics
- Additional adult presence will support with phonics, interventions, and transitions
- An extra classroom space is being set aside solely for use by the mixed-age classes

How will this benefit my child?

Research and real-world examples show that, when planned well, mixed-age classes:

- Improve progress for younger pupils
- Encourage social behaviours and confidence
- Reduce direct comparison and competition
- Promote flexible, stage-based learning
- Build strong, family-like class communities

Is there any research supporting this model?

Yes, there are many researchers, who have shared studies into the benefits of mixed-age classes. Some examples include (but is not limited to):

- **Kulik and Kulik (1992) and Miller (1999)** states that there is no evidence of mixed age classes having negative effects on children’s attainment and much evidence of social benefits such as increases in cooperation, improved relationships, reduction in anxieties about learning and improved self-esteem.
- **Cronin (2019)**
A critical review of mixed-age grouping in primary schools finds that, when well-implemented, composite classes can support individualised pacing, peer-teaching opportunities and stronger social cohesion—challenging the assumption that single-year classes are always best. cerj.educ.cam.ac.uk
- **Glasgow & Sheffield Universities (2024)**
A longitudinal study of Early-Years multi-grade classes found that exposure to older peers drove significant gains in both literacy and numeracy for younger children, with sustained effects through Key Stage 1. eprints.gla.ac.uk

What overall evidence is there to support mixed age classes?

1. Social and Emotional Development

- **Role Models:** Older children can model positive behaviours, routines, and learning attitudes, helping younger children to settle more quickly.
- **Confidence Building:** Younger children may feel a sense of pride and motivation from being part of an older peer group, which can boost self-esteem.
- **Collaborative Skills:** Mixed-age settings often foster strong collaboration and peer support, nurturing empathy and social responsibility.

2. Differentiated and Individualised Learning

- **Flexible Grouping:** Teaching in mixed-age classes encourages teachers to focus more on stage, not age, tailoring instruction to individual needs.
- **Continuity and Progression:** Exposure to older content and expectations can provide a stretch for more able younger children, helping them make accelerated progress where appropriate.

3. Language and Communication Development

- **Richer Vocabulary Exposure:** Younger children benefit from hearing the more advanced vocabulary and sentence structures used by older peers.

- **Peer Tutoring:** Older pupils explaining concepts to younger children can reinforce their own understanding while helping the younger pupils learn in a relatable way.

4. Independence and Responsibility

- **Classroom Routines:** Older children typically demonstrate greater independence, which can encourage younger pupils to develop those same habits earlier.
- **Supportive Environment:** With older peers taking on roles like helping with transitions or classroom organisation, younger children may feel more supported and secure.

5. Teacher Development and Practice

- **Strong Differentiation Practice:** Teachers in mixed-age settings often become highly skilled in scaffolding and modelling, benefiting all pupils.
- **Continuous Assessment:** Teachers tend to use more formative and flexible assessment strategies, tracking progress across a broader spectrum.

6. Community and Belonging

- **Family Feel:** Mixed-age classes often have a more familial atmosphere, which can contribute to a strong sense of belonging and mutual respect.
- **Reduced Competition:** With a wider range of ages and abilities, children may be less prone to direct comparisons, reducing unhealthy competition.

What Mitigates Any Issues?

- **Clear, stage-based curriculum mapping** (not simply repeating two different years curriculums sequentially)
- **Robust professional development** for teachers in mixed-age pedagogy
- **Strategic grouping** (e.g., guided groups, cross-age peer groups)
- **Use of formative assessment** to track individual progress accurately
- **Leadership oversight** to ensure both groups are challenged and supported

Why are parents not consulted beforehand?

We recognise mixed-age classes are a significant change and we have taken worries and questions seriously. Consultations should feed into decision making, and on this occasion, the operational and strategic decision regarding mixed-age classes was made between the Head Teacher, SLT and governors. This was based on a budget and staffing capacity.

While consultation wasn't feasible regarding the decision to mix the age of classes next year, we have allowed for a period of views to be shared and questions to be asked and answered.

The Head Teacher has also allowed time to meet with several parents who have asked to discuss this decision in more detail.

We are committed to clear and ongoing communication. Therefore, we have:

- Devised a policy for mixed-age classes and class allocations
- Devised these FAQs based on questions asked and views shared
- Offered personal meetings upon request

What risk assessments have been conducted on potential negative impacts on children?

We believe strongly that we are not putting the children at risk through mixed-age classes. In addition, there is no evidence to prove that children can be at harm from such plans. However, we do appreciate that children may initially struggle to settle into their new year group and find it difficult at times.

As a result of this acknowledgement, we will:

- Use our general wellbeing risk assessments
- Constantly consider dynamic risk assessments (on the spot checks for wellbeing and any struggles)
- Use wellbeing support where needed from our package of SEMH support (Waves of interventions)
- Contact parents where necessary and discuss any issues
- Monitor the situation regularly
- Discuss and issues or cases regularly at our SMT, SLT, Wellbeing and Behaviour and Inclusion Meetings

Is this just about covering a maternity leave?

No. While staffing changes (including maternity) are part of the bigger picture, this model is a strategic response to class size, financial viability and sustainability, and long-term provision quality. It is not necessarily a short-term or convenience-based decision. However, will be reviewed again next year.

In addition, making the decision to start mixed-age classes now has meant that the current staffing compliment across Greasley has been retained.

How can I talk to someone if I'm still concerned?

At the start of every academic year, there is an inevitable period of 'settling in' and time for staff, children and parents to navigate their way through their new year group and class allocations.

At the start of the academic year, teachers are very experienced at supporting children and parents transition into their new year groups. They manage this effectively every year and settling in is not unique to mixed-age classes or new class allocations. However, if you wish to raise anything then we welcome honest, open, transparent and professional discussions.

In the event of wanting to have a discussion with a member of staff, please follow the process below:

- Speak first to your child's class teacher
- Contact a member of the Senior Leadership Team if further discussion is needed
- Contact the Head Teacher and ask to arrange a meeting using the following email address – head@greasley.notts.sch.uk

Will there be any face-to-face consultations or parental forum for parents and carers regarding this change?

The Senior Leadership Team, along with the governors, have made the decision not to carry out a face-to-face forum. This is to ensure that all views and concerns are shared individually.

On this occasion, we do not want parents and carers to become worried by the views and concerns of other parents.

Instead, we have offered:

- Personalised discussions with parents and carers (over the phone, messages or meetings with the Head Teacher)
- FAQs

How will you ensure that my child gets the education that they deserve and enriches their future?

- That is our overall goal for all children
- That is part of our ethos, vision, aims and Rainbow Values
- Children at Greasley Beauvale Primary and Nursery School are not disadvantaged by the class they are in. The mixed-age classes follow the same National Curriculum, across the Key stage, and it is delivered to meet their individual needs and ability
- Through the Teachers' Standards, teachers can confidently adapt the curriculum to suit the needs of their classes (at all ages and stages). Whatever the composition of the class allocations, it is the responsibility of the class teacher to treat all pupils as individuals and make sure that every pupil is making good progress
- Every class across school, mixed-age or not, has a wide variety of needs. Every teacher at Greasley Beauvale Primary and Nursery School has the experience and skills to meet the needs of all children (irrespective of age)

At Greasley Beauvale Primary School, our vision is for everyone to **reach their true potential, nurture their talents** and foster a personal **love of learning** through a **safe, engaging and challenging curriculum. We take notice of each other** and **strive to be healthy and happy in body and mind.** We **champion physical, emotional and mental wellbeing** to **promote the best outcomes for everyone** to **build a healthy future together.**

Appendix 2: Transition Sequencing Frame



When will I know if my child will be in a mixed-age class? or be allocated to a new class list? When will my child meet their new teacher?

April

- Senior Leadership Team (SLT) to make decision about mixed-age classes following budget setting and a review of the year
- Decision about mixed-age classes to be shared with parents
- Parent/carer voice consultation sent out regarding important information about their child (to inform allocation of classes)



May

- Collate responses from parents/carers and share with teachers (before decisions about classes, and allocation of children to potential new classes, are made)
- Class teachers share intentions with SLT regarding intentions to allocate children to new classes or keep classes the same



June

- Teachers and SLT work on allocation of children to new classes
- Decision about allocation of children to new classes to be shared with parents and carers
- Handover staff meetings take place between staff to share information about children (ready for the new academic year)
- Children to complete 'All About Me' sheets for their new class teacher
- Share whole school 'Transition Day' with parents and children
- Whole school 'Transition Day' with new teachers and staff
- Regular story times built into timetables with new class teacher



July

- Regular story times built into timetables with new class teacher
- Whole school transition slot with any job-share teachers
- Parental 'Meet the Teacher' sessions to prepare for September
- Reports shared and 'Open Afternoon' event takes place as a final opportunity to meet with existing teacher and ask any questions regarding new academic year

What will transition activities involve? Where? How will I give my views about the allocation of my child into a new class? When?

When will I know my child's new teacher? Will I get to meet the new teacher?