

What is a mixed age class?

A mixed age class is a class in which there are children who are from more than one-year group within the same classroom. In most cases, a mixed age class will comprise of pupils from the same Key Stage (Key Stage 1, Lower Key Stage 2 and Upper Key Stage 2).

How are the classes structured at St Anne's Fulshaw CE Primary School?

At St Anne's Fulshaw CE Primary School we have the following class structure:

- Oak Class - Reception
- Maple Class - Year 1 and Year 2 (Key Stage 1)
- Chestnut Class - Year 3 and Year 4 (Lower Key Stage 2)
- Beech Class - Year 5 and 6 (Upper Key Stage 2)

In all classes there is a wide range of ability and ensuring every child in every class is challenged and supported to make accelerated progress is what we do every day.

How do mixed age classes work at St Anne's Fulshaw CE Primary School?

Our mixed age classes follow a two-year rolling programme of study. The rolling programmes have been developed to create a broad and balanced curriculum over a two-year period. National Curriculum content for children from both years within the key stage has been carefully considered to ensure that the progression of skills is clear.

At St Anne's Fulshaw, our teachers always ensure that:

- Our classroom practice allows pupils to take pride in their abilities as individuals, giving them constant motivation to improve.
- The pace of learning is individualised.
- Our children are viewed as unique individuals where we concentrate on what children *can* do, rather than what they *can't* do. Our teachers focus on teaching each child according to his or her own strengths, and our learning support is specifically targeted on meeting individually identified needs.
- There is challenge for all pupils within the class.
- Children develop a sense of family with their classmates, and enjoy a wider social circle with children from other year groups.

What are the benefits of mixed age classes?

Research evidences that mixed-age classrooms are beneficial for young children's development. A study by Simon Veenman titled 'Cognitive and Non-cognitive Effects of Multi-grade and Multi-Age Classes: A Best-Evidence Synthesis' found that there is no empirical evidence that student learning suffered in any way in multi-age (mixed age) classrooms.

Children in such classrooms did not learn more or less than students in single age classes. In fact, students in multi age classes scored higher on attitudes towards school, personal adjustment and self-concept than students in single age classes, thriving socially and emotionally.

Mixed-age classrooms generate a family of learners who support and care for one another. Older children have the opportunity to serve as mentors and take leadership roles. These children model more sophisticated approaches to problem solving, helping younger children to accomplish tasks they would not be able to do independently whilst completing their own learning. This dynamic increases the older child's level of independence and competence while increasing the younger child's spirit of belonging in a community of learners.

Younger children have the opportunity to extend their learning and increase their vocabulary whilst working alongside older children. They are exposed to the curriculum content covered by the older children and so are well prepared to access this successfully when they, in turn, are the older children in the class.

Mixed year classrooms are both socially and psychologically healthy because they promote friendship and provide extended contact with adults and peers of varying ages. Children in these classes therefore show a notable increase in self-esteem and social skills.

Our children's academic achievement over time is testament to the success of mixed age classes and we are very proud that our children are not only academically well prepared, but socially and emotionally secure in their own selves when they leave us to move onto their secondary schools.

If you have any questions about our class structure, please don't hesitate to contact your child's class teacher or Ms Daniel at head@stannesfulshaw.net

