

BWJPS Little people, big future.

Mixed Age Classes: Everything You Need to Know.

Our commitment to you:

Deliver: we will deliver a high-quality provision to all our learners.

Inform: we will challenge misconceptions and share information

Communicate: we will communicate the right information, in the right way, at the right time.

Listen: we will listen to ideas and concerns, addressing them in a constructive manner

Celebrate: we will celebrate our children's success

Show: we will show parents that their children are happy, well cared for and are learning & developing well in school.

What is mixed-age learning?

A mixed-age class is a class in which there are children who are from more than one year-group within the same classroom.

The facts: the scientific bit!

Evidence suggests that pupils do **not** perform less well when they work in mixed-age classes.

There is evidence to suggest: (taken from a meta-review led by Pete Boyd in 2020)

- There is a positive impact on collaborative learning.
- There is a positive impact on peer interaction, feedback and peer coaching.
- There is a positive impact from the use of flexible grouping options.

What are the benefits of a mixed age class?

- Increased opportunities for flexibility in ability groupings, enabling learners to work with the appropriate ability, regardless of age.
- The better a teacher knows a learner, the more s/he can support individual needs. Mixed age classes can allow opportunities for learners to spend more than one year with a teacher, proving opportunity for the class teacher to develop a deep understanding of a child's strengths and needs, and allowing the child to develop a greater level of trust.
- Children are viewed as unique individuals – something we pride ourselves on at BWJPS. A mixed age class lends itself specifically to this approach.
- Fewer classes means greater share of TA support can be awarded to mixed age classes, without reducing the allocation for other classes.
- Highly personalised learning – the teacher focuses on teaching each child according to his or her own strengths – again, this is something we pride ourselves on always at BWJPS.

- It encourages a spirit of co-operation, where learners are more likely to support each other than compete. For example, older learners often support younger learners both socially and academically, building their confidence, competence and leadership skills.
- “Vertical” grouping often nurtures problem solving, vocabulary and social competences.
- Younger learners benefit as they see older learners modelling positive, mature and supportive behaviours.
- Older children model more sophisticated approaches to problem solving, enabling younger learners to accomplish tasks more effectively.

Will my child be held back if s/he is placed in a mixed age class?

No. Evidence from the current EYFS and Y1/Y2 class proves that the children are excelling in a mixed age environment. This was replicated in the observations we made when the Y5/6 children were taught together for foundation subjects and science in the spring and summer terms.

The ways in which learning and teaching are organised in primary schools means that work is tailored to the needs and current achievement levels of individual pupils – something our recent Ofsted inspection acknowledged.

The staff at BWJPS are extremely experienced at planning and delivering work to match the needs of mixed ability pupils already within our classes, providing challenging work for the more able pupils and extra support for those needing more help.

The school plans the educational experiences for pupils in all classes in ways which ensure good progression and continuity, whichever age group or class they are in.

How does the National Curriculum and other widely available schemes of work cater for mixed age classes?

The schemes we use cater for mixed age learning. Foundation subject expectations are set out over each Key Stage, with the flexibility to deliver content earlier or later, depending on learners’ needs. The content taught will be aligned fully with the National Curriculum for each age group.

At BWJPS, we are already working on a rolling programme of topics and themes & these are planned, monitored and tracked termly to ensure full coverage is achieved. These long term plans are further scrutinised by external experts such as local authority visitors, Ofsted and our School Improvement Partner.

In EYFS, we work in accordance with the statutory framework for early years which has the same educational programmes for all children aged between three and five years old. All EYFS staff are trained and skilled in delivering these educational programmes. We identify

individual next steps for each child to ensure children are being challenged and developed at a pace which is personal to them and their needs.

When required, children are separated into single age year groups to deliver specific aspects of the curriculum, for example phonics. These sessions are always planned and taught by the class teacher.

What about English and Maths?

Areas of learning are regularly revised and revisited in English and maths. The English National curriculum is organised into Key Stages. The Key stage 1 curriculum has specific objectives to work towards in Year 1 and Year 2, however at BWJPS we move children forward when they are ready and do not wait until they are a specific age – this is good teaching. The Key stage 2 English curriculum is arranged into Year 3 & 4 and Year 5&6. The objectives and spelling lists are already combined.

The maths curriculum is split into year groups. As the maths curriculum is a spiral curriculum classes revisit topics annually and this begins with previous learning (known as recap). This allows teachers to plan succinctly for mixed-age classes, using additional adults to split children into groups and teach them separately when additional teaching is required.

How will we achieve the best outcomes for your children?

By doing what we already do very well every day.

- The quality of the learning tasks is high. There is a range of opportunities for open-ended, explorative and problem-oriented learning, as well as the acquisition of factual knowledge.
- Formative assessment is used well: to observe and diagnose how a learner is learning and is intended to improve teaching and learning.
- Opportunities are created for working with single age groups, where appropriate, both socially and academically.
- Ensuring that opportunities to socialise and play sports with other children are created.

Who will be the class teachers & what might a typical day look like?

- EYFS – Mrs Whittam
- Y3/4 – Mr Wilde
- Y5/6 – Miss Pereira