

Barnes Farm Junior School

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26 January 2017

Dear Y5 parents,

I am writing to you with regards to the Class Structure policy which has been announced today by both Infant and Junior schools. This involves mixing up the classes throughout the school on an annual basis beginning in September 2017.

I am mindful of the particular sensitivities for Y5 parents that may be produced by this decision and I wanted to address these more specifically. This is because many pupils in these classes will have been grouped together ever since their Reception year in the Infant School and we anticipate both pupils and parents may have mixed reactions to this news.

Staff and Governors have discussed this policy at length and the issues linked to Y5 in particular. It was agreed that a consistent approach across both schools would enable us to achieve our desired outcomes. I would like to emphasise the rationale again from the policy:

- *To create opportunities for children to learn and play with a wider variety of peers*
- *To enable greater social interaction between children as they move through the school*
- *To ensure that the classes remain balanced in response to pupil transfer and transition during phases*
- *To promote a greater sense of community in a large three-form entry school*

In September 2018, all the Y5 pupils will be transitioning to a new secondary school wherever that may be. There is a positive opportunity here to equip children with the skills they will need then within a school they know and trust one year earlier. This will enable the pupils to be more 'secondary-ready' than our current model. This approach is common amongst many other larger schools both in Essex and across the country.

I would also like to point out the process whereby the children will be consulted on their views of friendships. This currently happens before the residential trip to Mersea in May but will now also be used to inform the professional judgements for the next academic year.

The staff and Governors strongly believe that taking advantage of the three-form entry size of our school will embed a greater sense of community and widen the social network for our pupils so that we achieve our mission to 'inspire and educate'.

If you wish to discuss this further or require any clarification, please do not hesitate to get in touch with the school.

Regards,

Ross McTaggart
Headteacher