

Dear Parents and Guardians,

I am writing to share an important update about our class structure for September.

As many of you will be aware, Torbay has experienced several years of low birth rates, which has had a significant impact on pupil numbers across local schools. In Foundation and Key Stage 1, around 30% of places remain unfilled. As schools are funded primarily based on the number of pupils that they have in the school, challenges with pupil numbers have resulted into schools adapting how their classes are structured.

For this academic year, we adapted by moving to mixed-age classes in Key Stage 1. For September 2026, our mixed age structure will remain in place for children in KS1. In addition, we will need to make a further adjustment: our Year 3 and Year 4 classes will move to a mixed-age structure. Reception, Year 5 and Year 6 will continue to be taught in straight year groups.

When I shared our plans with parents with children in Key Stage 1 last year, two key questions emerged:

1. How will you ensure all children continue to make good progress?
2. Will my child be separated from their friends?

Our KS1 team has worked incredibly hard this year to create a structure that enables every child to thrive. An additional adult joins the team for maths so that children can be taught with their year-group peers. For reading, children move to their Read Write Inc group from 9:00–10:00am. In their Read Write Inc session, children are grouped based on their half termly reading assessment, ensuring they are always challenged. Children in KS1 have made fantastic progress across the curriculum this year and we are optimistic that 100% of pupils will pass the phonics screening check in June, compared to 80% nationally.

Across the wider curriculum, we have made some adaptations to ensure learning is accessible for all. Broadly the KS1 curriculum is designed to be taught over two years, with most objectives flexible in terms of the order that they are taught. We will take this successful model forward as we plan for our new mixed-age Year 3/4 classes.

In terms of friendships, we have seen real benefits this year. Children in KS1 now have strong friendships across both year groups, and this has been a positive outcome of the mixed-age approach. As we get closer to half term, we will develop provisional class lists for September, ensuring that every child is placed with key friends who are positive role models.

I will be available at the gate if you would like to speak with me, and I also invite you to share any comments or questions using the Microsoft Forms link below. I will write to families again next week to respond to the common themes raised.

<https://forms.cloud.microsoft/e/aBtRnY2gYk>

Kind regards,



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