

Class Structure for September 2026 – Update from Parent Feedback

Dear Parents and Guardians,

Earlier this month, I wrote to you to inform you of our class structure for September 2026. As you will be aware, lower pupil numbers across Torbay are affecting how many schools are structured, as funding is directly linked to the number of children on roll.

This year, due to our lower pupil numbers in Key Stage 1, we moved to three parallel mixed-age classes in Key Stage 1. For September 2026, we will continue with this structure in KS1 and will also move to mixed-age classes in Years 3 and 4.

When I shared this plan with you earlier in the month, I gave you the option to submit your views through a Microsoft Forms link. Thank you to those who completed the online form. When analysing your feedback, several themes emerged and I have responded to each below.

How will each year group meet the learning goals for each subject?

Across the wider curriculum (subjects such as science, geography and history), our curriculum is organised into clear year-group objectives. This year in KS1, all children have been taught the Year 2 curriculum, with lessons carefully adapted to support, engage and challenge every learner.

Next year, KS1 will follow our former Year 1 curriculum, again with significant adaptations to ensure appropriate challenge for all. By the end of next year, we will have a fully developed two-year rolling programme (Year A and Year B) that can be taught in either order, ensuring that no learning is repeated. We will also ensure that our curriculum across these 2 years continues to cover all the objectives in the national curriculum.

This same approach will be deployed as we move to our mixed age classes in Years 3 and 4. Teachers will use the current Year 4 planning as a starting point and adapt it for mixed-age teaching – again ensuring that the needs of all learners are met.

In our core subject areas (Reading, Writing and Maths), we take the following approaches to enable all children to be supported and challenged:

- **Reading** – Children will continue with Read Write Inc or whole-class reading. Read Write Inc groups are small and based on assessments every six weeks. We have a huge team who teach Read Write Inc in classrooms and intervention spaces every day and children. When children have graduated off the Read Inc Program, their reading lesson will be in class where the children immerse themselves in a text and then answer questions related to the text.
- **Writing** – Mixed-age writing lessons can be highly successful. We will continue to plan carefully and use additional adults and technology to support progress. We have strong units of planning in place and these will be adapted so that the needs of our youngest and oldest children are met in writing sessions.

- **Maths** – This is more complex. KS1 maths progress this year has been exceptional, largely due to Mrs Featherstone joining the team daily for maths; allowing us to split classes into single-year groups and to have 4 adults teaching these groups. We plan to extend this model into Year 3/4 next year.

Will last year's curriculum be repeated?

No. KS1 children have been taught their year-group objectives in reading, writing and maths this year, alongside adapted Year 2 foundation subject planning (e.g. art and history). Next year, Year 2 children will continue with their year-group objectives in the core areas and will learn the second half of our KS1 foundation curriculum. This ensures a complete two-year rolling programme while we have mixed-age classes.

How will progress be tracked?

Teachers assess learning constantly during lessons, adapting teaching in real time. In addition, the following assessments take place:

- **Reading** – Formal assessments take place half-termly to support grouping and identify gaps in Read Write Inc.
- **Maths** – Children complete a short assessment at the start of each unit. In addition, children sit two tests per year to track progress.
- **Writing** – Children are assessed half-termly to inform planning and next steps.

Will changes happen again in Year 5?

At this stage, we cannot say for certain. Pupil numbers are difficult to predict. While birth rates in Torbay are low, lots of families continue to relocate to Torbay. We will monitor numbers closely over the next 12 months and update you as soon as we can.

How will Year 1 and Year 2 children be treated differently?

There is a significant developmental difference between children at the start of Year 1 and the end of Year 2. Our curriculum and classroom routines will reflect this.

For example, in a recent KS1 history lesson, all children began together on the carpet, listening to the teacher, sharing ideas and exploring images. Later in the lesson, Year 2 pupils worked independently in their books, while Year 1 pupils engaged in structured role-play linked to the

learning before completing their written work in small groups. This flexible approach ensures that both year groups receive what they need.

How will classes be allocated?

We will create three parallel classes that are balanced in terms of year group, prior attainment and gender. This will be a careful and thoughtful process involving current teachers and the leadership team. We will aim to keep positive friendship groups together, while also using the opportunity to rebalance classes where needed.

How will this impact friendships?

Children affected by class changes will take part in enhanced transition activities during the second half of the summer term to help them feel confident and settled for September. Last year, friendships were one of the biggest concerns raised by parents when we introduced mixed-age KS1 classes. The vast majority of children now have more friends across more year groups, which has had a very positive impact on confidence and social development. We do however recognise that any transition is difficult and a change of structure will increase levels of anxiety for some children. We will support the children with these emotions in the summer term and as we implement this new structure in September.

If classes are being merged as a cost-saving measure, where will the funds be redirected?

Because school funding is based on pupil numbers, fewer pupils result in a smaller budget. These changes are necessary to ensure we can balance our budget next year. This will therefore not lead to surplus funds. However, I am working closely with the Trust to strengthen our IT provision so that we can maximise learning opportunities both in school and at home.

How many classes will there be?

- Key Stage 1: Three parallel classes taught by Mrs Dennis, Mr Stocker and Miss Matthews.
- Year 3/4: Three parallel classes taught by Mrs Barker, Miss Bolton, and Mrs Kendall (3 days) / Miss Cose (2 days).

Please be assured that we will work tirelessly to make this structure successful. Our commitment is, and always will be, to ensure that your children continue to make excellent academic progress, feel happy and secure, and flourish in every aspect of school life.

If you have any further questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'S Bone', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Steve Bone

Head teacher