Farnham Green Primary School

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Growing Aspiration – Shaping the Future

Striving for Excellence…

22nd June 2026

Dear Reception and Year 1 families,

You are probably aware that we have continued to experience mobility over the last 12 months, each of the Year 1 classes are very small and along with the current reception classes there is not an equal balance of gender, educational need etc. in each class. It also means that currently the organisation of the school is not financially viable and we want to avoid having unqualified supply teachers at our school. In order that our children get the best quality teaching alongside equality of opportunity we will, therefore, be re-organising the current Year 1 and reception year groups for September.

We will, over the next week, be dividing our current Year 1 and reception children into 3 classes, ready for the autumn term. (Three mixed Year 1 and 2 classes)

In re-organising the classes, we will use a range of criteria, including friendship groups, educational needs, gender etc. **If you have any concerns relating to this re-organisation or you would like us to take into account any special circumstances, please consult with the class teacher as soon as possible, period (but no later than Wednesday 1st July 2026), by emailing; eyfs@farnhamgreen.org.uk or year1@farnhamgreen.org.uk**

I know that together we will ensure that your child continues to have a happy and successful learning experience next year; the organisation of the school is part of our on-going journey to excellence and your support is much appreciated.

First of all, please know that when making decisions about the structure of our school, the pupil's needs are considered carefully. As a school, we take into account what we know about our children's learning skills, their social maturity, their friendship groups, leadership skills and anything else that may impact their success in a class.

Decisions being made regarding which pupils go into a mixed class are not taken lightly.

The following information may help you in gaining some further clarity and understanding.

Background information

It is worth noting that some schools believe in the educational benefits of learning with and from others of different ages and prefer to teach a *multi-age* class of two or more (commonly three) different classes, such as a Year 4/5/6 class. They form multi-age classes by choice.

The decision to mix our classes is out of necessity. This has occurred at Farnham Green historically and has been successful.

Should children be grouped by age?

Putting pupils into classes based on their age is an administrative convenience. As all parents and teachers know, a child's age tells you little about his or her development — a boy can be much taller than other boys his age and be a better match physically to boys one or more years older. His twin sister might be smaller than girls her age but outshine them in all subjects (or none) at school.

Children's development follows a similar pattern but their age is not always an accurate predictor of their actual development. Inherited characteristics as well as environmental factors such as nutrition and experiences will influence development and the age at which particular milestones are reached.

Does a mixed-class affect academic achievement?

Most of the research has been carried out in classes in primary school. Various studies and meta-analyses combining the results of studies have consistently shown positive results for multi-age classes where there is a strong focus on individual learning needs and learning with both older and younger classmates. **At Farnham Green we have a strong focus on individual learning needs.**
A seminal article in 1995 described all mixed-class classes as "simply no worse, and simply no better" than single-class classes. In other words, pupils in mixed-class classes are not disadvantaged academically.

By mixing all classes Farnham Green will ensure that there is equity in provision which research shows is necessary in securing good outcomes for children.

Schooling isn't just about test scores

Schooling and education are not just about academic achievement. When "social-emotional" factors are considered, the evidence for mixed-class classes is positive.

It is not the class structure that affects learning so much as the type of learning activity engaged in, its relevance, its interest, a pupils' learning to date, and many other factors including the pupils' active involvement in the learning and the quality of the teaching.

Learning with others in genuinely collaborative groups is effective and can be organised in any type of class, but mixed-class teachers have more opportunities to group pupils flexibly, in different ways at different times.

Engaged pupils will learn whether the class is structured by age, class, ability, or as some form of mixed-class class.

Research has demonstrated that there are some major advantages to a mixed class, such as:

- Studies have found that pupils in combined classes do just as well as pupils in single-class classes.
- Pupils in mixed class classes often have more opportunity for teamwork.
- Pupils in the higher class of the mixed often demonstrate improved leadership skills.
- Pupils in the lower class of the mixed often work harder to achieve the next level.
- No two children develop at the same pace — a mixed class offers a greater continuum of skills, so that each pupil may work at their ideal level.
- A mixed class classroom is a better reflection of the real world, with more diverse groupings.
- Many parents claim greater social development and a wider friendship circle for all children involved in a mixed.

The potential down side of a mixed class could be:

- The teacher will have to teach two curricula simultaneously and pupils may be at risk of less individual attention. **Here at Farnham Green our curriculum is actually per phase – i.e. Y1 and 2 have the same curriculum. Our school follows the National Curriculum.**
- A great mixed class teacher needs to have all the characteristics of a great teacher in any type of class — knowledgeable, creative, compassionate, organised. **Here at FG, we are selecting the teachers just as carefully as we decide which pupils belong in which class. Our Y1/2 team will have experienced leaders and high-quality teachers.**

Looking ahead

If you are concerned with your child's ability to manage a mixed class, please share your concerns with the teacher. In the September class talks, please also ask the teacher about his or her strategies for reaching a diverse group of learners and for meeting individual needs. This will reassure you. As for your child, you will probably find that if you are positive, then they will be positive. But be assured that we will talk to each child and ask them how they feel about being in a class with older (or younger) children. We will find out if they are worried or excited about the classroom set up. If they are particularly anxious, we will support them and work in partnership with you.

Whether you are happy with the school's necessity to have mixed classes or not, please rest assured that the school and the teachers do have your child's best interest at heart. Everyone is working together to make the learning environment the best it can be. After all, we all have the same goal — providing your child with a great school year and the best possible outcomes.

Yours sincerely

Mr J Lee

Head of School