

The Trent-Rylands Federation

Trent Vale Infant and Nursery School *and* Beeston Rylands Junior School



Trent Vale Infant and Nursery School

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Helping each other towards excellence in all that we do

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Dear Parents / Carers,

This week, children and their families will find out which class they will be in next year. We'd like to take this opportunity to explain how our classes will be structured from September and address some common questions that often arise around class organisation.

Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS)

We are excited to continue working as a unified EYFS Unit, providing the best possible start to your child's educational journey here at Trent Vale.

- **Nursery (F1 – Acorns)** will be taught by **Mrs Sarah Hall** every morning.
- We will have two Reception (F2) classes:
 - **Lilac Class** – taught by **Mrs Robinson (21 or 22 children)**
 - **Beech Class** – taught by **Mrs Mason (21 or 22 children)**

In the afternoons, our Nursery children will join one of the Reception classes. **Miss Elliott** will continue to support the Nursery children during this time. This collaborative model allows us to make the most of our team's expertise and supports a smooth transition from Nursery to Reception by helping children become familiar with both staff and the learning environment.

Nursery and our new F2 Parents have already been informed about this structure.

Key Stage 1 (KS1)

From September, all Key Stage 1 classes will be mixed Year 1 and Year 2. There will be three mixed classes:

- **Maple Class** – taught by **Miss Maltby**
- **Cedar Class** – taught by **Miss Gough**
- **Holly Class** – taught by **Miss May**

Each class will have either 27 or 28 pupils, with an even balance of Year 1 and Year 2 children.

Why Mixed Year Groups?

This decision has been guided by both our current pupil numbers and the structure of national admissions.

Mixed-age classes are not new to Trent Vale or Beeston Rylands Junior School. They are a tried and tested way to manage class size regulations and fluctuating pupil numbers while maintaining a high standard of

education. The birth rate locally and nationally is falling and schools are admitting reduced numbers. This is the case in nearly all schools locally.

The local authority sets our Pupil Admission Number (PAN) at 50 children per year group. Infant classes are legally capped at 30 pupils. This usually results in one full class of 30 and a smaller group of up to 20 children which are then split between classes. In September, we anticipate:

- 43 children in **Reception (F2)**
- 40 children in **Year 1**
- 45 children in **Year 2**

This is a total of 128 children. We have capacity for 150 pupils in School. Whilst we are hoping that new children will join us throughout the year, this reduction in number impacts hugely on our budget.

With all year groups having fewer than 50 children, combining year groups allows us to use our staff and resources more effectively. Each school place brings approximately **£4,610** in funding. A class of 22 children (in a room meant for 30) means a potential funding loss of over **£36,000 per class**, impacting staff and resources. Combining year groups ensures financial sustainability while maintaining excellent education standards.

Year 1 and Year 2 are naturally compatible as both follow the National Curriculum, making them well suited for mixed-age teaching. Educational research, as well as local and national data, shows no negative impact on academic outcomes for children in mixed-age classes. In fact, some studies suggest that mixed-age environments can benefit social and cognitive development.

Will Children Still Mix with Friends in Other Classes?

Absolutely! We ensure children have ample opportunities to play, learn, and socialise with peers from different classes.

- **Lilac and Beech Classes (Reception)** will share an outdoor learning and play space, promoting interaction during free play and continuous provision.
- Reception children will also have lunch together, providing more opportunities to play and build friendships.
- **Year 1 and Year 2** children will mix during playtimes, school trips, joint lessons, and whole-year-group events.
- Transition support from Reception to Year 1 will include continuous provision and independent learning opportunities to help children adapt smoothly.

Children will actually mix with more children by being in a mixed class.

How Do We Ensure Curriculum Entitlement?

Teachers at Trent Vale are highly skilled in adapting teaching to meet a wide range of learning needs.

- The **National Curriculum** is designed to be flexible and adaptable.
- **Phonics and maths** will be taught in discrete year groups due to their sequential nature.
- In **English and wider curriculum subjects**, children will mostly remain in their classes but follow a two-year rolling programme with age-appropriate expectations. (The same approach is taken in the Junior school due to having mixed Y3/4 and Y5/6 classes)
- Groupings for learning may also be mixed or year-specific, depending on the topic and the needs of the children.

- This flexibility allows us to stretch more able learners and support those who need more targeted help.

Consistency is maintained through regular quality assurance, including the moderation of work and teaching practices. This ensures every child receives a high-quality education, regardless of class placement.

We are incredibly proud of the teachers and teaching assistants at Trent Vale. They are professional, skilled, and deeply committed to supporting one another and our pupils. We are confident that this new structure will continue to support the strong teaching and learning that defines our school.

We have also attached a Powerpoint which gives some further information about the mixed year group class structure.

<https://www.trentrylandsfederation.com/wp-content/uploads/2025/07/Mixed-age-Classes-Presentation-2025.pdf>

If you have any questions or would like to speak with us further about class structures for next year, please don't hesitate to get in touch. We are always happy to discuss your child's learning journey with you.

Thank you for your continued support.

Warm regards,

Janine Barratt and Sue Osborne
Trent Vale Infant and Nursery School