



The Trent-Rylands Federation

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

Trent Vale Infant and Nursery School

Mixed Age Classes 2025

Why?

- ▶ Over the last few years the number of children requiring a school place has decreased. Locally, the birth rate has been lower and many schools have less pupils currently and potentially for the next few years.
- ▶ Each school place taken by a child brings £4,610. A class of 22 children may sound ideal, but for a class that should be full with 30 children, that's a loss of £36,880 per class towards paying for staff members and resources. All of our year groups next year will have lower numbers so we are making the move to join year groups together.
- ▶ We have decided to join Year 1 and Year 2 classes as these year groups both follow the National Curriculum and teaching and learning can be more effective.
- ▶ Both national and local data for performance of children at the end of KS1 and 2 suggests that being placed in a mixed age class has no negative impact on children's academic achievements- as evidenced at the Junior School. This is also supported by educational research, with some studies suggesting that children often perform better when placed in classes with a larger age range.

We will have three classes of mixed Year 1 and 2. These will be as evenly split as possible as we have similar numbers in each year group. For example one class could have 15 Year 2 children and 13 Year 1 children. There may be some slight variation when we take into account additional needs and friendship groups etc. All these factors will be considered carefully by the adults that know the children best. Some current Year 1 children may stay in their classroom or with the same teacher.

Each class will be taught in the main by their teacher in their classroom. For Maths and Phonics children may move to another classroom to be taught with their peers depending on which year group they are in. This is due to the fact that there is a set scheme of work for each year group that we need to follow.

The teachers will work in a team approach to meet the needs of all our children. They will be supported by our teaching assistants.

This team approach to classroom provision, especially for Year 1 children, will look very similar to Reception where there are still many opportunities to learn through play. As play is a vital means through which children learn, we value it for every age-group in school and the environment will be set up in a way that the play opportunities enhance and promote learning towards the National Curriculum objectives.

What?

Children will continue to be taught as a whole class and in smaller groups where appropriate. Groupings may be contained to children of one year group or mixed depending on what the children need to learn or practice. We can be flexible in our approach to ensure that the children are doing the right things at the right time. This will enable us to stretch and challenge the more able children and support those who need it.

With the exception of Maths, English and Science, the curriculum content isn't split into separate year group content, rather, there is an expectation for the end of the key stage. Subject Leaders have developed a progression of skills and knowledge for children to work through in each year group. In the case of English, the curriculum for year 1 and 2 are completely aligned, with the majority of objectives being matched with similar but slightly trickier objectives for the older year group. Ensuring coverage of National Curriculum objectives for both year groups in the same classroom will therefore be easily facilitated by normal classroom practice. We will have a two-year rolling programme of study developed from our already successful curriculum to ensure that the older year group doesn't repeat unnecessary learning.

Progress of all children will continue to be monitored by teachers and leaders and creative ways will be found to support and challenge – this is the same whether the class is mixed-age or not. The governors will also continue to monitor progress and attainment of groups of children across school.

Children who find aspects of the curriculum more challenging will be supported in the same way they have been in single year classes. Children working above the expected standard will be provided with work which both deepens their understanding and moves them on to explore new concepts.

We will always consider the best ways to meet the needs of all the year groups – no year group has its needs prioritised above another.

All children develop at different rates. It isn't automatic that the oldest child in a class will achieve better than the youngest child. Children will be taught to their individual academic needs and not simply to their age. All classes in the school have a large range of maturity and attainment. Teachers will choose work appropriate to the standard a child is working at, ensuring that all needs are catered for but will also have carefully planned the key knowledge to be taught for each group. Every child will access the learning they need and what is statutory for their age group.

How?

The Benefits!

- ▶ Research has shown that children thrive in mixed age classes. They learn to form wider friendships and relate to broader groups of children, creating a classroom atmosphere where children are encouraged to help others and seek support from their older peers rather than simply relying on adult support.
- ▶ Children benefit in many ways from the opportunity to become an 'expert' for the younger children and a positive role model which the younger children often aspire to. This 'vertical' grouping often nurtures thinking & problem skills, vocabulary & social competences. There is often a greater sense of cooperation and opportunities to work with a wider circle of peers. This has been evident from our approach to playtime and the children have already made friendships across the year groups and look forward to opportunities to play together.
- ▶ Some children will have continued learning with the same teacher and this provides an opportunity for the teacher to develop a deeper understanding of a child's needs and strengths. They are therefore in a strong position to continue to support the child's learning. This is particularly good for children with SEN who might benefit from consistency. These children know their teacher's expectations well and have already built a good level of trust.
- ▶ There is great benefit for the older children. They will be able to consolidate learning from the previous year at the same time as constructing new learning - their new learning will make sense and be built upon more easily when the connections are made clear. We often revisit learning from previous terms and years to ensure there is a good base for new learning. We have worked really hard on developing retrieval recently; this can only be an even better opportunity!

Residential:

Year 2 children will still have a residential trip as normal and the Year 1 children will have a normal day in school!

Year 2 will still get the same responsibilities they have always had e.g. extra jobs.
This will help them to feel more grown-up and give them extra things to look forward to in Year 2.

Trips:

The classes will go on a trips in Year groups as normal

Year 2 will continue to have the same transition activities e.g. visiting the Junior school

Special School Days :

The classes will experience the special days in school together as they meet the needs of both year groups.

After School Clubs :

The clubs will be organised in the same way as they are this year.

Other

- ▶ SEN children will still get the support they need – there is no change to this
- ▶ Also, we are used to teaching a wide range of needs/ability in one year group, adding in another year group won't change the breadth drastically – we still recognise what children's individual needs are and work from there.
- ▶ Classes still won't be full at the beginning of the year. KS1 will have about 27 in a class
- ▶ The way we teach the children will always be the best way for their age group; if they have had a good grounding in what is right for their age, then they will be more ready for KS2.
- ▶ Infant class sizes have to be 30 and under so we have to merge year groups in this case rather than having a very large class of one year group.

Local schools with mixed-age classes:

Toton Banks Road Infant and Nursery School, Beeston

Ladycross Infant School, Sandiacre

Albany Infant and Nursery School, Stapleford

William Lilley Infant and Nursery, Stapleford

Any probably many more that we don't know about!

We already plan for mixed year Groups so this is not too much of a change for us. We have a fabulous staff team who are committed, passionate and creative and will work together to make this work successfully. Training and collaborative work is already well underway as we prepare for next year. I have full faith in our team, as always, to make this a great experience for the children.