



# Mixed Classes Policy

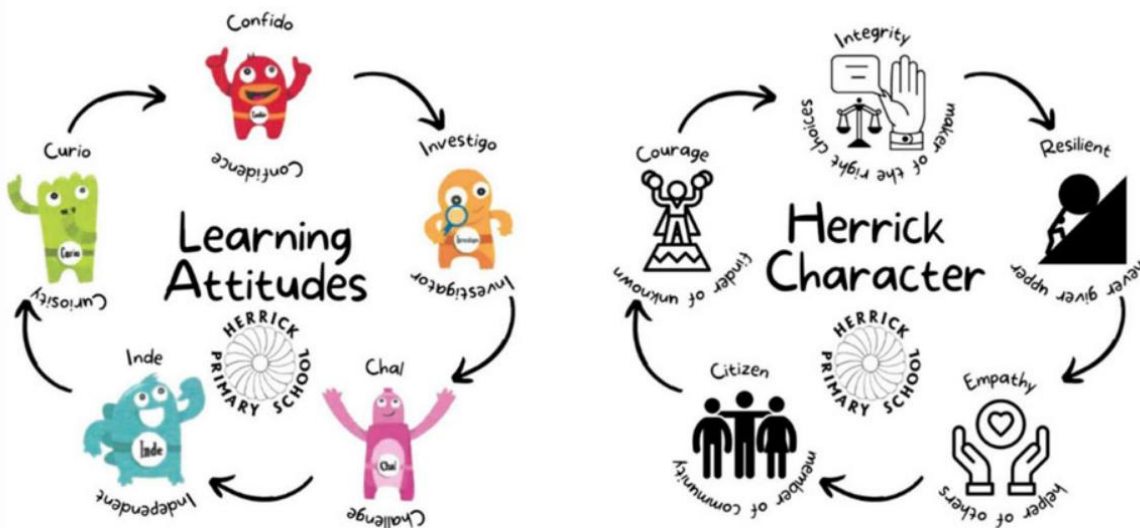
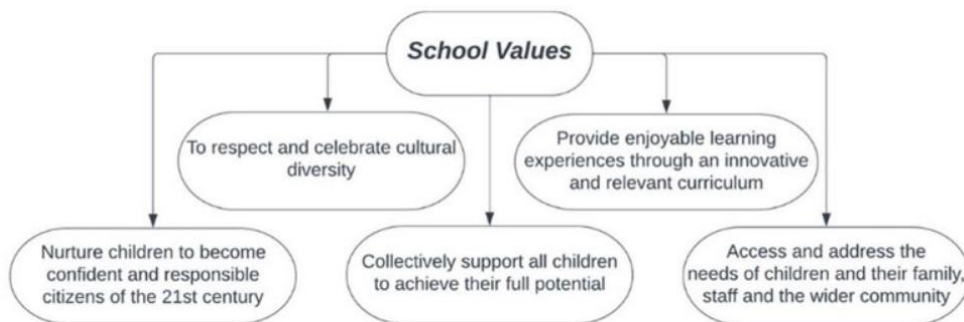
Ratified by Governors – June 2024

Headteacher – Mr U Patel

Chair of Governors – Mr S Martin

## Values and Vision statement

This policy applies throughout the school, including in the EYFS. The Herrick Character and Learning Attitudes are firmly rooted in this policy and underpin everything that we do. At Herrick Primary School 'learning never stops!' and we strive in our approach to consistency and equality in classroom arrangements and pupil allocations.



In doing so, this policy has also been written with due regard, under the Education Regulations to ensure that arrangements are made to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils.

## Mixing Classes within a year group

Due to the complexities of the ever-changing pupil admission number (PAN) at Herrick Primary School, we have worked closely with the Local Authority to devise a policy for how our classes will be mixed.

Each year the School Leadership Team will discuss year groups and pupil numbers with the Local Authority before deciding how to structure our classes for the following academic year.

Mixed age classes will be formed because of the number of pupils in each year group. It is not uncommon for this situation to change from year to year. The sizes of year groups can vary quite dramatically as has been the case at Herrick Primary School. Another factor that influences class sizes is that EYFS and KS1 children should only be registered and taught in groups of 30 or less children. Physical classroom space is also a consideration.

Having mixed classes allows pupils to:

- have opportunities to learn and play with a wide variety of peers.
- develop greater social interaction between peers as they move through the school.
- develop social resilience in a safe, comfortable environment – particularly helpful in preparing in the older year
- groups before moving to secondary school where being taught in various groups is the norm.
- be part of a year group team and not just a class.
- build a wide social circle with children across their year.
- settle more quickly and confidently when they are new to our school.
- feel a greater sense of community in a large primary school.
- learn from their older peers during years where they are the younger year group in that class.
- experience mentorship as part of their personal development when they are the older children in their class.

More broadly, mixing our classes strengthens the wider school community by allowing families the opportunity to develop relationships with other families within the year group. It is also recognised that mixed classes have a positive impact on standards of achievement.

We will review classes each year and mix classes dependent on the needs of the school and the children.

## **Policy Principles**

- The arrangements for class mixing are based on the professional judgement of Class Teachers in consultation with the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) and the Headteacher.
- We will always consider what is in the best interests of individual children and classes when making decisions.
- We will always consider the happiness and welfare of the children and will take into consideration existing friendship groups when we create new classes.
- The School's decision is final and only in circumstances where a safeguarding concern is present will the school consider moving a pupil to a different class.

## **Factors Considered When Organising Classes**

We aim to place children where they will achieve maximum academic progress and develop well socially and personally. Each year the current class teachers, who know each child very well, will work together to draw up the classes for the following year. Key factors considered in this process are outlined below.

- Teachers views on friendships\*
- Pupil view on own friendships
- Range of educational, social, and personal needs
- Age and level of maturity
- Balance of Gender
- Balance of Special Educational Needs
- Balance of English as additional language
- Balance of Ability
- Family relationships, such as in year siblings/staff children

*\*Friendships: Over the course of their Primary years, children will have a range of friendship experiences. Some of these can be fluid, whilst others stand the test of time. Moreover, children often choose to socialize with different children in school to those their parents may observe them with elsewhere. As we prepare to draw up the class lists, we will use our observations of the children in the classroom and at playtimes and lunchtimes to inform decisions.*

There is an additional key factor that MUST be adhered to when drawing up classes. As outlined in this policies Vision & Values statement and Principles, pupils' emotional wellbeing is of absolute paramount importance.

### **Quality Assurance' & Ratification**

- Class Teachers and Teaching Assistants observe the children's friendships at work and play.
- Class Teachers meet to ensure a good balance of friendships, range of educational, social, and personal needs, gender and maturity are represented in each class.
- SLT meets with Class Teachers to discuss and finalise groupings.
- Headteacher and Senior Leadership Team meet and approve classes.
- New classes are shared with parents and children in July.

### **Timescales**

- Class Teachers and Teaching Assistants discuss their observations of friendships in the Spring/Summer Term.
- Observations are considered along with the criteria listed above after May half-term.
- Class lists are drawn up by teachers and shared with SLT (June).
- Class lists approved by Headteacher before transition days. Please note transition days vary each year and dependent on when local secondary schools hold theirs.
- Class lists communicated to parents and children in July as part of the end of year reporting arrangements

# Information for Parents/Carers

## **What is a mixed age and split year group class?**

A mixed age class is defined to be a class in which there are children who are from more than one year group of the primary school. On occasions year groups will be split between classes.

## **Why are mixed age and split year group classes formed?**

Mixed age classes are formed in most schools partly because of the number of pupils in each year group. Unfortunately due to declining numbers at school, particularly in EYFS and year 1, we are unable to form two classes for each year group. KS1 children should only be registered and taught in groups of 30 or less children.

## **Will my child be held back if she/he is placed in a mixed age or split year group class?**

No. The ways in which learning and teaching are organised in primary schools means that teaching and work is tailored to the needs and current achievement levels of individual pupils. The staff at Herrick Primary School are experienced at planning and delivering, they provide challenge for the more able children and support for those needing more help whichever year group they are in. Much work is undertaken in small groups that contain children from 1 or 2 year groups or those of similar existing achievement levels.

Furthermore, the school plans the educational experiences for pupils in all classes in ways which ensure good progression and continuity, whichever year group or class they are in.