



Fishermoss School-Composite Classes

'Being the best we can be'

Respect-Honesty-Responsibility-Kindness-Hardworking

The following are questions which came from two siblings who were both going into composite classes for the first time. One was going into a P2/3 and the other P3/4.

Here are some questions children may ask you with suggested responses to support your child.

Q What is a Composite class?

A composite class is a class of pupils from two or more consecutive stages (year groups) e.g. P1/2 or P3/4/5. Composite classes are the norm in the majority of primary schools in Aberdeenshire.

Q Why am I not with my friends?

Pupils get to be with friends in the playground. It is an opportunity to make new friends. Learning and Teaching is the most important thing in the classroom. Time spent with friends happens mainly in the playground.

Q Am I not good enough to be in the straight class?

Some children might also ask 'Am I not good enough to be in the composite class?' Schools can only have a certain number of classes. Pupils are organised into classes looking at learning and teaching groups e.g. reading groups and maths groups. We do not want a teacher to have too many groups in the class because the teacher will then have less teaching time with each group. It is never about who is good enough.

Q Will I still get to see my friends?

Yes. You will see them in the playground. Sometimes classes are able to join together for social things e.g. class party, golden time



Q Will I get to share golden time?

Sometimes this is possible. Golden Time usually happens on a Friday afternoon but some classes are also timetabled to be in the hall for PE on Friday afternoons or may have the French teacher, for example.

Q Will I get to share the daily mile?

Classes have their own individual timetable for when they do writing, PE, Science, music, drama etc. It can be difficult to fit all these things in and to also think about joining with other classes. We also like to fit in buddy classes at Fishermoss where older and younger pupils join together for learning activities.

Q Will I share the same lunchtime?

We always make sure this happens.



Q Will I go to the same assembly as the other class?

This is not always possible because of the size of different classes and the number of children we can have in the hall at one time. We also want the teacher to be able to go to assembly with the class. If we split a composite class for assemblies the teacher is not able to go as they have to stay with the rest of the class. Some years we have P1, P1/2, P2, P2/3, P3, P3/4, P4, P4/5, P5, P5/6, P6, P6/7 and P7.

Q Will I get to do my new P4 work? Will what I learn be limited? (Full P4 curriculum?) Will I be repeating P3 work? This question relates to a child going from P3 into a P3/4)

Pupils in all classes, whether straight or composite, will follow the curriculum programmes to help them progress at their own level. Within one straight class, of up to 33 children, there can be a wide spread of ability. Teachers are experienced in planning for groups of different abilities - it is at the heart of good teaching. It could be said that every class is a composite class!

Q Will I get the same time with my teacher as have done in my straight class?

It will be the same, or maybe more, because a composite class can only have 25 pupils. A straight class can have 25 for P1, 30 for P2 and P3 and 33 for P4, P5, P6 and P7.



Q How will my teacher teach my P4 work when the P3's are there?

The same way a teacher of a straight class teaches different groups within that class e.g. Reading groups

Q Will I have to sit through the P3's being taught their work?

If the teacher feels it is something that will help you with your learning. Pupils in lots of different classes are having to be reminded about things such as times tables, capital letters and full stops etc

Q Will it be distracting having one half of the class being taught while I'm doing my work?

This happens in all classes, straight and composite, where the teacher is teaching different groups but this should not be distracting as pupils should be focused on their own work.

Q Can I still go to the P4 disco?

Yes. School Discos are arranged so that pupils in composite classes can be with their friends in another class.

Q Will I be sitting mixed in with P3's?

Sometimes you will be with them as you are part of their class. It is about us getting on with everyone in the school and not just people our age or just our friends.

Q Why not just have two smaller straight classes?

Teachers are allocated to a school strictly according to the total number of pupils in the whole school. Smaller classes mean more teachers which costs the Council more money. There is also a shortage of teachers across Scotland.



Questions Parents may have.....



Q Will my child's one to one time be reduced if the teacher has to teach two year groups?

It will be the same because composite classes are smaller than straight classes. A composite class does not go over 25 pupils and a straight class can be as many as 30-33. The exception to this is straight P1 classes which have a maximum of 25.

Q Why and how are composite classes formed?

Schools are staffed to agreed standards based on the total number of pupils within the school irrespective of the number of children in each year group. Head Teachers organise their classes to make best use of available staff, resources and space.

The Senior Leadership Team and Teaching Staff will form classes using their professional judgement taking account of a range of criteria to best meet the educational, social and emotional needs of children. The range of criteria to be considered include the following:

- Additional support needs
- Working groups (i.e. groups of children who are together for the greatest part of their curricular experience)
- Social groups
- Levels of attainment and achievement
- Particular family circumstances
- Gender balance



Q Is my child being kept back by being placed in a composite class with pupils from a year group below him/her?

Your child is not being kept back by being in a composite class. We will make sure that your child will progress through learning experiences in line with their personal levels of attainment and achievement.

Q How is a teacher able to teach two or more year groups at once?

If your child is placed in a composite class you can be confident that the staff in your school will provide appropriate learning and teaching opportunities suited to his or her individual needs. Your child will be working within a programme of locally and nationally agreed curricular policies and guidelines and the activities will be appropriate for his or her age, aptitude and ability. In every class, whether straight or composite, there are pupils with different levels of ability and teachers plan accordingly.

Q Will the children in the composite class get the same opportunities as the children in the single year group class?

Children in all classes, whether composite or single year group, will follow educational programmes devised to help them progress at their own level. In addition, the schools will make every effort to involve children of any one year group in activities which bring them all together. However, it is also important that the natural identity of each class is maintained.

Q Should I be concerned that the children in the composite class study different topics from the single year group class?

There is no need to be concerned. Class topics are used as a context for developing skills and all children will be developing the skills appropriate for their age, ability and aptitude. Quality improvement procedures exist at school and education authority levels to ensure that your child is making appropriate progress within locally and nationally agreed curriculum guidelines.

Q What should I do if my child's friends are all in another class?

You should be assured that all teachers will be sensitive to the social and emotional needs of children in their classes and will be encouraging members of the class to develop good working relationships with each other. There will be many opportunities for your child to continue to be involved with his or her whole year group including a range of curricular and social activities which includes the playground.

Q Will I be informed about composite classes?

Your school will keep you fully informed of the arrangements for the allocation of all classes. This will be done at as early a stage as possible before the end of the current school session. If you would like to discuss further the decisions made for your child please contact the Head Teacher who will be happy to meet with you to answer any questions.



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