

# St Mary's C.E. Primary School

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Headteacher: Jane O'Brien



10<sup>th</sup> June 2026

Dear Parents and Carers,

I am writing to share an important development for our school that will take effect in the next academic year (September 2026). After careful consideration and extensive collaboration with other high-performing and outstanding schools, we will be moving to mixed-age classes for our Year 5 and Year 6 pupils.

This decision has been made with the aim of providing the very best educational experience and outcomes for all children. Over the past month, we have worked closely with several good and outstanding schools that already successfully operate mixed-age classes. Through visits, professional dialogue, and shared planning, we have ensured that this change will be implemented with the highest levels of care, expertise, and ambition.

## **Why mixed-age classes?**

Mixed-age classes are a well-established approach used in many excellent primary schools, and they bring a wide range of academic and social benefits.

### **Academic advantages**

- Greater depth of learning: Teachers can plan learning that builds progressively, allowing pupils to revisit and deepen their understanding of key concepts.
- Flexible teaching: Children are taught according to their stage of learning rather than age alone, enabling more personalised support and challenge.
- Stronger mastery: Mixed-age settings encourage consolidation of skills, meaning pupils can develop greater confidence and competence before moving on.
- Enhanced independence: Pupils become more self-reliant learners, developing organisation, resilience, and problem-solving skills.

### **Social and personal development benefits**

- Positive role modelling: Older pupils demonstrate strong learning behaviours, which younger pupils naturally aspire to.
- Leadership opportunities: Year 6 pupils develop leadership, responsibility, and mentoring skills through supporting younger classmates.
- Improved confidence: Younger pupils benefit from the support of their older peers, helping them feel secure and motivated.
- Stronger relationships: Mixed-age classes foster a greater sense of community, collaboration, and mutual respect across year groups.

### **Our preparation**

We understand that any change to class organisation is significant, and we want to reassure you that this transition has been carefully planned and thoroughly informed.

Over the past month, senior leaders and staff have:

- Worked alongside outstanding schools that have achieved excellent outcomes with mixed-age classes.
- Observed teaching and learning in action to see the approach working successfully.
- Engaged in joint planning to ensure our curriculum is fully adapted to meet the needs of all pupils.
- Developed clear structures to maintain high expectations and strong academic progress for every child.

These schools consistently demonstrate excellent pupil outcomes, high levels of engagement, and strong personal development, and we are confident that by drawing on this expertise, we will achieve the same high standards.

### **Looking ahead**

Our priority remains unchanged: to provide a high-quality education in which every child thrives academically, socially, and emotionally. We firmly believe that mixed-age classes will strengthen our provision and create even greater opportunities for pupils to succeed.

To discuss this initiative further and address any questions you may have, we would like to invite you to a meeting at the school on Thursday, 18th June at 4:30 pm. This will be an excellent opportunity for us to share our plans and gather your insights.

Thank you, as always, for your continued support and partnership in your child's education. We look forward to seeing you at the meeting.

Kind regards

Debbie Butcher

Consultant Headteacher