



Dear Parents,

Re: Class structures for academic year 2026/2027

Due to low national birth rates, primary pupil numbers are declining across the country. In September 2026 we will have nine new reception children joining Sale and Davys while we will have a large class of 32 children in the year 5/6 class. This means we need to adjust the class structures to ensure pupil numbers are better balanced and school resources are used most effectively to benefit all children. As a small school this is something we are used to doing and our staff have significant experience of mixed class teaching that allows children to work at their own level, not just their age.

In September Merlin will be a mixed Reception/Year 1 class taught by Mrs Pitt and Mrs Hetherington. In addition, a full time Teaching Assistant will be supporting the class. Mrs Pitt and Mrs Hetherington are experienced teachers and have previously taught Reception and Year 1 mixed classes which is not a new class structure to Sale and Davys. Staff are experienced in teaching mixed age groups and value this approach as it naturally creates a “family-style” learning environment. We take great pride in our approach to personalising learning for each and every child to ensure the curriculum matches their individual learning needs. The quality of this work was recognised in our recent Ofsted Report with our ‘Outstanding’ judgement for Personal Development.

Some of the key benefits of a mixed Reception and Year 1 Class are a smoother, more child-centred transition from Reception’s play-based approach to Year 1’s more formal curriculum. A mixed class allows teachers to build directly on the EYFS profile and maintain familiar routines, environments, and continuous provision, helping children feel secure. Reception children aren’t pushed prematurely into formal learning; instead, Year 1 children often benefit from extended play-based learning, which supports deeper understanding. Both groups of children will access learning at their developmental stage through enhanced provision; exploratory learning and outdoor learning. Hands-on learning experiences will reinforce mastery and allow older children become role models, supporting younger peers and developing confidence and empathy. Younger children often feel more secure with older peers guiding routines and modelling language and behaviour.

To support this approach the hall will be allocated as an additional learning space for the class each morning. This will allow for more formal and specific teaching of maths, phonics, reading and writing just for Year 1 children, allowing them to be taught as a single Year group for English and maths in a dedicated space. The full Year 1 curriculum will be delivered to the children throughout the year and teaching will be adapted to meet the children’s needs, as is the case in all mixed aged classes at Sale and Davys.

There are many benefits for both reception and Year 1 children within the mixed class structure. Mixed-age discussions expose younger children to richer vocabulary and more complex ideas. Older children consolidate their learning by explaining concepts to younger peers. It enables Year 1 children to expand their friendship groups to the new Reception children reducing social pressure and encouraging cooperative learning. Both Reception and Year 1 children will be meeting up again in mixed aged classes moving up through the school.



Parents can be assured that at Sale and Davys C.E. Primary School children have been taught in mixed age classes over many years with great success. The school is experienced in mixed-age planning within a differentiated curriculum and there is adequate staffing to allow for appropriate small-group teaching. I am more than happy to talk with individual parents should you need more information.

Yours sincerely,

Sarah Briggs
Headteacher