



2nd July 2020

Dear Parents/ Carers,

I am writing to you today regarding the class structure from September 2020. You will see from the table below that we will have some mixed age classes, as we do at present, but we will also have some single year group classes. Some of you may have concerns but I will explain the benefits and hope to dispel any reservations that you may have.

The structure will be as follows:

<b>Foundation</b>	<b>Ali Class</b>	<b>Mr Bond</b>
<b>Foundation</b>	<b>Darwin Class</b>	<b>Mrs Marvin</b>
<b>Year One</b>	<b>Hockney Class</b>	<b>Mrs Corley and Mrs Sluce</b>
<b>Year One/Two</b>	<b>Picasso Class</b>	<b>Mrs O'Hara</b>
<b>Year Two</b>	<b>Teresa Class</b>	<b>Mrs Mosedale</b>
<b>Year Three</b>	<b>Jobs Class</b>	<b>Mrs Pegley/Miss Rajpara</b>
<b>Year Three/Four</b>	<b>Blyton Class</b>	<b>Mrs Talbot</b>
<b>Year Four</b>	<b>Cadbury Class</b>	<b>Mrs Malin</b>
<b>Year Five</b>	<b>Da Vinci Class</b>	<b>Ms Parry</b>
<b>Year Five/Six</b>	<b>Hamilton Class</b>	<b>Mr Cramp</b>
<b>Year Six</b>	<b>Newton Class</b>	<b>Mr Roper</b>

## Reasons:

At the forefront of our decision making has been the time that the children have not been in school due to the Coronavirus pandemic. None of us could have pre-empted this but we need to respond to its impact. It has affected each and every one of us in different ways and will continue to do so for some time to come. How we respond to lost learning is hugely important and the health and well-being of our children is at the heart of our decision making. Our children need positive mental health to achieve well. Strong bonds with their class teacher and teaching assistant will support positive mental health.

As you may know, the government is suggesting a September return for all children. We are awaiting the guidance to support the full return but, if the children are to remain in class bubbles as anticipated, there will be no opportunity to swap around for Maths and English as Key Stage 2 have done previously so we have had to consider this in our planning moving forwards.

In addition, whole class teaching fits better with our new Maths Mastery approach to teaching and learning where Maths is taught. Ofsted were happy with the progress we had made with maths and we are rolling this mastery approach out across the school curriculum.

Our new class structure will ensure smoother transitions across Key Stages - from Foundation to Year 1 and from Year 2 to Year 3, for those children who need it. Moving into Key Stage 2 can be a big step for lots of children, though not all. A pure Year 3 class will ease this transition process especially as the

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children (as in other year groups) will not have had the opportunity to meet with their class teacher and spend time in their new classroom.

Summer term in Foundation Stage, as in other year groups, is a long and crucial term to miss. Having a Year 1 class gives us the opportunity to provide a slower and smoother transition. Reception children learn best through play and open-ended experiences, which as they move into Year 1 become more structured and focus more so on formal education.

We are aware that many of our children in the new Year 1 class will still need this play and a less formalised approach to their education. We believe it will allow us to modify our curriculum for them so that they can catch up on lost learning in a way that is suitable for them. We are lucky at St Mary's that our children in Foundation and Key Stage One all have access to a stimulating, enabling environment. Unlike in some schools we are experts at providing this kind of learning for our children. Structuring classes in this way allows us to streamline the appropriate learning much more.

At St. Mary's, we recognise that we will have to change our curriculum substantially in order to help children to retain previous learning and make accelerated progress. We have started on this journey with access to a new curriculum. We are developing a 'recovery' curriculum which will help to close gaps in learning created by the Coronavirus and ensure children meet important milestones in school without disruption. Again, any gaps in subject knowledge identified by the teachers can receive intervention from the class teaching assistant or teacher at point of need so that no learning time is lost.

I would like to reassure you that, when deciding upon the mix, the school will consider individual pupil's aptitude for settling into new situations and whether they are likely to feel uncomfortable or uneasy with the new class dynamic. Where possible, friendship groups will be considered so that pupils are happy in the class; however, the school cannot guarantee that pupils will be in the same class as their friends. The school always strives to ensure that pupils feel comfortable and safe, so the school will ensure that there are familiar faces in their new class.

I think it's important to emphasise that decisions are being made which are in the best interests of the children educationally, in line with evidence-based research, but also to support their social and emotional health and wellbeing.

Thank you for taking the time to read this letter, notification of your child's class teacher will be in their school report.

Very best wishes to you all.



Mrs Ayres  
Head Teacher