



14 July 2020

To Parent/Carers of years 4 and 5 pupils

Dear Parent/Carers,

As you will know, next year we will be combining our main classes in years 5 and 6 in to three year 5/6 classes.

This is fundamentally due to the number of pupils we have in the key stage phase and we have to do this to maintain normal class sizes of around 30 pupils.

I am writing to you to outline how this may work, to reassure you that this is common practice in schools and to let you know that our relentless drive to secure the very best for our pupils will not be affected by this arrangement. In fact, the arrangement will allow us to teach the core curriculum areas that your child needs to succeed in, through even better ways within this design.

In our current 'single-year' year group we have a vast range of abilities from children working at a very greater depth right through to children working at levels that are several years below their peers. The school curriculum is able to meet their needs through adapting the teaching and learning to meet the range of needs in any given class. This will continue when classes are grouped across the two years.

In the National Curriculum framework, the programmes of study for Key Stage (KS) 1 and 2 English, maths and science are set out year-by-year or in pairs of years. The programmes of study for foundation subjects are set out by key stage.

The teaching team are currently reviewing our curriculum to ensure it can meet the needs of all pupils. Teachers in mixed-age classes will be clear as to what the age-related expectations look like for the divided year group. This will be used to inform planning and ensure that pupils are assessed against their own year group expectations. Rigorous assessment will ensure that the teachers can respond to the learning needs of both age groups and teachers will adapt the learning and groupings as the pupils mature and progress.

Mixed aged classes are a common feature of primary schools across the country and they do not impact on good progress for all the children.

The school remains accountable for the progress of all of the children who attend Great Hollands and we do not intend to implement anything that would damage our rapidly improving outcomes for our Year 6 pupils, either for those leaving in July 2021 or July 2022. We will continue to ensure that our pupils leave us ready to face the challenges of secondary school with confidence.

In normal conditions we would group the children from across the three classes into a maximum of five groups for the core subjects such as mathematics and reading, whilst maintaining mixed ability groupings for subjects such as geography and history. Our aim is to provide a similar provision to this which also conforms to 'COVID-Secure' guidelines.

In the years 5/6 phase, at times during the day, we will have 5 teachers and up to 4 teaching assistants available to work across the phase. By working in this flexible way, we will be able to teach core subjects across five groups making these vitally important lessons fit the needs of our children, in order to get everyone back up to where they need to be, by filling gaps in learning following the COVID-19 lockdown. Of course, this will all be carefully managed following our risk assessments and government guidance on coronavirus. We need to find the right balance to keep both our staff and pupils safe whilst still being able to offer high quality education for all in maintaining the excellent teaching and learning opportunities for our children.

Why do we have 2 teachers in Lions class? This is to allow all 3 classes to operate normally, whilst another teacher is able to respond to learning gaps and to provide targeted catch-up provision and support to children who need it from across the 3 classes, so that no child is left behind.

We also envisage the development of the class groupings throughout the year (dependant on COVID-19 concerns) where there will be ample time for the year 6 children to work together as a collective group, particularly in the run-up to SATS and in the transition to secondary school. We will still make year 6 a special year for our children.

Our planning is still developing in line with the ever-changing situation with coronavirus and subsequent updated guidance from the Department for Education. In September I plan to offer a virtual meeting with parents, once we see what the situation is both nationally and locally at that time.

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'R Ferris', with a horizontal line underneath.

Richard Ferris
Headteacher