

Carrigeen NS

www.carrigeenns.com

'Promoting full personal, moral and social development in caring Christian communities of learning and teaching.'



'Déan do dhícheall' - 'Do your best'

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Class Division Policy

Currently, there are six class teachers and eight class groupings in Carrigeen National School. Therefore split classes are an inevitable consequence. However, it should be noted that over 70% of children in Irish primary schools are taught in split classes. Research has shown that children do not lose out academically when they are taught in a room with two class groupings.

The curriculum is written for Junior Infants/Senior Infants, 1st/2nd, 3rd/4th and 5th/6th. It is not 1st class on its own, 2nd class on its own etc. Curriculum objectives are covered over two years. Teachers' practice is guided by the curriculum and not by textbooks. The textbook is a tool that aids teaching and learning but does not dictate and limit what teachers do.

The 1999 curriculum emphasises skills development through active learning over retention of information – skills such as communication skills, life skills, problem solving, predicting, analysing, deducting, developing research skills, examining many sources of information, distinguishing between fact and fiction etc.

These skills are developed across all class levels and can be developed in multi-class settings.. Teachers teaching split classes will work on the same subject/strand/strand unit with both classes in their room. Every effort will be made to ensure that children coming together again the following year will have covered the same curriculum objectives. Teachers will confer on a regular basis while planning their schemes of work in line with the Plean Scoile. With the co-operation of the Learning Support teacher all classes will be taught Maths and English in their own class groups where possible.

The following criteria will be used to determine class groupings:

- The two primary criteria used are age and gender
- Children will be divided according to age with the younger children grouped with the lower class and the older children grouped with the higher class.
- **The only exception to this rule may occur in an effort to avoid having more than one Special Need Assistant in any room.**
- Where a large group of children to be split is involved a selection of boys and girls will be chosen, on age, to maintain gender balance.
- New entrants who have accepted a place in Carrigeen N.S. may be included in the division in June.
- Children enrolling during the summer holidays will be placed in the smaller class grouping at the start of the new school term.
- Class divisions will be made known to parents and pupils before the summer holidays.

Chairperson, BOM- Fr.Laurence O'Keefe
Principal-Damien Aylward
Deputy Principal-Margaret Brennan



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Explaining to parents why their child is in a split class.

The DES allots one teacher to each group of 26 pupils at present. This is known as the pupil-teacher ratio. The ideal situation for teacher and pupil would be a single stream class at all class levels with no more than 20 pupils per class. However, the current system does not allow for this and the principal has overall responsibility for grouping or splitting the classes where numbers would otherwise be too big or too small in one class. The DES' objective is that class size should be as equitable as possible across all class levels. **The pupil-teacher ratio is dictated annually by the government budget and schools have no control over this.** However, the teacher will ensure that each pupil in each class will be working on the set of skills from the national curriculum for the correct class.

Why does one half of the class have a different booklist to the other?

Classroom teaching is based on the curricular objectives for each class level. Pupil textbooks are used merely as a guide by the teacher. The primary curriculum (www.curriculumonline.ie) is primarily skills-based rather than content-based. In Mathematics there is a separate set of content and skills for each individual class. For other subjects the content is menu-based and teachers can choose content suitable to their class. The teacher is a professional who is trained to tailor the curriculum and differentiate the content and expected outcomes to cater for the needs of each individual pupil. The smaller the class group, the more effectively the teacher will be able to do this. Although the class may be using a textbook as a guide, the teacher is dealing with each child as an individual learner. Pupils are not aware of this as it is carried out in a seamless manner by a skilled professional. Teachers choose the books and adapt them. Publishers sometimes put numbers or names of classes on books as a guide. This may be misleading for parents as the teacher, as the professional decides how the content and skills to be taught.

The supports which could be made available to children and teachers in mixed classes

The Principal, the Class Teacher and Learning Support team will consult on how best to organise the learning support for the mixed class. In some cases, the Learning Support Teacher may work in the classroom with the Class Teacher, in a team-teaching arrangement. It is possible that the Learning Support Teacher may work in the classroom supporting one child or a small group of children, with the Class Teacher doing the main teaching of the lesson. Another arrangement for Learning Support which may suit the class is for either the Class Teacher or the Learning Support Teacher to withdraw small groups of children. Occasionally, especially in the case of Senior Infants/1st, 2nd/3rd, 4th/5th it may suit the classes better, if the teaching of Mathematics is taken separately by the Class Teacher for one class and the Learning Support Teacher for the other class. All of these arrangements must be considered on a class by class basis, from year to year.

Sacramental Preparation:

For sacramental preparation (2nd/6th class), classes who have been divided will come together for Religious Education.

The allocation of teachers to mixed classes

It is the duty of the Principal as per Circular 16/73 to assign teaching duties.

This policy was ratified by the Board of Management on 19th January 2016.

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