

### **Why do schools have mixed age classes?**

This is simply a result of school size. There are 7 year groups and there need to be 25-30 children in each class to make the school financially viable. The government funds schools according to pupil numbers. This effectively means that only schools with at least 200 pupils will have single age classes. All small schools have mixed age classes. A primary school with 50 pupils will typically have a class with 4 age groups together.

### **How can you teach two year groups in the same classroom?**

All classes have a large range of abilities; teachers are used to dealing with different abilities. They never teach the same level of work to every child. They make sure that each child have the correct level or work irrespective of age. Two year groups merely extend this range a little. We teach children at THEIR level not at an age related level.

### **Don't the children end up repeating a year?**

No. They will of course return to particular aspects of the curriculum repeatedly such as fractions or shape but these are visited multiple times during the year anyway. Topic areas such as 'Food and Farming' or 'People who help us' are taught on a 2 yearly cycle. If a child studies the 'Food and Farming' one year, they won't do it again the next. In the main, 'Food and Farming' won't appear again in school for another two years.

### **Do mixed age classes require more careful planning by teachers?**

Yes, the planning is much more time consuming. One advantage is that planning remains much fresher; it isn't possible to just roll out old plans, year after year.

### **Do the children suffer academically?**

None of our data or national data suggests there is any negative impact on children due to mixed age classes. At individual school level this is borne out by LA and Ofsted inspection.

### **Do children suffer emotionally?**

No. This is quite the reverse. We see children learn to form wider friendships and to relate to broader groups of other children. It also allows the younger children to experience being one of the older in a class. Children and parents are usually apprehensive but the long term view does not bear this concern out. Parent and child feedback is overwhelmingly positive by the end of the academic year.

### **A teacher's view on mixed aged classes**

We really enjoy the challenge of teaching mixed year group classes. We always work closely with the teachers on either side of our classes to ensure all the children are making maximum progress. We have always found that the children settle very quickly. Older children in a mixed class enjoy the responsibility of being 'on top', while younger children rise to the challenge of following older role-models. In fact, often only a few weeks or months separate children in different academic year groups. Self-esteem is always top of our agenda, in mixed or single age classes. We can honestly say that at the end of the year children at Christ Church make progress appropriate to their age and ability, both academically and socially, in both single and mixed age classes.