



☰ Pennard Primary School, Pennard Road, Pennard, Swansea, SA3 2AD

☎ (01792) 233343

✉ [Pennard.Primary@swansea-edunet.gov.uk](mailto:Pennard.Primary@swansea-edunet.gov.uk)

<http://pennardprimary.co.uk/>



@pennardprimary

**Headteacher:** Kerina Hanson B.Ed. (Hons) NPQH

**Deputy Headteacher:** Mrs. V. Eynon BA.Ed. Hons

13<sup>th</sup> June 2023

Dear Parent / Carer,

Please find the following information about class organisation of teaching and learning in the school for 2023 – 2024. Hopefully the information below will reassure you and answer questions you may have.

**Mixed age classes**

Bae	Classes	Year groups	Teachers	Learning support
Bae un	Oxwich N	Nursery	Mrs Davies	3.5 or 4.5 (TBC)
	Oxwich R	Reception	Miss Booth	Ratio max 1:6
Bae Dau	Pobbles	Year 1 / Year 2	Mrs Mabbett & Mrs Thomas	2.5
	Langland	Year 2 / Year 3	Mrs Eynon (DHT)	Ratio max 1:15 / 1:12
Bae Tri	Three Cliffs	Year 4 / Year 5	Mrs Dardecker (ALNCo)	X4
	Rhossili	Year 5 / Year 6	Mr Price	Ratio max 1:12

(Please note that ratios change due to allocation of learning support between each Bae. Ratio max shown is the highest adult to pupil ratio but with additional staff it will often be lower than this)

We have had mixed age classes through the school since 2019 due to a falling roll and less funding. Our school is organised into three Baeau in line with the progression steps Curriculum for Wales.

Some parents have reservations about having their children in mixed classes and often find it more acceptable to have their child in a mixed class if they are from the younger age group. Many parents feel that in this situation, their child will be in a more challenging situation. On the other hand, some parents do not like their child to be with younger children and feel that they may be ‘held back’ or will end up doing work that is too easy for them.

These fears, though understandable, are not borne out in practice. Firstly the starting date for any academic year is the 1st of September. This is an arbitrary date that has its origins back in time to a more rural England & Wales when children used to help bring the harvest in during the later summer months. Children born in September are almost a full chronological year older than children born later in the academic year, for example, in July or August. It seems quite normal, however, for them to be in the same year group. If we then compare two children, one born in August and the other born in the following month, though they may be only a few days’ difference in their respective ages they can, under the normal arrangements, find themselves in different year groups. Levels of maturity and ability do not necessarily follow year groupings exactly, and some younger children are often more mature and more able than some older pupils.

Secondly, the school curriculum is designed to allow for mixed classes. Elements of the curriculum are taught on a cyclical basis; that is, knowledge and skills being taught on several occasions over time. For example, in Literacy, the correct punctuation of sentences is taught in all-year groups but at different levels depending on the children involved. In Science, Electricity and Magnetism is covered on several occasions. Knowledge and skills are revised, consolidated and extended as we go along.



*Dream, Believe, Achieve Together - Breuddwydio, Credu, Cyflawni Gyda'n gilydd*

Thirdly, and most importantly, work in all classes is already differentiated. This means we seek to give children work, which best suits their needs at that time, based on prior assessment. Children in a mixed class are therefore not given work that is either too easy or too difficult. Teachers are used to dealing with a wide range of ability and need within each class.

There is absolutely no research evidence to suggest that being in a mixed class has any detrimental effect whatsoever on the educational outcomes or wellbeing of a child.

### **Will my child be held back if she/he is placed in a mixed age or split group class?**

Definitely not! The way in which teaching and learning is organised in primary schools means that teaching and work is tailored to the needs and current achievement levels of individual pupils. The staff at Pennard Primary School are experienced professionals who are very adept at planning and delivering work to match various the needs of our pupils, they provide challenge for more able and support for those needing it whichever year group they are currently in.

### **Mixed age groups may mean my child's friendship group is being broken up.**

Great care is taken in allocating classes and their social needs are not ignored. It is good for children to experience classes with different classmates so that their circle of friends and acquaintances can extend beyond the traditional age boundaries. As we grow older, it is very rare that we only mix and make friends with people of our own age. This is also the case in school, children do not only spend their break times with children in their class, many play with children from other classes and this is something we encourage as it helps children develop a wide, caring social circle. Also, when children transfer to secondary school, new groupings in different subject areas become a fact of life. Getting used to being in different classes in primary school is a great grounding to help children cope as they move onto to secondary education

### **Organisation**

The organisation for teaching and learning remains the same as it has been for a number of years. There will be times when classes together in their pastoral registration class and other times when they will be taught in a range of different groupings across the Bae. Groups of children will make use of other rooms or areas of the school, including the outdoors, for group work and other activities as they have in the last few years.

### **Individual placement in classes**

The children will be organised into two registration groups within each., The children in the middle year group (Year 2 and Year 5) will be asked to nominate friends that they would be happy to be with and we ensure that they were placed in the same registration class with at least one of their friends. It should be noted, however, that there are many activities where the Bae, or individual year groups will be together.

### **Staffing**

As a school we are funded for teaching staff based on pupil numbers. This funding does not take account of where larger or smaller year groups are, just pupil numbers. Our current funding allows for five full time teachers as well as the headteacher. We also have funding for learning support staff which should be spent on pupil ratios for Nursery to Year 2 classes, and a very small amount for learning support across the school. The new Additional Learning Needs (ALN) Bill has changed the way pupils with ALN are funded, and schools are currently in a transition period away from individual pupil hours linked to funding. This is likely to have a significant impact on our school funding as a whole, though there remains uncertainty around how much impact this will have.

As much as we would like to have separate year groups with small classes across the school the reality is that funding for schools does not make this possible.

Finally, we are not unique in the way we work, we have researched our approach and visited other schools to identify the way forward in our school with the aim of benefiting pupils in the best way we can.

We hope this helps to settle any concerns you may have, however, should you have any further questions please do come and speak to us – we are here to help!

Cofion gorau,

*Kerina Hanson*

Headteacher