BLACKROD PRIMARY SCHOOL

Class Structure/Flight Path

Statement

At Blackrod Primary School, our Published Admission Number (PAN) is **45 pupils per year group**. To maintain appropriate class sizes, provide high-quality teaching and learning, and make effective use of staffing and accommodation, the school operates a mixed-age class structure from Key Stage 1 onwards.

This policy explains how children are organised into classes, how flight paths are established, and how places are allocated when pupils join the school.

The school's class organisation model is founded on the principle that learning is paramount. Whilst children's social development is important and actively supported through the wider life of the school, class allocation decisions are made to ensure fairness, consistency, effective teaching and the best possible outcomes for all pupils.

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to:

- Ensure a fair, transparent and consistent approach to class organisation.
- Maintain balanced class sizes across the school.
- Support high-quality teaching and learning.
- Provide continuity for children throughout their primary education.
- Explain how pupils are allocated to classes and groups.

Class Structure

EYFS

Picasso class 1&2 - The 45 children are divided into a two groups (23/22) when they join Blackrod Primary School, based on their date of birth. This is for registration and some carpet/teaching activities. All children in EYFS are in the same setting and the children and teachers work collaboratively with the whole cohort.

The class structure from Key Stage 1 upwards is organised as follows:

Key Stage 1

- **Milhazes** – Year 1
- **Van Gogh** – Year 1/2
- **Gauguin** – Year 2

Lower Key Stage 2

- **Kahlo** – Year 3
- **Da Vinci** – Year 3/4
- **Lowry** – Year 4

- **Upper Key Stage 2**

- **Mahlangu** – Year 5
- **Ringgold** – Year 5/6
- **Mackintosh** – Year 6

This structure enables the school to maintain appropriate class sizes and ensure children receive their full curriculum entitlement.

Organisation of Year Groups

Each year group is divided into three groups of fifteen pupils:

- **Youngest 15 (Y)**
- **Middle 15 (M)**
- **Oldest 15 (O)**

These groups are determined according to children's dates of birth within the year group.

A full cohort of 45 children is therefore organised into three groups of 15 pupils.

Flight Path through School

Children who join Blackrod Primary School in Reception will normally follow a consistent flight path with their allocated group of 15 pupils throughout their primary education.

This means that children remain within their designated Youngest (Y), Middle (M) or Oldest (O) group as they move through the school.

The flight path model provides:

- Continuity for children and families.
- Balanced class organisation across year groups.
- Consistency in class sizes.
- Effective curriculum planning and staffing.

The school believes that all classes are equally valued and that no class is considered better or more desirable than another.

Year Group Cohorts

Whilst Blackrod Primary School operates a mixed-age class structure, children continue to spend significant time with their own year group throughout their time in school.

Due to the National Curriculum for Mathematics containing specific objectives for each year group, children are taught Mathematics in their single year-group cohort to ensure that teaching is closely matched to age-related expectations and curriculum requirements.

In addition, children work alongside their year-group peers during a range of school experiences and enrichment opportunities, including:

- Educational visits.
- Residential visits.
- Swimming lessons.
- Bikeability training.
- Curriculum events and enrichment activities.
- Year 6 activities and celebrations.

This approach enables children to benefit from both the advantages of mixed-age classes and the strong identity and shared experiences of their own year-group cohort. Children develop relationships with a wide range of peers whilst continuing to learn, collaborate and celebrate key milestones with their year group.

In-Year Admissions

When a child joins Blackrod Primary School after Reception, they will be allocated to the group where a place has become available.

For example:

- If a vacancy exists within the Youngest (Y) group, the child will join that group.
- If a vacancy exists within the Middle (M) group, the child will join that group.
- If a vacancy exists within the Oldest (O) group, the child will join that group.

This approach ensures that:

- Group sizes remain balanced.
- The established flight-path model is maintained.
- Class organisation remains fair and sustainable.

The Headteacher retains responsibility for admissions and class allocations and will ensure that decisions are made in the best interests of both the individual pupil and the wider school community.

Exceptional Changes to a Child's Flight Path

Blackrod Primary School is committed to maintaining the integrity and continuity of each child's allocated flight path throughout their primary education. In the vast majority of cases, children will remain within their designated Youngest (Y), Middle (M) or Oldest (O) group from Reception to Year 6.

However, in exceptional and rare circumstances, the school may determine that a change to a child's flight path is necessary. Such decisions will only be considered where there is a clear need that cannot be effectively addressed within the existing arrangement.

Any decision to alter a child's flight path will:

- Be based on advice and recommendations from relevant external professionals, where appropriate.
- Be considered carefully by the Headteacher and relevant school staff.
- Take into account the best interests of the child and the wider school community.
- Be discussed with parents/carers as part of the decision-making process.
- Be referred to and considered by the Governing Board where required.

Changes to a child's flight path will not be made routinely and will only occur where there is compelling evidence that the change is necessary to support the child's needs and wellbeing.

School will not change a child's flight path, nor move another child from a group, at the request of a parent. Decisions regarding class organisation and flight paths are made solely in accordance with this policy and in the best interests of the children and the school as a whole.

Blackrod Primary School is committed to meeting the needs of all pupils, including those with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND), within the class to which they are allocated. SEND provision is delivered by all members of the staff team and is not dependent upon placement within a particular group or class. This is consistent with the approach that would be expected in any one-form entry primary school.

The school considers all classes and groups to be of equal value. There is no direct educational, social or pastoral advantage or disadvantage associated with membership of a particular flight-path group or class. All children have access to the same high-quality curriculum, teaching, support, enrichment opportunities and expectations for achievement.

Requests for a specific class, group, teacher or flight path cannot be accommodated, as doing so would undermine the fairness and integrity of the school's class organisation model. Decisions regarding class placement remain the responsibility of the Headteacher and where appropriate, the Governing Board.

Rationale for Group Allocation

Blackrod Primary School has carefully considered a range of approaches to organising mixed-age classes. The school believes that allocating children to groups according to their age within the year group provides the fairest, most transparent and most consistent method of class organisation.

By dividing each year group into the Youngest (Y), Middle (M) and Oldest (O) groups, all children are allocated using an objective criterion that remains consistent throughout their time in school. This approach ensures that class organisation is clear, equitable and free from subjective judgement.

Children within mixed-age classes remain developmentally within a relatively narrow age range. The age difference between pupils in any year group is no greater than twelve months and children continue to learn alongside peers who are at a similar stage of development.

The school does not organise classes according to attainment or perceived ability. Children's attainment changes over time, can vary across different subjects and develops at different rates. A child may excel in one curriculum area whilst requiring additional support in another. For this reason, it would not be appropriate, equitable or sustainable to base class allocation on a judgement of ability.

Furthermore, grouping children by perceived ability can place artificial ceilings on children's progress and expectations. Blackrod Primary School has high aspirations for all pupils and believes that every child should have the opportunity to achieve their full potential regardless of class placement.

The school also does not organise classes according to friendship groups. Whilst friendships are important and highly valued, they are not a suitable basis upon which to organise the structure of a school. Children's friendships naturally develop and change over time and often extend beyond a single class.

At Blackrod Primary School, children have numerous opportunities to socialise and build relationships during:

- Breaktimes.
- OPAL lunchtimes.
- Educational visits.
- Residential visits.
- Swimming lessons.
- Bikeability training.
- Extra-curricular activities.
- Whole-school events and celebrations.

Through these experiences, children develop friendships across their year group and throughout the wider school community.

Class allocation does not determine a child's social group. Children continue to socialise, play and develop friendships with a wide range of peers throughout the school day. The primary purpose of class organisation is to create balanced classes and provide the best possible learning environment for all pupils.

Whilst social development is important and actively encouraged throughout school life, learning is paramount during lesson time. Class allocation decisions are therefore made to support effective teaching, learning and outcomes for all children rather than to maintain friendship groups.

Equality of Opportunity

Class placement does not indicate a child's ability, attainment, behaviour, SEND needs or potential.

All classes:

- Follow the same curriculum.
- Have access to high-quality teaching.
- Receive appropriate support and intervention.
- Take part in the same enrichment opportunities.
- Are equally valued by the school.

Children's individual needs are met through effective teaching, adaptive practice and targeted support, regardless of their class placement.

Monitoring and Review

The Headteacher will monitor the effectiveness of this policy annually and report to the Governing Board when required

The school reserves the right to review class organisation where necessary due to:

- Changes in pupil numbers.
- Staffing changes.
- Accommodation requirements.
- Educational, welfare or operational considerations.

Blackrod Primary School Commitment

Blackrod Primary School is committed to ensuring that all children thrive in well-balanced classes where they can achieve highly, build positive relationships and experience a joy in learning and life. All class organisation decisions are made with the best interests of children at the centre, ensuring fairness, consistency and equality of opportunity for every pupil.