

Questions Parents Ask

Why do classes have to change from year to year?

The number of children attending the school changes regularly because of families moving into and out of the area. The school has to take account of this and organise classes to make the best use of all available staff.

Will my child be considered when the school is making organisational changes?

Children are the most important consideration in the school. The headteacher and staff make every effort to ensure that the class structure takes the individual needs of all children into account.

Will my child's education be affected?

Teachers are skilled and experienced in planning and providing for your child. They consider many factors which help your child learn and develop e.g. ability in classwork, motivation, involvement with others at the same stage and social well-being.

Where children are working in English language and/or mathematics groups, would more advanced working groups be placed in higher year classes?

This is not always the case. The headteacher and staff have to consider how the different groups contribute to the overall balance of the class.

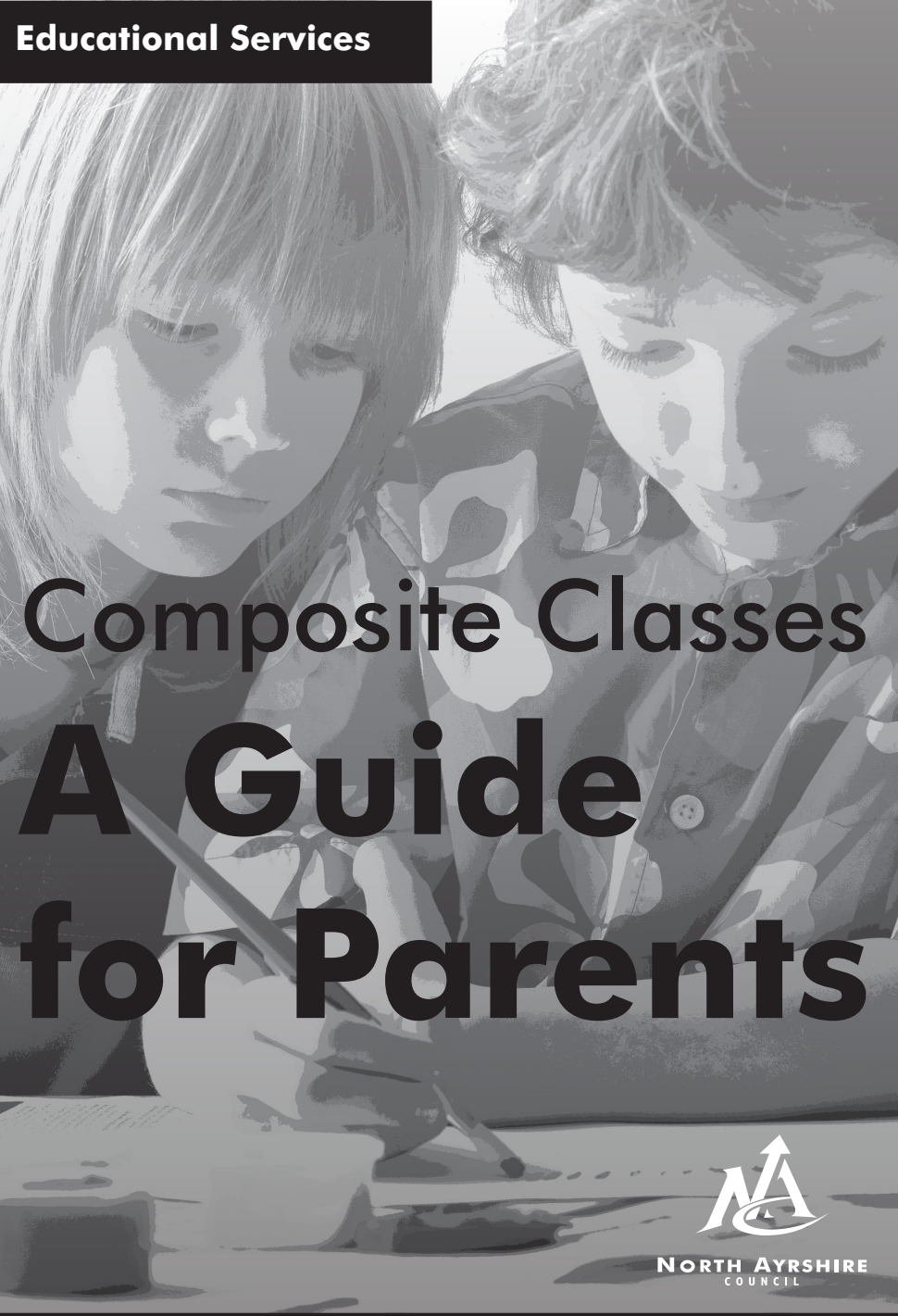
Will my child have opportunities to be involved with children of the same age?

Pupils will be involved with others at the same stage in activities which bring the whole year group together.

Will my child stay in a composite class?

Composite classes are a normal part of school organisation. Some children are never part of a composite class while others, particularly in rural schools, never experience anything else.

Educational Services



Composite Classes A Guide for Parents



NORTH AYRSHIRE
COUNCIL



Composite Classes

A Guide for Parents

For the last 20 years, composite classes have been operating successfully as a method of managing children's learning and teaching in a variety of schools in Scotland.

Almost 90% of primary schools in North Ayrshire have composite classes.

In all classes (composite and non-composite), teaching and learning is organised in groups.

What Is A Composite Class?

Composite classes occur when children from two or more year stages are grouped together.

Composite classes are:

- Classes which have more than one year stage e.g. P1/2.
- Classes which in small schools may have up to 7 year stage groups within the same class e.g. P1/2/3/4, P5/6/7 or P1-7.

Why are Composite Classes Formed?

The number of children at each stage in a school varies from session to session. Schools are, however, staffed to agreed standards based on the total number of classes within the school, regardless of the number of pupils at each stage. This means that the headteacher has to organise classes to make best use of available staff, resources and space to the benefit of all children in the school.

How Are Composite Classes Formed?

Current national guidelines recommend that the maximum number of pupils in a class is 25 in P1, 30 in P2 and P3 and 33 in P4-P7. However, in line with the Scottish Government policy of reducing class sizes further in the early years, North Ayrshire Council has reduced the maximum class size in P2 and P3 to 25. The maximum number of pupils in a composite class, irrespective of the year stage, is also 25. The headteacher will structure classes based on advice given by North Ayrshire Council Educational Services.

Composite classes are normally formed on the basis of:

- Existing successful groupings of pupils.
- English language and/or mathematics groups.

This means that pupils are working at broadly the same pace and level.

In the case of children moving from nursery to Primary 1, transition arrangements are important. Information on children's progress, development and age is taken fully into account when classes are being formed.

When Will A Composite Class Be Formed?

Normally, classes will be formed before the start of a new school year so that all involved know the class structures for the new session. In certain circumstances, significant changes in numbers may affect these plans.

How Will I Know What Is Happening To My Child?

- You will be kept informed of the arrangements for annual class structures.
- You may contact the school to discuss the arrangements for your child.
- You are invited to discuss your child's progress at parents' evenings and at regular intervals throughout the session.