

Q: How does a school decide how many classes to have?

A: Each year primary schools are allocated a number of teachers based on the total number of children on the school roll. There are maximum numbers for class groups set by government:

P1: 25 children; P2 and P3: 30 children; P4-7: 33 children
Composite classes: 25 children

Classroom size also affects the number of children in classes. Headteachers consider all of these factors when grouping children into classes.

Q: How does the headteacher decide on class groups?

A: When structuring more than one class for entry to P1, the headteacher will liaise with pre-school settings and take account of the following factors:

- transition reports
- gender
- family relationships
- creating learning groups

Q: Why can't class structures stay the same from year to year?

A: Each year for a variety of reasons, children move in and out of schools. This, along with numbers of P1 enrolments, determines the roll of the school, and the number of staff allocated. This number can fluctuate from year to year (and within a year), and so the number of classes in school can change regularly.

Q: Why is a composite class necessary?

A: Schools are allocated staff based on the total school roll, not on numbers at any particular stage. When the number of children at a stage is too many for one class, but not enough a second, a composite class needs to be formed.

Q: Why is my child in a composite class?

A: Perth & Kinross Council's guidance on the Structure of Classes in Primary Schools outlines that composite classes will be primarily set up according to date of birth ie the oldest children in one stage together with the youngest children in the stage above. Headteachers may need to make adjustments to class lists to ensure a suitable gender balance and a balance of additional support needs across classes.

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Q: Will my child's progress be impacted by being in a composite class?

A: Curriculum and assessment guidelines provide a framework for child centred learning and all children experience a curriculum suited to their age, ability and stage. All teachers are trained to work with a range of abilities and needs whether in a composite or non-composite class. In all primary classes there are wide ranges of abilities, and all children will learn in different ways, responding to a variety of methods and resources. Teachers are able to adapt to the range of needs within any class and plan accordingly.

Q: Will my child miss out socially in a composite class?

A: Schools make every effort to both encourage new friendships and support children to keep old ones. Opportunities are built into the school week for children to work and socialise across classes. As parents and carers, you can also help by supporting your child to maintain previous relationships and encourage new ones out of school time.

Q: Will my child be in a composite class again?

A: If numbers dictate the necessity for a composite class, then children may be in a composite class more than once. Indeed, many children can be in a number of composite classes, and in some cases are in composite classes for their whole time at primary school. The make-up of each of these composite classes may change each time.

Q: How will my child be supported through the change?

A: When children are part of a reorganisation of learning in schools, they face new opportunities and challenges. Staff understand that this can be an anxious time. However, this is a normal part of school life each year and staff are experienced in ensuring that any necessary supports are put in place. Activities will be planned to support transition from one year group to the next, including meeting new teachers and classmates. Teachers plan collaboratively for transition and ensure that all relevant information is shared in detailed planning and handovers.

Q: How can I support my child through this change?

A: You can help your child to prepare for change and to settle in comfortably and quickly, by chatting positively, and with excitement, about their new class.

Q: What can I do if I have concerns about whether my child's learning needs will be met in their new class?

A: You should share your concerns with the headteacher. They will explain how the school will organise learning and teaching to meet the needs of your child and discuss any specific actions that may need to be considered to support your child.



Structuring of Classes in Primary Schools Parent Information



Guidance for Parents

The purpose of this guidance is to explain how learning is planned for and organised in schools in Perth & Kinross; to explain how classes are structured; to share information about composite classes; and to answer some frequently asked questions.



How is learning planned and organised?

A great deal of forward planning is given to how learning and classes are organised. The need for change happens as the roll of a school goes up or down, and this may happen a number of times during your child's time at primary school.

In Perth & Kinross Council schools, the way that classes and learning are organised needs to take into account:

- Overall numbers of children in the school and at each stage
- Children's dates of birth
- Children's gender
- Children's additional support needs

Careful consideration is given to ensuring that a range of learning and teaching approaches and opportunities are in place, in order that children can work with a range of other children and adults to support their learning.

Children in any class are taught according to their individual needs and next steps. This is the same whether a child is in a composite or a non-composite class.

Composite classes

There are likely to be times when numbers of children and teachers in schools may result in the need to form composite classes. This is when two or more stages are taught as part of one class e.g. the oldest children in P3 joining the youngest children in P4 to make a P3/4 composite class.

Across Perth and Kinross each year, the majority of our schools will have one or more composite classes. In 2021-22, 61 out of our 70 primary schools (87%) operated with composite classes at one or more stages. 173 classes out of a total of 443 classes were composite – this represents 39% of the council's primary classes, so moving to and from composite groups is common.



Headteachers, who are responsible for the leadership and organisation of learning in the school, will make the decision on how best to organise classes using the following criteria:

- each composite class shall have a maximum of 25 children as per national guidance
- the lead factor in determining the population of the class will be the date of birth of the child, ie the oldest children from the younger stage join with the youngest children from the older stage.
- (This criterion is used because it is unambiguous and transparent: for the purposes of school provision, age is not a 'protected characteristic' in the Equality Act 2010. This means that in relation to the provision of education, schools may lawfully use the criteria of age to organise classes)
- a reasonable balance in terms of gender, where possible
- the range of Additional Support Needs - these needs should be significant and evidenced through the Child and Young Person's Planning process.

We know that friendships are important and schools ensure a wide range of opportunities for children to spend time with peers from across classes. However, social groupings and friendships are not criteria for populating classes.

When children are part of a reorganisation of learning in schools, they face new experiences, opportunities and challenges. They may want to talk about these changes, and you can help children to prepare for change and to settle in comfortably and quickly, by chatting positively, and with excitement, about their new class.

Classes are almost always reorganised in the final term for the coming school year once the P1 intake and placing requests have been confirmed and staff allocations decided. Your child's school will keep you informed, and staff will be sensitive to the needs of all children when planning for change.

Indicative Timeline



Term 3

Headteachers submit details to PKC of their projected roll for the following session and the number of teachers they expect to be allocated in line with Perth and Kinross Staffing Standard.



Term 4

Once confirmation of staffing for the coming session is received, headteachers review their preferred class structures and consider the impact on current class groups.



Mid-June

Parents will be informed of class structures

