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Ruishton Church of England Primary School

June 17th

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Soon!**

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Dear Parents,

This letter has one subject only... **class placement**. There have been some “rumours” regarding classes next year so this letter is by way of explanation and to put some of those rumours to rest. Decisions will be made by Friday. However they are never easy and are more difficult this year than in the past,

There have been delays this year due to our not knowing until very recently how many were going to be allowed to start school this year. The local authority has reduced the number of children allowed to enter reception from 24 to 21 (five class school, not six), citing a low birthrate! We have therefore become an oversubscribed school with more wishing to enter than are being allowed to do so. I disagree with the decision to reduce numbers but I am powerless to alter the decision. Perhaps in September parental pressure could override it, as you have more say in this than I do; the chair of governors and I have argued long and hard.

When arranging classes we have to take account of the child’s age, legislation, the birth rate, siblings being in the same class and also where there are identified educational needs. With seven year groups and five classes all children will need to spend two years in the same class, the younger children generally lower in the school, and the older children in the higher age groups, but with children following the appropriate curriculum for their age and ability. It is important that we make the decision based on sound educational guidance and not any subjective assessment. This year all classes will have more than one year group. Unless we are allowed to take 30 children every year and the birth rate is constant there will always be mixed age classes... it is not an educational problem at all, indeed there are many advantages.

Class placement as you can see is giving me headaches and we have therefore taken the same pragmatic approach, based on evidence, as we have used in the past. This system is the fairest. We have arranged the children in age order, except where there is evidenced documentation that the child has an additional need. This could be physical, learning, gifted and talented or psychological. However, whatever the reason, placement out of age order must be recommended as beneficial to that child academically and have supportive evidence. This means that as a minimum the child is on the SEN or gifted and talented register, has an individual education plan, or has involvement with an outside agency. Inevitably some of you may feel unhappy, but it is not a case of keeping children “down” or moving them “up”. Some are younger, some older and some have additional educational requirements. See me if you are unhappy. I can’t change anything but at least it gives you a target.. I am a quick mover though.

Neil Dalton