



More Information regarding 2015 Planning

Monday November 17th 2014

Dear Parents and Carers,

We have been asked a range of questions over the last few days about our planning for the 2015 structure and in particular the P-2 classes and 3/4/5 classes and how they will work in practical terms. We have outlined below some of the most asked questions and answers.

How is the decision about a structure made and what is taken into account? *Teaching staff discuss the various options at team meetings and then at a Leadership group level. The structure also is discussed at the school's consultative group that is made up of teacher representatives and a teacher aide representative. The structure also needs to take into account all of the following:*

- *numbers of children at particular grade levels*
- *number of teachers at the school*
- *numbers of classrooms*
- *individual teacher's abilities and strengths*
- *programs requiring specialist teaching*
- *needs of particular groups of students in the school*
- *Education Department and Union agreement regarding class sizes eg. current target of an average class size of 21 for Prep–Year 2*

Once all these factors have been considered a structure is chosen that allows the best opportunities for the following:

- *appropriate placement of students in classrooms*
- *best teacher match for the grade*
- *teaching and learning approaches to be used*
- *structural considerations around class locations and ability for teacher and students to plan and work together*

- *maintaining class sizes that allow entry of students during the year, especially in Grades 1-4 where this is most common.*
- *Allowing students to work within the most appropriate area in the school. For example it is always a benefit to be able to include Grade 2 students within the P-2 Area to fully immerse them in the Early Years teaching approach.*

How will the multi level classes work on a daily basis? *Numbers of each year level of students will be as balanced as possible across the grades. Students will spend some time each week with their own teacher but there will also be structured times in which students will work in ability groups and/or year levels across the area for English and Maths. Older students in the classes will be provided with opportunities to work with their peers in a social context. Students will work on extending their curiosity as far as possible through Investigations (P-2) and Inquiry Units of Work (3-6). Consideration will be also made regarding the most appropriate teaching staff to teacher particular groups. In 2015 we have employed two new expert level teachers starting at the school that will assist with this.*

How will such a wide range of students be catered for in the P-2 and 3/4/5 classes? *There is always a wide range of abilities within a classroom regardless of whether that is made up of two, three or more grade levels. Teachers will make sure that they assess thoroughly at the start of the year to determine the students starting point for learning. They will then develop a plan for each child to make the appropriate level of progress across the year. Four P-2 classes and three 3/4/5 classes will mean that teachers can plan together with a common starting point and meet regularly to discuss student progress and develop learning plans.*

As a small school Pender's Grove has at various points in recent times had to develop a structure that contained multi level classes. In 2010 there were 2 x 4/5/6 classes and in 2009 the school structure contained a 3/4/5 class. The school has run Prep/1 classes in most years with the exception of 2013 where we had a much larger than average Prep intake. We believe that one of the strengths of the proposed structure for 2015 is its multiple numbers of each multi level combination.

For more information about multiage classrooms please have a look at the following links:

<http://www.avps.vic.edu.au/multiage-parents.html>

<http://www.ncrel.org/sdrs/areas/issues/methods/instrctn/in500.htm>

As always please don't hesitate to come and speak to us if you would like more information.

Regards,
Douglas, Dayle and PGPS teachers