

Great Easton C of E (Aided) Primary School
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Headteacher: Claire Jackman

11th June 2020

Dear Parents and Carers

It is that time of year when we start to plan classes for September. We have left it a bit later than usual due to not being sure of the plans for returning at the end of the summer. As you will have heard The Government is not expecting all children to return to school for the last month, as previously hoped. We are really disappointed that this is the case as we would love to see the children and provide some normality. However, in the current circumstances, with the need for social distancing and with the Essex R number being 0.98 on Monday, we are also relieved that we will not be expected to try and manage the return of all children.

We are now turning our focus towards September. Whilst we don't know what the plans for school will be exactly, we would like to start planning in the hope that we will be returning to something close to what we know and miss so dearly.

Usually we ask the children to fill in a little sheet indicating who their top friends are so that we can make sure to put them with at least one of those friends. As you can imagine, children all put down different friends so it is not always a straightforward task!

We would be very grateful if you could assist us this year and ask your children which friends they would choose to be with in class next year. If your child will be in Year 2,3 or 6 then you **do not** need to do this because they will automatically be together in a year group.

The teachers are staying with their current year groups - we are very lucky to have such a strong and skilled teaching staff.

The class splits are detailed below:

YR/1 = 21 YR & 10 Y1 (Mrs Delaney and Mrs Lawrence)

Y1/2 = 10 Y1 & 22 Y2 (Miss Wilson)

Y3/4 = 23 Y3 & 9 Y4 (Miss Govey)

Y4/5 = 13 Y4 & 19 Y5 (Miss Miles)

Y5/6 = 7 Y5 & 25 Y6 (Mr Curtis)

As we emphasise each year, if your child is a Y1 in the R/1 class they are not 'being kept down' in any way. We analyse our data very carefully and the children who attain greater depth at the end of year 6 are overwhelmingly children who have been the older children in a class - so the 1s in the R/1 class, 4s in the Y3/4 class and 5s in the Y4/5 class. There are many benefits to children being the top of the class age-wise as this can really boost their self-confidence and means they are not comparing themselves to children who may be two years older than they are. It may be that after lockdown and missing over a third of the year, you feel your child would benefit from being an older one in the class they were in. This will ease them back to school much more. You may also find that your child would prefer to be an 'older' one. We need to be extremely mindful of the children's emotional well-being and mental health when returning in September after such an extended period at home. They will have become very attached to life with you and will more than likely find separation hard and we are making plans

for the first term to really focus on re-integrating children back to school and ensuring they maintain that 'love of life and learning' that we hold at the core of all we do.

Learning-wise and curriculum-wise your child will be taught the same, whichever class-split they are in. We have a rolling programme so the whole of key stage one follows the same curriculum and are taught their year group curriculum for maths and English. At key stage two all children are taught their year group expectations for maths and English and they all do the same Courageous Curriculum project learning.

The focus needs to be on friendships and your child's happiness so that they can thrive.

We do have to consider siblings and SEND children and where they will be best placed.

September is going to provide a lot of different challenges for many different reasons - our main concern will remain the same - the happiness of the children. If this means we spend even more time on PSHE and their emotional well-being and adjusting what the 'new normal' will be in school, then this is what we will invest our time in. Children's education over lockdown will have varied greatly but this is not a concern for us. Typically, there may be four years difference (or more at times) between the academic performance of children in a class.

Teachers are used to differentiating for this and providing challenge for those working at a higher level and support for those at a lower level. This is what we are trained to do and are confident in providing this. It is not as simple as catering for two year groups in a class, routinely we have to go beyond this, so please do not worry at all about your child academically whichever class they are placed in. Our results and success in this field speak for themselves. We will be doing our very best for every child once they are emotionally secure and happy being back at school. As we have already said, happiness continues to be our main priority and from this, with parental support, we can help them to soar academically.

If you could email your child's preferences back on the form provided by Friday 19th June, we will begin the process of organising classes for next year and be in touch in due course. If you are unable to use the form, feel free to include the details within an email.

We are hoping to be able to organise some socially-distanced meet-ups on the field with the new class groups at the end of term, obviously in smaller groups but making sure your child will have the opportunity, should you wish, to sit outside with the class teacher and hear a bit about next year in order to have the opportunity to spend a bit of time in school and hear from us about September. We hope this will go some way in reassuring them and helping them to feel excited about the next school year. Again, we will be in touch with details soon.

Best wishes

Claire Jackman

Miss Jackman
Headteacher

Child's name:

My child would like to be with at least one of these four friends:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.

Any other comments: