



**East Lothian  
Council**

**Department of Education & Children's Services**

## **GUIDELINES**

# **COMPOSITE CLASSES IN PRIMARY SCHOOLS IN EAST LOTHIAN**

**Revised – April 2009**

## DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION & CHILDREN'S SERVICES COMPOSITE CLASSES IN PRIMARY SCHOOLS

There are 35 primary schools in East Lothian. In some of these schools there are composite classes. This leaflet has been produced to explain the reasons for their existence and the workings of composite classes.

### COMPOSITE CLASSES

A composite class is one in which pupils from 2 or more year-groups are taught together. For example, a P1/2 class can contain pupils aged 4, 5 and 6. Composite classes exist where there are not sufficient pupils at a stage to form complete classes. Small schools can also multi-composite classes, for example a five stage multi-composite class, P3-P7.

### CLASS SIZES

Under present agreements class sizes are determined by the number of pupils on the school roll and the finance available for staffing. Normally no single-age class should be greater than 25 in P1, 30 in P2 and P3 and 33 in P4 to P7. No composite class should be greater than 25.

### CRITERIA

Composite classes should be formed using the following criteria

- Age
- Severe/complex needs
- Physical size of classroom

### TEACHING AND LEARNING

It is the responsibility of all teachers to plan, deliver and assess the education of all children according to school, authority and national guidelines.

### TRANSFER TO SECONDARY

Children in a composite class will transfer to secondary school with their age peer group. P7 pupils in a P6/7 composite will move on to the Secondary stage with other P7 pupils. They will have undertaken the appropriate Primary education curriculum and participated in all the transition activities within the school and the cluster.

Head Teachers are responsible for the internal organisation of their own school. The Council recommendation is that composite classes are formed **primarily** on the basis of age. The child's date of birth would determine the class in which he/she is placed. The only other factors to consider are if a child has severe/complex needs and the physical size of the classroom.

## Composite Classes - your questions answered

**Q. What is a composite class?**

A. This is when pupils from more than one-year group are taught as a single group. The maximum class size for a composite class is 25.

**Q. Why do we need composite classes?**

A. Composite classes help us to deliver education efficiently when there are not enough children to make a single year class.

**Q. How are composite classes composed?**

A. We base composite classes on pupil age. For example, when we are making a composite P3/4 class, we take the oldest pupils in P3 and the youngest pupils in P4. The age-range in composite classes may often be less than 8 months, whereas in single-year-group classes it may be 12 to 13 months.

**Q. Are there many composite classes in East Lothian schools?**

A. There are composite classes in the majority of schools in the county.

**Q. Will children repeat work?**

A. No, we plan and record work so children are always learning something new.

**Q. Will my children be able to mix with friends of their own age?**

A. Yes, we know that friendship groups are important and we encourage children to mix with their friends at break, through whole-school or stage events.

**Q. Will there be more composite classes in the future in East Lothian?**

A. Yes, we think that we will have more composite classes as we strive to deliver a high quality education within budget.

**Q. What can I do to support my child?**

A. You can help to reassure and settle your child in his/her new class.  
You can create opportunities to maintain friendships and encourage new ones.  
You can be positive and continue to work with the school.

**Q. How is education delivered within a composite class?**

A. All classes, whether composite or not, contain pupils of different abilities and levels of development. Teachers use a variety of methods, for example, small group teaching and individualised learning to ensure that the differing abilities of all children are met.

**Q. What is the impact of composite classes?**

A. Inspection reports from across Scotland indicate that there is no difference in the quality of education provided in composite classes, or in outcomes for children taught in composite classes.

**Q. Will my child be 'kept back'?**

**A. No, we treat every child as an individual.**

**Q. Does the teacher teach to the 'middle' of the class?**

**A. All teachers take account of the needs and abilities of individual pupils.**

**Q. Do more able pupils get bored? Do the less able 'switch off'?**

**A. All teachers plan to motivate and engage all children.**

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