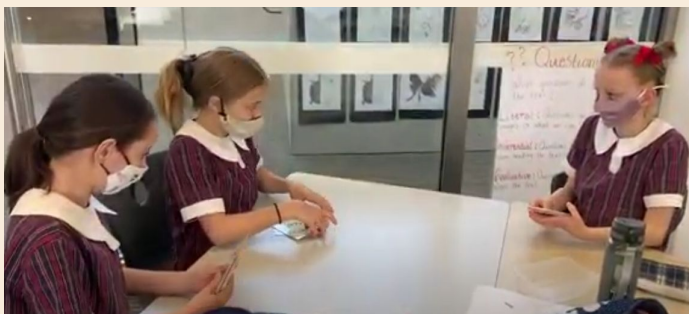




Learning at St James Multi-age Settings

An Information Evening for Families
18th November, 2021



The purpose of our Information Evening

- To provide greater clarity around how a 3/4 classroom operates
- To explore the goals of multi-age settings
- To share student, teacher and parent perspectives of 3/4
- To respond to your questions and curiosities

What is the structure for 2022?

3/4 - Sarah Contin (20 students)

3/4 - Cathy Busch (20 students)

3/4 - Jessica Conway (3 days) & Carmelina Corio (2 days) (20 students)



What are the goals of multi-age classes?



- To provide a stimulating environment for children's learning
- To provide opportunities for greater social interaction and collaboration
- To provide varying opportunities for children to learn from one another
- To develop leadership skills for students
- To enhance use of flexible groupings to target learning
- To strengthen teaching practices through increased collaboration, team planning, data analysis & professional learning

Why multi-age classes?

POSITIVE IMPACT ON SOCIAL & EMOTIONAL LEARNING

Educational research shows that multi-age classes:

- have positive impacts on students' social and emotional learning and wellbeing
- provide students with greater opportunities to build friendships and make connections with students across year levels who share interests or have compatible personalities
- provide opportunities for older children to be leaders and role models for younger children, so building confidence and self esteem
- encourage younger children to aspire to the level of the older children, meaning they tend to 'catch on' more quickly (in relation to social skills as well as academic achievement)

Why multi-age classes?

ALLOWS TEACHERS TO WORK COLLABORATIVELY TO ENHANCE LEARNING

Educational research shows that multi-age classes:

- enable larger teams of teachers, with similar cohorts, to work together, **increasing the capacity of teachers** to authentically collaborate on planning and assessment
- enhance consistent teacher judgement and practice.

Why multi-age classes?

GREATER OPPORTUNITIES FOR FLEXIBLE GROUPINGS FOR LEARNING

Educational research shows that multi-age classes:

- provide teachers with more opportunities to group students flexibly, **in different ways at different times**, depending on the intended learning outcomes

Why multi-age classes?

BALANCED, STIMULATING LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS

Educational research shows that multi-age classes:

- create more class groups for each year level, enabling schools to strategically separate children who have an adverse effect on each other's learning or wellbeing.

This greatly **benefits the culture and learning environment of classrooms** across the school.

Why multi-age classes?

QUALITY TEACHING IS WHAT MATTERS

Educational research shows that multi-age classes:

- are equal to single year level classes in academic outcomes
- do not determine either educational advantage or disadvantage

The most important factor in determining student academic success is the **quality of the teaching**.

Teaching practices such as explicit teaching, differentiation, formative assessment, flexible grouping strategies and collaborative learning have a far greater impact on student achievement than the structure of classes.

These practices are all routinely implemented across classes at St James and well supported by mentoring, instructional leadership and professional learning.

Parent Insights

Jo & Dave - *Parents of Angus in Year 4 and Mila in Year 2*



Teacher Insights

Mandi, Jess, Cathy & Sarah - Yr 3/4 Collaborative Community



Student Insights

To gather student voice around multi-age classes we asked the students themselves what they thought.

- *We used small focus groups from each 3/4 class*
(Some of the students' responses were written down, some were filmed)
- *We used surveys across all of 3/4*

This is what they had to say...



How did you initially feel about being in a 3/4 class?

“I sort of felt like it was a good opportunity to make a lot of new friends, that I didn’t have when I was in Year 2.” Year 3 student

“When I was first told it was going to be 3/4 I was a bit nervous because I thought if I made a spelling mistake I would look stupid in front of the Yr 4s. But then when I got used to being around them I realised there was nothing to be embarrassed about or scared about because they are kind people.” Year 3 student

How did you initially feel about being in a 3/4 class?

“At the start I was a bit worried about being split up and in different groups, but it was an opportunity to meet the Year 3s because I didn’t used to go up to them or play with them. Normally I was just with the boys. Now I’ve met the Year 3s, they are fun and I have new people to play with.” Year 4 student

How do you feel now about being in a 3/4 class?

“We are used to it now! It’s good now, you are used to people around you. When we started, the Year 3s would be on one side and the Year 4s would be on another side. It was very separate but now it’s not.”

Year 4 student

“I feel good that the teachers did it and I’d tell the new Year 3s that there isn’t anything to worry about and it was a good experience to go through.”

Year 3 student

How do you feel now about being in a 3/4 class?

*“I really like being with everyone.
It’s a good feeling, because I didn’t always
mix well with the people in my year level, and
sometimes I’m a bit more like the Year 3s.”*

Year 4 student

*“I learn different ideas from different people.
Everyone is friends so you can say what
you want to say.”*

Year 3 student

How is it different to what you expected?

“It is different to how I expected. I thought that everything we learnt, they’d do with the Year 3s and then with the Year 4s and it would take double time. But, we learn at the same time. Some of it is easy and some of it is hard.”

Yr 4 student

What has surprised you?

“I thought it would be quite annoying, that everything would be the same for everyone, but the teachers have made it still a challenge for the Year 3s and a challenge for the Year 4s.” Year 4 student

“I thought at first we’d learn the same things all over again, but I feel like we have learnt some of the same things but I’ve understood it a bit more.”
Year 4 student

What has surprised you?

“The amount of fun I’ve had with the Year 4s has surprised me. I thought it would be separate, that the Yr 3s would hang together and Yr 4s would hang together, but it’s a mix, so that was a surprise.”

Year 3 student

“It surprised me that the teachers made some things a bit easier for some students and some things a bit trickier for other students.”

Year 4 student

Student Insights

Yr 3/4B, 3/4C, 3/4CJ



What is the best thing about being in 3/4?

"I think the best thing about being in 3/4 is the difference. We are all really different from each other but I think that's actually really good! The Yr 3s can teach the Yr 4s new stuff and the Yr 4s can teach the Yr 3s new stuff." Year 4 student

"The best thing about 3/4 is change in our learning, and having that opportunity at an age like this. It's now easier to learn how to make friends and deal with change." Year 4 student

"Last year I was very enclosed in my friendship but now I'm more open to letting new people into my friendship group."
Year 3 student

"Now I can go where I want!" Year 4 student

Highlights of 3/4 2021 taken from student surveys



How are the class groups created?

There are many considerations when forming multi-age groupings:

- Social dynamics
- Academic support and enrichment
- Gender
- Behaviour
- Social & emotional needs
- Age & maturity

How are the class groups created?

It is a complex process which takes many weeks. Undertaken with care & consideration.

1. Students complete a socio-gram to provide further insight into their friendships and those they work well with.
2. Teachers combine their thorough knowledge and understanding of the class dynamics with data from socio-grams.
3. Teachers work together with the Leadership team to create classes.
4. Social dynamics, academic achievement, gender, behaviour, social & emotional needs are all considered at this time.

The school endeavours to create three equal, well-balanced classes.

How will the teacher teach Yr 3 or Yr 4 or both?

The Victorian Curriculum is arranged in stages, not yearly outcomes. Curriculum for Levels 3 and 4 is taught over 2 years.

St James uses a 2 year Scope and Sequence (curriculum mapping tool) to ensure guaranteed and viable curriculum for all students.

Civics and Citizenship

Civics and Citizenship Level Description

The Level 3 and 4 curriculum introduces students to democracy in the context of the community. It explores an understanding of democracy as rule by the people, creating rules for groups and how rules and laws affect them. Students also explore how different groups can shape personal identity.

Science

Levels 3 and 4

Science knowledge helps people to understand the effects of their actions

Living things can be grouped on the basis of observable features and can be distinguished from non-living things

Different living things have different life cycles and depend on each other and the environment to survive

A change of state between solid and liquid can be caused by adding or removing heat

Natural and processed materials have a range of physical properties; these properties can influence their use

Earth's rotation on its axis causes regular changes, including night and day

Earth's surface changes over time as a result of natural processes and human activity

Heat can be produced in many ways and can move from one object to another; a change in the temperature of an object is related to the gain or loss of heat by the object

Forces can be exerted by one object on another through direct contact or from a distance

How do the 3/4 teachers work together?

- Teachers plan together & share ideas / expertise
- Teachers discuss student data and engage in professional dialogue around the 'next steps' for students
- Teachers support one another in creating flexible groupings
- Teachers team-teach and observe one another, to continually build capacity
- Teachers attend professional learning meetings, twice weekly, to develop use of evidence-based teaching practices
- Teachers are supported by the school Leadership team



How do teachers cater for individual differences?

→ Teachers group students using assessment data.



How do teachers cater for individual differences?

- Teachers use learning intentions & success criteria.
- Teachers roam and provide feedback at students' point of need.

Year 3/4 think an '**Outstanding Narrative**' must include:

An engaging title	
An orientation	
A complication	
A series of events	
A well thought through resolution	
Paragraphs	
Interesting vocabulary	
A range of sentence openers	
Consistent past tense (already happened)	
Character thoughts, feelings, words and actions	
A descriptive setting	
Accurate punctuation A . , ! ? " " ...	
Careful spelling	
CHALLENGE: Engage the reader	

How do teachers cater for individual differences?

- Teachers use open-ended tasks so students can access at their point of need.
- Teachers modify learning tasks in order to scaffold or extend learning.

'How many different fractions can you make using a packet of M&Ms? How many different ways can you show your thinking?'



Teacher Insights

Mandi, Jess, Cathy & Sarah - Yr 3/4 Collaborative Community



Additional support & enrichment

Teachers, with support of school leaders and LSOs, create Personalised Learning Plans (PLPs) for those students who have been identified as requiring additional academic or wellbeing support or who have a learning difficulty or disability.

(Cognitive, Social & Emotional, Sensory & Physical)

Intervention - Evidence-based practices to provide a variety of support; 1:1, small group, in class support

Enrichment - Like-minded groups, fostering continued growth and a love of learning

How will the students prepare for Sacraments?

Year 3 - Reconciliation

Year 4 - First Eucharist

Students of both year levels participate in sacrament preparation for Reconciliation and Eucharist. In the 2nd year of sacrament preparation, students deepen their understanding.

On some occasions students will be split into Year 3 or Year 4 only.

For example: when practising for the mass.



Which camp will the students attend?

Camps will rotate over 2 years.

Bike Camp 2021 - Maldon (2 nights)

Zoo Snooze 2022 - Melbourne Zoo (1 night)

Booked for Term 1, Week 8 2022



Which devices/technology will students in 3/4 use?

Currently all Year 3 and 4 students have access to their own chromebook.

In 2022, some new chromebooks are to be purchased and will be divided between the classes. (Flip feature will allow them to be used as tablets)

Teachers and students will have continued access to the STEM resources

(which include Strawbees, Spheros, Cubetto, Merge cubes, Makedo, etc.)



How will the students prepare for NAPLAN?

All students in 3/4 will engage in learning in Term 1 and the beginning of Term 2, some of which will be part of the preparation for NAPLAN.

Regardless of whether the tasks may be present during NAPLAN testing, it is valuable learning for all.

For example: All students will need to develop their understandings of Narrative writing and Persuasive writing, as indicated in the curriculum.

At times, the Year 3s may complete some practice tests, without the Year 4s.

What will Home Learning (Homework) look like?

St James Home Learning Policy is a school wide policy, based on evidence. Some key points to note:

- Quality is more important than quantity
- Home Learning is enhanced by providing students with choices among tasks
- It should provide opportunities to reinforce & consolidate learning
- It should include conversations with families
- According to John Hattie; *“Homework has an effect size of 0. Five to ten minutes has the same effect of one to two hours. The best thing you can do is reinforce something you’ve already learnt.”* [Visible Learning](#)

What will Home Learning (Homework) look like?

Example from Policy:

Teachers continually reflect upon the effectiveness of their practice and so this format was adjusted throughout the year to better suit the needs of the students.

It will be reviewed at the beginning of 2022 and adjusted once again.

It will be differentiated for Yr 3 & 4.

Year 3/4 Home Learning

Weeks: 4 and 5

Dear students,

Complete the 4 'Must Do' activities. Year 3s choose 2 other activities of your choice, Year 4s choose 3-4 activities of your choice to complete over the next 2 weeks. Colour on the grid those tasks you have completed. Keep any written tasks, drawings, photos, notes, etc. in your Home Learning Book.

The Home Learning Grid is to be signed by a parent / caregiver and returned to school on: Friday 26th February

Mathletics (10 minutes each night. Addition)	Reading (20 minutes each night. Keep a record of what you have read.)	STEM Challenge Design your own planet. <i>Include: name of planet, weather, surface, distance from the sun, days in a year, living things, moons.</i>
Maths Teach someone in your family how to play 'Cover Up' using three 10 sided dice. Use addition, subtraction, multiplication or division.	SMART Spelling 'ce' as in ice 'wr' as in wrist Choose an activity from the SMART Spelling list.	Art Challenge Create a 2D or 3D model of the planet you have designed.
Open-ended Problem Solving $3_ + 1_ = _2$ What might be the missing number? Record as many possibilities as you can.	R.E. Write a prayer of thanksgiving to share with your family during meal time.	Inquiry Choose a wondering of interest to explore on Wonderopolis related to Space & Earth Science. List 3-4 interesting discoveries.

Parent / Carer Signature: _____

Class Reps & Social Functions

1 parent representative from Year 3

1 parent representative from Year 4

Both reps will liaise and work together.

Social Functions can be organised for Year 3 families, for Year 4 families or for both.

If you are interested further information will be available through the 2021

Parents Association Reps- Kate Korber & Kat Cheshire

Parent Insights

Donette & Toby - *Parents of Noah in Year 4 and Beau in Year 2*



Thank you for your time
and ongoing support of your
child's learning at St James



*"Many ideas grow better
when transplanted into
another mind than in the
one where they sprung
up." Oliver Wendell Holmes Jr.*

