

Multi-Age Classes at Boroondara Park Primary School

Each year, we review our enrolments, community needs and staffing to shape class structures that best support learning and wellbeing.

For 2026, Boroondara Park Primary School (BPPS) will run multi-age classes for Grades 1/2, 3/4 and 5/6. Multi-age classes bring together two year levels, giving teachers greater flexibility to tailor learning and maintain balanced class sizes that support both academic and social development.

Our focus remains the same: ensuring every child feels known, supported and challenged at their own level.

In every classroom – whether straight or multi-age – there's a natural range of abilities, interests and learning needs. Our teachers plan for this diversity every day. It's no longer about "teaching the year level"; it's about knowing each learner.

For example, during a writing unit, some students might focus on developing sentence structure while others refine voice and vocabulary – working on the same topic but at different levels of readiness. These flexible approaches ensure that every child is challenged and supported appropriately.

Multi-age classrooms also give students a wider circle of relationships and learning experiences. They help build cooperation, leadership and confidence as students learn from one another across ages. Older students take pride in supporting younger peers, while younger ones benefit from role models and new friendships. The result is a strong, connected classroom where difference is normal and valued.

It's natural to have questions about how multi-age classes work in practice, particularly around curriculum coverage or individual attention. Research consistently shows that multi-age classes do not disadvantage students academically. What makes the biggest difference – by a large margin – is the quality of teaching.

We are fortunate at BPPS to have an experienced, collaborative teaching team. Our staff plan together, share data and continually refine their practice to meet the needs of each child. Lessons are designed using assessment data and adjusted for readiness so students can work at a level that challenges them appropriately. Teachers may group students by ability for some tasks and by mixed abilities for others, depending on the purpose of learning.

Each year, a great deal of thought goes into class formation to make sure we balance learning needs, friendships and wellbeing. Our priority is always the best interests of every student.

If you'd like to know more about how multi-age learning works, or what it might mean for your child, please reach out – we're always happy to talk. You'll also find answers to some common questions below.

Thank you for your ongoing trust and partnership.

Multi-Age Classrooms – Frequently Asked Questions

What are the benefits of multi-age classrooms?

Older students often gain confidence from helping younger peers, which also reinforces their own understanding. Younger students benefit from observing and learning alongside older classmates. Both groups develop empathy, cooperation and a sense that everyone learns differently – and that's okay.

As with any classroom, teacher quality makes the biggest difference. Skilled teachers plan and differentiate learning so that each child is appropriately challenged and supported. Working as a team, multi-age teachers collaborate closely, review student data together and share ideas to strengthen programs across the level. This teamwork creates consistency and rich learning opportunities for all students.

Are there any disadvantages to being in a multi-age class?

It's common for parents to wonder whether a child in a multi-age class might get less teacher attention or fall behind. Research shows that's not the case. Students in multi-age and straight classes perform similarly academically, with the biggest factor being teacher quality.

Many parents who were initially unsure tell us by the end of the year that the experience has been positive. Multi-age settings can actually enhance students' confidence, independence and teamwork skills.

How do teachers cater for two year levels at once?

In every class – multi-age or not – students are at different points in their learning. Teachers plan lessons that meet students where they are and stretch them forward. They do this through goal setting, regular assessment, targeted support and extension, and open communication with families.

Will my child repeat content in a multi-age class?

No. Our Integrated curriculum runs on a two-year cycle that keeps topics such as History, Science and Geography varied and building on one another. English and Maths is based on the Victorian curriculum then refined based on the students in each year level and grade. Teachers plan together to make sure learning is well-sequenced and never repeated, adjusting lessons each year to suit their students and keep them challenged and interested.

Do teachers run two programs for two grades?

No. The whole class works on the same focus area in each subject but tasks are differentiated to meet students at their point of need.

For example, in a Maths lesson on multiplication, one group might work on single-digit problems using skip counting, another on two-digit $\times$ one-digit and another designing their own problems for peers to solve. Each group may include students from both year levels – what matters is readiness, not age.

Is it better to be the older or younger year in a multi-age class?

Both benefit in different ways. Older students often take on leadership and mentoring roles, while younger students gain confidence and learn from older peers. These experiences strengthen relationships, self-belief and a sense of responsibility.

What does the research say about outcomes?

Research by Professor John Hattie and others shows that multi-age classes make no difference to academic results compared with straight classes. What matters most is teacher quality. Studies also show social and emotional benefits: greater confidence, cooperation and a stronger sense of belonging.

What about socially?

Multi-age classes widen children's friendship circles across the school. Students often find more play options and connections with peers of different ages and interests. Same age activities and experience occur across classes, giving all

students regular opportunities to connect with peers from their year level. Children adapt quickly and enjoy the broader sense of community that multi-age learning brings.

Next Steps

If you have further questions, please speak with your child's teacher or chat with other families who've experienced multi-age classes.

Every class is carefully designed with students' academic, social and emotional needs in mind.

Thank you for your continued support as we work together to help every child at BPPS learn, grow and thrive.

Sources

Thank you to staff and community members for their feedback when putting together this document.

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