



BANWELL PRIMARY SCHOOL

Belong Believe Achieve

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Dear Parents & Carers,

IMPORTANT UPDATES FOR SEPTEMBER 2021

I am writing to update the school community about some important changes that will be happening in September 2021.

Class Structures

Over recent years, Banwell Primary School (along with many other schools in the area) has been faced with declining pupil numbers. Whilst there are lots of new housing developments being established locally there are also lots of new schools being built. Schools are facing a situation where there simply are not enough children for the number of school places in North Somerset.

Each child generates just over £3000 of income to a primary school each year so when numbers decline it has a significant impact on the school's budget when classes are not full. To give an example, in the current school year we have one class with only 13 children and another with only 15. Financially these class numbers are not sustainable.

Governors and school leaders have therefore decided that from September 2021 Banwell School will need to reduce to 6 classes instead of 7. This means that some of our classes will have children from more than one year group in them and so will be a mixed year group class. Many small village schools have mixed year group classes and I, along with other members of the Banwell team, have direct experience of working in this way. There are many positives which I know the children will benefit from. It means that all children are taught in classes that are more equal in size and it also provides an opportunity to mix groups of children up. This often means new friendships are established which ultimately leads to wider circles of friends. Our teachers already plan closely together but having mixed age classes only strengthens this collaborative work.

We have given a great deal of thought as to the best way to structure our classes this year, especially in light of the school time that children have missed due to COVID lockdowns. Following many lengthy discussions, the class structure for September 2021-22 will be as follows:



Class	Teacher	Classroom	Teaching Assistant
Mixed Reception & Year 1	Mrs Kent & Mrs Isgrove	Current YR classroom	Mrs Gardiner
Mixed Year 1 and Year 2	Miss Gibbs & Mrs Browett	Current Y1 classroom	Mrs Venn
Mixed Year 3 & Year 4	Miss Rose	Current Y2 classroom	Mrs Lynam
Mixed Year 3 & Year 4	Mr Lowe	Current Y3 classroom	Mrs Swire
Year 5	Mr Venn & Mr Davis	Current Y4 classroom	Mrs Hackeson
Year 6	Mrs Nicholson	Current Y6 classroom	Mrs Jenkinson

We will be naming the classes in due course so that they are known as a collective name rather than year group numbers. This helps the children to identify as a newly formed class. This is similar in a way to how we have given the pods a colour name this year. The children across a couple of classes have quickly become known as a colour name rather than purely their year groups.

Where year groups are split (September 2021 Y1, Y3 and Y4 cohorts) we will be informing parents in the near future as to which class their child will be in. Teachers are currently looking at the best way to split their classes and are considering a range of factors when doing this.

Staffing Changes

The end of the school year often brings with it some staff changes and this year is no exception.

After 6 successful years at Banwell (7 if you include the year he joined us as a student!) Mr Ben Summers will be leaving us in the summer. He has been successfully appointed as a hospital teacher at Bristol Children's Hospital. This is a job I know he has wanted to do for a long time and will be amazing at. Mr Summers joined us as a newly qualified teacher in 2015 so is now ready for an exciting new challenge in his career. I am sure you will join me in wishing Mr Summers the best of luck for this new chapter in his life.

Following 6 years as our school bursar Mrs Jean Duckett will be retiring in the summer. Jean had originally planned to retire last summer but has very kindly stayed with us throughout this last challenging year and her support and commitment has been absolutely invaluable. I know that the whole school community wish Jean a long and happy retirement!

We have appointed Mrs Claire Trego to the new post of Office Manager from September 2021. She is a highly experienced member of the office team at Bournville Primary School and I know she is very much looking forward to joining our team here at Banwell.

Hopefully September will be the start of a "normal" school year with Covid restrictions gone. I know this is something we are all looking forward to.

Best wishes,



Claire Pocock
Headteacher

