



## Composite (Split) Classes

Composite classes usually consist of one class containing two grades or years of schooling. Extensive research shows it makes no difference to performance whether students are in a straight or composite class.

The key to success in student learning is the relationship between the teacher and the child as this determines the way students think and act at school. When a student has a good relationship with their teachers, they are more likely to feel positive about class and about school in general. They are also more willing to have a go at hard work, to risk making mistakes, and to ask for help when they need it. At Southern Grove Primary we have highly dedicated teachers who build positive relationships with their students in order to maximise the learning potential of every student.

Composite classes are created in response to student numbers in each year level. Combining students in this way allows schools to ensure more consistent class sizes, match teachers to student need; maximise school and teacher funding and resources; and cope with declining or increasing enrolments.

When determining composite classes at Southern Grove we consider teacher and student relationships, peer relationships, gender balance, inclusivity and academic performance. This ensures our students and staff will have a successful year.

Despite much positive research regarding student growth in composite classrooms, negative perceptions persist, particularly among parents. Many fear their children will be unable to keep up with work; will have fewer friendships; that younger children will be overlooked or that older children will not be sufficiently challenged; that children with learning difficulties will suffer more anxiety; or that the curriculum for each year level will be inadequately covered.

Aligned with current research, at Southern Grove Primary School we believe education is not only about academic achievement, and age is not an accurate predictor of a child's development. Wide-ranging student abilities exist in children of the same age, and not just in composite classes. Multiple studies conclude it makes no difference to performance whether students are in a straight or composite class. Experts agree the most important factor in determining how well a student does is the quality of the teacher and providing a 'differentiated' curriculum caters to all children as individuals, according to their needs.

Differentiation describes a concept being taught universally to all students within a class and creating related tasks at varying levels of complexity. When differentiating instruction in this way, teachers are providing for the needs of students at multiple levels of understanding at the same time which in turn allows students to see clearly not only where they are at, but where they are going. Differentiation occurs in every classroom at Southern Grove and children are taught in accordance with their individual learning needs.

**We ask that you view your child being in a composite class as a positive and feel reassured that your child will succeed in their class.**

