



PPPS Composite Classes – Information for parents

What if my child is in a composite class?

Every class is a composite class filled with students with different learning needs, rates of learning, interests, and strengths at different points in terms of their progress and achievement depending on what they are learning.

Is a composite class an 'A' class?

No. 'Streaming' students is not supported by the research nor at Picnic Point Public School. Nor would we create a composite class consisting of advanced younger students and place them with older students needing remediation. These practices are outdated and not supported by the research and can have a negative impact on student engagement and academic achievement.

Why does the school form composite classes?

This is explained in our Formation of Classes Policy. Staffing is allocated using the formula (right). Children in the early years receive a higher allocation so fewer students are required to be entitled to a full-time teacher.

$K \times 0.0513$	20 students = 1 teacher
$Y1 \times 0.0435$	22 students = 1 teacher
$Y2 \times 0.0400$	24 students = 1 teacher
$Y3-6 \times 0.0333$	30 students = 1 teacher

Staffing, however, is calculated on the TOTAL number of enrolments in the school, not the number of students in a particular year. For example, a school with the following enrolments is not able to form straight classes because the numbers simply do not allow for it.

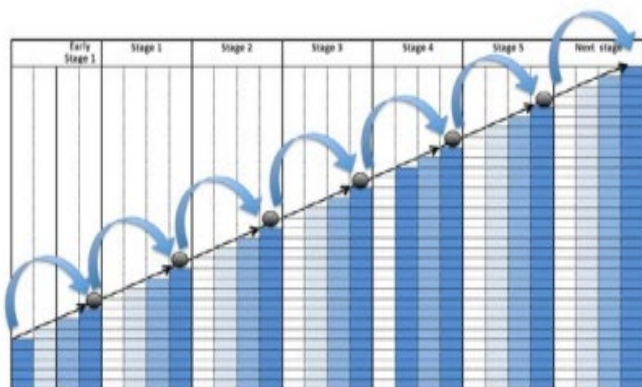
In many schools' composite classes are the preferred model because they support a stage-based view of learning rather than an age-based approach. When we focus on the age or class year group some students will find their work too hard and some too easy.

Our Stage 3 Seniors are all composite classes as we run a Middle Year's Program which has proven to support continuity of learning and a smoother transition to high school.

How does the teacher cater for different year groups in the same class?

The primary curriculum is based on stages of learning from Kinder to Year 6. Each stage builds on the next stage. Curriculum content is organised around key concepts and skills.

Students revisit many the same concepts every year, but it is expected that over time students will develop deeper understandings and greater proficiency and competence in applying the skills and processes.



For example, students in Stage 2 (Years 3 & 4) focus on the same concepts in History. Students have two years to demonstrate achievement of the stage standards.

There is also a greater focus on individualised learning as it is very possible to have students working at various points of the stage expectations. For example, it is possible to have students in Year 3 who



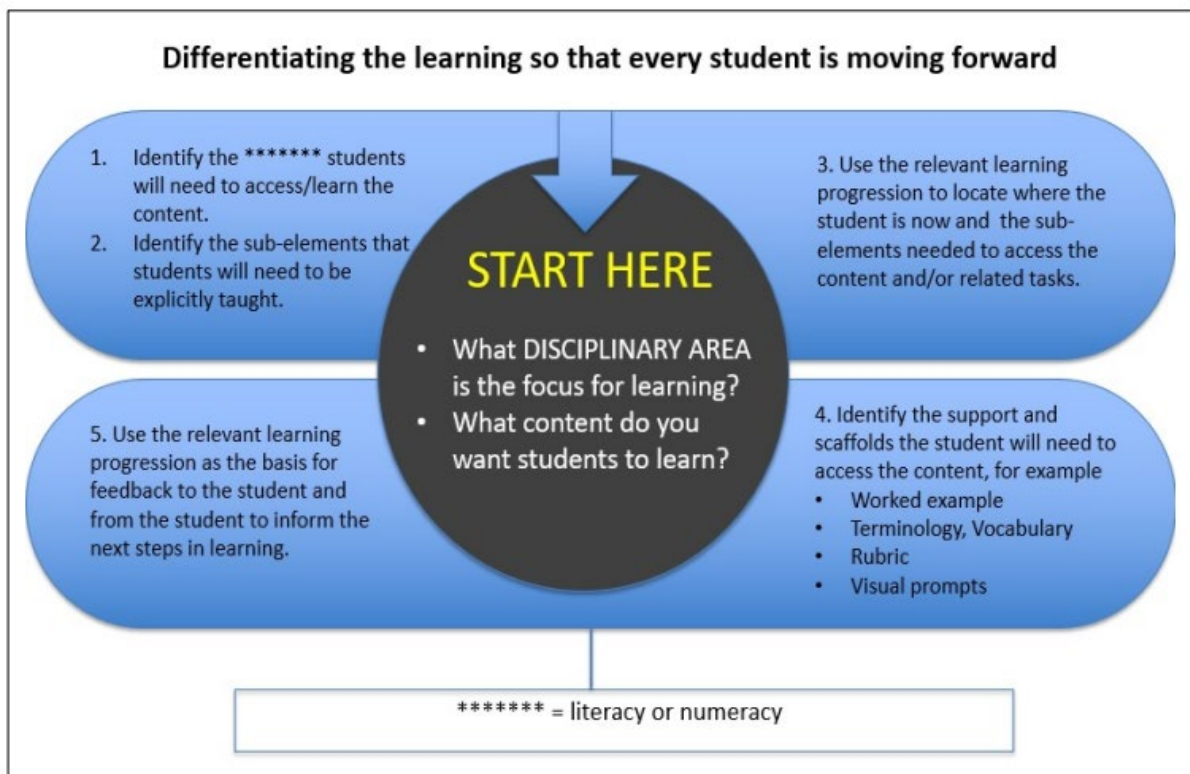
are developing proficiency at the beginning of the stage and other Year 3 students who are working towards the end of a stage skills and processes.

What if my child needs support or extension in literacy and numeracy?

Teachers cater for different instructional needs in the key disciplinary areas by using the National Literacy and Numeracy Learning Progressions. These progressions can be used from K-10 and designed to ensure all students develop strong foundations in literacy and numeracy.

Learning progressions describe the developmental sequence of learning in a particular domain – literacy or numeracy. We can think of them like learning maps. These maps help students, teachers, and parents to better understand where the student is now and the next steps in learning. This process assists all students to be challenged and supported in their learning regardless of their year group or stage of learning.

Learning progressions are not the curriculum. They are not a checklist. The diagram below shows how teachers can use the learning progressions in conjunction with the syllabus in the context of the teaching and learning cycle.



How will being placed in a composite impact on my child?

Research shows there is no discernible difference between composite and 'straight' year group classes in terms of academic performance because every class is essentially a composite class.

In our experience most parents who express concerns about their child being placed in a composite class at the beginning of the year are keen for their child to be placed in a similar class in the following year. Some children take longer to settle, but this can be due to factors other than being placed in a composite class.



Can I change my child's new class?

Teachers spend a lot of time considering class placement and use knowledge of the student as a whole child to guide their decision making. This means that we consider the social-emotional, behavioural, and academic needs of all students. It is very difficult to simply pluck a child from their new class and the school will only consider moving a child's class in exceptional circumstances and with the support of all stakeholders.

Parents are asked to submit requests regarding their child's new class before the end of the year. This is so that these requests can be considered when new class groups are being drafted and formed. Whilst all requests are heard and considered, there is no guarantee that a parent request can be granted.

What are the evidenced based practices that research show improves student learning?

For the most part, it is the quality of teaching, combined with student engagement, and their sense of belonging that has the greatest impact on learning.