WELCOME – David Simpson

Good afternoon/evening and thank you for coming. This presentation will explain why we are creating three mixed KS1 classes next year, how it will work and what it will mean for your child’s education and well-being. Thank you very much to those of you who emailed in questions beforehand – we aim to answer those questions within the content of the presentation. Following the presentation, staff, governors and members of our wider ACET team will be available to answer any further questions that you wish to ask at the end. You will hear from a number of academy representatives – myself, Governors Emma Taylor, Sarah Kilner/Faith Jackson and Dominic Curran, and staff members Beki Malton, Helen Hodges and Emily Bates. Thank you.

SLIDE THREE – Emma Taylor

WHY ARE WE MIXING YEARS ONE AND TWO?

Since 2016, we introduced the strategy, reviewed annually, to provide two classes per year group for as long as we could afford to. This has been sustained in the past by rising pupil numbers. Unfortunately, in 2020-21, pupil numbers have not risen as much as needed and the resultant academy budget is not sufficient to sustain this model. We will remain at 14 classes. Therefore, we will be adopting a mixed year-group model in KS1.

SLIDE FOUR – Beki Malton

WHY KS1?

KS1 learning is very similar between Years One and Two, and the differentiation involved is something KS1 teachers are already experienced in, and already do. The majority of learning is very much focused on end-of-KS1 expectations and being KS2-ready by the end of KS1. Therefore, all pupils will be on a continuum of learning across both year groups according to their ability and readiness, rather than being labelled as specifically Y1 or Y2. Y1 and Y2 pupils are already confident in learning, playing and developing alongside each other from their recent time together in Foundation Stage, and their learning will be enhanced by the fresh opportunity to re-visit and develop previous friendships. In addition, taking planned opportunities to come together for whole key stage learning is an approach already employed successfully by our KS1 team, and this is a natural extension of this.

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SLIDE FIVE – David Simpson

HOW WILL YEAR ONE AND YEAR TWO PUPILS BE TAUGHT?

All children develop at different rates. It isn’t automatic that the oldest child in a class will achieve better than the youngest child and children are taught to their individual academic needs and not simply to their age. All classes in the academy have a large range of maturity and attainment. Teachers will deliver learning and work appropriate to the standard a child is working at, ensuring that all needs are catered for, across the whole class, in the way they already do. As Mrs Malton stated, differentiation is something teachers are already skilled in. In the majority of lessons, the children will start the session together on the carpet with the teacher targeting questions at individuals or groups of children at an appropriate level before moving to groups to access appropriate tasks to develop, consolidate or practise what they have been taught. The teacher will oversee all the learning with a teaching assistant supporting. Pupils who require additional assistance or who require an extra layer of challenge to explore concepts in greater depth or learn something new will be targeted, sometimes by the class teacher, sometimes with planned support and direction from the teaching assistant. On occasion, groups of children may be removed from whole class teaching in order to facilitate this. Interventions will not be affected and be employed in the same as way as currently.

SLIDE SIX – Helen Hodges

HOW WILL TEACHERS PLAN AND PROMOTE PROGRESS?

All three teachers will plan together, sharing excellent practice and promoting the best possible methods and arrangements to promote high quality learning. We will have a dedicated teaching assistant in each class through the day in order to support our focus on different groups of learners, especially in core subject learning such as phonics, reading and maths which underpin all other subject areas.

The curriculum will follow an alternating two-year cycle with all classes following the same set of topics one year and a different set of topics in the second year. This means curriculum content will not be repeated unnecessarily, and all three classes will go on educational visits together.

With the exception of Maths, English and Science, the curriculum skills content isn’t split into separate year groups. Rather, there is an expected level of competency and learning by the end of Year 2 with a progression of skills for children to work through across KS1. So areas such as History and Geography will

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be taught on the two-year cycle, ensuring that content is not repeated unless it needs to be built upon for individuals or groups as necessary. In the case of Maths and English, the progression across Y1 and Y2 are completely aligned, with the majority of objectives being matched with a similar but slightly more advanced objectives for the older year group. Ensuring coverage of national curriculum objectives for both year groups in the same classroom will therefore be easily facilitated by normal classroom practice of differentiation, consolidation and extension of skills and learning.

Where there is a separate and specific age related focus, in phonics for example, pupils will be taught in separate Y1 and Y2 groups of approximately 14 or 15 pupils in each classroom, with the class teacher and teaching assistant working together between the two groups. In addition, we have the option of using of the adjacent library at specifically timetabled times to create a fourth learning area where we can organise the three classes into four groups – two Y1 and two Y2 for year group specific learning. All our systems have in-built flexibility to ensure the learning is balanced for the subject matter focussed on, and this includes preparation for Y1 phonics screening and Y2 SATs.

**SLIDE SEVEN – Dominic Curran**

**WILL BEING IN A MIXED CLASS DISADVANTAGE MY CHILD?**

Current research shows that academic achievement is not measurably any different to the academic achievement of children in same-age classrooms. Mixed-age classrooms nationally are not found to negatively affect pupil achievement and there is no measurable difference locally between the performance of our ACET schools who have mixed classes and those that do not. At a very recent Ofsted inspection at our fellow primary academy in Temple Normanton the lead inspector stated that the mixed classes were a huge benefit for scaffolding the learning of the younger pupils, and developing the independence of the older pupils within the classes. At Listerdale...

- KS1 pupils will spend two years with the same teacher, allowing the teacher to develop a deeper understanding of a child’s strengths and needs, and therefore be in a better position to support your child’s learning.

- Pupils will develop a sense of family with their classmates. They will become a "family of learners" who support and care for each other with older pupils having the opportunity to serve as mentors and to take leadership roles.

- In this way, pupils are more likely to cooperate than compete. The culture of cooperation makes it possible for them to help each other as individuals, not see each other as competitors.

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• There is greater opportunity for older pupils to model more sophisticated approaches to learning, and younger children are able to accomplish tasks they could not do without the assistance of older children. This dynamic increases the older pupil’s level of independence and competence, and raise the younger pupils’ aspirations.

• Pupils will be viewed as unique individuals, just as in every other class. The teacher will focus on teaching each child according to his or her own strengths, and encourage them as progressive, successful learners.

• By staying with the same teacher, pupils moving into Y2 will hit the ground running in September, because the teacher will not spend the early weeks in the academy year getting to know each child. Less review of prior learning is also needed before proceeding with new content.

SLIDE EIGHT – David Simpson

HOW WILL WE CREATE THE CLASSES?

There will be three mixed classes made up of Y1 and Y2 pupils. There will be no more than 30 pupils in each class. This is in line with the legal position on pupil numbers in KS1 classes. There are rare and special circumstances where school are legally instructed by local authorities to accommodate an extra child over that number, but as I said, these are rare and impossible to predict. Current numbers of F2 and Y1 pupils indicate we will be at or close to a maximum of 90 pupils across Y1 and Y2 in total in September but our teachers are experienced in teaching numbers higher than this and this will not impact on their focus on your child. The classrooms are big enough to accommodate this number and more. Our current single Y6 class, for example, is expertly taught with 34 pupils.

Each class will have the same ratio of Y1s to Y2s and will be created to be as similar to each other as possible, taking a number of influences into consideration. These considerations include (and are in no particular order of preference):

• social and friendship groupings

• emotional development

• stage of learning

• gender and age (balance of class and year group)

• additional needs

All these factors will be taken into consideration by myself and class teachers when making a decision on who will be in each class. Parents will be informed about class groups at the earliest opportunity and time will be made available for any family wishing to discuss their child’s learning. However, after having taken
views, it is the academy that will make the final allocation, based on our professional judgement of where the child will best flourish in regard to their personal, social and academic achievements.

SLIDE NINE – Sarah Kilner

The staffing is as indicated on the slide, with each teacher being allocated a dedicated and experienced member of support staff, working alongside them to meet the individual needs of all pupils. In the short term, there will be a newly recruited teacher owing to maternity leave but they will be appropriately qualified, supported by our very experienced existing team and there will be a focussed period of transition for pupils and teachers so that by the end of this academic year all will be familiar with each other and ready for September.

All classrooms will be adjacent so that time and resources between classrooms can be used effectively and efficiently. We are confident that our planning, resourcing and delivery of this approach will be extremely beneficial to your children and provide an excellent environment for them to fulfil their potential.

TO CONCLUDE – David Simpson

We have thought this through in great detail and can assure you that everything we are putting in place holds your children and their emotional and educational well-being at the centre of our planning. Please never think otherwise. While it is a change of approach, it has huge benefits and we are confident that with your support we will continue to meet your child’s needs and promote their life chances throughout their time at Listerdale. The arrangement will be monitored very closely by myself and our senior leadership, including support and challenge from our wider Academy Improvement team, and your views as parents will be sought regularly through the year.

That concludes our presentation and thank you for your attendance and attention. My colleagues and I will be available to answer any individual questions any of you may wish to ask as you leave.

Thank you once again.