

24th May 2007

Dear Parents,

School Organisation for September 2007

Many of you will have realised that the number of children coming into school has been reducing over the past few years and the total number of children attending our school is almost 60 fewer than 4 years ago. This has been having a large financial impact on our budget, as we receive our funding according to the number of children on roll. The Governing Body have worked hard to ensure that the number of classes in school have not been reduced, even though class sizes have become very small in some cases. This investment in teaching staff has been paid for by using our reserves (savings) over the past three years. We are now in a position that we can no longer sustain the number of classes we currently have and, from September 2007, like many other schools, we will have to merge some classes together. We are the last primary school on the peninsular to follow this route.

We have thought long and hard about the most appropriate way to combine classes in order to ensure a continuity of the high level of educational opportunities, which we offer to our children. We have researched studies about academic progress and our findings have shown that in cases of classes merging, children do better if the decision about which class they attend is made on their age rather than their academic ability.

Therefore, we have agreed that:

- Nursery will stay as a separate class and will be taught by Mr Frost.
- Mrs Gill Packard and Mrs C Taylor will job share and will teach Reception and Year 1 as one class.
- Mrs Julie Packard and Mrs J Sweeting will teach Year 2, also as a job share.
- Miss A Sterling will teach Year 3 and the younger Year 4 children in a class of 32 children.
- Miss J Rivers will teach the older Year 4 children and Year 5 in a class of 32 children.
- Mrs C Eldridge will teach Year 6 in a class of 28 children.

From September, Mrs Gill Packard and Mrs J Sweeting will cover the statutory staff release time (PPA) instead of Teaching Assistants and supply staff.

We are currently reorganising the curriculum to ensure that the children receive appropriate input and that they continue to progress well with their knowledge, skills and understanding.

We appreciate that the change may cause anxiety for some families and we would like to reassure you that we have organised the classes as carefully as we can. The education of our children at Shotley CP School is our main priority and we will continue to work extremely hard to ensure that we remain one of the best performing schools in the County.

We have a very dedicated and experienced staff who are very able to plan and teach a variety of abilities in a class extremely effectively. The way we have organised the classes will ensure that there is very little difference to teaching a single year group. In addition to this, as there will be fewer classes, Teaching Assistant time will be re-organised to give more support to each class with more time for individual and small groups of children, or to work in a supporting role with the class teacher.

We have no choice but to follow this course of action, and in the event of our pupil numbers growing again, we will be able to revert back to single year group classes.

If you would like to discuss any concerns about the reorganisation, there will be an open meeting on Thursday 7th June, 2.45pm - 3.15pm, where you can address your concerns to the Governing Body.

Yours sincerely,

Mrs D Dell
Chair of the Governing Body

