



Braeburn International School Arusha



A Parent's Guide to Mixed-Age Classes

Why have mixed-age or composite classes?

Composite classes are a way to spread students more evenly between teachers and to ensure that children are given the maximum amount of opportunity to learn and grow within their school journey.

Some year groups can end up being very small with only a handful of children and the benefits of putting year groups together far outweigh keeping them apart in such small numbers.

Composite or mixed age-group classes are very common all over the world.



How does being in a mixed-age class affect my child's education?

Part of the design of a mixed-age class means that learners working at different levels within the class will have much the same experience as they would in an ordinary single-age group class. Our teachers are highly skilled in teaching children who are working and achieving at different levels - in a way, all classes are composite classes!

Teaching a composite class isn't necessarily very different from teaching a class of all the same year. Class teachers will always ensure that learners are being taught at the correct level and that the lessons and activities they take part in are appropriate to their age and ability.

In spite of this, efforts are usually made to ensure that activities and lessons are utilised to include every member of the class, regardless of their stage, grade, or level. This allows for the children in the class to gain the same benefits of social interaction as in a single stage class.



Benefits of mixed-age classes

Many studies show that being in a composite class not only doesn't negatively affect children's education, but in fact might even improve performance. Some experts say that being in a composite class improves learners' confidence and assertiveness. It also helps to foster the ability to work both as a team and independently!

It's often the case that older students benefit from the confidence boost that comes with being able to help younger learners, while also reinforcing their own learning. Conversely, younger pupils receive the advantage of contact with students who are able to help them with their work, as well as models for appropriate behaviour. Both older and younger learners also find encouragement in the understanding that there are different levels of ability, and that they are not excluded or forgotten by being at a different stage of learning than others in a subject. Everybody wins!



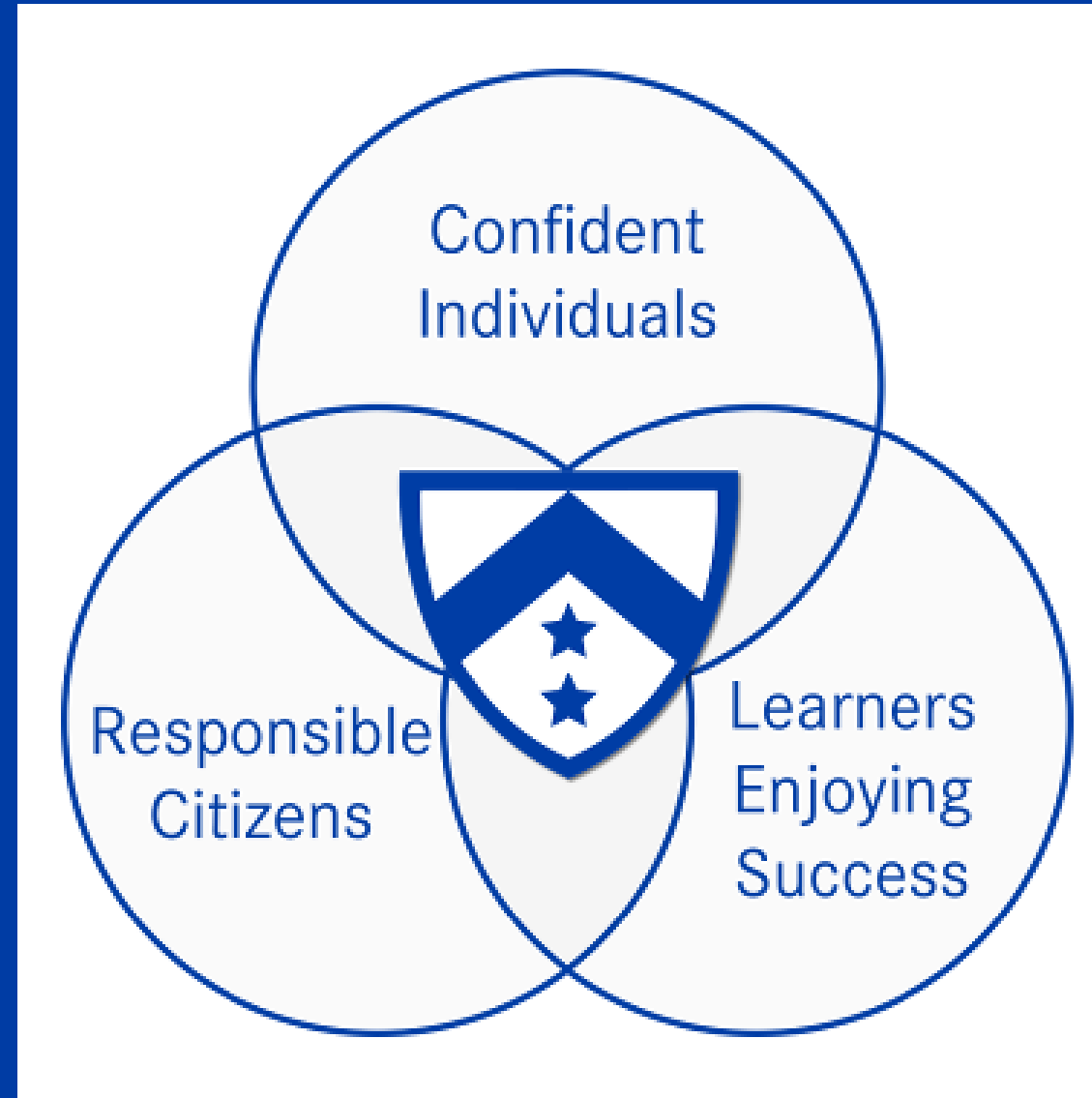
How does the curriculum work in a mixed-age class?

The majority of the curriculum is taught through broad cross-curricular themes meaning the year group objectives can be targeted through a wide variety of activities and projects.

These cross-curricular themes rotate on a two-year basis so children who complete 2 years of a mixed-age class do not repeat a theme but instead build on their skills across all the different themes.

Direct, discrete teaching takes place in small groups with children who are working at the same level. This could be across both year groups depending on what level the individual child is working at.





Remember...

Our teachers are skilled at understanding children's development and meeting them where they are in their learning and development. Within mixed-age classes, children learn across cross-curricular themes with expectations adapted according to each child's individual needs. Learning is never 'watered down' to the youngest age-group in the class, nor is it pitched too high for the younger learners. Instead, through these cross-curricular themes, each individual child is given opportunity to learn at the pace that works best for them, learn from their peers, and become confident, responsible and successful in their own way.





Braeburn International School Arusha

We are here to help!

If you have any questions, queries or just want to know more about how your child is learning in a mixed-age class, please do not hesitate to get in touch with us. You can email us at:

primary@braeburn.sc.tz

Thank you!