

# ANGLO EUROPEAN SCHOOL



## SETTING POLICY

Last reviewed 21/04/2026

This policy is regularly reviewed following recommended guidelines

# SETTING POLICY

## Definitions

'Setting' involves grouping students by ability alone in a given year group into classes for specific subjects, but not across the whole curriculum. When students are set by ability, behaviour and suspected potential are not criteria for placement, apart from in exceptional circumstances. Similarly, poor presentation or poor handwriting or spelling are not criteria for placement (except where they are a nationally agreed criteria for assessment in that subject).

'Streaming' involves grouping students by ability alone into classes for all or most of their lessons, so that a student is in the same group regardless of the subject being taught. This is often done for timetabling purposes so that students can attend a number of subjects in the same group.

'Mixed ability' involves grouping students to ensure diverse abilities within one class, and across parallel classes. It is usual to ensure that other attributes are also proportionally distributed across the mixed ability classes, such as gender, ethnicity, SEND and potential behaviour issues.

## School context

In a typical Year Group cohort, approximately 45% of students are HPA (High Prior Attainers), 40% MPA (Middle Prior Attainers) and fewer than 5% LPA (Low Prior Attainers), with the remainder not completing KS2 tests at the end of primary school. This distribution of ability, which is skewed towards more able students, should be taken into account when decisions are made about types of groupings. In addition, some subjects have to also bear in mind the proportion of students that should be successful in the Higher tier GCSE and ensure that at least this proportion are taught a suitable curriculum when younger.

The decision how to group students is taken to maximise the chances for the cohort of students to achieve highly in the long term. The decision where to place individual students in groups is taken to maximise the chances for that individual student to achieve highly in the long term; this means that, when placing in hierarchical groups, for example, an individual student is best placed where they can access the curriculum most readily, whilst being stretched and challenged.

Group names are used to distinguish between mixed ability groups and setted groups. When hierarchical groups are used, groups are numbered, for example, as 8x/Ma1, 8x/Ma2, for the setted maths classes in the x side of Year 8. When mixed ability groups are used, groups are lettered, for example, as 8x/Gg1a, 8x/Gg1b, for the mixed geography classes in the x side of Year 8. When there are elements of both systems are used, combinations of numbers and letters are

used; for example, 9y/Sc1a, 9y/Sc1b, 9y/Sc2a and 9y/Sc2b for the 4 science groups on the y side of Year 9 with 2 top sets and 2 bottom sets.

### **Key Stage 3**

In KS3, students are taught on one of two sides of the year group (x side and y side); this is decided randomly on entry (apart from students in the Mandarin Excellence Programme (MEP) that are in 7C on entry on the x side).

In Year 7, students are taught in their mixed-ability tutor groups across all subjects, with the exception of the following:

- Students attend Art/Computing/Food in smaller mixed-ability classes for safety purposes
- In Mathematics and Physical Education, students start the year in their tutor groups and are setted at the end of the Autumn Term.

In Years 8&9, there is a mixture of grouping structures:

- Students attend Computing/Food/Art in smaller mixed-ability classes for safety purposes
- Students are setted by ability in PE and maths lessons.
- In Languages, Humanities, English, Citizenship, Music and Drama, students attend Year 8 and Year 9 classes in mixed ability groups and in Year 9, these subjects employ a hybrid system of two top groups and two bottom groups, for example, 9x/En1a, 9x/En1b, 9x/En2a and 9x/En2b.
- In Languages, Humanities, English, Citizenship, Music and Drama, students attend Year 8 classes in mixed ability groups.
- In Humanities, students continue to have mixed ability classes in Year 9. In Languages, English, Citizenship, Music and Drama students start to have some hybrid setting.

The general principle is that all students start in mixed ability groups at the beginning of Year 7 and move to setted arrangements by GCSE in some subjects in KS4. These specific? arrangements are reviewed on a regular basis.

### **Key Stage 4**

In KS4, students are taught on one of two sides of the year group (x side and y side) for their core and compulsory subjects; this is agreed by the Maths, Science and English departments as students move into Year 10 so that students are placed correctly for their setting arrangements. Students are not placed on a side of the year group when attending their option subjects.

In Citizenship, the grouping arrangements reflect the groups being entered for GCSE Citizenship (set 1) and those completing the AES Citizenship Diploma.

In the option subjects, where there is more than one class in an option block, these classes are usually setted. The exceptions are in Business Studies, Art, Drama, Food and Computing, where the nature of the students opting for these subjects lends itself more readily to mixed ability groups.

### **Sixth Form**

In the Sixth Form, there are no separate sides of the year group, although students naturally fall into one of 4 routes: A levels, AIB, IBDP and IBCP. In the large majority of cases, there is only one class per subject in each option block and, therefore, all classes are mixed ability, with the caveat that students have had to matriculate into the sixth form and also onto this course.

The only subjects that may have more than one class per option block are Maths Applications at Standard level, English Literature at Standard level and the Theory of Knowledge classes. These tend to be taught in mixed ability groups, although Maths have taught their IB standard classes in sets to good effect.

### **Setting decisions**

**In principle, a student is promoted when they consistently achieve higher than a student in a set above them, and demoted when they consistently underperform compared to a student in a lower set.** Decisions on setting should be based solely on the assessed ability of the student(s) in that subject and available information should be considered when setting students. Although the weight assigned to each piece of information (such as KS2 performance, recent assessments and day-to-day performance) is left to the individual subjects making those setting decisions, those criteria should be documented by the subjects.

It is usual for set composition to be reviewed regularly, such as termly or half-yearly; subjects must have a system in place for reviewing set composition regularly. Where a student is clearly placed incorrectly, however, the decision to move this student should not wait for the start of a new term.

Mid-year starter students must be tested as soon as practically possible so that they can be assigned their appropriate set. On occasions and when available, reliable information from their

previous school can be used to support setting decisions. As far as possible, the size of the existing sets should not be a factor to deciding the set for a mid-year starter, but rather the most appropriate set for that student's ability. It is vital that such mid-year starters have their sets reviewed regularly, and at least termly, to ensure that they have been placed correctly.

### **Other grouping decisions**

When grouping students in mixed ability classes, subject areas are free to use the criteria most sensible in their area; however, those criteria should be documented by the subjects. The ability of the students clearly needs to be taken into account to ensure suitably stratified groups and other attributes such as gender, ethnicity and behaviour record can be used to stratify the groups.

It is usual for group composition to be reviewed regularly such as termly or half-yearly; subjects must have a system in place for reviewing set composition regularly. It would be highly unusual to move a student between mixed ability groups at any other time, other than in exceptional circumstances, such as at the request of their Year Leader for non-subject related issues.

Mid-year starter students do not need to be assessed in subjects that use mixed ability grouping. However, the group that they have been assigned to will also be reviewed, to ensure that they have been placed correctly and that they are making appropriate progress.

### **Communication with parents**

Whenever a subject makes a decision to move a student between groups in-year, this must be communicated to parents so that they are aware and so that the decision can be explained. Communication can be by telephone or in writing by the relevant Subject Leader or Key Stage Coordinator. Although this may seem inefficient, the more personal approach will usually result in a more favourable outcome. If parents have concerns about such group changes in these circumstances, such queries will be handled by the relevant Head of Department in the first instance and then the Deputy Headteacher (Curriculum), if required; they will review the information and decision making process, and communicate with parents.

When such movement happens at the end of the academic year as part of new grouping for the following year, then parents will be informed by a "setting letter" and this process is overseen by the Deputy Headteacher (Curriculum). If parents have concerns about such group changes in these circumstances, such queries will be handled by the relevant Head of Department in the first instance and then the Deputy Headteacher, if required; they will review the information and decision-making process and communicate with parents. Parents need to communicate their

query by the deadline stated in the setting letter so that the setting decision(s) can be reviewed by the end of term and communicated back to parents.