

Multi -Grade Classrooms

St. Patrick school is composed of multi -grade classrooms. While some may think this is undesirable for a child learning, but our school believes this to be an added benefit. See benefits below from <https://multigradeteacher.wordpress.com/why-multigrade/>

Benefits:

1. There are many, perhaps *more opportunities* for children to work and develop at their own level on a continuous basis.
2. Flexibility of *grouping is beyond the normal range* of ages and abilities and can benefit those children who are working below (or above) grade-level in certain skills.
3. Students are continuously exposed to **re-teaching**, as they listen in on, and benefit from, lessons being given to younger students. This review of the basics reinforces and *clarifies a child's understanding*, even when they may be working at a more advanced level.
4. Students are also exposed to **pre-teaching** (“eaves-dropping” on teacher’s lessons and discussions with older students). This both *prepares and stimulates* the younger child’s thinking.
5. Academic, physical and social *competition between peers is reduced*, as is the anxiety and pre-occupation of having to compete. Consequently, discipline measures are needed less frequently. The learning and social atmosphere is cooperative rather than competitive.
6. Pro-social behaviors and expectations are *modelled by the older students*. The teacher plays a key role (as all teachers do) in modelling and intentionally teaching these skills, but in a multi-grade classroom, many models are available for younger students.
7. Older students have opportunities to genuinely *help younger students learn*. Their teaching helps them clarify their own learning. The cognitive development and self-esteem of both younger and older students are improved. In single grade classrooms, this is experienced in “Buddy” activities, but in a multi-grade classroom, this is happening all the time.
8. Multi-grade classrooms are *less homogenous* than single-grade classrooms, therefore differences are the norm and more easily accepted.
9. All children are expected to *work independently at various times* during the day. They receive more intentional training to be independent workers. Off-task behaviors diminish as self-discipline and accountability increases.
10. Lengthier time with the same teacher can *increase trust, understanding of expectations, and positive relationships between teacher and students*, and teacher and parents. I also believe that children retain what they have learned better, because so many of their learning memories are attached to the same classroom and the same teacher. Or perhaps it is because we are more likely to refer to, and thus rehearse, our shared memories. An interesting area for research....
11. Teachers continue to build upon their *knowledge of each child's interests, strengths and needs* over the multiple years they teach a child. Sometimes it takes more than one school year to find out how a particular child learns best. Often, especially with high needs students, it takes more than one year for a teacher to see the results of his or her efforts; having the same child for a number of years allows us to reap – and enjoy – the fruit of our labor. Good for teacher morale; good for student success.
12. The *stability of having the same teacher* for more than one year can increase emotional security, especially for those students who receive less support from home, or whose home lives are unstable or in transition.
13. *Effective learning time* in the first term increases when children return to the same teacher in September.
14. Children who need a few more months to mature *have time to develop*; they continue with the same teacher, and carry on at their own level, despite a new grade designation.
15. Children who are academically advanced or lagging, can easily *take part in higher or lower level skills*, while maintaining interactions with peers.