



The Wilnecote School

Title of Policy:

The Wilnecote School – Setting Rationale

Member of leadership team with lead responsibility for oversight and update of policy	Mrs. J Marsland
Approved at SLT	February 2025
Policy approval at Governing Body	September 2026
Policy review cycle	Annually
Policy review date	September 2026



Setting Rationale 2026-27

At The Wilnecote School, our approach to student setting is designed to support high-quality teaching and learning, provide appropriate challenge, and ensure equity of opportunity for all students. Our model is underpinned by a commitment to academic excellence, while also taking into account individual progression and pastoral needs.

We operate a hybrid model of setting and mixed-ability teaching. This approach allows us to stretch and challenge one of our key focus groups, Higher Prior Attainers, while also providing targeted support for students who require additional help with reading and numeracy. At the same time, it enables all students to benefit from the inclusivity and breadth of mixed-ability teaching in certain subjects.

All setting decisions are made with the principle that no child should be limited in their potential. We aim to foster a culture in which every student is encouraged to be the best version of themselves and to aspire to achieve their highest possible outcomes. As such, we ensure that the setting model is flexible, with student progress carefully monitored to provide clear and accessible pathways for their progression.

General Principles

- Each year group is structured into two main bands: X and Y, with a clear focus on ensuring gender balance across these bands to allow for appropriate grouping in PE and to support broader curriculum needs.
- Across the bands students are initially grouped in classes (1–7), based on prior attainment and predicted outcomes in English, Maths, and Science. These groupings are reviewed annually to ensure they reflect students' most up-to-date performance data.
- Movement between bands will be overseen by the Quality of Education (QoE) Team on an individual basis, ensuring such changes are appropriate and in the best interest of student progress. Movement between groups within a band can be managed at the discretion of the Head of Department (HoD) for each core subject within the constraints. HoD must always act in the interest of the student's progress to ensure appropriate challenge is maintained.
- The Accelerator Group (typically Y1 and can be possibly Y2 in Science where Y1 is Triple) consists of students with the highest academic potential. Placement into this group is data-driven, informed by performance indicators in core subjects, and aims to offer a stretch and challenge curriculum to maximise progress and outcomes. Importantly, in all the core subjects there is flexibility within the model to accommodate students who show significant improvement and are ready to transition into the 'Accelerator' group, ensuring that potential is recognised and nurtured throughout a student's journey
- Each year group will also include a Aspire Group (Y4), consisting of students with the lowest prior attainment or predicted outcomes currently in English and Maths. These students will receive tailored support to help close attainment gaps and build foundational skills.
- Students identified in the 'Aspire Group' will need tailored support and "exit strategies" to ensure that students have clear pathways for progression.
- Setting decisions are never based on behaviour; they are solely determined through academic data and subject performance. However, pastoral teams and Academic Heads of Year will review groupings before they are finalised to ensure that safeguarding and pastoral considerations are factored into the structure.
- Whereby an individual teaching group is shared by two (or more) teachers, a lead teacher of the group must be identified by the HoD to ensure data input and Parental Communication Events (PCE) are



arranged accordingly. This Lead teacher will also ensure that student progress and appropriate challenge is promoted and maintained across the lessons and between teachers.

- Teaching groups are typically restricted to a maximum size of 30 students.
- When a student moves teaching groups due to academic reasons, the HoD is responsible for contacting parents, stating the reasons for the move. (Example Letter Below)
- When a student moves teaching groups due to pastoral/safeguarding reason, the pastoral member of staff linked to that year group is responsible for contacting parents, stating the reasons for the move. (Example Letter Below)
- Annual review and adjustments of groupings in place to reflect academic progress.

HoD have responsibility for the on-going data analysis and therefore checking and ensuring students are in the most appropriate sets to ensure progress.

HoD must ensure that staffing of all groups is equitable and ensures challenge and progress for all student groups.

Constraints of the Timetable

- All year groups will be divided into X and Y Band for Core Subjects and PE; and science from Year 8
- All other subjects at KS3 will be taught as the following mixed ability groups:

X- Band			Y-Band			
E	D	U	C	A	T	I

-
- Teaching groups are typically restricted to a maximum size of 30 students.
- Whilst academic performance and predictions are carefully considered when assigning sets, both pastoral and gender balance will also impact final groupings.
- Both classroom and teacher availability determine maximum number of groups in one department during any one lesson throughout the week.
- Some individual teaching groups are shared by two (or more) teachers due to teacher availability (teaching allocation, leadership allocation and/or part-time status). The number of split teaching groups will be kept to a minimum by HoD during timetabling.
- Year 7 English is taught as a ribbon (all 7 groups at the same time). Therefore Year 7 English cannot be blocked against English for a different year group.
- Movement between bands needs to be limited due to the wider impact on other subject areas, including Modern Foreign Languages, core subject settings, and the rotational structure of equipment-intensive subjects such as Science, Design Technology, and PE. Wherever possible, curriculum areas will aim to maintain parallel rotations between bands X and Y to support consistency and minimise disruption.
- KS3 Art, Design and Technology is blocked to allow clear, planned rotations of subjects.
- Setting at KS4 will be determined by those students who opt for Triple Science.
- Year 11 Core is blocked against Year 10 Options/PE



- Year 10 Core is blocked against Year 11 Options /PE
- Movement between bands will create issues with Languages, setting, and rotations so must be minimise and weighed against the best interests of the student.

Key Stage 3 (KS3)

- The setting structure in KS3 Core allows for academic focus while supporting flexibility.
- Despite there being fewer sets in the X band compared to the four in the y band, movement across bands should be reduced and rarely needed, as the spectrum of student ability is narrower in the X band due to the highest- and lowest-attaining students having been moved to the Y band. This means that, in theory, there is sufficient flexibility within the X band to accommodate any necessary upward or downward movement by a student.
- This allows for nuanced setting decisions and flexibility in movement within each teaching band.

Maths uses the following setting model:

	Y1
X1	
	Y2
X2	
	Y3
X3	
	Y4

Accelerator Group

Aspire Group

Set by ability – set 1 -7

English

- Year 7 will be delivered through a “Ribbon” model, which facilitates maximum fluidity and movement across groups to best support student development in literacy and early identification of the Fresh Start group.
- Year 8 and 9 will be delivered through the Banding model, which facilitates movement within each band to best support student development. Each year group will have an Accelerator Group (Y1) and an Aspire Group (Y4). Y2, Y3 and X1 – X3 are able to be mixed ability groups with the flexibility of creating a further accelerator group in X1 if cohort makeup is appropriate.



Science

- Year 7 Science will be a foundation year, following the mixed ability model (EDU, CATI).
- Year 8 and Year 9 will be follow the Y1 (Accelerator Group) – Y4 (Aspire Group) setting model.

Non- Core Subjects

- All other subjects outside of the core will follow a true mixed-ability model (EDU – X-Band and CATI – Y Band), promoting inclusivity and collaboration.
- As part of the Year 7 to Year 8 transition and Year 8 to Year 9 Transition, language option choices will also be considered when finalising groupings.

Key Stage 4 (KS4)

- At KS4, the principle of setting remains, with added curriculum-specific considerations:

Science

- Triple Science opter will form both Y1 and X1 groups:
 - Y1 = HPA (High Prior Attainment) and higher MPA (Middle Prior Attainment)
 - X1 = MPA and LPA (Low Prior Attainment)
- This ensures broad access to academic Science pathways while supporting appropriate levels of challenge.
- Science although governed by Triple Options, will also define groups Y2 – Y4 and X2 – X3. Providing an Accelerator Group (namely – Y2) of students who can access Higher Tier content but have not opted for Triple Science.
- English, Maths and Science departments retain the autonomy to define their internal groupings within bands, provided that both an Accelerator Group and a Aspire Group are in place to address the full spectrum of learner needs.

KS4 Options

- Whereby options have multiple groups taught within the same Option Block, the HoD must clearly define their setting rationale to ensure firstly, all students' needs are met and student outcomes are prioritised.

Suggested Group Sizes 2026/2027

Teaching groups will typically have no more than 30 students

Year 7 (NoR = 185)						
X1 (E)	X2 (D)	X3 (U)	Y1 (C)	Y2 (A)	Y3 (T)	Y4 (I)
28	28	28	28	28	28	17
Year 8 (NoR = 197)						
X1 (E)	X2 (D)	X3 (U)	Y1 (C)	Y2 (A)	Y3 (T)	Y4 (I)
30	30	30	30	30	30	17
Year 9 (NoR = 198)						
X1 (E)	X2 (D)	X3 (U)	Y1 (C)	Y2 (A)	Y3 (T)	Y4 (I)



30	30	30	30	30	30	18
Year 10 (NoR = 194)						
X1	X2	X3	Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4
30	30	30	30	30	28	16
Year 11 (NoR = 186)						
X1	X2	X3	Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4
28	28	28	28	28	28	18

Year Group Demographics

Year Group	Students	FSM	SEND E (EHCP)	SEND K (SEN Support)	Female	Male	EAL	LP A	MP A	HP A
Year 7	185	26.5%	5.4%	18.9%	51.4%	48.6%	5.9%			
Year 8	197	22.8%	4.1%	10.7%	52.8%	47.2%	5.6%			
Year 9	198	18.7%	2.5%	16.7%	46.5%	53.5%	5.6%			
Year 10	194	23.7%	3.1%	16.0%	45.9%	54.1%	8.2%			
Year 11	186	23.7%	2.7%	23.1%	60.8%	39.2%	8.1%			
Whole School	960	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—

*Figures correct at 10th September 2026

Target Setting Rationale

- At The Wilnecote School, we believe that no student should be left behind. All students deserve aspirational, yet fair targets that encourage strong academic achievement and personal growth.
- Target setting is underpinned by two key principles:



- FFT20 /50 benchmarking: Ensuring students are set aspirational targets.
- RADY strategies: Acknowledging and addressing the disadvantage gap by adjusting targets to promote equity, especially for Pupil Premium students. (From 2025, this uplift will apply only to new Year 7 cohorts and will continue into subsequent year groups as they progress. Setting allocations for Pupil Premium students in the 2025 Year 8 and Year 9 cohorts will be protected.)

General Principles

- FFT20/50 will serve as the primary benchmark for setting target grades at Key Stage 4, based on each student's Key Stage 2 (KS2) data.
- Subject-specific target calculations:
 - English: Based on KS2 Reading and Writing assessments.
 - Maths: Based solely on KS2 Maths assessment.
 - All other subjects: Based on the average of all available KS2 assessments.
- Where KS2 data is incomplete or unavailable, internal assessment data from CAT4 (GL Assessments) will be uploaded to FFT to ensure targets can still be generated. Where CAT 4 or GL assessments have not been completed due to time restrictions or late on rolling, HoDs will set up an appropriate target based on internal data and the student's context.
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Key Stage 3 (KS3) and Minimum Expected Grades (MEGs)

- Although FFT20 generates GCSE (KS4) target grades, these are used to calculate Minimum Expected Grades (MEGs) for internal tracking at KS3.
- MEGs are converted to a scaled score (0–100) to allow consistent internal assessment across subjects and year groups.
- A conversion table is used to map FFT20 GCSE grades to the internal scaled score system.

Scaled KS2 Score	KS3 Scaled Score	FFT 20 Avg GCSE
Less than	10	0
80	20	1
85	30	2
90	40	3
98	50	4
105	60	5



108	70	6
111	75	7
114	80	8
117	85	9

Raising Attainment in Disadvantaged Youngers (RADY) Principles

- Disadvantaged pupils typically begin secondary education with lower prior attainment than their peers. As a result, target grades are often set lower for these students, creating a target gap that mirrors and perpetuates the attainment gap.
- This target gap is not intentional, schools do not set out to disadvantage these pupils. However, when targets are based solely on prior attainment, the outcome is predictable: disadvantaged pupils are assigned lower expectations. And you can't close a gap by aiming to maintain one.

The RADY Approach

- RADY addresses this by ensuring that the average target grades set for disadvantaged students are equal to those of their peers. This means targets for disadvantaged pupils must be adjusted upwards, so their average matches that of non-disadvantaged pupils regardless of the starting point.
- In practice, this means:
 - Target Adjustment: Disadvantaged students' targets are increased to remove the built-in target gap.
 - Aspirational Targeting: Schools must adopt the principle that *equal targets lead to equal opportunity*. Disadvantaged pupils must be given targets that reflect the same level of aspiration as for others.

Implementation from September 2025

- Year 10 (Key Stage 4) – Pupil Premium Students:**
 - These students have already experienced two key stages with an existing gap.
 - Heads of Department will be asked to identify key students whose targets could realistically be increased by +1 grade.
 - These students known as “GAP Busters” must be positively discriminated in terms of grouping:
 - They should be placed in higher ability groups aligned with their adjusted Minimum Expected Grade (MEG).
- Year 7 and Year 8 – Pupil Premium Students:**



- From September 2025, all new Pupil Premium students in Years 7 and 8 will automatically receive increased FFT20 and this will change each year according to the cohort data.
- When applying setting principles, these students must also be positively discriminated into higher ability groups that reflect their adjusted MEG.

Appendix 1

Set Change Letter

The Wilnecote School

Tinkers Green Road, Wilnecote.

Tamworth

B77 5LF

[Date]

Dear Parent/Carer,

Re: Change of Set for [Student's Full Name] in [English/Maths/Science]

I am writing to inform you that [Student's First Name] has been moved from [previous group name, e.g. Set 2] to [new group name, e.g. Set 1] in [English/Maths/Science].

This decision has been made following careful consideration by the subject team/pastoral team and is based on the following reasons:

- [Reason #1, e.g. Progress and attainment in recent assessments]
- [Reason #2, e.g. Teacher feedback and classroom performance]
- [Reason #3, e.g. Better alignment to support individual needs]

We believe this change will provide [Student's First Name] with the most appropriate level of challenge and support to help them continue making good progress in the subject.

If you have any questions or would like to discuss this further, please do not hesitate to contact [Head of Department/Pastoral Leader] via [email/phone].

Thank you for your continued support.

Yours sincerely,

[Your Name]

Head of Department: English/Maths/Science : Academic Head of Year /Pastoral Leader Year 7/8/9/10/11
The Wilnecote School



Appendix 2

The Wilnecote School

Tinkers Green Road, Wilnecote.

Tamworth

B77 5LF

[Date]

Dear Parent/Carer,

Re: Change of Class for [Student's Full Name]

Following our recent conversation, I am writing to inform you that [Student's First Name] has been moved to a different class/group as part of our ongoing commitment to supporting student wellbeing and ensuring a positive school experience for all.

This change has been made following careful consideration by the pastoral team and is based on the following reasons:

- [Reason #1, e.g. To better support [Student's First Name]'s emotional wellbeing and social development]
- [Reason #2, e.g. To promote a more positive learning environment and peer dynamic]
- [Reason #3, e.g. To provide pastoral consistency and targeted support]

Please be assured that this decision was not made lightly, and we believe it is in the best interest of [Student's First Name] to help them feel settled, supported, and confident in school.

If you have any questions or would like to discuss this further, please do not hesitate to contact me via [email/phone].

Thank you for your continued support.

Yours sincerely,

[Your Name]

Academic Head of Year/Pastoral Leader

Year [7/8/9/10/11]

The Wilnecote School