

New National Curriculum 2014

The new National Curriculum 2014 Guide for parents

In 2013 the government announced plans to overhaul the [national curriculum](#). **For most children, these changes will take effect from September 2014, but children in Years 2 and 6 will follow the existing programmes of study until September 2015 in English, maths and science.** From September 2013, schools had the option of either continuing to teach the current curriculum or gradually transitioning to the new curriculum. Bishops Down staff are currently working on a new curriculum taking the best of what we already had whilst covering the programmes of study in the new National Curriculum.

Why the big curriculum change?

The main aim of the government is to raise standards, particularly as the UK is slipping down international student assessment league tables. Inspired by what is taught in the world's most successful school systems, including Hong Kong, Singapore and Finland, as well as in the best UK schools, it's designed to produce productive, creative and well educated students.

Although the new curriculum is intended to be more challenging, the content is actually slimmer than the current curriculum, focusing on essential core subject knowledge and skills such as essay writing and computer programming.

Will all primary schools follow the new curriculum from 2014?

No – academies and free schools are exempt. This is partly because these schools need more flexibility in what they teach (for example, in the case of faith schools that have a strong emphasis on religious education), but many critics think that the government is using the lure of not having to follow the national curriculum to encourage more schools to become academies. Academies and free schools do, however, still have to teach a balanced and broadly based curriculum that includes English, maths, science and RE.

Assessment

As part of the reforms to the national curriculum, the current system of “levels” used to report children's attainment and progress will be removed from September 2014. Levels are not being banned, but will not be updated to reflect the new national curriculum and will not be used to report the results of national curriculum tests. Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 tests taken in the 2014 to 2015 academic year will be against the previous national curriculum, and will continue to use levels for reporting purposes.

What are the main changes?

Subject	What's new?
English	<p>Stronger emphasis on vocabulary development, grammar, punctuation and spelling (for example, the use of commas and apostrophes will be taught in KS1)</p> <p>Handwriting – not currently assessed under the national curriculum – is expected to be fluent, legible and speedy</p> <p>Spoken English has a greater emphasis, with children to be taught debating and presenting skills</p>
Maths	<p>Five-year-olds will be expected to learn to count up to 100 (compared to 20 under the current curriculum) and learn number bonds to 20 (currently up to 10)</p> <p>Simple fractions (1/4 and 1/2) will be taught from KS1, and by the end of primary school, children should be able to convert decimal fractions to simple fractions (e.g. $0.375 = 3/8$)</p> <p>By the age of nine, children will be expected to know times tables up to 12x12 (currently 10x10 by the end of primary school)</p> <p>Calculators will not be introduced until near the end of KS2, to encourage mental arithmetic</p>
Science	<p>Strong focus on scientific knowledge and language, rather than understanding the nature and methods of science in abstract terms</p> <p>Evolution will be taught in primary schools for the first time</p> <p>Non-core subjects like caring for animals will be replaced by topics like the human circulatory system</p>
Design & technology	<p>Afforded greater importance under the new curriculum, setting children on the path to becoming the designers and engineers of the future</p> <p>More sophisticated use of design equipment such as electronics and robotics</p> <p>In KS2, children will learn about how key events and individuals in design and technology have shaped the world</p>
ICT	<p>Computing replaces Information and Communication Technology (ICT), with a greater focus on programming rather than on operating programs</p> <p>From age five, children will learn to write and test simple programs, and to organise, store and retrieve data</p> <p>From seven, they will be taught to understand computer networks, including the internet</p> <p>Internet safety – currently only taught from 11-16 – will be taught in primary schools</p>
Languages	<p>Currently not statutory, a modern foreign language or ancient language (Latin or Greek) will be mandatory in KS2</p> <p>Children will be expected to master basic grammar and accurate pronunciation and to converse, present, read and write in the language</p>