

1. Home (<https://www.gov.uk/>)
2. Childcare and parenting (<https://www.gov.uk/browse/childcare-parenting>)
3. Schools and education (<https://www.gov.uk/browse/childcare-parenting/schools-education>)

The national curriculum

1. Overview

The 'basic' school curriculum includes the 'national curriculum' (<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/national-curriculum>), as well as religious education and sex education (<https://www.gov.uk/national-curriculum/other-compulsory-subjects>).

The national curriculum is a set of subjects and standards used by primary and secondary schools (<https://www.gov.uk/types-of-school>) so children learn the same things. It covers what subjects are taught and the standards children should reach in each subject.

Other types of school (<https://www.gov.uk/types-of-school>) like academies (<https://www.gov.uk/types-of-school/academies>) and private schools (<https://www.gov.uk/types-of-school/private-schools>) do not have to follow the national curriculum. Academies must teach a broad and balanced curriculum including English, maths and science. They must also teach religious education.

Key stages

The national curriculum is organised into blocks of years called 'key stages' (KS). At the end of each key stage, the teacher will formally assess your child's performance.

Child's age	Year	Key stage	Assessment
3 to 4		Early years (https://www.gov.uk/early-years-foundation-stage)	
4 to 5	Reception	Early years (https://www.gov.uk/early-years-foundation-stage)	Teacher assessments (there's also an optional assessment at the start of the year)
5 to 6	Year 1	KS1	Phonics screening check
6 to 7	Year 2	KS1	National tests and teacher assessments in English, maths and science
7 to 8	Year 3	KS2	
8 to 9	Year 4	KS2	
9 to 10	Year 5	KS2	

Child's age	Year	Key stage	Assessment
10 to 11	Year 6	KS2	National tests and teacher assessments in English and maths, and teacher assessments in science
11 to 12	Year 7	KS3	
12 to 13	Year 8	KS3	
13 to 14	Year 9	KS3	
14 to 15	Year 10	KS4	Some children take GCSEs
15 to 16	Year 11	KS4	Most children take GCSEs or other national

Assessments

By the end of each summer term the school must write a report on your child's progress and talk it through with you.

2. Key stage 1 and 2

Compulsory national curriculum (<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/national-curriculum>) subjects at primary school are:

- English
- maths
- science
- design and technology
- history
- geography
- art and design
- music
- physical education (PE), including swimming
- computing
- ancient and modern foreign languages (at key stage 2)

Schools must provide religious education (RE) (<https://www.gov.uk/national-curriculum/other-compulsory-subjects>) but parents can ask for their children to be taken out of the whole lesson or part of it.

Schools often also teach:

- personal, social and health education (PSHE)

- citizenship
- modern foreign languages (at key stage 1)

Tests and assessments

Year 1 phonics screening check

The check will take place in June when your child will read 40 words out loud to a teacher. You'll find out how your child did, and their teacher will assess whether he or she needs extra help with reading. If your child does not do well enough in the check they'll have to do it again in Year 2.

Key stage 1

Key stage 1 tests cover:

- English reading
- English grammar, punctuation and spelling
- maths

Your child will take the tests in May. You can ask the school for the test results.

You'll be sent the results of your child's teacher assessments automatically.

Key stage 2

Your child will take national tests in May when they reach the end of key stage 2. These test your child's skills in:

- English reading
- English grammar, punctuation and spelling
- maths

The tests last less than 4 hours. You'll get the results in July.

The school will send you the results of your child's tests and teacher assessments.

3. Key stage 3 and 4

Key stage 3

Compulsory national curriculum (<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/national-curriculum>) subjects are:

- English
- maths
- science
- history
- geography
- modern foreign languages
- design and technology

- art and design
- music
- physical education
- citizenship
- computing

Schools must provide religious education (RE) and sex education (<https://www.gov.uk/national-curriculum/other-compulsory-subjects>) from key stage 3 but parents can ask for their children to be taken out of the whole lesson or part of it.

Key stage 4

During key stage 4 most pupils work towards national qualifications - usually GCSEs.

The compulsory national curriculum subjects are the 'core' and 'foundation' subjects.

Core subjects are:

- English
- maths
- science

Foundation subjects are:

- computing
- physical education
- citizenship

Schools must also offer at least one subject from each of these areas:

- arts
- design and technology
- humanities
- modern foreign languages

They must also provide religious education (RE) and sex education (<https://www.gov.uk/national-curriculum/other-compulsory-subjects>) at key stage 4.

English Baccalaureate (EBacc)

The EBacc is a way to measure how many pupils in a school choose to take a GCSE in these core subjects:

- English language and literature
- maths
- the sciences
- history or geography
- a language

Find out more about the EBacc (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/english-baccalaureate-ebacc>).

4. Other compulsory subjects

Children must also study:

- sex and relationships education (year 7 onwards)
- religious education (RE)

They may not have to take exams in these subjects.

Sex and relationship education

Sex and relationship education (SRE) is compulsory from age 11 onwards. It involves teaching children about reproduction, sexuality and sexual health. It does not promote early sexual activity or any particular sexual orientation.

Some parts of sex and relationship education are compulsory - these are part of the national curriculum for science. Parents can withdraw their children from all other parts of sex and relationship education if they want.

All schools must have a written policy on sex education, which they must make available to parents for free.

Religious education

Schools have to teach RE but parents can withdraw their children for all or part of the lessons. Pupils can choose to withdraw themselves once they're 18.

Local councils are responsible for deciding the RE syllabus, but faith schools (<https://www.gov.uk/types-of-school/faith-schools>) and academies (<https://www.gov.uk/types-of-school/academies>) can set their own.