

## **UK National Curriculum**

The National Curriculum applies to pupils of compulsory school age in community and foundation schools, including community special schools and foundation special schools, and voluntary aided and voluntary controlled schools. It is organised on the basis of four key stages.

Key stage 1: Ages 5-7 (Years 1-2)

Key stage 2: Ages 7-11 (Years 3-6)

Key stage 3: Ages 11-14 (Years 7-9)

Key stage 4: Ages 14-16 (Years 10-11).

At key stages 1 and 2 the statutory subjects that all pupils must study are art and design, design and technology, English, geography, history, information and communication technology, mathematics, music, physical education and science.

### **The structure of the National Curriculum**

For each subject and for each key stage, programmes of study set out what pupils should be taught, and attainment targets set out the expected standards of pupils' performance. It is for schools to choose how they organise their school curriculum to include the programmes of study.

### **Programmes of study**

The programmes of study (as defined by the Education Act 1996, section 353b) set out what pupils should be taught in each subject at each key stage, and provide the basis for planning schemes of work. When planning, schools should also consider the four general teaching requirements (use of language, use of ICT and health and safety and inclusion) that apply across the programmes of study.

### **Attainment targets and level descriptions**

An attainment target sets out the 'knowledge, skills and understanding which pupils of different abilities and maturities are expected to have by the end of each key stage' (Education Act, 1996, section 353a). Attainment targets consist of eight level descriptions of increasing difficulty, plus a description for exceptional performance above level 8. Each level description describes the types and range of performance that pupils working at that level should characteristically demonstrate.

The level descriptions provide the basis for making judgments about pupils' performance at the end of key stages 1, 2 and 3. At key stage 4, national qualifications are the main means of assessing attainment in National Curriculum subjects.

The majority of pupils are expected to work at:

- levels 1-3 in key stage 1 and attain level 2 at the end of the key stage
- levels 2-5 in key stage 2 and attain level 4 at the end of the key stage
- levels 3-7 in key stage 3 and attain level 5/6 at the end of the key stage.

### **Personal, social and health education and citizenship (PSHE)**

At key stages 1 and 2 there is a joint non-statutory framework for personal, social and health education and citizenship.

**For more information: <http://curriculum.qcda.gov.uk/key-stages-1-and-2>**