

CURRICULUM NEWS

New National Curriculum 2014

The national curriculum provides an outline of core knowledge around which teachers can develop exciting and stimulating lessons to promote the development of pupils' knowledge, understanding and skills as part of the wider school curriculum.

It is divided into key stages and subjects known as core or foundation. Core subjects include English, maths and Science. Foundation subjects are history, geography, art, DT, computing, music, PE and languages.

In the new national curriculum, introduced September 2014, there is a greater emphasis on:

English - speaking and listening leading to reading and writing; phonics: reading for pleasure; writing for purpose and an audience

Maths – when to and what maths to apply; reasoning and problem solving; longer time spent teaching concepts so there is greater depth to the learning and application

Science – moving from experience, observation, asking questions in KS1 to deeper understanding of scientific ideas, encountering more abstract ideas, predicting, and recognise change over time in KS2

For primary schools the biggest change is the introduction of **Computing** and the need to teach children from a very early age programming skills. At The Downs and Northbourne CEP schools we are well resourced for this area but will be spending time on ensuring teachers skills are up to date.

Other changes mean that some content from the old national curriculum is now being taught to the children at a younger age. Teachers have spent time in curriculum teams, and with other schools, comparing the differences in the curriculum so that we meet all statutory requirements.

Our aim as a Federation is still to give all our pupils the best possible education, to raise standards and improve learning for all our pupils regardless of ability, ethnicity, gender or disability.

We are also committed to developing the "whole child" and so our teaching and learning is underpinned by our curriculum and Christian values (www.downs.kent.sch.uk/parentzone/curriculum)

More detailed information about the National Curriculum 2014 can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-curriculum-in-england-framework-for-key-stages-1-to-4/the-national-curriculum-in-england-framework-for-key-stages-1-to-4>

ASSESSMENT NEWS

How is my child getting on at school?

The biggest change introduced with the primary national curriculum is the removal of levels. Until now parents have been informed on how well there is child is doing through the use of levels (i.e 2B is average for the end of year 2 and 4B is average for a child at the end of year 6).

However, how we share information with you about your child's learning will not change although we will no longer talk about levels.

At parent consultations we will still be sharing with you what areas of the curriculum your child is doing well in, what areas of the curriculum needs support and we will still talk with you about how we are supporting them to achieve well and how you can also help at home.

Parent consultations happen twice a year but teachers are happy to discuss how your child is progressing at other times too. If you have any concerns or want to know what more you can do to support home learning then make an appointment with the class teacher through the home school contact book.

The mid-year and end of year report will still state whether your child is working below expectation (3), working in line with expectation (2) or above expectation (1) according to their year group and national expectation for that year group.

Teachers are planning from the new national curriculum and assess the children's progress every day against what the learning objectives for each lesson are. They use this assessment to identify children's strengths and areas for development, they identify the next step in learning and any strategies that may be needed to modify lessons. Children are regularly involved in this process as they identify how successful they have been in achieving the objectives of the lesson and can plan their own next steps.

In order to consolidate children's understanding of how well they are doing we are introducing termly pupil time. One week, towards the end of each term, children will have the opportunity to work with the teacher 1:1 or in small groups to review their learning; celebrate their successes and identify their next steps. As we go through the year we anticipate that not only will you be having conversations with class teachers about how well your child is doing but with your child as well.

Year 2 and Year 6 will still have tests set by the Department for Education (DFE) and moderated externally. For 2015 Year 2 and Year 6 will undertake the old SATS tests and will be awarded a level (just to confuse matters). In 2016 there will be new tests but it is unclear yet how these will be marked and reported but it seems as if they will use a standardised score. More information will follow when we have the details from the DFE.

As with the curriculum, our assessment is used to help develop the "whole child" and so our assessment is underpinned by our curriculum and Christian values and will also consider the progress children are making socially, emotionally and behaviourally and we will celebrate children's successes in non-academic subjects such as sport, art and music.

Further information about our principles of assessment can be found at www.downs.kent.sch.uk/parentzone/curriculum