

The National Curriculum

A Guide for Parents

This guide is intended to support parents of primary school children. Obviously it would be impossible to set out in detail everything your child would learn during their six years of statutory primary education, but by providing an outline of typical content and some background information about how the curriculum and assessment works, hopefully it will help parents support their children in making the most of their education.

Core Subjects

English, Maths and Science remain very important and are considered the core subjects in both primary and secondary education. The National Curriculum sets out in some detail what must be taught in each of these subjects, and they will take up a substantial part of your child's learning week. Alongside these are the familiar foundation subjects: Art, Computing, Design & Technology, Foreign Languages (age 7+ only), Geography, History, Music, and Physical Education. For these foundation subjects, the details in the curriculum are significantly briefer: schools have much more flexibility regarding what they cover in these subjects.

More Able

If your child is achieving well, rather than moving on to the following year group's work many schools will encourage more in-depth and investigative work to allow a greater mastery and understanding of concepts and ideas.

The National Curriculum-English in Year 2

As children move through Key Stage 1, the curriculum intends that almost all children will secure the basic skills of decoding so that they can become fluent readers. As their reading confidence grows they can begin to write their own ideas down.

Decoding is the ability to read words aloud by identifying the letter patterns and matching them to sounds. Once children are able to 'decode' the writing, they can then start to make sense of the words and sentences in context. Watch out for hard-to-decode words such as 'one' and 'the'. These just have to be learned by heart and are known as 'tricky' words.

Speaking and Listening

The Spoken Language objectives are set out for the whole of primary school, and teachers will cover many of them every year as children's spoken language skills develop. In Year 2 some focuses may include:

- Articulate and justify answers and opinions
- Give well-structured explanations and narratives, for example in show-and-tell activities

Reading Skills

- Read words aloud confidently, without obvious blending or rehearsal
- Learn letter patterns so that decoding becomes fluent and secure by the end of Year 2
- Blend letter sounds, including alternative patterns, e.g. recognising 'ue' as the 'oo' sound
- Read aloud words which contain more than one syllable
- Recognise common suffixes, such as -ing and -less
- Read words which don't follow phonetic patterns, such as 'one' and 'who'
- Become familiar with a wide range of fairy stories and traditional tales
- Discuss favourite words and the meaning of new words
- Check that what has been read makes sense, and self-correct reading where necessary
- Make predictions about what might happen next in a story
- Continue to build up a repertoire of poems learnt by heart, appreciating these and reciting some, with appropriate intonation to make the meaning clear

Writing Skills

- Form letters of the appropriate size, using capital letters where appropriate
- Use appropriate spaces between words when writing
- Begin to use joins between letters where needed
- Spell longer words by breaking them into their sound parts
- Learn to spell some common homophones, recognising the difference between them
- Use the possessive apostrophe in simple phrases, such as 'the boy's football'.
- add suffixes to spell longer words, including -ment, -ness, -ful, -less, -ly
- Write about real events and personal experiences
- Plan out writing in advance, including by writing down key words
- Re-read writing to check that it makes sense and to make corrections, including punctuation
- Use question marks, exclamation marks, apostrophes and commas in lists
- Use the present and past tenses correctly in writing
- Begin to write longer sentences by using conjunctions, such as 'and', 'but', 'if' or 'because'

Homophones are words which sound the same, such as 'blue' and 'blew', or 'one' and 'won'

The National Curriculum - Mathematics in Year 2

During Key Stage 1, there is a big focus on developing basic number skills. That means securing a good understanding of place value, and recognising number bonds to 20. Practising these skills frequently will help children's mathematical thinking throughout school.

Number bonds are essential to the understanding of maths. Children in Year 2 learn their number bonds to 20, that is being able to quickly recall the total of any two numbers up to 20, e.g. $5 + 9 = 14$, rather than having to count on to find the answer.

Number and Place Value

- Recognise place value in two-digit numbers, e.g. knowing that the 1 in 17 represents 10
- Read and write numbers up to 100 as words
- Count in 2s, 3s and 5s
- Compare and order numbers up to 100
- Use the < and > symbols to represent the relative size of numbers

Calculations

- Recall number bonds up to 20 fluently
- Add and subtract numbers mentally and using objects, including two-digit numbers
- Show that adding two numbers can be done in any order, but subtracting cannot
- Recognise that addition and subtraction are inverse operations
- Learn the multiplication and division facts for the 2x, 5x and 10x tables
- Show that multiplying two numbers can be done in any order, but dividing cannot
- Solve problems using the x and ÷ symbols

Fractions

- Find $\frac{1}{3}$, $\frac{1}{4}$, $\frac{2}{4}$ and $\frac{3}{4}$ of an object or set of objects or quantity
- Find the answer to simple fraction problems, such as finding $\frac{1}{2}$ of 6 and recognise the equivalence of $\frac{2}{4}$ and $\frac{1}{2}$

Measurements

- Use standard units to measure length (centimetres and metres), mass (grams and kilograms), temperature (degrees Celsius) and capacity (millilitres and litres)
- Use the £ and p symbols for money amounts
- Combine numbers of coins to make a given value, for example to make 62 pence
- Tell the time to the nearest five minutes on an analogue clock
- Know the number of minutes in an hour and hours in a day

Shape

- Identify and describe the properties of 2D shapes, including the number of sides and a line of symmetry.
- Identify the number of faces, edges and vertices on 3-d shapes
- Use mathematical language to describe position and direction line and distinguishing between rotation as a turn and in terms of right angles for quarter, half and three-quarter turns (clockwise and anti-clockwise).

Statistics

- Construct and understand simple graphs such as bar charts and pictograms

Parent Tip

Parents can always take a lead role in practical maths. Encouraging your child to help with the purchasing of small items at the newsagent, or measuring themselves and others, is a great way to start exploring number relationships.

The National Curriculum – Science in Year 2

In the first years of schooling, much of the science curriculum is based around real-life experiences for children. This includes everyday plants and animals, as well as finding out about different materials and the four seasons. There are likely to be lots of opportunities for exploring scientific ideas both in the classroom and the local surroundings.

Scientific Investigation

Children are encouraged to carry out their own observations and experiments to further their scientific understanding. In Year 2 this may include learning to:

- Use scientific apparatus to make observations, such as magnifying glasses
- Collect information about what they have seen
- Make links between observations and their scientific understanding

Living Things and their Habitats

- Compare the difference between things which are alive, which are dead, and which have never been alive
- Understand that different animals are suited to different habitats
- Identify some plants and animals in different habitats
- Describe how animals feed on other plants or animals

Habitats are simply the different types of places living things are found. This can range from the vast, such as oceans and rainforests, through to local features such as rock pools, or to the small, such as under a single log.

Plants

- Describe how seeds or bulbs grow into plants
- Understand that plants need water, light and a suitable temperature to grow and stay healthy.

Animals including Humans

- Notice that all animals have offspring which grow into adults, including humans
- Know about the basic survival needs of animals, such as food, water and air
- Describe the importance of exercise, healthy diet and hygiene to humans

Everyday Materials

- Identify and compare the uses of different materials including wood, metal, plastic, glass, brick, rock, paper and cardboard
- Find out how some solid objects can be changed by squashing, bending or stretching

Parent Tip

Growing your own plants or flowers at home can be an exciting - if slow - process for children to take part in. Why not try some quick-growing seeds such as cress or mustard, as well as something more substantial planted in the garden, and watch how the processes of growth are similar for all plants? At certain times of year you may also be lucky enough to witness some of the growth cycle in animals, such as tadpoles in a pond, or lambing season at the local farm.

The Foundation Subjects

At primary school, English, Maths and Science are the core subjects which make up the bulk of the timetable. That said, the other foundation subjects play a key part in providing a broad and balanced curriculum. All eight of these subjects are a compulsory part of the National Curriculum. In addition, all schools are required to include some Religious Education in their broader curriculum, although the content of this is agreed locally.

Here is a very brief outline of what will be covered in the foundation subjects during primary school:

Art

Schools will be largely free to design their own curriculum in Art, while providing a broad experience for their students. Children will explore a range of different techniques such as drawing, painting and sculpture, and will use a variety of materials, from pencil and paint to charcoal and clay, to create their own art pieces. In addition, during both Key Stages, children will study the works of some great artists, architects and designers from history.

Computing

There are three main strands of the Computing curriculum: information technology, digital literacy and computer science.

Information technology is about the use of computers for functional purposes, such as collecting and presenting information, or using search technology. Digital literacy is about the safe and responsible use of technology, including recognising its advantages for collaboration or communication. Finally, computer science will introduce children of all ages to understanding how computers and networks work. It will also give all children the opportunity to learn basic computer programming, from simple floor robots in Years 1 and 2, right up to creating on-screen computer games and programmes by Year 6. Many schools will use programming software which is freely available online, such as Scratch or Kodu.

All schools will also include regular teaching of e-safety to ensure that children feel confident when using computers and the Internet, and know what to do if they come across something either inappropriate or uncomfortable. We will also invite parents to work with them on this aspect of the curriculum.

Design and Technology

This subject includes cooking, which will be taught in all primary schools from 2014, with children finding out about a healthy diet and preparing simple meals. It also includes the more traditional design elements in which children will design, make and evaluate products while learning to use a range of tools and techniques for construction. There may also be some cross-over with Science here as children incorporate levers, pulleys or electrical circuits into their designs for finished products.

Geography

Across primary school, children will find out about different places in the UK, Europe and the Americas through studying small regions in each, and comparing these to other areas, including their own locality.

In Key Stage 1, children will learn the names of the continents and oceans as well as the names of the four home nations and their respective capital cities. They will use the four main compass directions and simple maps and photographs to explore the local area.

History

In Key Stage 1, the focus of history is very much on locally significant events or events within their own memories, as well as key events of great significance such as Bonfire Night. In addition, children will find out about important historical people and events, such as Florence Nightingale or The Great Fire of London.

Music

Over the course of primary school, children will listen and perform a range of music. In the first years of schooling this will often include singing songs and rhymes and playing untuned instruments such as tambourines and rainmaker sticks.

Physical Education

Physical Education lessons will continue to include a range of individual disciplines such as dance and athletics, with team sports and games. Through these sports, children should learn the skills of both cooperation and competition.

Religious Education

At Wembrook we aim to enable pupils to:-

Express their feelings about significant personal events and relationships;

Develop a sense of awe and wonder in response to the natural world;

Develop awareness of the spiritual and moral aspects of life experiences;

Reflect upon questions and issues related to life experiences and respond to them in a variety of ways;

Develop an understanding of what it might mean to be committed to a religious tradition;

Reflect on their own experiences, beliefs and values and develop personal responses to ultimate questions in the light of their work;

Have confidence in their views and understand that people have different needs, views, cultures and beliefs, that need to be treated with respect;

The starting point for each topic will usually be from aspect one building upon pupils own experiences of the natural world and human relationships developing to include specific religious content.

Key Stage One children will study Christianity, Islam and Sikhism in depth and encounter the other religious traditions on at least one occasion.

These were chosen by the population represented in the local community and in line with guidance given in the Warwickshire Agreed Syllabus. They will be reviewed as necessary. Over each Key Stage children will have opportunities to revisit areas of study.