



New Curriculum

Frequently Asked Questions

This document contains answers to the questions that were posed at the Curriculum Information Evenings held earlier this term.

Curriculum Questions & Answers

Will the new curriculum remain in place for a certain amount of time or could it be changed again?

The programmes of study are a key part of this government's plan for education and long-term economic objective.

The new curriculum embodies high expectations and is designed to raise standards for children aged 5 to 16, especially the poorest. It provides a broad and balanced education ensuring all pupils gain core knowledge across a range of key subjects so that they get the best start in life.

With a strong focus on getting the basic skills right in primary school, it has been deliberately designed to ensure England has the most productive, most creative and best educated young people of any nation. It ensures a population with the knowledge and skills not just to secure good-quality employment and success in life, but also to help us compete and win in the global race.

The curriculum may change but we are at the mercy of the government so we shall have to watch this space.

If schools are allowed to choose how they are teaching, will this not have an impact on the children or their development into senior school?

Who chooses what is taught in each stage?

Can we have more clarity and information about what the children learn so that parents can go through it at home?

The new curriculum begins in schools from September 2014 and the requirements for each year group are planned carefully to ensure consistency, breadth and balance. Clarity and information about what objectives are being covered in each year group at NMR can be found on the school website at www.ninemileride.wokingham.sch.uk under 'Curriculum'. Teachers have always been given the autonomy on how to deliver and teach the objectives. This may mean that teachers in the same year group are teaching different topics.

Are there any study guides available to buy which will cover the new curriculum?

The internet has lots of sites which give further information about the new curriculum and if you look at the school website www.ninemileride.wokingham.sch.uk under curriculum, there is a parent guide and also information for each year group. You can also download a copy of the new national curriculum from <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-curriculum-in-england-primary-curriculum>

Companies like 'Scholastic' and 'CGP' are starting to put together programmes of study and these can be found on the internet.

How is going to work when two years are together i.e. years 3 and 4 when the targets are different in each year

The curriculum has been planned and learning objectives are clear for both year groups. There will be some overlap with some objectives, for example in science.

'ask relevant questions and using different types of scientific enquiries to answer them'

and

'set up simple practical enquiries, comparative and fair tests'

Examples of both years 3 and 4 science objectives taken from the new curriculum.

Where this is the case, the linked objectives from both stages will be used to inform planning. This will ensure that all gaps in learning are addressed and a coherent progression of learning is maintained for all children. There will be specific objectives that will be planned for separately to ensure appropriate curriculum coverage. Further details of what is taught in both year groups can be found on the school website.

Are other local schools giving Y6 a year's grace and how will NMR Y6's transition into secondary school?

The new curriculum begins in **all** schools from September 2014. However, for children in all Year 2 and Year 6 classes in England, the new curriculum won't become statutory until 2015. This is because these children are in the last year of the Key Stages. At this age, children are formally assessed to judge their progress against the requirements of the curriculum. Because the 2014 curriculum will only have been in place for nine months, these children will be assessed against the requirements of the old curriculum in the National Curriculum Tests. New tests will be produced for the summer of 2016 to assess work from the new curriculum.

Is the secondary curriculum changing?

Whilst much of the media coverage about the new curriculum has focused on primary education, secondary school pupils will also face more rigorous lessons come September 2014.

The secondary curriculum changes have been described by the Department of Education as 'more precise and challenging'. Changes include learning several computer programming languages and more depth in the sciences.

What does 'Planning with fewer restrictions' actually mean?

The content is actually slimmer than the old curriculum, focusing on essential core subject knowledge and skills such as essay writing and computer programming. This means that in many foundation subjects (art, PE, PHSE etc.) there are fewer objectives to cover over the year.

If all children are grouped and study the same in order to keep children together, wont the more able children get bored and how will they be kept motivated?

"The expectation is that the majority of pupils will move through the programmes of study at broadly the same pace...Pupils who grasp concepts rapidly should be challenged through being offered rich and sophisticated problems before any acceleration through new content. Those who are not sufficiently fluent with earlier material should consolidate their understanding, including through additional practice, before moving on."-National Curriculum 2014

Teachers will use assessment information, skill and knowledge to plan lessons which include challenge and extension activities to extend learning in a fun and challenging way so that pupils stay motivated.

Levels v Stages-What will be done to avoid bending current system/culture to meet the new system? One diagram clearly showed levels 1-24.

Levels do not work with the new curriculum and will not be used at all from September 2015. The numbers that were shown on a slide at the presentation referred to average point scores (APS) and not levels. APS are used by the school to measure progress.

How can we as parents be better equipped to support our children? Can we send lots of sample work home

Glossaries and word lists can be found on the school website so that you can access from home. The school is also looking into reporting progress in a different format so that gaps in learning are shared with you termly and the information that you get is cumulative over the year.

Are there stages in each core area?

Yes for core subject (reading, writing, maths and science).

No, for Foundation subjects. Objectives are referred to as lower key stage and upper key stage. Schools must map out the expectations for each year group. NMR has done this and the information can be found on the school website under 'Curriculum'.

Will lessons change from class to class?

Is it the teacher's prerogative?

The key objectives are set out for all year groups and must be covered by the end of the year but how they are delivered is up to the individual teacher. Assessment information and the needs of the children will be taken into account when planning topics and lessons.

How much support needs to be given at home?

Can the school provide support materials?

The school would appreciate as much support from home as possible. Spellings, times tables, reading and homework tasks will all help to support learning. The school will also begin sending home . / x sheets for writing and maths termly so that you are very clear on next steps in learning. The school is also looking at ways to improve the support materials that can be used at home.

Can you be held back a stage?

A child can be working on objectives from the previous stage if this is appropriate to the learning needs. Interventions and extra support will be planned to try and fill the gaps so that the child can move onto the appropriate stage as soon as possible. A child will always be kept in the appropriate year group (unless there are exceptional circumstances) but the work will be differentiated.

How will you ensure that individual needs are met within a class environment?

The needs of all children will be met through high quality teaching, careful planning, and assessment.

Can school provide code-breakers for grammar definitions?

Yes, the school has uploaded Department for Education glossaries and word lists to the school website.

What happens if a child gets to Y4 and is only Y2 ready?

If a child is not the appropriate stage emerging, the teacher will use previous stage objectives from the previous year to set targets. There may be some children who need individualised programmes of study because of their individual needs and they shall be planned for on an individual basis. Careful tracking of assessment data will clearly highlight gaps in learning for all children. A child who is not working at the appropriate stage will be given specific interventions to try and narrow the gap. Regular reviews will take place within school between teacher and Inclusion Manager to analyse the effectiveness of the intervention and it may mean that new interventions are put in place as a result.

During investigation maths how is every child catered for if they find maths difficult and they are not vocal. How are they included?

Maths investigations can be paired, individual or group tasks, and may switch between different approaches within the same lesson if appropriate. Children work in mixed ability pairs or groups which allow less confident children to hear use of mathematical language and see the approach of the more confident. All children are carefully monitored by the class teacher, and grouping/support adapted where necessary to ensure that all benefit for the session. We often find that children who struggle with one area of maths (e.g. calculations) will have strengths in other areas (e.g. shape) which they will be able to demonstrate in investigations. This builds their confidence and challenges their perception that they will always find maths difficult.

At the meeting it was stated that there will be a presumption that some of the basic words will be known by the children and that the list of words to learn will not include these. However, it was reiterated several times that the new curriculum is aimed at giving breadth of knowledge with an aim of keeping children working towards the same level of academic achievement. However, if children are not taught the basics/or do not know the basics (i.e. should and could). How will the school ensure that a child has the opportunity to learn these so that a child does not have knowledge gaps?

The next couple of years will be a transition time for all schools. As a result, schools will need to plan lessons which cover the basics as well as offer breadth and knowledge of the new curriculum. Schools will appreciate the support of parents to help children learn their spellings, homework, reading and times tables at home.

It is my understanding that the school has decided that at the start of each year children will be at an emerging level, and it is the aim to have the child next level ready by the end of the school year. If a child is still at emerging level by the end of the school year will they be kept at this level? If not how will the school ensure that each child does not have a knowledge/skills gap, without expecting the child to do increased home study?

All children are assessed on entry and this gives the school a baseline for every child. The baselines may all be different so some children may begin the year on emerging and some on developing. The Assertive Mentoring system allows us to plan and teach to the gaps. The next couple of years will be a transition time for us all and we shall make sure that the children are taught what they need in order to make progress. This may mean filling knowledge gaps before a child can move onto the next stage.

How will children who are slow achievers or fast achievers be challenged so that they are not put off school and learning?

This will be down to careful mapping of curriculum objectives, assessment data that clearly identifies gaps in learning and informs planning. It will also be down to the teacher to deliver lessons that offer challenge for all abilities and that capture the imagination of all children and keep them focused and motivated. Interventions will also be planned and delivered for children that are identified as needing support/challenge.

The presentation referenced other 'countries' several times – which countries? And where is the evidence to say they are achieving more than our children? How was this data collated and by whom? Please can you provide full reference for the research that is being used to back the new curriculum –

The curriculum combines the best elements of the world's most successful school systems, including Hong Kong, Massachusetts, Singapore and Finland, with some of the most impressive practice from schools in England. The action research was carried out by the Department for Education. White paper 2010
https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/175429/CM-7980.pdf

Education Minister Nick Gibb reported:

"This September sees some changes in schools. To make sure that many more children get a better start in life, we're improving what children study, how they study it and how their progress is assessed. It's a lot of change, but it's necessary. Why? So that this country keeps up with the demand from universities and employers for top-class knowledge and skills."

The idea is for children to "go further...at an earlier age" and expectations are considerably higher for any given year group.

Languages are supposed to be integral to the new curriculum from the age of 7 – how is Nine Mile Ride going to teach a second language (I realise that this will not happen for the current year twos)

At NMR we have been teaching a foreign language to KS2 children for over 10 years so this new expectation will not require any changes. We will continue to teach French to all KS2 classes. The children in Year 3 and 4 are grouped for French to cater for their different levels of experience of the language.

My understanding IT will also be integral so how will IT be included and what aspects of IT will be taught?

Until now, children have been taught ICT in schools, which has basically showed them how to use technology. Under the new curriculum, there'll be a much greater emphasis on learning about computers and teaching children how to use code.

Children as young as five will get practical experience of designing and writing computer programmes so that they understand the basic principles of computer science.

Not everything will change; children will still learn how to use email, for example, but now they'll be taught how networks like the Internet actually work too. From seven, they will be taught to understand computer networks, including the internet. Please follow the link for more information.
<http://www.theschoolrun.com/primary-school-coding-explained-for-parents>

Why is Grammar Hammer not sent home?

At this point in the term, there is a great deal of new teaching that needs to take place in school first. Once this has happened, we may take the decision to send home Grammar Hammer.

Why is Big Maths not sent home in every year group?

Big Maths will now be sent home every week for every year group that participates. This is not part of the weekly homework but can be used to as to help children work through their mistakes.

Will number lines still be used and will Big Write still take every other week?

The answer to both questions is yes.