

From this September 2014 the Primary School Curriculum has had a radical shake up. So what are the big changes and how will they affect your child?

In 2013 the Government announced plans to overhaul the National Curriculum and these changes take effect from the 1st September 2014.

For most children these changes will take effect immediately but children in Years 2 and 6 will still follow the existing programmes of study until September 2015 in Maths, English and Science.

Why the big curriculum change?

The main aim is to raise standards, particularly as the UK is slipping down the international student assessment league tables. Inspired by what is taught in the world's most successful school systems, including Hong Kong, Singapore and Finland, as well as in the best UK schools, it's designed to produce productive, creative and well educated students.

Although the new curriculum is intended to be more challenging, the content is actually slimmer than the previous curriculum, focusing on essential core subject knowledge such as computer programming.

What are the main changes?

The table below summaries the main changes in the core subjects covered by the National Curriculum.

Subject	What's New?
English	<p>Stronger emphasis on vocabulary development, grammar, punctuation and spelling (e.g. the use of commas and apostrophes will be taught in KS1)</p> <p>Handwriting—not currently assessed under the national curriculum—is now expected to be fluent, legible and speedy</p> <p>Spoken English has a greater emphasis, with children to be taught debating and presenting skills.</p>
Maths	<p>Five year olds will be expected to learn to count to 100 (compared to 20 under the previous curriculum) and learn number bonds to 20 (previously up to 10)</p> <p>Simple fractions (1/4 and 1/2) will be taught from KS1, and by the end of primary school children should be able to convert decimal fractions to simple fraction (e.g. $0.375 = \frac{3}{8}$)</p> <p>By the age of nine, children will be expected to know times tables up to 12x12 (previously 10x10 by the end of primary school).</p> <p>Calculators will not be introduced until near the end of KS2 to encourage mental arithmetic.</p>
Science	<p>Strong focus on scientific knowledge and language, rather than understanding the nature and methods of science in abstract terms.</p> <p>Evolution will be taught in primary schools for the first time. Non-core subjects like caring for animals will be replaced by topics like the human circulatory system.</p>
Design & Technology	<p>Afforded greater importance under the new curriculum, setting the children on the path to becoming the designers and engineers of the future.</p> <p>More sophisticated use of design equipment such as electronics and robotics.</p> <p>In KS2 the children will learn about how key events and individuals in design and technology have shaped the world.</p>
ICT	<p>Computing replaces Information and Communication Technology (ICT), with a greater focus on programming rather than on operating programs.</p> <p>From age 5 the children will learn to write and test simple programs and to organise, store and retrieve data</p> <p>From 7 they will be taught to understand computer networks including the internet.</p> <p>Internet safety—previously taught from 11-16 will now be taught in primary schools.</p>
Languages	<p>Previously not statutory, a Modern Foreign Language or Ancient Language (Latin or Greek) will be mandatory in KS2.</p> <p>Children will be expected to master basic grammar and accurate pronunciation and to converse, present, read and write in the language. At Seabrook the children will continue to learn French</p>