

- ✓ Understanding Key Stage 1
- ✓ National Curriculum tests and tasks
- ✓ Helping your child

**PARENT  
KNOW  
HOW**

What your child is

**learning**

at school

**5-7**

department for  
education and skills

# AT A GLANCE



## Understanding Key Stage 1 (ages 5–7)

- All children in state schools follow the National Curriculum, which sets out the subjects and skills they have the right to learn. There are four key stages, and children aged between five and seven are at Key Stage 1.
- Your child will study 11 core subjects. Your child's teacher will continually monitor your child's progress so that you will know how well they are doing.
- By the end of Key Stage 1, your child will also take National Curriculum tests and tasks in reading, writing and maths.
- National Curriculum tests are not 'pass' or 'fail' tests. They are used to check your child's progress and inform the teacher's assessment of your child. Your child's future learning will be based on the teacher's overall judgement.
- You can play an important part in your child's success at Key Stage 1 by taking an active part in their education and giving them support and encouragement.

### Did you know?

**The National Curriculum tests that your child will take at the age of seven are also called 'key stage tests' and are commonly known as 'SATs'.**

# Making sense of Key Stage 1

The early years in primary school are the foundation of your child's education. When your child enters Year 1, at about five-years-old, your child will come into contact with the National Curriculum for the first time. From then, until the age of seven, they will follow Key Stage 1 of the National Curriculum.

This booklet explains what you can expect your child to be taught and how they will be assessed at Key Stage 1. You will find information on:

- subjects your child will study
- National Curriculum tests and tasks
- practical tips for supporting your child with their schoolwork.

## The National Curriculum

The National Curriculum allows all children to be educated in a way that is balanced and challenging. It lists the subjects and skills that every child has a right to learn and enables teachers to measure how well children are doing, so that they can help them do better. There are four key stages in the National Curriculum. Your child is now starting the first key stage. They will finish the final stage at the age of 16.

## What subjects will your child study?

Because the early years of education will shape how your child learns in the future, the National Curriculum allows your child the opportunity to strengthen their skills and knowledge in a wide range of subjects. Not only does this tap into children's natural curiosity about the world they live in, it also makes sure they are ready to move on to Key Stage 2 at around the age of seven. During Key Stage 1, your child's school must teach your child the following subjects:

- English
- Geography
- Maths
- Art and design
- Science
- Music
- Design and technology (DT)
- Information and communication technology (ICT)
- History
- Physical education (PE)
- Religious education (RE)

## Measuring your child's progress

You might have heard teachers talk about learning 'levels', which measure how far your child is progressing. There are eight levels in the National Curriculum – Level 1 is

the lowest and Level 8 the highest. By the end of Key Stage 1, most children reach Level 2.

How do you know what level your child is at?

- During Key Stage 1, your child's teacher will continually monitor your child's progress so that you will know how well they are doing.
- Although Key Stage 1 assessment is mainly based on teacher assessment, your child will take tests and tasks in English and maths. These will be the first National Curriculum tests your child will take.
- Your child's teacher marks the test and combines the result with their assessment of your child. They will send you a report to tell you what level your child is at in speaking and listening, reading, writing, maths and science.
- You will be able to see how your child is doing in comparison to other children at the same stage across England. The report that you receive from your child's teacher will include a summary of the teacher assessment results for all the children in your child's age group in the school and the previous year's national results.

### Remember...

**... not all children develop at the same rate. If your child is at a lower level than other children, it doesn't mean they have failed.**

# Your questions about National Curriculum tests and tasks

## Why do children have to do tests and tasks?

Tests and tasks give an overview of how the National Curriculum is being delivered across the country. The tests and tasks are designed to cover work that your child has learnt over previous years and will help the teacher make their assessment. It will also provide a good basis for planning future learning. All children in state schools who have reached the end of Key Stage 1 have to take the tests and tasks.

**'Tasks' are like mini projects that children do at this stage of their learning.**

## What if I don't want my child to take part?

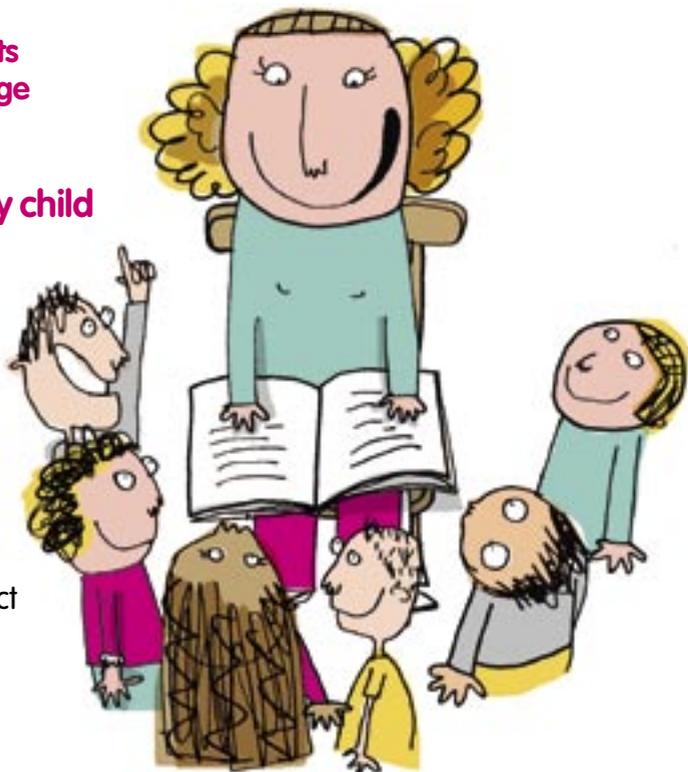
State schools must make sure their pupils who are ready to take part are entered for the National Curriculum tests and tasks, so your child will not be able to 'opt out'. If your child is at an independent school, then you can contact the school to see if they are taking part in National Curriculum tests.

## When do the tests and tasks take place?

During the final year of Key Stage 1, when your child is around the age of seven – children can take the tests at any time. The teacher will decide which tests and tasks your child should take.

### Your child can't fail

National Curriculum tests are not 'pass' or 'fail' tests. They are used to check your child's progress in school and to plan the next stage of their learning.



## What do tests and tasks involve?

Your child won't be tested on anything that isn't in the National Curriculum. Most tests and tasks will take place as part of normal classroom work, and your child might not even know they are being assessed. There will always be a 10-minute introduction so that your child can ask questions and understand what they have to do.

## What can I do to help my child?

You play an important part in your child's success at school. Help them do their best by giving lots of encouragement. There are some practical tips on page 7 of this booklet.

## Helping your child through Key Stage 1

Even when they are familiar with the National Curriculum, some parents are still unsure of how they can help their child. One good thing about having a child in the early years of primary school is that you might be as excited as them when they start to read and write. So it's a chance for you to practise new skills at home together. Your child's teacher will be happy to suggest ways you can encourage your child. Check out the tips below too.

### Encourage reading

- Read books with your child and talk about the story, the poems or the information in them. What parts of the book have they enjoyed the most and why?
- Allow your child to read at their own pace and encourage them to re-read their favourite stories. They will begin to recognise familiar letters and words.
- Remember that reading isn't just about books – make the most of shop and street signs when you're out and about. And why not ask your child to find out what a DVD is about by reading the back of the box?

## Improve writing

- Encourage your child to want to write. Let them use crayons, paints and finger paints to make patterns and talk with them about the patterns they make.
- Write down a story your child tells you – they will learn through what they see. Get them to suggest words and letters.
- Find lots of opportunities to write together – make lists before you go shopping, and write letters to friends and family. Help them to make their own books, posters or labels for things in their room.

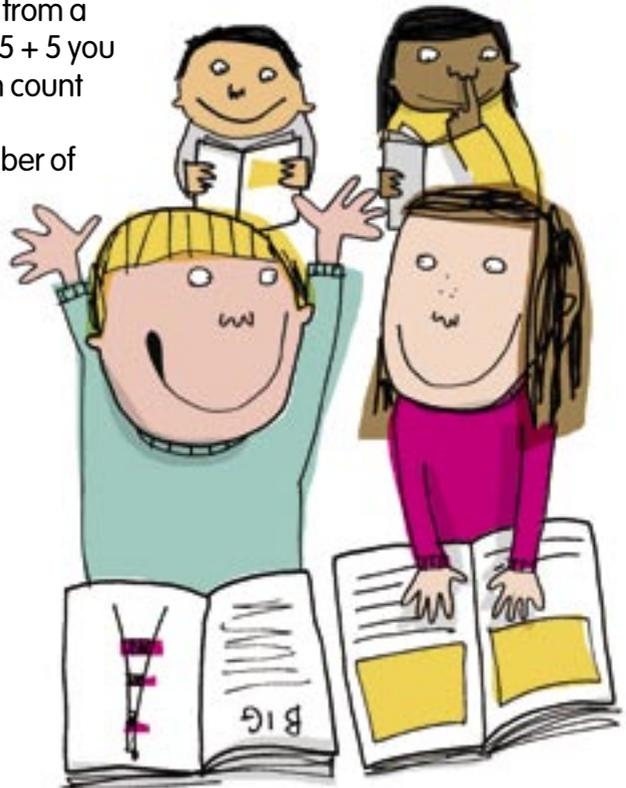
## Introduce maths

- Help your child to count on from a number. For example, for  $15 + 5$  you need to start at 15 and then count out the numbers to 20.
- Ask them to count the number of steps on their way to bed or to count how long it takes them to walk around the garden.

- Play shops and allow them to handle money. Ask them how much change you should get when you buy from them. ('That costs 8p, but I've got 10p. How much change should you give me?')

## Getting advice

If you want more ideas for helping your child, ask your friends and family how they help their children. If you have the internet at home, visit **[www.parentscentre.gov.uk/discover/](http://www.parentscentre.gov.uk/discover/)** where you will find activities that are related to your child's study.



## Want to find out more?

For face-to-face help and advice on Key Stage 1, the National Curriculum or tests and tasks, contact your child's school. Other organisations can also offer help and support:

**[www.qca.org.uk](http://www.qca.org.uk)**

Information on key stage tests and qualifications. A factual guide to all the compulsory tests that your child will complete between the ages of 7 and 14 is available at

**[www.qca.org.uk/testguide](http://www.qca.org.uk/testguide)**

**[www.nc.uk.net](http://www.nc.uk.net)**

Outlines the National Curriculum.

**[www.parentscentre.gov.uk/guidetocurriculum5to7](http://www.parentscentre.gov.uk/guidetocurriculum5to7)**

Guide to the National Curriculum including information on how to help your child learn.

## Can't get onto the internet at home?

Visit your local library which will have computers and internet access.

Copies of this publication can be obtained from: DfES Publications, PO Box 5050, Annesley, Nottingham NG15 0DJ.  
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