

British School of Washington



What is the “National Curriculum”?

State schools in England must teach a range of subjects according to targets set by the National Curriculum. This was established in 1989 to ensure the same standards of teaching and learning across the UK. The National Curriculum covers learning for all children ages 5-16 years old in state schools, and sets out:

- which subjects should be taught
- the knowledge, skills and understanding your child should achieve in each subject (according to your child’s age)
- targets - so teachers can measure how well your child is doing in each subject
- how information on your child’s progress should be passed on to you

The National Curriculum Key Stages

The National Curriculum is organized into blocks of years called “Key Stages”. Key Stage 3 is for students aged 11 – 14.

Age	Year	Key Stage (KS)	Assessment
11 – 12	Year 7	KS3	Internal teacher assessments
12 – 13	Year 8	KS3	
13 – 14	Year 9	KS3	

What are National Curriculum levels?

Programs of study

For each National Curriculum subject, there is a program of study. The programs of study describe the subject knowledge, skills and understanding pupils are expected to develop during each key stage.

National Curriculum levels

The programs of study also map out a scale of attainment within the subject. In each subject, these “attainment targets” are split into eight levels, plus a description of “exceptional performance”. The exception is Citizenship, which has separate attainment targets for the end of Key Stages 3 and 4.

Children develop at different rates, but National Curriculum levels can give you an idea of how your child’s progress compares to what is typical for their age. For example, by the end of Key Stage 3 most students will have reached a level 5/6. The school will send you a report telling you what National Curriculum levels your child has reached in each of the subjects that is being taught.

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How are students taught?

Students are taught mostly in mixed-ability groups with setting in Maths & Modern Languages. The curriculum is delivered by subject specialists and students are encouraged to become independent, reflective learners who are closely involved in the process of assessing their own learning. Classes are taught using a variety of styles and approaches which take into account the needs and learning styles of the students.

How are students assessed?

Internal assessment

The UK government no longer provides statutory assessment at the end of Key Stage 3. Teachers carry out regular assessments of their students' progress in each subject as a normal part of their teaching. At the end of each year they will carry out a formal "teacher assessment", indicating which National Curriculum level best describes the student's performance in each area of learning.

External Assessment

1. MIDYIS tests

These tests (covering literacy, numeracy and some non-verbal questions) are administered to Year 7 students in the Autumn Term and are externally marked by the CEM (Centre for Evaluation and Monitoring) which is a part of Durham University in the UK. The tests are used widely in the UK and overseas to measure a student's developed ability rather than testing them on what they have learnt at school. The resulting data can then be used to measure a student's potential in a range of subjects and to provide predictions for future exam performance as well as assessing a student's academic strengths and weaknesses.

2. SOSCA tests

In the Summer Term Year 9 students sit a series of curriculum-based assessment tests known as "SOSCA" (secondary on-screen curriculum assessments) consisting of three on-line assessments in English (Reading), Maths and Science. These tests are designed to measure a student's progress in these subjects at the end of Key Stage 3. These tests are also administered and marked by the CEM in the UK.

How to find out more about:

1. The National Curriculum

<http://curriculum.qcda.gov.uk/key-stages-3-and-4/subjects/index.aspx>

2. The Key Stage 3 Curriculum at BSW

<http://tinyurl.com/22u36jf>

3. Visit our website

www.britishschoolofwashington.org



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