



Curriculum Changes

Briefing Note

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Curriculum and Assessment Review Final Report - GOV.UK

Yesterday (05.11.2025) The Government accepted key recommendations from the independent Curriculum and Assessment Review (undertaken by Professor Becky Francis) and published reforms to modernise the National Curriculum. These reforms include a stronger emphasis on essential literacy, science and maths fundamentals; clearer expectations for knowledge sequencing across key stages; greater emphasis on practical and vocationally relevant skills for life and work; and updates to qualifications and assessment to align with the new curricular expectations.

The implementation of the new curriculum delivery will follow an agreed timetable, allowing schools time to adapt their existing schemes of work, assessment practice and staff development. The Department for Education has framed these changes as a long-term programme to raise standards and equip young people for the world of work but the new curriculum delivery needs to be in place by September 2028.

What this means in practice for primary schools

Primary curriculum content will be refined to ensure core reading, writing, number and foundational science knowledge are secure before transition to secondary. Schools will be expected to make sequencing explicit in curriculum maps, tighten assessment of knowledge progression, and introduce clearer skills-for-life elements (e.g., digital literacy, workplace-ready behaviours) where age-appropriate.

The DfE briefing and ministerial statement set a clear expectation that all settings review curriculum intent, implementation and impact with evidence of coherence and progression, not simply a collection of topics.

What this means in practice for secondary schools

Again, there will be curriculum sequencing and assessment. Schools will need to make curriculum intent, implementation and impact more explicit for example, mapping knowledge progression across years and key stages and aligning assessment to demonstrate secure learning before onward progression.

There will also be stronger statutory/expectational emphasis on English (reading and oracy), maths and triple science entitlement or deepened science content, plus updated expectations for vocationally relevant and digital skills that must be incorporated into KS3–KS4 planning.

Finally, GCSE content and assessment models are likely to be reviewed and updated, so schools must be ready to adjust schemes of work, assessment points and exam preparation approaches as specification changes are confirmed.

Safeguarding implications

Due to these changes and as I shared with you via the Designated Safeguarding Lead briefing sessions there will be a deep dive into the content of lessons particularly PSHE, RSE and demonstrating pupil progress, pupil understanding and ability to be able to engage in lessons and express their views in a safe place with appropriate challenge.

With these changes to curriculum sequencing and more rigorous assessment with an increase on teacher focus on evidence of pupil progress this will provide additional opportunities to spot sudden changes in attendance, attainment or behaviour that can be early indicators of safeguarding concerns, including neglect, exploitation or mental health deterioration.

With new content on life and work, digital literacy and potentially citizenship related material, schools will be able to create greater opportunities to strengthen prevention education (online safety, consent, recognising grooming or radicalisation) and this should be mapped explicitly to the school's PSHE, RSE and online-safety policies to ensure consistent safeguarding messages in an age appropriate and trauma informed way. This will additionally support staff confidence in effective and consistent delivery of difficult topics.

The implementation period will however increase workload and stretch staff capacity. During this phase it is imperative that routine safeguarding activities (pastoral check-ins, supervision of vulnerable pupils, timely CPOMS updates) remain prioritised.

It is important to note that changes to assessment and reporting can affect how vulnerable pupils are identified. Schools must therefore ensure data reviews include welfare indicators (attendance, behaviour logs, wellbeing notes) and that DSLs remain central to interpreting curriculum-related attainment gaps as potential safeguarding signals.

As these curriculum changes will increase external contacts, for example external providers and workplace links, schools must ensure appropriate safer recruitment, visiting provider checks and supervision arrangements to manage safeguarding risk.

Additionally, schools must factor in time for staff training to recognise safeguarding signals within classroom assessment data and to provide support and direction on delivering sensitive elements of the new curriculum (e.g., online safety, radicalisation awareness) with age-appropriate approaches.

There must also be a coordinated response with Governors/Trust to confirm resourcing and oversight for both curriculum rollout and continued safeguarding compliance.

At HH: Safeguarding Matters I will continue to support schools in ensuring that any changes do not impact on the safeguarding of children and in fact support and enhance engagement from children to feel safe to disclose risk.