

All schools in England and Wales are required to follow the National Curriculum. This means that teachers have to ensure that they plan thoroughly what they will be teaching, how it will be taught and when it will be taught – this is known as curriculum planning.

Although individual schools may have modified models of curriculum planning, all schools will ensure that your child's education is strictly planned in each subject area over the following periods:

- Key Stage (Years 7–9 or 10–11)
- Yearly
- Weekly
- Daily
- Individual lessons.

Therefore, when your child enters secondary school in Year 7, teachers in each subject area will have planned not only what your child will be studying in their first lesson and first week at their new school, but also what will be taught in Years 7, 8 and 9. Heads of department will co-ordinate this planning in their individual subject area.

Meeting the students learning needs

Curriculum planning will not only focus on what topics will be taught, but also on the skills that students will require within specific subjects. Teachers will plan to address the needs of all their students, ensuring that preferred learning styles are met – they will introduce tasks that suit individual students' needs, for example some may like to read, write, record, discuss, or become involved in role-play or model-making. Tasks will be set to ensure that all learning styles are catered for.

Each subject area will also ensure that teachers incorporate government initiatives, such as the Every Child Matters agenda or the new Programme of Study at Key Stage 3, within their planning. These may help in such areas as cross-curricular links – helping to ensure that subjects relate to each other and that students see that there are aspects of their History and Religious Studies lessons that link together. There is also a requirement to focus on issues that increase the students' understanding of cultural, social and economic issues, and to help them become 'better citizens' – this is known as Citizenship. The latest initiative requires all subject teachers to incorporate Personal, Learning and Thinking Skills (PLTS) within their teaching. These are intended to develop students' skills in areas such as independent enquiry, creative and reflective thinking, team-working, self-management and effective participation. These are skills that students will need beyond the individual subject and the classroom, and that will prepare them for the workplace and later life.

Teacher planning

When students enter Year 10 and embark upon their GCSEs, teachers also use examination board specifications to plan their teaching to ensure that students are fully prepared for the end of Key Stage examination.

Curriculum planning underpins teaching within schools. Heads of department are directed by senior managers (the headteacher, deputy and assistant headteachers) to produce planning documents that are distributed to all staff to ensure consistency among teachers and quality teaching for your child. Good curriculum planning gives access to the curriculum for all students and the opportunity for every child to achieve their academic potential.

Here are some examples of curriculum planning:

- Yearly planning – a scheme of work
- Daily planning – a teacher's planner
- Individual lesson planning – an individual lesson plan.

Wales has its own skills framework.

