

September 2014

Dear Parents/Carers

The National Curriculum defines the programmes of study for key subjects in maintained/state primary and secondary schools in England. Fundamentally, it sets out what your child is supposed to learn and when. A new version has just been introduced and, although as a free school we do not have to follow a National Curriculum, all our pupils will follow it at a level appropriate to them although not all pupils will study a language. For some pupils in some subjects, the Programmes of Study will be for their Key Stage. For others, the Programmes of Study for an earlier Key Stage may be more appropriate. Our schemes of work in each subject are designed to ensure that pupils are able to access and progress through programmes of study that are appropriate to their levels of ability.

In addition, and importantly, at Churchill we recognise that many of our pupils also need to be equipped with the tools to learn: our Learning to Learn curriculum teaches the basic skills such as focusing on a task, tolerating sitting beside another pupil, and other skills that are prerequisites to learning.

The new curriculum has been developed partly by comparing England's curriculum to those in other countries. The Department of Education stated " it's all about trying to compete in the global economy and the forthcoming curriculum combines the best elements of what is taught in the world's most successful school systems, including Hong Kong, Massachusetts, Singapore and Finland, with some of the most impressive [existing] practice from schools in England."

The idea is for children to "go further...at an earlier age" and it's clear from reading through the official literature that expectations are considerably higher for any given year group. Whilst some of the content is totally new, existing topics will be introduced a year or two earlier than would currently be the case for most children

The table below summarises some of the many changes that are relevant to our pupils.

Subject	What's new?
English	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• A Stronger emphasis on vocabulary development, grammar, punctuation and spelling• Handwriting (not currently assessed under the national curriculum) is expected to be fluent, legible and speedy• Spoken English has a greater emphasis, with children to be taught debating and presenting skills.• There is a greater focus on literature based learning• A greater emphasis is placed on planning, drafting, editing and proofreading writing.

<p>Maths</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • By the age of nine, children will be expected to know times tables up to 12×12 (currently 10×10 by the end of primary school) • Calculators will not be introduced until near the end of KS2, to encourage mental arithmetic. • There is an increased level of challenge around the theory of number – achieved by introducing prime numbers in KS3. • There are increased requirements for algebra, geometry and measures and ratios, proportion and rates of change – the three pillars for calculus at post-16 level. • There are raised expectations for achievement in probability. • Financial education has been reinforced with a focus on solving problems involving percentage increases and decreases, simple interest and repeated growth.
<p>Science</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is a strong focus on scientific knowledge and language, rather than understanding the nature and methods of science in abstract terms • Evolution will be taught to primary aged pupils for the first time. • New content at Key Stage 3 includes skeletal and muscular systems, the concept of a pure substance, the properties of ceramics, polymers and composites, the efficacy of recycling
<p>Design & technology</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Design and Technology has become more important in the new curriculum, setting children on the path to becoming the designers and engineers of the future • There is more sophisticated use of design equipment such as electronics and robotics • In KS2, children will learn about how key events and individuals in design and technology have shaped the world.
<p>ICT</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Computing replaces Information and Communication Technology (ICT), with a greater focus on programming rather than on operating programs • Internet safety – currently only taught from 11-16 – will be taught in primary schools
<p>Geography</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is a greater use of atlases and maps including O/S maps and digital Maps • Children are expected to know and locate countries, capitals, major cities, mountains and rivers • In depth studies of a European, North/South American country and a region of the British Isles are required

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is a renewed emphasis on locational knowledge and place, • There is a strong focus on human and physical processes, including some more traditional content such as rocks, soils, glaciation and geological timescales.
History	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Greater emphasis is placed on British History taught in chronological order.

In order to prepare pupils for the more ambitious end of year expectations in English, Mathematics and Science, as set out in the new curriculum, teachers at Churchill School will amend their delivery of the programmes of study detailed above as is appropriate. New programmes of study for English, Mathematics and Science will be adopted in full from September 2014, in line with guidance from the Department of Education.

In addition children will no longer be given levels (such as Level 4b at the end of Year 6). A new system of formal assessment will be introduced, but full details have not as yet been released by the Department for Education. From May 2016, a new assessment procedure based on the new curriculum will be implemented. We will of course provide you with the details of these new style tests when they become available to us.

We are busy planning new units of study to meet the requirements of the new curriculum, but which more importantly provide exciting and engaging learning opportunities for your children.

Class newsletters will help keep you informed about the curriculum your child is following as will discussions on Pupil Review Days and through meetings such as Annual Reviews. We will also be publishing curriculum maps on our website in the near future which will provide more subject specific detail.

Yours sincerely,

Georgina Ellis
Headteacher