

# Designing the Key Stage 3 curriculum

The Coalition Government took office on 11 May 2010. This publication was published prior to that date and may not reflect current government policy. You may choose to use these materials, however you should also consult the Department for Education website [www.education.gov.uk](http://www.education.gov.uk) for updated policy and resources.



Guidance

Curriculum & Standards

# Key Stage 3 *National Strategy*

## *Designing the Key Stage 3 curriculum*

**Headteachers,  
Governors and Heads  
of Department**

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The Key Stage 3 National Strategy aims to raise the standards achieved by 11- to 14-year-olds by transforming approaches to teaching and learning. It supports five curricular strands: English, mathematics, science, ICT, and teaching and learning in the foundation subjects (TLF). In its first year, the English and mathematics strands, with literacy and numeracy across the curriculum, were introduced. The other strands will follow from 2002.

### *About this guide*

This guidance is intended for senior and subject leaders in secondary schools in England as they plan the extension of the Strategy to all subjects. Governors too may find it of interest.

Experience with the Strategy to date indicates that a flexible approach will be needed in future curriculum planning. The guide offers advice and practical suggestions on how schools might:

- design and timetable the curriculum at Key Stage 3 to achieve a balanced curriculum;
- tailor the curriculum to the needs of their pupils and the communities they serve.

There is no single right way to produce a timetable and no single timetable will suit all schools. The task of timetabling is especially difficult when specialist staff are hard to recruit and compromises sometimes have to be made. Each school will weigh the advantages and disadvantages of different arrangements and decide for itself which is the best solution for its purposes.

The guide is in four sections and has two appendices.

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In introducing the Strategy schools will have given a good deal of thought to overall curriculum planning at Key Stage 3. Some schools may already have reviewed the curriculum and timetable at Key Stage 3 as part of their preparations for the Strategy and will not need to study this guide in detail. Others may have decided after some analysis that revisions of their Key Stage 3 curricular arrangements are not needed. But where schools are planning a curriculum review, they may find it helpful to read and discuss the advice and suggestions in this guide that are relevant to their circumstances.

Some acronyms are used throughout the guide: design and technology (DT), information and communication technology (ICT), modern foreign languages (MFL), history (HI), geography (GG), physical education (PE), religious education (RE) and citizenship (CT).

### *Acknowledgements*

We are very grateful to the schools listed on page 31 for the case studies and examples. These show how different schools have designed and timetabled a curriculum that is suited to their particular circumstances.

### *What the law requires*

All maintained schools are required to provide for all pupils a balanced and broadly based curriculum which:

- provides opportunities for all pupils to learn and achieve;
- promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical development;
- prepares pupils for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of adult life.

Each school has to teach the National Curriculum and religious education. The challenge for a school is to customise this basic entitlement to learning and, in the context of the Key Stage 3 Strategy and other relevant Government initiatives, create its own distinctive and unique curriculum.

The Key Stage 3 curriculum must include the following National Curriculum subjects, as specified in their programmes of study:

English	geography
mathematics	modern foreign languages
science	art and design
design and technology	music
information and communication technology	physical education
history	citizenship (from August 2002)

Other statutory requirements are:

religious education	careers education (from Year 9)
sex and relationship education	

There are no nationally specified programmes of study for the additional requirements, but schools, other than voluntary-aided or faith schools, must teach religious education according to the locally agreed syllabus.

Sources of guidance on organising and teaching the curriculum are listed in appendix 2.

### *The flexibility for schools*

The school curriculum must include the National Curriculum and the other statutory requirements, but schools have considerable freedom to determine the character and distinctive nature of their curriculum, and to play to their strengths. Increasing numbers of schools are showing how this can be done.

The Key Stage 3 Strategy puts the spotlight on the quality of teaching and learning in Years 7, 8 and 9, and aims to raise pupils' attainment in these crucial years of secondary education. With this in mind, schools may need to consider the following.

- **The school's ethos, values and aims** – what implications do these have for Key Stage 3 and how will they inform decisions about the curriculum?
- **The curriculum priorities and emphases** – how much weight and importance should be given to each of the required subjects and to areas within them?
- **Curriculum enrichment** – what might need to be added to the required curriculum?

- **The packaging and labelling of the curriculum** – which subjects will be taught separately and which will be combined with other subjects?
- **The distribution of the curriculum across the key stage** – will each subject be taught every week, every term and every year in the key stage?
- **Curriculum inclusion and differentiation** – how will the organisation of the curriculum be adapted to suit individual pupils with different abilities and needs?
- **Continuity and progression** – how can the design of the curriculum help pupils to make a smooth transfer from one key stage to the next and to make steady progress within Key Stage 3?

Similarly, schools have substantial freedom in timetabling the curriculum. Depending on its status and circumstances, a school may be able to decide on some or all of the following.

- **The number of terms** in the school year
- **The number of teaching hours** in the week
- **The number of days in a timetable cycle**
- **Lesson length**
- **The time allocated to each subject**
- **Pupil groupings** – whether pupils should be grouped in particular ways for any subject, for example, by ability or by gender
- **Transition support** – whether to offer a summer school and how best to organise a catch-up programme
- **Booster classes for Year 9** – if, when and how they will take place

The next two sections of this guide look at each of the issues in turn.

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### *Ethos, values and aims* *What sort of school are we?*

Each school has its distinctive character, ethos, aims and values. All schools will want to attach particular importance to promoting mutual respect and understanding of different religions, cultural traditions and languages. Some schools will focus on innovative ways of learning through the use of ICT. Others may have certain subjects or activities in which they have special strengths, such as an integrated arts programme or using the school grounds as an educational resource. Still others may have links with the local community that can help to promote business and enterprise in the curriculum or to strengthen citizenship within and beyond the school. A specialist school will have a commitment to certain subjects and a faith school to its own programme of religious education.

The overall design of a school's curriculum needs to reflect the character of the school and support its aims and values. Pages 10–13 of *The National Curriculum: handbook for secondary teachers in England* describe a set of values, aims and purposes for the school curriculum. Individual schools can then build on and extend these broad national aims to provide a firm foundation for their own curriculum.

#### examples

#### What sort of school are we?

- *A language college, which is also a beacon school, gives priority to modern foreign languages and communication skills.*

*'We strive to provide a world-class education for our pupils, enriched by a strong European and international dimension. We give special emphasis to pupils' understanding of, and respect for, their own culture and that of others, to enable them to communicate and engage with peoples around the world.'*

- *A culturally diverse school sets a premium on inclusion. It stresses educational innovation and the 'student voice'.*

*'Our goal is to be at the forefront of developments in innovative teaching and learning to produce enterprising and creative pupils. We help pupils to understand the world in which we live, to recognise the interdependence of groups and nations, and to become full participants in a democratic society.'*

- *An 11 to 16 comprehensive school concentrates on a rounded education.*

*'We aim to be a school of excellence, not only in terms of academic standards, but also in the whole range of the school's curricular and extra-curricular work. We strive for the highest standards of work and of personal and social behaviour. We believe that this school should offer a breadth of challenge and opportunity.'*

### *Curriculum priorities and emphases* *What do we want to emphasise in the curriculum?*

The core subjects, English, mathematics and science, need to be given priority in Key Stage 3 to ensure that they are secure. Beyond this, each school will decide which subjects to give more time to and, within a subject, which aspects or skills to emphasise. The priority or emphasis might apply across the key stage, to particular year groups, to groups of pupils or to individuals.

### What is important for our pupils to learn?

- *A school with particular strengths in its ICT and languages departments offers Spanish as a second foreign language for those pupils in Years 8 and 9 who show a special interest in languages. The small groups learning Spanish use the school's ICT facilities for weekly video-conference sessions with pupils in a partner school in Spain. The pupils are not 'pen-pals' but 'video-pals', which gives them an added incentive to learn.*
- *A school with substantial numbers of low-achieving pupils emphasises literacy across the curriculum. Teachers in every subject have planned into their schemes of work where and how they will teach literacy objectives in their subject. Every fortnight, a lesson taken by form tutors is devoted to setting and reviewing pupils' literacy targets. Departments also use literacy starters with Key Stage 3 classes to secure subject spellings and vocabulary. The work is coordinated by the school's literacy coordinator.*
- *A school specialising in the performing arts focuses on English, drama, music and dance. This is shown in the teaching time given to these subjects throughout the key stage. It is shown also in the extensive opportunities for pupils to be involved in plays, concerts and performances staged in the school and the local community.*
- *In an area of high-technology industries such as computing and pharmaceuticals, a school gives priority to mathematics and science to help its pupils to make the most of local job opportunities. Scientists from local companies visit the school as part of the Science and Engineering Ambassadors scheme, and Year 9 pupils undertake project work to achieve Creativity in Science and Technology (CREST) Awards.*

### *Curriculum enrichment and study support Do we need to add to or enrich the curriculum?*

Schools generally go beyond the statutory requirements and add to the content of the timetabled curriculum. The enrichment might apply to the whole key stage, or to particular years or groups of pupils. For example, schools add a programme of personal, social and health education (PSHE) to their curriculum for all pupils throughout Key Stage 3, often with plans to incorporate some aspects of citizenship.

A good range of activities is usually offered outside normal school hours, which young people participate in voluntarily, including catch-up and master classes, homework and study clubs, sports and outdoor activities, foreign exchanges, the creative arts, community work, mentoring, and opportunities to pursue particular interests. Literacy and numeracy summer schools are increasingly common to help pupils who have yet to achieve level 4 to transfer from Year 6 to Year 7, as are summer schools for gifted and talented 10- to 14-year-olds.

Schools also add to the curriculum by giving pupils extra opportunities within the school day, for example, artists in residence, educational visits, fieldwork and work shadowing.



### What should we add to the curriculum?

- *Because Business Studies is popular as a qualification in Key Stage 4, one school devised a new subject, Business Enterprise, for all pupils in Years 8 and 9. On one day each term, the normal timetable is suspended for an enterprise day in which pupils do hands-on business projects that anticipate their Key Stage 4 studies.*
- *A school with a strong academic tradition adds Latin to its Key Stage 3 curriculum as an option for its most able pupils. Latin is offered as an alternative to a second modern foreign language, which all Key Stage 3 pupils are otherwise expected to study.*
- *In one school, enrichment lessons are taught by paired heads of department while teachers watch to see a model lesson of accomplished teaching. The topic is chosen to lie outside the National Curriculum and to draw on the skills of both heads of department. An example is a short series of lessons on the theory and practice of ballet, taught by the heads of PE and science, to enhance study of dance in PE and forces and motion in science.*

### *Curriculum packaging and labelling How do we put it together?*

Although the National Curriculum is specified in separate subjects, schools are not required to teach the subjects separately or to use their given titles. One subject can be combined with another, a subject can be woven into the teaching of other subjects, or it can be taught in separate lessons.

New 'packaging' can make a difference to some pupils' interest and learning. But where subjects are grouped, care is needed to retain the distinctiveness of each subject, and its knowledge and skill base.

### Packaging the curriculum

- *A boys' school in an ex-mining village makes the foundation subjects more appealing to its pupils to help overcome an ingrained tradition of low educational achievement. Staff noted that the Year 7 boys enjoy computer games. Two afternoons a week are set aside for a year-long project in which pupils design a computer game. The work is based on local coal mines and the disasters and difficulties that miners faced. From the boys' point of view, these afternoons are 'Project Danger Mine!'. But in practice they are being taught parts of the programmes of study for geography, history, design and technology, art and design, and ICT. Separate lessons in these subjects make regular explicit links to 'Project Danger Mine!', and the project work consolidates and gives a focus to the subject-based learning.*
- *One school packages PSHE, citizenship, careers education, sex and relationship education and some aspects of RE in a course in Preparation for Society. This is taught through some discrete lessons, opportunities in assemblies, the tutorial programme, a mini-enterprise scheme and special projects. A key element is pupils' involvement in year councils and a students' union.*

## *Curriculum distribution*

### *How might we arrange the curriculum across the key stage?*

It is for schools to decide how to organise the teaching of the National Curriculum and religious education. It is not necessary, for example, for each National Curriculum subject to be taught every week, every term, or even every year. More time can be allocated to a particular subject in one year than in another, as long as the full programme of study is covered by the end of the key stage.

examples

#### **Curriculum distribution across the key stage**

- *One 11 to 16 school with 60-minute lessons uses the idea of alternating patterns, but over years rather than terms. History and geography are each taught for two lessons per week in Year 7. In Year 8, history has one lesson, geography two lessons. In Year 9, the pattern is reversed: history has two lessons, geography one.*
- *In another school, art and design lessons alternate each term with design and technology lessons of the same length. This allows longer lessons in each subject, helping pupils to achieve something worthwhile in each lesson.*
- *In a school that plays a significant part in the arts festival held locally each spring, the music and art and design programmes of study are covered in Years 7 and 8. In Year 9, pupils do project work to produce a contribution to the festival, applying their learning from the previous two years.*

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## *Curriculum inclusion and differentiation*

### *How do we tailor the curriculum to the individual?*

Teachers cater for individual pupils' interests and capabilities mainly through differentiated activities and targeted support in timetabled lessons and study support. Some pupils' needs are met by reinforcing aspects of earlier programmes of study, or by selecting aspects of the Key Stage 4 programmes of study. The statutory inclusion statement in *The National Curriculum: handbook for secondary teachers in England* (pages 30–37) describes how all pupils can be provided with relevant learning experiences and suitably challenging work.

In addition, there are ways of catering for pupils' particular needs through the design of the timetable. The first three of the examples below have the added advantage that they also support citizenship.

examples

### Tailoring provision to individual pupils' interests and capabilities

- *One school uses registration time to operate a reading mentor scheme for poor readers in Year 7, involving 30 sixth-form volunteers and trainee teachers.*
- *In an inner-city school, English is allocated one extra period per week for lessons that reflect pupils' experiences and background. For example, a series of lessons on non-fiction texts and persuasive writing focuses on Martin Luther King's speech, 'I have a dream'; lessons on literary texts use poems about belonging to two different cultures: Moniza Alvi's 'Presents from my aunts in Pakistan', Sujata Bhatt's 'Search for my tongue', and John Agard's 'Half-caste'. The school feels that this has increased pupils' self-esteem and their confidence in themselves as learners.*
- *In a local education authority that encourages special schools to link with mainstream schools, a school for pupils with severe learning difficulties joins its neighbouring comprehensive school for design and technology. This gives the special-school pupils access to excellent workshop facilities and, importantly, brings pupils from both schools into contact with each other. Further contact between the pupils is promoted by joint school journeys.*
- *One school offers a 'gifted and talented programme' that takes the form of days off the timetable, one day per month, for a group of about 30 pupils who study one subject for a full day. For example, in a mathematics day or a history day, pupils are encouraged to work together to explore a topic in depth. The composition of the group is not necessarily the same each month.*

Another way to tailor provision to the needs of the most able pupils is by accelerating their learning. When the key stage programme of study has been taught in full, pupils can progress beyond its requirements or take up other subjects and activities. The only exception to this flexibility is that pupils must engage in physical activity throughout Key Stage 3.

examples

### Accelerated learning

- *Recognising that its pupils greatly enjoy using computers and that ICT is increasingly important in the workplace, an inner-city comprehensive school encourages its most enthusiastic computer-users to complete the Key Stage 3 ICT programme of study in two years. They begin a vocational GCSE course in ICT from the start of Year 9.*
- *In another school, pupils who are talented in the arts complete the programmes of study for art and design and for music by the end of Year 8. They then start a course leading to a qualification in media or performance in Year 9.*

## *Continuity and progression*

### *How can we best connect key stages?*

Pupils of all abilities can falter in their learning when they move from one key stage to the next and are faced with an unfamiliar environment and new styles of teaching and learning. The primary to secondary transition, from a single familiar class teacher to numerous new teachers for different subjects, is particularly difficult for some pupils. Good curriculum design, plus good information about each pupil's strengths and weaknesses, can help to offset any possible dips in progress at the time of transfer.

#### examples

#### **Building on Key Stage 2**

- *To help the least able pupils make the transition from primary school, a secondary school arranges for English, mathematics and science to be taught by a single teacher with experience of teaching Year 6 in a primary school. She teaches two classes of approximately 20 pupils each. All other Year 7 pupils are in larger classes and are taught separate English, mathematics and science lessons by three specialist teachers.*
- *A secondary school in a suburban town has developed a bridging course with its main partner primary schools. The ten-week course, which is based on the Key Stage 3 programmes of study, begins after the Year 6 tests in May and is targeted at pupils who attained level 5. The first six weeks of the course are taught in the primary schools and the rest in the secondary school. Teachers from all the schools have cooperated to develop lesson plans for the course. The secondary school feels that the new course has improved continuity and gives its most able pupils a flying start.*

#### **Preparing for Key Stage 4**

- *A minimum achievement of level 5 in the Key Stage 3 tests provides a sound foundation for GCSE courses. To help borderline pupils to achieve level 5 in the Key Stage 3 tests, a school organises booster classes in the core subjects in the spring term of Year 9. These parallel its Year 9 master classes for gifted and talented pupils to help deepen and broaden their study in preparation for Key Stage 4.*
- *One way of helping pupils to move on to Key Stage 4 is to anticipate the style and content of a range of qualifications in Year 9 lessons. In a specialist arts college, the Year 9 schemes of work enable pupils with a particular interest or ability in music to include aspects of GCSE Music in their Key Stage 3 music lessons.*

Before its timetable is constructed, a school will make decisions about the total time available for teaching – the number of weeks in the year and the length of the school day. The constraints will be taken into account, particularly staffing, and often accommodation. There will also be parental expectations about the time of day that schools should start and finish, and views about how long the learning day should be for both pupils and staff. Local circumstances such as bus timetables and travelling times will also affect matters.

Nonetheless, schools have room for manoeuvre. This section considers the scope for variation and how it can be exploited. It considers how the total teaching time might be adjusted, and then looks at the different ways in which the time can be allocated.

### *How many terms in the school year?*

Decisions on the number of terms in the school year are taken locally.

For most schools, the local education authority (LEA) determines the dates of school terms. Schools that wish to vary the dates need to do so by agreement with the LEA. Foundation and voluntary-aided schools are able to set their own dates, as are city technology colleges. But any school taking a fresh look at the dates of its terms will be influenced by the benefits, especially for parents, of all local schools using the same dates.

In the conventional three-term year, the length of a term varies across the year, and from one year to the next. The differences can make it more difficult to plan units of work and to review pupils' progress and attainment at regular intervals. A recent commission on the organisation of the school year by the Local Government Association reported that there had been a warm response to their proposal for a six-term year but there are other possible options for LEAs and schools to consider if they wish.

#### **A school year with four or five terms**

- *A school is consulting on a proposal to begin its school year one week early at the end of August. The autumn term would be split into two terms and the half-term break extended to two weeks. The school believes that two shorter autumn terms would be less tiring for pupils and staff, and it would be easier to maintain a steady pace of work throughout each term.*
- *An 11 to 16 comprehensive school organises its year into five terms, each eight weeks long. There is a two-week break between each term, with a four-week break in the summer. Parents like the short summer break because their children are less likely to become restless and bored. Staff feel that pupils settle into school more quickly after the summer break and retain more of the previous year's learning. Staff also feel that a standard term length helps them to maintain a brisk pace of work, makes planning easier and creates more manageable workloads for them and their pupils. Assessments at the end of every eight-week term are used to monitor individual pupils' progress, set targets for pupils and inform adjustments to teaching plans.*

## How many teaching hours in the week?

DES Circular 7/90 recommends a minimum of 24 hours teaching time each week for pupils in Key Stage 3, exclusive of registration, collective worship, breaks and lunch.

Most schools start their day between 8:30 am and 9:00 am and finish between 3:00 pm and 4:00 pm. But small differences in the timings can make a big difference to the total teaching time over the key stage, and consequently to the curriculum offered.

Then there is the question of how much teaching time can be fitted into each day. The table below shows how day lengths can vary between schools, and how some of the case-study schools are more efficient than others in the amount of teaching time they offer. Across the schools, lunch breaks vary from 30 minutes, staggered for different groups, to 65 minutes for all pupils simultaneously.

Start (am)	Finish (pm)	Total day (h:min)	Teaching hours per day (h:min)	Lessons per day
9:00	3:15	6:15	5:00	5 × 60-minute lessons per day
8:30	3:00	6:30	5:00	6 × 50-minute lessons per day
8:45	3:30	6:45	5:00	4 × 75-minute lessons per day
8:45	3:30	6:45	4:40	7 × 40-minute lessons per day*

\* There is one extra lesson on one day per week.

Schools that want to change the time that school starts or ends may do so only at the beginning of a school year. They must consult parents and give them and the LEA at least three months' notice of the change. There are several factors to consider as a decision is made.

- Small adjustments to the start and finish of the school day can produce a useful amount of extra time, enough perhaps for another whole lesson, or to extend existing lesson times.
- More teaching time can be created by adjusting the times for break, lunch and activities other than lessons, and staggering lunch times.
- The length of each day can be the same or different. For example, some schools have an extra lesson on some days in the week.

example

### Variation in the length of the school day

- *An 11 to 18 comprehensive school has four daily lessons of 65 minutes, two in the morning and two in the afternoon. Tutor time has been reduced to 15 minutes and the lunch break to 50 minutes. On three days there is a further 65-minute lesson in the afternoon. On the two shorter days, the time after the last lesson is used for extra opportunities to consolidate learning or extend the curriculum – including supervised homework, catch-up classes and revision sessions – and brief but regular meetings for staff.*



## How many days in the timetable cycle?

Some schools adopt a timetable cycle of more than five days to achieve more flexibility. For example, an average of 90 minutes a week can be given to a subject by having a single one-hour lesson in the first week and a double lesson in the second week. Short lessons can be avoided by having a double lesson once a fortnight, rather than a short single lesson every week, although a disadvantage is the longer gap between lessons. In a ten-day timetable, it is vital that English and mathematics lessons, in particular, are distributed regularly throughout each week, so that pupils maintain and sharpen their skills through near-daily practice.

A five-day timetable is the most common in secondary schools. An analysis of timetables in the Key Stage 3 pilot schools showed that only 15% of schools used ten-day timetables.

example

### A ten-day timetable

- *A Key Stage 3 pilot school takes advantage of its ten-day timetable to provide one lesson every two weeks for target setting. During this lesson, the form tutor works with groups of two or three pupils to give them detailed advice on how best to set their targets and evaluate their performance. Pupils' success in achieving their targets is evaluated with their tutor at the end of the timetable cycle.*

Another way of making the timetable more flexible is to rotate lessons or subjects. 'Carousels', popular in many schools, involve using the same lesson slot in the timetable for the discrete teaching of different subjects on a rotating basis. A 'rotating lesson' replaces the lesson normally taught in that slot each week, with a different slot chosen each week.

examples

### Rotation of lessons

- *One school wanted to find time for a one-hour discrete lesson of ICT in each of Years 7, 8 and 9, to balance the work done across the curriculum to teach ICT capability. The time has been found by taking the weekly PSHE lesson out of the regular timetable and teaching it in a 'rotating lesson'. Form tutors teach PSHE to every class in week 1 on Monday period 1, in week 2 on Monday period 2, and so on until the 25th week, when it takes place on Friday period 5. In week 26 it is again taught on Monday period 1.*
- *One school with six forms of entry uses the same lesson slot for three modules, rotating through aspects of citizenship, then PSHE, then careers education, after which the pattern starts again with citizenship. Three classes are timetabled simultaneously for this carousel so that three specialist staff can teach their respective modules.*

## How long should each lesson be?

Several factors affect decisions on lesson length. Short lessons, perhaps of 35 to 40 minutes, are attractive from a timetabler's point of view because, used singly or in multiples, they allow a variety of times to be allocated to different subjects each week. On the other hand, short lessons mean that more of the school day is taken up with movement between rooms. In this respect, the longer that lessons are, the better.

School timetablers will be familiar with the demands of different subjects and will know that the optimum lesson length can vary from subject to subject. Subjects that involve practical work may need more time if pupils are to achieve something worthwhile in each lesson. Some subjects, notably English, mathematics and modern foreign languages, need to take place very regularly, which implies more frequent, but shorter, lessons. Lessons for classes which consist wholly or mainly of pupils with special educational needs may need to allow for, in some cases, their shorter concentration spans.

Most schools base their timetables on a standard length of lesson, usually varying from 35 minutes to 75 minutes. The Key Stage 3 Strategy suggests that lessons of 50 minutes or 60 minutes are useful for English and mathematics and several other subjects. They satisfy the principle of frequency, ensuring that pupils maintain and sharpen their skills through near-daily practice. Where necessary, lessons can be doubled up to form longer blocks of time for practical subjects. More than three quarters of the Key Stage 3 pilot schools have timetables based on 50-minute or 60-minute lessons.

Some schools have decided that the way to meet the varied demands made on the timetable is to have different lengths of lesson during the day. The examples illustrate some of the different timetables among the Key Stage 3 pilot schools.

examples

#### Timetables with different lengths of lessons

- *One school has three 60-minute lessons before lunch and two 55-minute lessons afterwards.*
- *Another school has one 50-minute, two 45-minute and four 40-minute lessons each day.*
- *A third school has twenty 60-minute and five 55-minute lessons in the week;*
- *A fourth school has a mixture of 30-minute and 50-minute lessons during each day, with the 30-minute lessons mostly in the form of one-hour double periods.*

#### *How much time overall for each subject?*

Different subjects require different amounts of overall teaching time for adequate coverage of the programmes of study. Some subjects also like their overall time to be blocked together to allow occasional cross-subject working, for example, in science and mathematics, or in the creative arts.

If exact time allocations were specified it would prevent schools from tailoring their curriculum to their aims and values and their pupils' needs. Nevertheless, it is possible to identify threshold times below which quality and depth of learning are likely to suffer. Starting points for thinking about time allocations are described in appendix 1.

If a school chose to use the starting points in appendix 1 to allocate 'basic' time to subjects, it would typically find that it had a further 10% to 14% flexibility each week to allocate time over 36 weeks of the school year. There would also be two weeks for additional activities. The 10% to 14% could be used to increase time for all subjects or for priority subjects, or used for curriculum enrichment and other activities.





## How some schools have allocated time to subjects

### Core subjects

- In Years 7 and 8 of a comprehensive school, four hours per week are allocated to English, three hours to mathematics and three hours to science. In Year 9, English is reduced by one hour per fortnight. The extra time is allocated to science to help pupils prepare for studying double science at Key Stage 4.

### Information and communication technology

- One school uses a 60-minute lesson slot for a discrete lesson of ICT each week in Years 7 and 8. In Year 9, pupils do units of an ICT qualification during English, mathematics, and design and technology lessons. The equivalent lesson slot is used for an extra humanities lesson, alternating between history and geography.
- Another school allocates an extra half-hour per week for ICT in Years 7 and 8 for pupils to be taught spreadsheet modelling in a mathematical context.

### Modern foreign languages

- In a specialist language college with 40-minute lessons, time for modern languages increases through Years 7 to 9, while time for English decreases (times in hours:minutes):

	MFL	English
Year 7	2:00	4:00
Year 8	2:40	3:20
Year 9	3:20	2:40

### Performing arts

- A school specialising in the performing arts provides 23 lessons of 65 minutes each week. There are five lessons on Monday, Wednesday and Thursday. On Tuesday and Friday there are four lessons and an earlier finish to the school day. A range of extra-curricular activities is then offered, with a significant proportion linked to art, music, drama, dance and gymnastics. There is a high take-up of these activities.

### Citizenship and personal, social and health education

- One school allocates 50 minutes to citizenship and PSHE each week. Humanities teachers are keen to develop aspects of citizenship through history, geography and RE, and a school council is planned. Form tutors support a range of supplementary activities, including three days during the year dedicated to PSHE and citizenship activities, and community work for the whole school. Pupils determine the focus for the three days and take an active part in planning, organising and running them.

There are more examples of how schools allocate teaching time to subjects in appendix 1.

### *How might pupils be grouped?*

Schools group pupils in various ways for different purposes. Some organise pupils into ability bands or sets for some or all of their subjects. Most will identify groups or individuals who need additional or different lessons and activities, because their abilities or aptitudes are out of the ordinary.

#### examples

#### How pupils are grouped

- *In one school, Year 7 pupils working at levels 2 and 3 are taught English and mathematics in groups of ten. Teaching assistants help them in other subjects.*
- *In another school, the group of the academically weakest pupils is taught each core subject by two teachers, a subject specialist and a special educational needs specialist.*
- *In a 9 to 13 middle school, Years 7 and 8 are divided into two parallel bands. Year 7 is set across each band for mathematics, with mixed-ability classes for other subjects. In Year 8, there is setting across each band in all subjects, except the arts and PE.*
- *In a mixed comprehensive school, some subjects are organised in single-sex sets with the aim of improving pupils' motivation and attitudes to learning.*
- *In another school, two Year 8 classes are taught history together by one teacher once a fortnight. The joint lesson involves exposition and questioning by the teacher and the use of audio-visual materials, while pupils apply their note-taking and reading skills. The teacher released by this arrangement uses the time to observe teaching and support other history teachers with their planning.*
- *In a selective school, pupils in Years 8 and 9 are set by ability in the core subjects. Twice a week, the top set is double-staffed, which gives high-fliers the opportunity to work in smaller groups and study more challenging topics.*

### *How can we best organise catch-up classes?*

Standards have improved greatly at Key Stage 2 but not all pupils have reached level 4 when they start Year 7. The Key Stage 3 Strategy helps to provide a special programme for those pupils who achieve level 3 in the Year 6 tests. This starts in the summer term of Year 6, is supported by summer schools in the school holidays, and leads to 'catch-up' programmes in Year 7. The *Progress Units* (for literacy) and *Springboard 7* (for mathematics) are materials designed to support the programmes. Other materials are being developed to support pupils below level 3.

Good information from primary schools and summer-school staff will help to identify the pupils who will benefit from the programmes. The information can also be used to highlight pupils' strengths and weaknesses and to set them specific targets for improvement.

In Key Stage 2, the pupils will have benefited from daily English and mathematics lessons. The principle of 'little and often' is a key to the success of the catch-up programmes in Year 7. They depend on good organisational arrangements to ensure regular, systematic teaching, and to allow pupils to attend both programmes if necessary. Teaching assistants who support the programmes need training so that they can help the pupils effectively.

The *Springboard 7* mathematics programme can be organised in various ways. It can:

- form a complete course of about three hours each week for a whole class of pupils;
- supplement the main programme for Year 7 mathematics at particular points;
- be used selectively to form an intensive extra course of about 60 minutes a week, taken as a weekly extra lesson, or taught in three 20-minute extra slots spread over the week.

The last option is the one that best fits the 'little and often' principle though it may be the most difficult to arrange.

Similarly, the *Literacy Progress Units* are best taught in three 20-minute slots each week, in addition to normal English lessons for Year 7. Whole-class versions of the units are available but the best arrangement is small, targeted groups. It is, of course, not intended that every level 3 pupil should follow every progress unit. Reading and writing test scores, in particular, need to be separated to ensure that pupils are not studying units needlessly.

### Organising catch-up classes and related activities

- *In one comprehensive school, literacy catch-up sessions are scheduled in 20-minute tutorials in tutor time on three days each week. For mathematics, pupils work in ability sets. The two lower sets follow a programme based largely on the Springboard 7 materials. In addition, a supplementary tutorial is provided in an after-school mathematics club that is held once a week.*
- *In another school, Year 7 pupils are withdrawn for three literacy support sessions each week from the last 20 minutes of lessons. The subjects chosen change each half term and exclude the core subjects. A literacy support teacher teaches the sessions. For mathematics, the lowest two groups of pupils have one extra lesson per week for mathematics, with the time taken from French.*
- *In a school with six mixed-ability classes in Year 7, there are on average ten pupils below level 4 in each class, seven of whom are at level 3. The school does not want to withdraw pupils from lessons and cannot create extra lessons in this year's timetable. English and mathematics are each taught for three hours a week in Year 7. In each subject, pairs of classes are timetabled simultaneously. Teaching assistants give 25 minutes of support during group work in each lesson, supporting two classes in a one-hour teaching period. Catch-up materials are used in these sessions.*
- *A grammar school with a few Year 7 pupils with specific weaknesses in English or mathematics provides extra-curricular sessions once a week at lunch time during the autumn and spring terms of Year 7, using the materials selectively.*
- *A school with a timetable based on 35-minute teaching periods allocates six lessons each week to both English and mathematics. Every week, two lessons in each subject are used for Progress Units or Springboard 7, or for enrichment for pupils at levels 4 and 5.*

### *How should we organise Year 9 booster classes?*

Booster classes are for borderline pupils between levels 4 and 5 or between levels 5 and 6 in English, mathematics and science. The classes allow teachers to target work very efficiently. The aim is to help pupils to do as well as possible in the Key Stage 3 tests so that they enter Key Stage 4 confident and better prepared for GCSE and other courses.

As with catch-up classes, there are three general ways of timetabling booster support:

- in extra classes and study support before school, in the lunch break, or after school;
- by withdrawal from lessons;
- in English, mathematics and science lessons.

Where extra sessions are organised in out-of-school hours, they depend on voluntary attendance by pupils, which can be uneven. Arranging booster classes in short intensive bursts, with gaps in between, and using a different teacher from the normal class teacher, helps to retain pupils' motivation and make the classes more effective. The Key Stage 3 Strategy *Year 9 booster kit* contains revision guidance, samples of lessons, and leaflets for pupils and parents (see appendix 2).



### Organising booster classes

- *One school offers a Year 9 booster programme in the form of a 90-minute 'carousel' for English, mathematics and science after school on Tuesdays. The programme runs from half-term in the autumn term through to April, when revision in normal lessons starts. Thirty or more out of over 100 pupils in Year 9 attend the carousel on a voluntary basis.*
- *Another school offers booster classes in each core subject during the Easter holidays.*
- *One school holds booster classes on Saturday mornings in English, mathematics and science. The school describes these classes as 'very popular'.*

### *Supporting particular classes, groups or individuals*

Secondary schools usually have teams of learning support staff, including teachers and teaching assistants. The Standards Fund currently provides money for extra support for catch-up programmes, and there may be other sources of funding for supporting individuals and groups of pupils, such as the Ethnic Minority Achievement Grant. Some ways to provide extra support are:

- joint planning by the support teacher and class teacher of what is to be taught;
- preparation of extra or modified learning resources;
- mentoring to go through practice test papers with pupils, giving detailed feedback and advice;
- team teaching by the class teacher and a support teacher;
- targeted support in a lesson by a teacher or assistant for an individual pupil or a group of pupils;
- pre-lesson tutoring or support;
- withdrawal from lessons for a short temporary period for extra support or pre-lesson preparation by a teacher or assistant;
- extra sessions within or outside the school day;
- follow-up in mainstream lessons of extra sessions such as catch-up classes.

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The case studies in this section illustrate how three schools have tackled the issues set out in sections 1 to 3 and used the flexibility offered by the National Curriculum.

### *Case study 1: An 11 to 16 comprehensive school*

#### **Characteristics and context**

This is an 11 to 16 mixed comprehensive school on the south coast. 6% of its 1220 pupils are from ethnic minority backgrounds. It has been a beacon school since September 2000 and is a Key Stage 3 pilot school. As a specialist technology college, it is a designated training centre for teachers in the use of ICT. It shares a large campus with another popular comprehensive school, an infant school, a junior school and a sixth-form college.

The school is increasingly oversubscribed. The intake represents the local urban community, ranging from affluent suburban families to those living in relatively deprived housing areas. 13% of the pupils take free school meals. About one quarter of the school's pupils are on the special needs register; 27 of them have a statement of special educational needs.

#### **Ethos, values and aims**

The school's mission is:

*To be a lead school locally and nationally in developing innovative solutions for inclusive comprehensive education, and in enabling all pupils to become independent users of ICT.*

The school gives priority to ensuring a smooth transfer from primary school. A booklet for pupils has been designed to help them move from Key Stage 2 to Key Stage 3. Cross-curricular approaches to literacy are promoted actively throughout Years 7 to 9. Key Stage 3 teachers in mathematics, English, science and modern languages are able to observe 'expert teachers' teaching Key Stage 2 classes at local primary schools.

#### **Curriculum design**

Year 7 pupils are taught in mixed-ability classes, with an option of learning either French or German in Year 7. In mathematics, setting occurs from Year 8 onwards. Both geography and modern languages are set from Year 9. Extra classes are offered after school to particular groups, for example, for learning support, to learn a second foreign language, or to study an accelerated course in geography leading to GCSE in Year 9.

Specialist teachers teach PSHE, combined with citizenship and careers, for one hour per week to all Key Stage 3 pupils. Thinking skills are taught through science and mathematics.

The school's ICT and video-conferencing facilities are used to support self-study and distance learning. The use of ICT in subjects is growing steadily as teachers become better trained and more confident. Staff have developed their own ICT skills through the New Opportunities Fund (NOF) training, supplemented by the school's own professional development programme.

#### **Timetabling**

The school operates a three-term school year. The timetable cycle is ten days to allow more flexibility in allocating time to different subjects. There are 25 one-hour lessons per week. The length of the lesson allows English and mathematics, and several other subjects, to structure their lessons as suggested by the Key Stage 3 Strategy and to set and review homework. Some practical lessons, such as art and design, and design and technology, are taught in double or even triple lessons.



Drama is taught by withdrawing Key Stage 3 pupils for drama mornings four times a year for a total of 16 hours, using a different day of the week on each occasion. Staff feel that this arrangement allows a more focused and in-depth approach to the teaching of drama.

An activities week in the summer term offers residential, sporting, cultural and creative options for all pupils in Years 7 to 10, including outdoor pursuits, sailing, walking and camping.

Pupils in catch-up classes are withdrawn from other lessons rotating between subjects. Pupils with special educational needs are invited to extra sessions either before or after school. On occasions, they are withdrawn from French or German lessons. Otherwise, all pupils have the same teaching time for each subject. A four-day numeracy summer school is offered to invited pupils in Year 8 working at level 4, identified using QCA's optional tests. Year 9 booster classes are held for mathematics in twilight sessions in the autumn term and for English during the school day in the spring term.

The school has established a 'think tank' to consider the length of the school day and the structure of the timetable. Possible changes might include a different Year 7 curriculum, taught by a dedicated Year 7 team with fewer teachers teaching more subjects. The more flexible timetable that is envisaged will build in teaching time for catch-up groups and extension activities for the most able, and time for extra-curricular activities.

Time allocations to subjects (h:min per week)		Year		
		7	8	9
	<b>English</b>	3:00	3:00	3:00
	<b>Mathematics</b>	3:00	3:00	3:00
	<b>Science</b>	3:30	3:30	3:30
	<b>Design and technology</b>	2:30	2:30	2:30
	<b>ICT</b> (plus application of ICT in other subjects)	2:00	2:00	2:00
	<b>*History</b>	1:00	1:00	2:00
	<b>*Geography</b>	2:00	1:00	1:00
	<b>Modern foreign languages</b>	2:00	2:00	2:00
	<b>Art and design</b>	1:00	1:00	1:00
	<b>Music</b>	1:00	1:00	1:00
	<b>PE</b>	2:00	2:00	2:00
	<b>RE</b>	1:00	2:00	1:00
	<b>Citizenship/PSHE/Careers</b>	1:00	1:00	1:00

\* Some aspects of citizenship are taught in history and geography.

The school's learning centre is open every day from 8:00 am to 5:00 pm, offering study support and facilities to all pupils on a voluntary basis. 38 computers are available for pupils to use, as well as an extensive range of reference and fiction books. Staff are on hand to assist pupils with research and homework.

## Case study 2: A specialist school for performing arts

### Characteristics and context

This school is an 11 to 18 specialist performing arts school with 1131 pupils, serving a former mining community on the southern edge of a midlands town. Few of the pupils are eligible for free school meals since there is a high level of local employment, mainly in relatively low-paid distributive and manufacturing jobs. The school's strong community philosophy is expressed in its non-selective admissions policy. Despite the apparent economic advantages of the community, standards of achievement at Key Stage 3 are around the national average. The school has been a Key Stage 3 pilot school since April 2000.

### Ethos, values and aims

The school's mission statement is:

*The school is a centre of excellence in the Performing Arts. It promotes talent and creativity among pupils and the wider community. The school works in partnership with parents and the community to encourage learning and creativity. It is sensitive to pupils' needs and talents, fosters self-esteem and motivation and offers high-quality education.*

The school aims to raise pupils' awareness of the range of human communities in the world. It has set up strong links with other schools in Germany and France, including exchange schemes for pupils. It also has good links with its feeder primary schools. Pastoral care is emphasised and there is a well-established tradition of close home-school links.

### Curriculum design

English and mathematics are each taught for three hours per week throughout the key stage. To enhance this provision, one hour every week alternates between literacy and numeracy skills, for which pupils are grouped by ability. Year 7 pupils are otherwise taught in mixed-ability classes. Years 8 and 9 work in ability sets within half-year groups for mathematics, science and languages; all other subjects are taught in mixed-ability groups.

All pupils study two modern foreign languages, French and German, throughout Key Stage 3.

Pupils study selected aspects of history, geography, citizenship and RE through humanities, with increased subject specialisation during the three years of the key stage. ICT, key skills and thinking skills are integrated into all subjects and assessed.

### Timetabling

The school year has three terms. The school day runs from 8:45 am to 3:10 pm, with five 60-minute lessons each day. The timetable cycle is five days.

Music, drama and dance are timetabled together so that performing arts can be emphasised.

PSHE and careers are taught to all tutor groups in a rotating lesson through the year (Monday period 1 in week 1, Monday period 2 in week 2, and so on). The time released by this arrangement has been allocated to literacy and numeracy, and for citizenship within humanities.

Groups of pupils are withdrawn from lessons throughout the school day for learning support based on an integrated learning systems (ILS) package. A teaching assistant supports these sessions.





The school arranges summer schools for literacy and for gifted and talented pupils. Booster classes are organised in English, mathematics and science for Year 9 pupils during the Easter holidays. Literacy and numeracy catch-up classes for selected pupils in Years 7 and 8 take place every week before school (8:30 to 9:00 am). The *Literacy Progress Units* and *Springboard 7* materials are also used in the Year 7 literacy and numeracy lessons. An extra teacher supports English for one hour a week in Year 9.

Time allocations to subjects (h:min per week)		Year		
		7	8	9
	<b>English and literacy</b>	3:30	3:00	3:00
	<b>Mathematics and numeracy</b>	3:30	3:00	3:00
	<b>Science</b>	3:00	3:00	3:00
	<b>Design and technology</b>	2:00	2:00	2:00
	<b>ICT</b> (plus application of ICT in other subjects)	1:00	1:00	1:00
	<b>Humanities</b> (HI, GG, RE, CT)	4:00	5:00	5:00
	<b>Modern foreign languages</b>	3:00	3:00	3:00
	<b>Art and design</b>	1:00	1:00	1:00
	<b>Music</b>	1:00	1:00	1:00
	<b>Drama</b>	1:00	1:00	1:00
	<b>PE</b>	2:00	2:00	2:00
	<b>*PSHE/Careers</b>	–	–	–

\* PSHE and careers are taught in a rotating lesson throughout the year (36 one-hour lessons)

A wide range of extra-curricular activities is on offer to pupils, particularly in the performing arts, but also sports, educational visits, school journeys and summer camps.

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## Case study 3: A city comprehensive school

### Characteristics and context

This school is an 11 to 16 mixed comprehensive school in a busy south-coast port. It opened six years ago in purpose-built accommodation. It has high attendance rates in all year groups, good success at Key Stage 4, measured by added value, and excellent rates of post-16 take-up.

In a recent review of its curriculum the school concluded that, good though its curriculum was, its aim to foster the full potential of every pupil was not being realised. Staff felt that some pupils were losing ground on transfer from primary school and that, for many pupils, the pace of learning in Years 7 and 8 was too slow. The school proposes to change the pattern of its curriculum at Key Stages 3 and 4 and the way it organises pupils, within the existing framework of a teaching week of 25 hours.

The principle behind its plans, developed in partnership with the LEA, is the desire to accelerate pupils through the programmes of study at Key Stage 3, and to broaden and deepen their studies in Year 9 and beyond. The scheme has links with local post-16 providers and with a local independent school.

### Ethos, values and aims

The school sets out its aspirations for its pupils as follows:

*They will follow a curriculum that is stimulating and challenging and that, crucially, takes fully into account the standards they have already reached when they join the school.*

*They will reach the highest standard of attainment that they can – well in excess of national expectations for the school.*

*They will be offered a greater diversity of opportunity at Key Stage 4 to encourage them to stay in education beyond the age of 16, and to lock them into post-16 opportunities as early as possible.*

*They will leave the school with the skills and desire to be autonomous, life-long learners.*

### The school's proposals

Year 7 pupils will be grouped into three main bands: those who enter the school having achieved level 5 or above, those entering at level 4, and those entering at level 3 or below. The bands will be formed in two different ways:

Group 1: organised by Key Stage 2 test results in mathematics and science;

Group 2: organised by Key Stage 2 test results in English.

For mathematics, science and ICT lessons, pupils will be taught in bands organised from group 1. For English and humanities lessons, pupils will be taught in bands organised from group 2. It will be possible for pupils to be in different bands for different subjects so that the curriculum is tailored to their needs. In all other subjects, pupils work in mixed-ability groups.

In all cases, the pupils will, from the very beginning of Year 7, start on learning programmes appropriate to their previous achievements.

The Key Stage 3 curriculum will be accelerated for all pupils in the level 5 band and, in certain subjects, for the level 4 band, so that the work is completed in two years. The level 3 band will continue to complete Key Stage 3 in three years.



The school has set a target that 100% of its pupils will attain the national expectation (level 5 at Key Stage 3) by the age of 14. It intends that a proportion of the pupils will be entered one year early for the Key Stage 3 tests but it does not regard this as essential to its plan.

The level 5 band will start work on GCSE courses in Year 9, with a view to achieving at least five GCSE grades A\*–C by the end of Year 10. The level 4 band will start work on some GCSE subjects in Year 9.

The school will incorporate into its Year 11 curriculum a greater variety of courses and emphasise a multimedia approach. Pupils will be able to extend their skills and knowledge and have greater choice in what they study. This, it recognises, will require much closer cooperation with the 16 to 19 sector.

### Plan for the level 5 band

		Year				
		7	8	9	10	11
English		Key Stage 3		GCSE English and English Literature		GCSE Media Studies
		Key Stage 3		GCSE Mathematics		AS Statistics
Mathematics		Key Stage 3		GCSE Mathematics to grade A*		
		Key Stage 3		GCSE Science double award		AS Biology
Science		Key Stage 3		GCSE Biology, Chemistry, Physics		
		Key Stage 3 HI and GG and some aspects of citizenship		GCSE Integrated Humanities		GCSE History, Geography or RE
Humanities		Key Stage 3 HI and GG and some aspects of citizenship		GCSE Integrated Humanities		Voc. GCSE e.g. Leisure and Tourism
		Core RE				
MFL		Key Stage 3 French or German		GCSE French/German		2nd language
		Key Stage 3 French or German			GCSE French/German	
Design and technology		Key Stage 3		GCSE Design and Technology		
		Key Stage 3		Vocational GCSE Engineering or Manufacturing		
Arts		Key Stage 3 art and design and music, with drama and dance		Foundation/GCSE Expressive Arts		GCSE Art (single subject)
PE		Core PE (2 hours per week)				
ICT		Key Stage 3 ICT		ICT key skill		Voc. GCSE ICT double award
		plus cross-curricular ICT			Cross-curricular ICT	
Citizenship, PSHE and careers		Rolling one-hour period per week, citizenship with PSHE and careers education		Rolling one-hour period per week of CT and PSHE, plus five conference days		
		Rolling one-hour period per week, citizenship with PSHE and careers education		Duke of Edinburgh Scheme, etc.		
Other		Vocational or AS 'top up' or free choice				

## Appendix 1 *A basis for deciding time allocations*

### *Starting points for allocating time*

There are no prescribed time allocations. It is up to each school to determine the amount of time needed for its pupils to cover the programmes of study successfully in all subjects.

The challenge for senior and subject leaders is to decide how to give enough teaching time to the core curriculum and ICT, while at the same time ensuring that pupils study a broad curriculum in sufficient depth and to the expected standard. This will enable pupils to make informed choices about routes to follow after Key Stage 3 and to follow those routes successfully.

Annual monitoring by the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA) of the school curriculum gathers extensive information from a representative sample of schools, and from LEAs and professional associations. Monitoring evidence collected since the 1995 review of the National Curriculum suggests that the times in the table below could be starting points for thinking about the timetabled teaching time needed for a broad, well-balanced Key Stage 3 curriculum for every pupil.

DES Circular 7/90 recommended a teaching week of at least 24 hours for Key Stage 3. However, the DfEE 1999 Pupil Census showed that 78% of secondary schools had a teaching week of 25 hours or more. The percentage column of the table therefore refers to a 25-hour teaching week to reflect what the majority of schools now provide.

The times are averaged over the three years of the key stage, but this should not be taken to mean that each subject has to be taught every week, every term or even every year.

Subject	Average hours:minutes per week	Total hours over one year of 36 weeks	% of typical 25-hour teaching week
<b>English</b>	3:00	108	12%
<b>Mathematics</b>	3:00	108	12%
<b>Science</b>	3:00	108	12%
<b>Design and technology</b>	1:30	54	6%
<b>ICT</b>	1:00	36	4%
<b>History</b>	1:15	45	5%
<b>Geography</b>	1:15	45	5%
<b>MFL (first MFL)</b>	2:00	72	8%
<b>Art and design</b>	1:00	36	4%
<b>Music</b>	1:00	36	4%
<b>Physical education</b>	1:30	54	6%
<b>Citizenship</b>	0:45	27	3%
<b>Religious education</b>	1:15	45	5%
<b>Totals</b>	<b>21:30</b>	<b>774 hours</b>	<b>86%</b>

*NOTE: The table is based on 36 weeks of teaching time in a teaching year of 38 weeks (190 days). This allows two weeks (10 days) for special curriculum events and activities, such as religious festivals, concerts, school council meetings, elections and debates, fieldwork, educational visits and sports days.*

## Notes on the starting points

The suggested starting points are based on the programmes of study for each National Curriculum subject. They take into account the notional times which guided the Dearing review of the National Curriculum, subsequent evidence from QCA's monitoring, and the following considerations.

- The starting points for English, mathematics and science are based on guidance in the Key Stage 3 National Strategy publications: *Framework for teaching English: Years 7, 8 and 9*, *Framework for teaching mathematics: Years 7, 8 and 9* and *Key Stage 3 National Strategy: Management guide – lessons from the pilot*.
- The starting point for ICT is based on the expectation that there will also be significant opportunities for pupils to apply and develop their ICT capability in all other subjects.
- The starting point for MFL is based on pupils being taught one modern foreign language. Two modern foreign languages would not necessarily require twice the amount of time.
- The starting point for physical education reflects the commitment in the Government's White Paper, *Schools – achieving success* (DfES, 2001), of 'an entitlement of two hours of high quality PE and sport each week in and out of school for all children'.
- As citizenship does not become statutory until August 2002, the starting point for allocating timetabled teaching time to it is an estimate. The starting point assumes that citizenship is taught in several ways: in citizenship lessons, in other National Curriculum subject lessons, by specific citizenship activities, and through pupils' involvement in the life of the school and the wider community.
- The starting point for religious education is based on the DFE Circular 1/94 *Religious education and collective worship*, which states that '45 hours a year will be devoted to religious education'.

## Decisions to be made by schools

The overall allocation of time to a subject will result from discussions among teachers, subject leaders and senior management teams, taking account of priorities identified by the school and any constraints imposed by staffing or accommodation.

The starting points for thinking about time suggested in the table are approximate because they may not correspond exactly with the length of a school's lessons. In practice, many schools will exceed them. Time allocated to subjects may also vary between schools, between Years 7, 8 and 9, and even between particular classes in a school. Time allocations may also have to be calculated separately for individual pupils, or groups of pupils, to meet their specific learning needs, for example, in English and mathematics.

If a school chose to use the times in the table as starting points for allocating time to subjects, it would have a further 14% flexibility to decide how teaching time is used over 36 weeks of the school year. In the total teaching year of 38 weeks, or 950 hours in a typical school, the further flexibility would be 173 hours – 18% of teaching time.

The way that time is used will depend on the school's analysis of its pupils' needs and on the school's aims and strengths. A school that intends to review the design and timetabling of its Key Stage 3 curriculum could consider this guidance, consult all the interested parties and then make its decisions based on what is best to improve teaching and learning in the school.

### Example: School A

The pupils entering Year 7 of school A have achieved relatively good standards in the core subjects by the end of Key Stage 2. The school has decided that discrete teaching time of three hours per week for each core subject will be sufficient throughout Key Stage 3, provided that pupils who are below level 4 at the start of Year 7 have some extra support.

The school bases its weekly timetable on 25 one-hour lessons per week. There is the same distribution of teaching time in each of Years 7, 8 and 9.

The school has identified a Key Stage 3 'basic curriculum' offering the minimum teaching time in each National Curriculum subject, to which it adds a PSHE and careers programme. Some aspects of citizenship are integrated into lessons in humanities subjects and others into PSHE. Both are supplemented by extra-curricular activities and the community life of the school. The 'basic curriculum' requires 22 hours per week.

The school allocates the remaining 3 hours per week (12%) in these ways:

- 30 minutes extra each week for PE, so that four of the elements of the National Curriculum for PE can be taught during the year, supplemented by extra-curricular competitive sports and outdoor and adventure activities;
- 30 minutes extra each week for design and technology to allow study in depth in this practical subject;
- 60 minutes extra each week for discrete teaching of ICT, supplemented by the teaching of ICT capability in all subjects, to help the school to meet its ICT targets;
- 60 minutes each week for an enhancement programme, incorporating an opportunity for most pupils to study a second modern foreign language from Year 8.

Subject	No. of 'basic' 60-minute lessons per week	'Basic' time per week (h:min)	Actual no. of lessons allocated	Total time per week (h:min)
English	3	3:00	3	3:00
Mathematics	3	3:00	3	3:00
Science	3	3:00	3	3:00
Design and technology	1.5	1:30	2	2:00
ICT	1	1:00	2	2:00
*History, geography, RE	4	4:00	4	4:00
Modern foreign languages	2	2:00	2	2:00
Art and design	1	1:00	1	1:00
Music	1	1:00	1	1:00
PE	1.5	1:30	2	2:00
*PSHE and careers education	1	1:00	1	1:00
Enhancement, including 2nd MFL	–	–	1	1:00
<b>Totals</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>22:00</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>25:00</b>

\* Aspects of citizenship are incorporated into history, geography, RE and PSHE programmes.



### Example: School B

School B is a 9 to 13 middle school. The school's Key Stage 2 results have risen steadily to around the national average but relatively few pupils achieve level 5. For Key Stage 3 pupils, each afternoon starts with 15 minutes of brisk teaching by form tutors, alternating each day between literacy and numeracy skills. The programmes for these sessions are coordinated by the school's literacy coordinator (the head of humanities) and the head of mathematics.

The rest of the day is divided into seven periods of 40 minutes. This allows near-daily lessons in English and mathematics, continuing the pattern established in Years 5 and 6. Practical subjects are taught in double or triple lessons. Two periods each week are allocated to a PSHE programme, combined with citizenship and careers education.

The school's choice of 40-minute lessons reduces its flexibility. It allocates this time to strengthening the teaching of ICT capability in discrete teaching time, and to offering a second modern foreign language in Year 8.

Subject	'Basic' time per week (h:min)	Year		Average time per week (h:min)
		7	8	
Literacy and numeracy skills		–	–	1:15
English	3:00	5	4	3:00
Mathematics	3:00	5	4	3:00
Science	3:00	4	5	3:00
Art, design and technology	2:30	4	4	2:40
ICT	1:00	2	2	1:20
Modern foreign languages	2:00	3	4	2:20
History	1:15	2	2	1:20
Geography	1:15	2	2	1:20
Music	1:00	1	2	1:00
Physical education	1:30	3	2	1:40
Religious education	1:15	2	2	1:20
Citizenship, PSHE and careers	1:20	2	2	1:20
<b>Totals</b>	<b>22:05</b>	<b>35</b>		<b>24:35</b>

### Example: School C

The Year 7 intake of school C includes significant numbers of pupils who have yet to achieve the levels expected for their age in English, mathematics and science.

The school bases its timetable on 50-minute lessons, with 30 periods per week. Like school A, it adds a PSHE and careers programme to its 'basic curriculum'. The school's basic curriculum requires 22 hours 20 minutes per week.

The school allocates the remaining 2 hours 40 minutes per week (11%) in the following ways:

- 20 minutes extra for each core subject;
- 25 minutes extra for the group of humanities subjects, to ensure that the application of literacy and numeracy skills can be securely established in a range of contexts, and that discrete lessons of each subject can be taught;
- 15 minutes extra each week for music, and for art and design, to ensure a balanced curriculum.

The school operates a ten-day timetable to provide the flexibility needed for art and music: two art lessons and one music lesson in the first week, and vice versa in the second week. There is a similar arrangement for ICT and MFL.

Subject	No. of 'basic' 50-minute lessons per week	'Basic' time per week (h:min)	Actual no. of lessons allocated	Total time per week (h:min)
English	3.6	3:00	4	3:20
Mathematics	3.6	3:00	4	3:20
Science	3.6	3:00	4	3:20
Design and technology	1.8	1:30	2	1:40
*ICT	1.2	1:00	1.5	1:15
History, geography, RE	4.5	3:45	5	4:10
Modern foreign languages	2.4	2:00	2.5	2:05
Art and design	1.2	1:00	1.5	1:15
Music	1.2	1:00	1.5	1:15
PE	1.8	1:30	2	1:40
Citizenship	0.9	0:45	1	0:50
PSHE and careers education	1	0:50	1	0:50
<b>Totals</b>	<b>26.8</b>	<b>22:20</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>25:00</b>

\* Some aspects of ICT are incorporated into other subjects.





### Guidance on teaching National Curriculum subjects and religious education

- *The National Curriculum: handbook for secondary teachers in England*  
This includes non-statutory guidelines for personal, social and health education.  
[www.nc.uk.net](http://www.nc.uk.net)
- *Framework for teaching English: Years 7, 8 and 9*  
*Framework for teaching mathematics: Years 7, 8 and 9*  
[www.standards.dfes.gov.uk/keystage3](http://www.standards.dfes.gov.uk/keystage3)
- *Citizenship at Key Stages 3 and 4* is available from QCA, reference 00/58  
[www.dfes.gov.uk/citizenship](http://www.dfes.gov.uk/citizenship)
- QCA/DfES schemes of work: science, ICT, design and technology, history, geography, modern foreign languages, art and design, music, physical education, citizenship, religious education  
[www.standards.dfes.gov.uk/schemes](http://www.standards.dfes.gov.uk/schemes)
- Further guidance on religious education is provided in DFE Circular 1/94, and in *Religious education: non-statutory guidance*, available from QCA, reference 00/576

### Guidance on other statutory requirements

- Guidance on sex and relationship education is available from the DfES, reference DfES/0116/2000.
- Guidance on careers education is in DfEE Circular 5/98, in *Careers education and the new curriculum*, reference DfES/0039/2000, and in *Learning outcomes from careers education and guidance*, available from QCA, reference 99/359.
- *Enterprise through the National Curriculum*  
[www.dti.gov.uk/enterpriseguide](http://www.dti.gov.uk/enterpriseguide)
- *Education for sustainable development*  
[www.nc.uk.net/esd](http://www.nc.uk.net/esd)

### Other useful publications

- *Planning, teaching and assessing the curriculum for pupils with learning difficulties*, QCA  
[www.nc.uk.net/ld/](http://www.nc.uk.net/ld/)
- *Guidance on teaching gifted and talented pupils*, QCA  
[www.nc.uk.net/gt/](http://www.nc.uk.net/gt/)
- Key Stage 3 National Strategy:  
*Literacy Progress Units*  
*Springboard 7*  
*Year 9 booster kit*, including revision guidance and leaflets for pupils and parents  
[www.standards.dfes.gov.uk/keystage3](http://www.standards.dfes.gov.uk/keystage3)
- *Key Stage 3 National Strategy: Management guide – lessons from the pilot*  
[www.standards.dfes.gov.uk/keystage3](http://www.standards.dfes.gov.uk/keystage3)
- *Report of the independent commission on the organisation of the school year*, Local Government Association (tel: 020 7664 3299)

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Central Foundation Girls' School	Tower Hamlets LEA
Clough Hall Technology School	Staffordshire LEA
Deer Park School	Gloucestershire LEA
Frederick Gough School	North Lincolnshire LEA
Hazel Grove High School	Stockport LEA
Joseph Rowntree School	York LEA
Millthorpe School	York LEA
Ossett School	Wakefield LEA
Oxclose School	Sunderland LEA
Penkridge Middle School	Staffordshire LEA
Pingle School	Derbyshire LEA
St Benedict's Catholic School and Sports College	Gloucestershire LEA
The John Cabot City Technology College	Bristol
The Highfield School	Hertfordshire LEA
Tytherington High School	Cheshire LEA
Varndean High School	Brighton and Hove LEA
Westborough High School	Kirklees LEA
Westfield School	Hertfordshire LEA
Wilnecote School	Staffordshire LEA
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