

✪ The National Curriculum of England and Wales

Education is compulsory for all children in England and Wales from ages five to sixteen. The subject matter studied by students is based around the four **key stages** (or KS) of the **National Curriculum**.

The National Literacy Strategy and the National Numeracy Strategy were introduced to complement the curriculum for english, science and mathematics in primary schools. Many schools have thorough schemes of work that teachers can follow for their planning and delivery of the curriculum.

These are also available on the Internet. (www.qca.org.uk, www.nc.uk.net)

✪ The structure of the UK education system is outlined below:

Ages/Key Stage	Stage	Tests	Phase
Foundation			Primary
3-4 yrs old	Nursery		
4-5 yrs old	Reception		
Key Stage 1			
5-6 yrs old	Year 1		
6-7	Year 2	National tests	
Key Stage 2			
7-8 yrs old	Year 3		
8-9 yrs old	Year 4		
9-10 yrs old	Year 5		
10-11 yrs old	Year 6	National tests	Secondary
Key Stage 3			
11-12 yrs old	Year 7		
12-13 yrs old	Year 8		
13-14 yrs old	Year 9		
Key Stage 4			
14-15 yrs old	Year 10	Some GCSEs	
15-16 yrs old	Year 11	GCSE/GNVQs	
Post 16 Education			
16-17 yrs old	Year 12	AS/A Levels	
17-18 yrs old	Year 13	AS/A Levels	

✪ How the curriculum relates to the key stages

Within the key stages, different areas of the curriculum are mandatory:

KS1 and 2 English, mathematics, science, design & technology, history, geography, art, music and PE.

KS3 All the above, plus a modern language

KS4 English, mathematics, science, PE, technology and a modern language

All students study **religious education** throughout the four key stages, based on a non-or urge a particular religion on them. It needs to reflect the broadly Christian tradition of the UK, but should also encompass other religion.denominational curriculum decided locally. This curriculum should not try to convert students

✪ Assessment

Students are formally tested by their teachers when they first start school: this is called the **baseline test**. There are also national tests (or SATs) in **english** and **mathematics** at the end of key stages 1 and 3, with the addition of SATs in **science** at the end of key stages 2 and 3.

At the end of key stage 4, students sit national examinations such as General Certificates of Secondary Education (GCSEs) and General National Vocational Qualifications (GNVQs).

Students can also continue their schooling beyond the age of 16. From 16 – 18 they can study for further GCSEs or GNVQs, or work towards the **AS/A2** qualifications in individual subjects. All of these qualifications are taught at secondary schools or in colleges of further education and can enable students to progress to university.

✪ The academic year

The UK academic year runs from September to July and is split into three terms, with a one week (usually) half term in the middle of each. The year is organised approximately as follows:

Autumn Term

Dates:	Starts September until the third week in December
Half term:	End of October
Christmas Holidays:	About two weeks

Spring Term

Dates:	First/second week in January- Easter
Half term:	Middle/end February
Easter Holidays:	About two weeks

Summer Term

Dates:	Two weeks after Easter until the third week of July
Half term:	Whitsun Week (end of May)
Summer Holidays:	About six weeks

Within these term dates, there will also be five mandatory **INSET** (In-service Training) days used to promote the professional development of staff.

✪ Special needs

Students with specific learning difficulties, or special educational needs (SEN), are often taught within mainstream schools. Such learning difficulties can be emotional, behavioural, physical or through conditions such as dyslexia.

SEN students will be monitored and their progress evaluated via an IEP (Individual Education Plan) under the supervision of the school's SENCO (Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator).

Students are assessed as to the level of their needs (from Stage1 to a full statement) and the school is then given state funds to help individual students, through withdrawal from lessons and/or in-class support - possibly from a learning support assistant.

✪ Different ways to teach in the UK

Supply teaching – day to day teaching cover for teachers absent due to meetings or illness etc

Contract – usually applies when a school gives a teacher a contract directly and to more extended periods (e.g. long illness or maternity cover)

Permanent – Usually applies to teachers who are taken onto the school's payroll with no fixed term contract.

In school

Each school is unique and will organise their day differently. However, they will follow a broadly similar schedule. This section aims to introduce you to a typical day and to give you some pointers on how to work effectively within the UK education system.

Summary

Class sizes are usually around thirty. Schools are not allowed to exceed this number at KS1 but may do so elsewhere. If classes are '**set**', for example for SATs work in primary schools or for particular subjects in secondary schools, you may find that the less able classes are smaller, sometimes containing less than twenty students.

In primary schools, teachers generally work exclusively with one class for a whole year. As their class teacher, you will be the teacher your class will know best and will turn to.

As a secondary teacher, you will have your own timetable and classes taken from throughout the school, teaching your own subject specialism. The number of times that you see a class a week will depend on your subject, the student's age and the number of periods that the school day is divided into. In a timetable of eight periods a day and forty a week, an history teacher may see their class twice a week at KS3, for example.

Within the school week, you should also have a number of non-contact periods (about 15% of the timetable). These are to give you time to prepare resources and mark work. You may also be used for lesson cover for absent teachers.

As a full time member of staff, you will be expected to:

- Set your own work based on the school's Programme of Study
- Mark any work set, according to the School Policies
- Set and mark homework
- Attend relevant out-of-school meetings, e.g. staff, key stage and year group meetings, and parents' evenings
- Act as a Form Tutor if you are a secondary teacher. This will mean that you are responsible for overseeing the pastoral welfare of a class of about twenty five students

Day One

When you arrive at a school for the first time, ideally you can expect to:

Be greeted by the headteacher (principal), deputy headteacher or your line manager (e.g. head of department or key stage co-ordinator)

Receive your timetable and a map of the school and be shown the staffroom

Receive or be shown a copy of the staff handbook listing the school's policies on, for example, discipline, health, and safety and equal opportunities

Secondary teachers should also receive their department's handbook, setting out the procedures for their own subject

Receive general information on e.g. timings, assembly, registration, breaks and lunchtimes

Be told procedures for you to obtain coffee and lunch

Be shown where resources are kept and how the photocopier works

Be taken through the emergency procedures

Be given useful contacts, such as the administrative staff and nurse, as well as where to find them

Receive information on students with special needs

If you are a primary teacher, check if your class will need to be collected at the start of each lesson and then taken elsewhere at the end of the lesson, e.g. the dining room or playground.

Find out how to get to these places!

Please do not be afraid to ask for any of this information!

A TYPICAL PRIMARY SCHOOL DAY

Before school

Teachers usually arrive between 8.00am and 8.30am to prepare resources for morning lessons and to brief any **learning support assistants** that they have supporting children in the classroom.

The children will arrive at about 8.50am and it is best to prepare a simple task for the first five to ten minutes of the day, e.g. hand-writing or reading.

At 9:00am, the children are **registered** to find out who is present and who is absent. This is usually followed by a half hour assembly once a week and prayers in class on the other days. On Mondays, it is usually necessary to collect the children's lunch money for the week.

The Morning

The pattern of the morning is largely dictated these days by the numeracy and literacy hours required by the government. The activities for these two subjects are set out in detail by the government and a large percentage of weekly planning by teachers will revolve around preparing for this.

An hour is to be spent on both Numeracy and Literacy, although this will normally be broken up by a fifteen minute discussion activity and morning break.

Some classes will have a full time learning support assistant who can take a group of children needing extra support or listen to readers. If you are teaching alone, you will need to organise independent group work during literacy hour to allow you to hear groups of readers daily.

The rest of the morning is spent looking at subjects that need visiting daily such as spellings and word sounds.

Lunchtime

The lunch break will be around midday and will generally last just over an hour. There is usually a cafeteria as well as a dining room for packed lunches. Teachers will have some kind of weekly duty to oversee the canteen at lunchtime or at break (when snacks are sold), or to patrol the school. Lunchtime is also a time in which teachers can prepare resources for the afternoon.

The Afternoon

Afternoon registration with your class will be at about 1.30pm. The afternoon is usually the time to look at two other curriculum areas, e.g. science, geography, PE etc, with a short break between the two. One whole afternoon a week may be given over purely to art or design & technology. If you are involved in sports activities, you will need to find out the procedure for organizing games in the gym or for swimming. You may even have to lead the students elsewhere to the playing fields.

The school day normally finishes with a story followed by the preparations to go home; e.g. the distribution of reading bags.

This description has been written from the perspective of a key stage 1 teacher: The organisation of the day will differ slightly for key stage 2 as the children are older and will therefore manage their own work independently. However, the broad outline remains the same.

A TYPICAL SECONDARY SCHOOL DAY

The start of the day

School can begin anywhere from 8.00am to 8.45am with the majority of schools starting at about 8.30am with **registration**. This is where form tutors, who are responsible for a particular class, will register the form to find out who is present and who is absent.

Registration is followed by some kind of **Act of Worship** – this could be an assembly, a chapel service or just a prayer in class.

Both registration and this daily Act of Worship are legal requirements set by the Government.

Secondary schools tend to be organised geographically by department so that there will be a maths area, a language area etc. each study area will include classrooms, storage for books and often a faculty room for staff.

Students will travel from department to department for lessons and there is often five minutes of 'travel time' built in between each lesson. If you are very fortunate, you will have your own classroom to teach in. However, it is more likely that you will also have to do at least some 'travelling' or sharing of rooms.

The Morning

The format of the morning will be to have between four and six lessons of about 35 to 60 minutes with a short break (about 20 minutes) in the middle. The end of each lesson is usually indicated by a bell.

The Afternoon

The lunch break is usually about an hour and gives students the chance to eat, relax and take part in clubs. There is generally a cafeteria as well as a dining room for packed lunches. Teachers will have some kind of weekly duty to oversee - the canteen at lunchtime or break (when snacks are sold), or to patrol the school. Whether lunch is free to staff depends on the school. The end of lunchtime is marked by afternoon registration and followed by between one and three lessons.

The school day ends between 3.00pm and 4.00pm although there are often clubs or sports matches after school.

Better teaching

In the classroom

If you are to be a successful practitioner and also enjoy your teaching, you will need:

Confidence

A positive attitude

To be control – of your class, your resources, your subject matter

To have initiative – be prepared for the unexpected

Always remember that you should try not to take your experiences too personally. There will be some things you quite simply cannot resolve in a school. You are responsible for the learning climate in your own classroom but you cannot change the ethos of a school all on your own.

If you are having a problem with a child, class or even a member of staff, you do not have to cope alone. Talk to someone in the school, preferably your line manager, as they have a responsibility to you to make it possible for you to do your job. You are entitled to expect support.

Always log events, particularly those involving violence. It can be a good idea to keep a daybook or journal so that you have a record of your teaching in case of any enquiries.

Set out below are some ideas which should make your life easier in the classroom. Most form only a guide to classroom management in UK schools. With a few legal exceptions, please use these ideas to fit into your style of teaching:

Before the lesson

Always be on time for the class

Look ahead. If there are any 'complex' resources to be manipulated, e.g. a video, check that you know how to work them **before** the lesson

Check that you have everything that you will need for a particular lesson, e.g. textbooks, pens etc.

Remember that the presentation of your classroom can be controlled by you. Students are likely to work better, and take pride in a cheerful, relevant environment

Use any classroom support you may have, from nursery nurses to learning support assistants.

They will know the students and are there to support you

Starting the lesson

Always make your expectations of behaviour and learning objectives clear to the class

Hand out any resources first, settle the class and then introduce yourself, and your expectations.

Classroom management

Make sure you are clear on the school's discipline and praise procedures and where to send a child if there are a problem you cannot resolve

Never leave a class on their own: always send a student for help

Remember to praise students as much as possible. The ratio of praise to reprimand should be seven to one ideally. Use the school's reward systems to help you where possible. **Catch students doing things well and tell them!**

It is vital to remember that, under the 1996 Education Act, a teacher is forbidden to use any degree of physical contact which is deliberately intended to punish a student, or which is primarily intended to cause pain, injury or humiliation (sections 448-550)

Try to learn the students' names as quickly as possible. It makes discipline much easier and can be an excellent ice-breaker: You may be able to design an opening activity around this. Another easy way to help with this is to draw up a plan of the classroom.

If the students disclose information to you or you notice any suspicious behaviour of physical symptoms of abuse, you **must** report this to the teacher designated in the school (there should be a named person within the school who deals with this). You cannot keep a student's confidences.

Ending the Lesson

Always leave time at the end of the lesson to clear up resources and take in work if necessary. At the end of the lesson, ensure that the students leave in an orderly way. Secondary school teachers should always *dismiss* a class. Students should not disappear out of the classroom when the bell goes but wait for you to dismiss them, preferably row by row or table by table. Always leave the classroom tidy. Resources should be put away and chairs stowed under the tables (or on top at the end of the day)

What are your expectations?

Be clear in your mind what you expect from the class. How can they know how to behave and what they should achieve if you yourself are not sure? You need to decide:

What levels of noise are acceptable in the classroom

What is practical - in terms of the activity they are doing or the length of the lesson?

How will they know to stop working/be silent if you want to talk to them?

How will you differentiate the work for the varying abilities?

How will you organize the collecting in and handing out of resources, etc?

How will you praise/admonish the students?

Where possible, agree these expectations in consultation **with the students** as they are more likely to respect constraints that they

Feel ownership or can see the reasons for

This is also true when it comes to starting the lesson, if you set out your **aims** clearly; it is easier for the students to understand the **purpose** of the tasks that they are undertaking as well as the result that they are heading towards.

Student Expectations - students themselves want teachers to explain things well, listen to them, be concerned about them as individuals, show them how to get better, keep control of the class and have a sense of humour

✪ Defining Government Agencies and Types of School

DfCFS	Department for Children Families and Schools. This government body manages the education system of England and Wales
TDA	Training and Development Agency. This administers the funding for teacher training and accredits the various teacher training courses
QCA	Qualifications and Curriculum Authority. This is the statutory body to advise the Government on all matters concerning curriculum and assessment in England
OFSTED	Office of Standards in Education. They organize the inspection of all state schools and LEAs in England. Independent schools are inspected by HMI (Her Majesty's Inspectors). Inspections should take place every six years (or more frequently if weaknesses are apparent)
LAs	Local Authorities. Have the responsibility for providing and funding education in their area of England and Wales for all students aged 5 to 16
Primary	schools for students aged 5 to 11 (Key Stages 1 & 2). Some primary schools have a Reception/Nursery class for children aged 3 – 5
Nursery	schools for children aged 3 – 5 (Foundation Stage)
Infant	schools for students aged 5 – 7 (Key Stage 1)
Junior	schools for students aged 7 – 11 (Key Stage 2)
Secondary	- schools for students aged 11 – 16 (Key Stages 3 & 4). Some secondary schools have a 'Sixth Form' for students aged 16 – 18
State School	these schools educate around 90% of students in England and Wales. They make no charge on parents but are funded as community, foundation, voluntary or specialist schools
Community	schools owned and maintained by the LEA who also set the student's admissions criteria in the school. These form the majority of primary and secondary schools

🌐 Useful websites

A*Star Teachers

www.astarteachers.co.uk

Government Organisations

Department for Families,
Children and Schools (DFCS)

www.dfcs.gov.uk

Teachers Training Agency

www.canteach.gov.uk

GTC

www.gtce.org.uk

National Curriculum

www.nc.uk.net

QCA (National Qualifications)

www.qca.org.uk

Literacy

www.standards.dfee.gov.uk/literacy/

Numeracy

www.standards.dfee.gov.uk/numeracy

OFSTED

www.ofsted.gov.uk

National Grid for Learning

www.ngfl.gov.uk

Home Office

www.homeoffice.gov.uk

Resources

Learn UK

www.learn.co.uk

BBC Education

www.bbc.co.uk/education/home

Just for Teachers

www.justforteachers.co.uk

Teachers Web

www.teachersweb.co.uk

Teachersnet

www.teachers.net

Teachernet

www.teachernet.gov.uk

Primary Resources 1

www.primaryresources.co.uk

Primary Resources 2

www.teachingideas.co.uk

Primary Resources 3

www.topical-resources.co.uk

Information on Education

Schools

www.schoolsnet.com

Times Educational Supplement

www.tes.co.uk

Guardian Education

www.educationunlimited.co.uk

Examination Boards

AQA

www.aqa.org.uk

Edexcel

www.edexcel.org.uk

OCR

www.ocr.org.uk

Accommodation

Loot

www.loot.com

Gumtree

www.gumtree.com

Net-Lettings

www.net-lettings.co.uk

B&B

www.hotelsgbltd.co.uk

B&B

www.london-hostels.co.uk

www.a-london-guide.co.uk

www.timeout.com/london

www.lonelyplanet.com/destinations

www.activeabroad.com

www.easyeverything.co.uk

www.homefreehome.co.uk