

Key Stage 3 Curriculum

Aims and Objectives

Aim

The Northern Ireland Curriculum aims to empower young people to achieve their potential and to make informed and responsible decisions throughout their lives.

Curriculum Objectives

The Northern Ireland Curriculum provides learning opportunities for each young person to develop as:

- an individual;
- a contributor to society; and
- a contributor to the economy and the environment.

The Curriculum Objectives recognise that education has a responsibility to prepare young people to manage their own lives, relationships and lifestyles and also to engage positively with others in sharing and protecting the resources of the planet now and for future generations.

The [Big Picture](#) provides a concise visual summary of the Key Stage 3 Curriculum.

Key Stage 3 Skills and Capabilities

At the heart of the curriculum lies an emphasis on the development of skills and capabilities for lifelong learning and for contributing effectively to society. These consist of the **Cross-Curricular Skills** and **Thinking Skills and Personal Capabilities**.

The **Cross-Curricular Skills** of **Communication, Using Mathematics** and **Using Information and Communications Technology (ICT)** are the bedrock skills through which young people access knowledge. These skills are developed across all **Areas of Learning**. **Thinking Skills** are tools that help children go beyond the acquisition of knowledge to deepen their understanding and apply ideas, generate new possibilities and make decisions, as well as to plan, monitor and evaluate their progress. The **Thinking Skills** are:

Managing Information;

Thinking, Problem-Solving and Decision-Making;

Being Creative;

Working with Others; and




Self-Management.

These form the basis of learning across all areas.

Personal and interpersonal skills and capabilities underpin success in all aspects of life. Children's self-esteem and self-confidence are explicitly fostered along with their ability to manage their own emotions, to interact effectively with others and eventually to regulate and enhance their own learning. These skills and capabilities are embedded in the **Areas of Learning**.



Key Stage 3 Curriculum

Summary of the Cross-Curricular Skills



 Communication	Useful Links
<p>Communication is central to the whole curriculum and enables pupils to express themselves socially, emotionally and physically and to develop as individuals, engage with others and contribute as members of society.</p> <p>The modes of communication include Talking and Listening and Reading and Writing as well as Non-Verbal Communication and the use of Multimedia and ICT technologies.</p> <p>Pupils are encouraged to use a range of modes to convey information and ideas creatively and appropriately and apply their communication knowledge, skills and understanding to real-life meaningful contexts across the curriculum and all Areas of Learning.</p>	<p>Communication</p>
 Using Mathematics	Useful Links
<p>Using Mathematics is the skill of applying mathematical concepts, processes and understanding appropriately in a variety of situations.</p> <p>Mathematical knowledge, understanding and skills includes ways to Communicate Mathematically, Manage Information, Think Critically, Solve Problems and Make Decisions.</p> <p>Pupils should be given opportunities to transfer their understanding, as appropriate, to real-life meaningful contexts across the curriculum and all Areas of Learning.</p> <p>Mathematical knowledge, concepts and skills are consolidated within the Area of Learning for Mathematics and Numeracy.</p>	<p>Using Mathematics</p>
 Using Information and Technology (ICT)	Useful Links
<p>Using ICT provides powerful tools and contexts to support meaningful learning and enrich pupils' learning experiences across the curriculum.</p> <p>Pupils should be enabled to Explore, Express, Exchange, Evaluate and Exhibit knowledge, skills and understanding through using ICT.</p> <p>The creative use of ICT can empower learners to become independent, self-motivated and flexible and helps them develop skills in researching, handling and communicating information in real-life meaningful contexts across the curriculum and all Areas of Learning.</p>	<p>Using ICT</p>

Key Stage 3 Curriculum


Summary of the Thinking Skills and Personal Capabilities

Managing Information	Useful Links
<p>Managing Information involves: Asking, Accessing, Selecting, Recording, Integrating and Communicating. This should occur across all Areas of Learning through a range of approaches, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • asking focused questions; • planning and setting goals; • breaking tasks into sub-tasks; • using their own and others' ideas to locate sources of information; • selecting, classifying, comparing and evaluating information; • selecting the most appropriate method for a task; • using a range of methods for collating, recording and representing information; and • communicating ideas with a sense of audience and purpose. 	<p>Thinking Skills and Personal Capabilities</p> <p>SEN Thinking Skills and Personal Capabilities</p> 
Thinking, Problem-Solving and Decision-Making	Useful Links
<p>Thinking, Problem-Solving and Decision-Making involves: Searching for Meaning, Deepening Understanding and Coping with Challenges. This should occur across all Areas of Learning through a range of approaches, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • sequencing, ordering, classifying and making comparisons; • making predictions, examining evidence and distinguishing fact from opinion; • making links between cause and effect; • justifying methods, opinions and conclusions; • generating possible solutions, trying out alternative approaches and evaluating outcomes; • examining options and weighing up pros and cons; • using different types of questions; and • making connections between learning in different contexts. 	<p>Embedding Thinking Skills and Personal Capabilities</p> <p>SEN Thinking Skills and Personal Capabilities</p> 

Key Stage 3 Curriculum

Being Creative	Useful Links
<p>Being Creative involves: Imagining, Generating, Inventing and Taking Risks for Learning. This should occur across all Areas of Learning through a range of approaches, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • seeking out questions to explore and problems to solve; • experimenting with ideas and questions; • making new connections between ideas or information; • learning from and valuing other people’s ideas; • making ideas real by experimenting with different designs, actions or outcomes; • challenging the usual or routine method; • valuing the unexpected or surprising; • seeing opportunities in mistakes and failures; and • taking risks for learning. 	<p>Educating for Creativity</p> <p>SEN Thinking Skills and Personal Capabilities</p> 
Working with Others	Useful Links
<p>Working with Others involves: Being Collaborative, Being Sensitive To Others’ Feelings and Being Fair and Responsible. This should occur across all Areas of Learning through a range of approaches, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • listening actively and sharing opinions; • developing routines of turn-taking, sharing and co-operating; • giving and responding to feedback; • understanding how actions and words affect others; • adapting behaviour and language to suit different people and situations; • taking personal responsibility for working with others and evaluating their own contribution to the group; • being fair; • respecting the views and opinions of others and reaching agreements using negotiation and compromise; and • suggesting ways of improving approaches to working collaboratively. 	<p>Other Skills</p> <p>Group Work</p> <p>SEN Thinking Skills and Personal Capabilities</p> 

Key Stage 3 Curriculum

Self-Management	Useful Links
<p>Self-Management involves:</p> <p>Evaluating Strengths and Weaknesses, Setting Goals and Targets, Managing and Regulating Self.</p> <p>This should occur across all Areas of Learning through a range of approaches, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • being aware of personal strengths, limitations and interests; • setting and reviewing personal targets; • managing behaviour in a range of situations; • organising and planning how to go about a task; • focusing, sustaining attention and persisting with tasks; • reviewing learning and understanding some aspect or aspects that might be improved; • learning ways to manage own time; • seeking advice when necessary; and • comparing own approach with others in different contexts. 	<p>Thinking Skills and Personal Capabilities</p> <p>Planning for Skills Development</p> <p>SEN Thinking Skills and Personal Capabilities</p> 

Key Stage 3 Curriculum

Areas of Learning

The curriculum is set out in **Areas of Learning**. Learning is connected across all these areas and includes aspects of the **Cross-Curricular Skills, Thinking Skills** and **Personal Capabilities**. The curriculum specifies minimum requirements (but not detailed programmes of study) for the subjects that make up the **Areas of Learning**. Teachers have flexibility to decide how best to interpret and combine these, to provide a broad and balanced curriculum that will prepare their pupils for a rapidly changing world.

The [Big Picture](#) provides a concise visual summary of the Key Stage 3 Curriculum.

Key Stage 3 Areas of Learning at a glance

At Key Stage 3 there are nine Areas of Learning.

For each area there are both statutory and non-statutory elements.

The table below provides a short summary of each area of learning. It also provides links to detailed information about each area of learning.

Summary of the Compulsory Areas of Learning at Key Stage 3	Useful Links
<p>Language and Literacy encourages pupils to develop their skills in talking and listening, and reading and writing through engaging with peers, poetry, prose, drama, non-fiction, media and multimedia to become critical, creative and effective communicators.</p> <p>Pupils have opportunities to appreciate and use language for a range of functional and creative purposes. This will enable them to create and analyse messages in print and digital forms throughout their lives.</p>	<p>Language and Literacy</p>
<p>Mathematics and Numeracy gives pupils a wider understanding of how the world around them works and prepares them for making decisions, solving problems and processing everyday information through creative and critical thinking.</p> <p>It has two subject strands: Mathematics and Financial Capability.</p> <p>Mathematics helps pupils to develop important skills such as calculating, logical thinking and investigating.</p> <p>Financial Capability gives pupils opportunities to develop knowledge and understanding of a range of finance issues that enables them to make competent and responsible financial decisions.</p>	<p>Mathematics and Numeracy</p>

Key Stage 3 Curriculum

Summary of the Compulsory Areas of Learning at Key Stage 3	Useful Links
<p>The Arts has three subject strands: Art and Design, Drama and Music. This area gives pupils opportunities to develop their creative, practical, expressive and problem-solving skills through communicating their ideas, thoughts and feelings to others.</p> <p>The Arts subject strands share overlapping concepts and skills and can be taught by delivering the subject strands together or separately and by making learning connections between strands.</p>	<p>The Arts</p>
<p>Learning for Life and Work has four subject strands: Employability, Local and Global Citizenship, Personal Development, and Home Economics and links the curriculum to the skills and capabilities that are necessary for life and work. This area aims to develop young people as individuals, as contributors to society and as contributors to the economy and the environment.</p> <p>Each school decides on how best to deliver Learning for Life and Work and this area is also reflected in the requirements for all other Areas of Learning.</p>	<p>Learning for Life and Work</p>
<p>Modern Languages gives pupils opportunities to develop effective communication skills through listening, speaking, reading and writing in at least one official language of the European Union.</p> <p>It encourages pupils to explore their personal sense of place in their local area and in the wider world, developing their awareness of cultural diversity and preparing them for moving comfortably between various cultural environments.</p>	<p>Modern Languages</p>
<p>Environment and Society has two subject strands: Geography and History. This gives pupils opportunities to investigate the past and the impact on today's environmental and social issues. Pupils are encouraged to develop their creative and critical thinking skills to solve geographical problems and evaluate a range of historical evidence.</p> <p>Environment and Society is taught by delivering the subject strands together or separately and by making learning connections between strands.</p>	<p>Environment and Society</p>

Key Stage 3 Curriculum

Summary of the Compulsory Areas of Learning at Key Stage 3	Useful Links
<p>Science and Technology has two subject strands: Science and Technology and Design. It aims to stimulate pupils' curiosity, enthusiasm and innovation and promotes an enquiry-based approach to learning. Its relevance and influence will increase further as it delivers novel solutions to worldwide problems.</p> <p>Science and Technology is taught by delivering the subject strands together or separately and by making learning connections between strands.</p>	<p>Science and Technology</p>
<p>Physical Education enables pupils to learn through movement so that they develop, extend and refine their skills in a range of movement contexts. Pupils should take part in a balanced programme of Athletics, Games, Gymnastics and Swimming. Active, enjoyable and challenging Physical Education learning experiences encourage pupils to develop positive attitudes to physical activity, positive sporting behaviour and a sense of fair play.</p>	<p>Physical Education</p>
<p>Religious Education gives pupils opportunities to develop their personal understanding and enhance their spiritual and ethical awareness. The Core Syllabus includes the Revelation of God, the Christian Church, Morality and World Religions. Schools can build on these areas in a way that suits their pupils' needs and the school's ethos.</p> <p>Parents can withdraw their child from part or all of Religious Education or collective worship.</p>	<p>Religious Education</p>