

## The National Curriculum, statutory and non-statutory elements

The National Curriculum is organised into *Key Stages* that are age-related. The Foundation Stage is for children from the age of three to the end of Reception Year; Key Stage 1 is for 5–7-year-olds; Key Stage 2 is for 7–11-year-olds; Key Stage 3 is for 11–14-year-olds; Key Stage 4 is for 14–16-year-olds. It comprises *statutory elements* (core and foundation subjects, Religious Education and, for secondary school students, sex education) and *non-statutory elements* as follows:

- *Core Subjects* (English, Mathematics, Science);
- *Non-core Foundation Subjects* (Design and Technology, Information Technology, History, Geography, Modern Foreign Languages, Art and Design, Music, Physical Education and Citizenship), not all of which apply to all the key stages;
- *Religious Education*;
- *Assessment* (at the end of each key stage – ages 7, 11, 14 and 16).

The framing of the National Curriculum is described variously in terms of :

- 1 *Aims and Purposes*.
- 2 *Subjects* for each key stage.
- 3 *Attainment Targets* (ATs), within which are eight levels of attainment; (for the foundation stage there are no levels prescribed, but there are *Early Learning Goals*).
- 4 *Programmes of Study* (PoS), which specify what students, should be taught at each key stage.
- 5 Eight *Level Descriptions* (LDs) within each attainment target and a category of 'exceptional performance' above level eight; these level descriptions are intended to be used for: (a) assessing attainment at the end of each key stage; (b) planning schemes of work to ensure progression; (c) reporting on students' progress; (d) target setting. The government has also published *performance criteria* for English, mathematics and science, as part of its target-setting agenda, which establish finer gradings within each level description.
- 6 *General Teaching Requirements*, which should be applied across the PoS, comprising:
  - (a) three principles for inclusion: setting suitable learning challenges; responding to pupils' diverse learning needs; overcoming potential barriers to learning and assessment for individuals and groups of pupils (including pupils with special educational needs, pupils with disabilities, and pupils who are learning English as an additional language);
  - (b) use of language across the curriculum: writing, speaking, listening, reading, subject specialist vocabulary;
  - (c) use of Information and Communication Technology across the curriculum;
  - (d) health and safety (for Science, Design and Technology, Information and Communication Technology, Art and Design, and Physical Education), with students being taught: about hazards, risks and risk control; to recognise hazards, assess consequent risks and take steps to control the risks to

themselves and others; to use information to assess the immediate and cumulative risks; to manage their environment to ensure the health and safety of themselves and others; to explain the steps they take to control risks.