

What the National Curriculum levels mean

National Curriculum levels

At Key Stages 1, 2, and 3, the National Curriculum is accompanied by a series of eight levels. These are used to measure your child's progress compared to pupils of the same age across the country.

There are eight National Curriculum levels, covering ages 5-14 years. The lowest is Level 1, which describes the achievements of children at around the age of five. The highest is Level 8, which is attained by the most able pupils at the age of 14. There is also a description of 'exceptional performance' above Level 8, which only a very few pupils are expected to reach.

What does this mean for your child?

It is expected that the majority of 11 year old children will achieve Level 4 by the end of Year 6 (currently around 75% achieve Level 4 or above). This is the level the government consider the minimum required for children to be able to access the high school curriculum.

Each level is divided into three sub levels, for example 3A, 3B and 3C.

- C means that the child has started to work at the level
- B means that the child is working well within the level
- A means that the child has reached the top of the level and is working towards the next level.

Children are expected to work their way through one level every two years so progressing 1.5 sub levels every year. For example a child working at level 2B in Year 2 would be expected to reach 3B in Year 4. However, children aren't robots and their rate of progress will vary from year to year. For some children, achieving Level 3 by the end of Year 6 is a real success. That particular individual may have started school below the national average level but has still achieved good progress throughout their primary school years. A child achieving Level 5 at 11 years of age is working at a high level, and only one percent of children nationally achieve Level 6 at primary school. High school students who pass GCSE at grade C have achieved Level 7.

National Curriculum levels expected in each primary school year group

	End of Year 2 Age 7	End of Year 3 Age 8	End of Year 4 Age 9	End of Year 5 Age 10	End of Year 6 Age 11
Level 6				Exceptional (Top 1% achieve)	Exceptional (Top 1% achieve)
Level 5A			Exceptional		Beyond expectations Approx' Top 10% achieve 5a or above Approx' Top 15% achieve 5b or above Approx' Top 25% achieve 5c or above
5B					
5A		Exceptional	Beyond expectations	Beyond expectations Approx' Top 10% achieve 5b or above Approx' Top 15% achieve 5c or above Approx' Top 25% achieve 4a/4b or above	
Level 4A	Beyond expectations				At level expected Approx' Top 75% achieve level 4c or above
4B					
4C	Exceptional	Beyond expectations	Beyond expectations	At level expected Approx' Top 75% achieve level 3b or above	
Level 3A					At level expected
3B					
3C	Beyond expectations	At level expected	At level expected	Below expectations Approx' 25% achieve	
Level 2A					At level expected
2B					
2C	At level expected	Below expectations	Below expectations		
Level 1				Below expectations	Below expectations