New Seaham Academy
Curriculum Overview

A curriculum designed so pupils know more, remember more and are fully prepared for the next stage of their education.

Our curriculum

At New Seaham Academy, our curriculum is ambitious, broad and balanced, and rooted in the National Curriculum and the Early Years Framework. It is designed around clear, well-sequenced knowledge and skills so that pupils build securely on what they have already learned, make meaningful connections across subjects and are ready for the next stage of their education. We place reading, vocabulary and foundational knowledge at the heart of learning, while ensuring that every pupil has access to rich experiences within and beyond the classroom.

National Curriculum

Our curriculum is informed by the National Curriculum and its ambition to secure essential knowledge while giving schools space to develop stimulating learning beyond statutory specifications. English, Mathematics and Science sit alongside the wider curriculum, including humanities, the arts, physical education and religious education.

Our schemes of work identify the important knowledge, vocabulary and skills pupils need, with end points and purposeful sequencing across all our classes.

Underpinned by Foundational Knowledge

Developing strong foundational knowledge is key in ensuring all pupils can access the curriculum here at New Seaham Academy and make progress: communication and language, early reading/phonics, writing fluency, calculation/mathematics, general world knowledge, physical/emotional development, and executive function (such as working memory).

Teachers identify the knowledge, vocabulary and subject-specific skills that pupils need in order to understand increasingly complex ideas. New learning is connected deliberately to prior learning, misconceptions are addressed, and assessment is used diligently to check understanding and inform teaching so that all pupils make progress with essential foundational knowledge underpinning their learning.

Know More, Remember More

Our curriculum is designed for durable 'forever' learning rather than short-term task completion. Teachers revisit important knowledge, vocabulary and concepts, provide enjoyable opportunities for retrieval and application, and check whether pupils can use what they have learned in new contexts. Reading, discussion, writing and carefully chosen practice help pupils deepen understanding and strengthen connections over time. The aim is that pupils accumulate knowledge, vocabulary and skills they can draw on confidently in future learning.

Early Years Framework – Best Start in Life

In Reception, the curriculum follows the statutory Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) framework and gives children the best start in life. Our Reception provision supports the three prime areas – communication and language, physical development, and personal, social and emotional development – alongside literacy, mathematics, understanding the world, and expressive arts and design. High-quality interactions, purposeful play, explicit teaching where appropriate, strong language development and carefully planned experiences help all children build the knowledge and skills that prepare them for Key Stage 1. Safeguarding, welfare and wellbeing are integral to this provision.

Early reading and phonics are a key part of our Early Years provision. We use Read Write Inc. Phonics as our systematic synthetic phonics programme from Reception, giving children a rigorous and sequential approach to learning the sounds that letters and groups of letters represent, blending these sounds to read words, and segmenting words for spelling. Children read decodable books that are closely matched to the phonics they have been taught, helping them develop accuracy, fluency and confidence. Regular assessment helps staff identify what children know and where additional practice or support is needed, while stories, discussion and a language-rich environment develop vocabulary, comprehension and a love of reading alongside phonics.

Outdoor Learning and Learning Outdoors

Outdoor learning is an intentional part of our curriculum. Pupils use the outdoor environment to apply subject knowledge, investigate, observe, problem-solve and learn through first-hand experience. This is not separate from academic learning: it provides meaningful contexts in which pupils can revisit and extend knowledge, develop independence and enrich their understanding of the world.

Our Woodlands area and Well-Being garden are inspirational additional areas we use here at New Seaham Academy to teach discrete skills such as woodlands crafts, shelter-building, gardening skills and a range of forestry skills.

Music and the Arts

Music and the arts contribute to pupils' cultural development, creativity and confidence. Pupils are taught the knowledge and skills needed to listen, perform, compose, create and respond. Experiences are planned so that pupils encounter a broad range of artistic and musical forms and have opportunities to develop and celebrate their talents – including assemblies and public school concerts.

Enrichment Opportunities for All

Enrichment is an entitlement for every pupil here at New Seaham Academy. Sporting, creative, cultural, outdoor and other wider opportunities extend the taught curriculum, broaden horizons and help pupils discover interests and talents. Participation is considered carefully so that disadvantaged pupils, pupils with SEND and pupils who may face other barriers are supported to take part. This aligns with Ofsted's emphasis on a coherent personal development programme that extends across the taught curriculum and wider opportunities.

Beyond the Classroom

Visits, visitors, performances, school trips, community links and other experiences beyond the classroom are chosen because they add value to curriculum learning. They provide context, deepen background knowledge and cultural understanding, and give pupils opportunities to apply learning in authentic settings. These experiences support pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and help prepare them for life in modern Britain.

British Values

Fundamental British values are woven through the curriculum and wider life of the school. Pupils learn about democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs. Through curriculum content, discussion, relationships and wider opportunities, pupils learn to engage respectfully with different perspectives, understand their responsibilities and contribute positively to their community.

Safeguarding

Safeguarding underpins everything we do. A strong safeguarding culture helps pupils feel safe, know how to seek help and understand how to keep themselves and others safe, including in the online world. Curriculum content is age-appropriate and supported by effective pastoral systems, staff vigilance and clear procedures. This reflects Ofsted's current expectation that safeguarding is a whole-school responsibility and is evaluated separately as part of inspection. We also take great care to ensure contextual safeguarding is an important feature in our school year – through our work with the NHS, Durham Fire Service, Durham Constabulary and other community links.

How we know the curriculum is working

Leaders and teachers evaluate the curriculum through pupils' work, discussion, assessment, learning in lessons and outcomes over time. Assessment is used proportionately to identify what pupils understand, where knowledge is insecure and what needs to be revisited. Leaders consider the experiences and achievement of different groups, including disadvantaged pupils and pupils with SEND, so that barriers are identified early and appropriate adaptations or support are put in place.

We ensure **all** our pupils are learning the intended curriculum, remembering important knowledge and becoming increasingly ready for the next stage of their education.

All our Class curriculum maps and subject schemes of work are available on the school website.

Key references

- Department for Education, National curriculum in England: framework for key stages 1 to 4.
- Ofsted, State-funded school inspection toolkit, for use from September 2026.
- Department for Education, Early years foundation stage statutory framework for group and school-based providers, effective from September 2026.
- Ofsted, Best start in life: a research review for early years (parts 1–3).
- Department for Education, Giving every child the best start in life.