

Letters and Sounds and the New National Curriculum for English

Frequently Asked Questions

Does Letters and Sounds link with the new National Curriculum?

Letters and Sounds was archived in 2012, ahead of the publication of the new national curriculum, which came into effect in 2014. This means that, although the new curriculum remains true to the principles of Letters and Sounds, it does not follow the same structure and allows schools more flexibility in choosing a strong synthetic phonics programme.

What about the Statutory Framework for the EYFS?

The new curriculum starts in Year 1. Before this, the Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage requires that children are taught to read and write using phonics. The expectation is that schools will use government-approved schemes and resources, and most schools will use a programme that matches the required teaching for KS1.

What are the similarities and differences?

Both Letters and Sounds and the new national curriculum place a strong emphasis on phonics, and both require the development language skills through reading and spoken language. The new national curriculum, however, is more flexible and only requires that the statutory skills and knowledge are taught by the end of the Key Stage, rather than in phases. The new curriculum also requires the explicit teaching of spelling, grammar and punctuation as part of the wider literacy curriculum and places a lot of emphasis on reading for pleasure.

Should I stop using Letters and Sounds?

The most important thing when teaching synthetic phonics is to pick a really strong synthetic phonics scheme and teach it faithfully throughout the whole school, supporting it with quality training. If you have been using Letters and Sounds successfully, then you can carry on teaching using it. However, you will have to buy additional resources for teaching spelling, grammar and punctuation and you will have to select these carefully in order to provide continuity through the school.

