

Curriculum 2028 Consultation Roadshow

September 2026

TransformED
TRANSFORMING TEACHING AND LEARNING



Department of
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WELCOME



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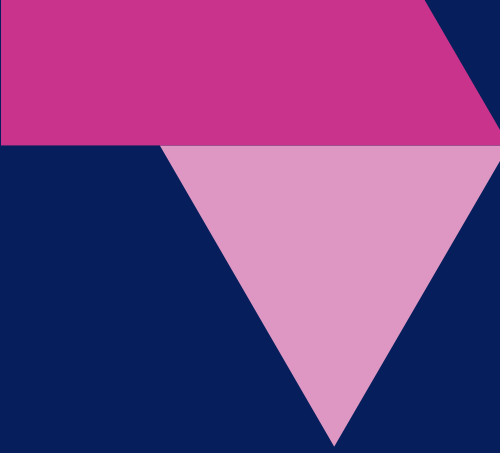
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Purpose

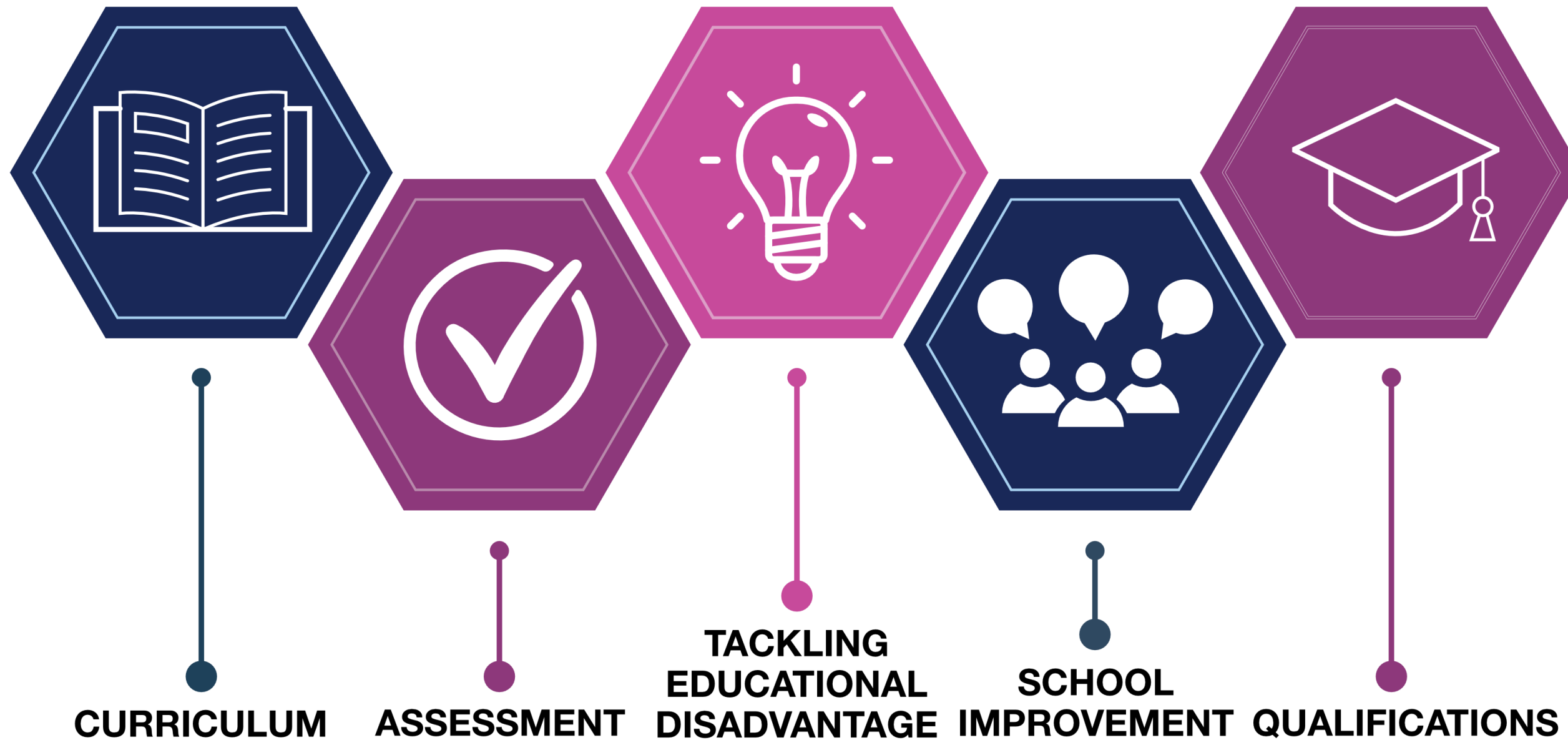
- **Support engagement with the curriculum consultation and ensure that teachers and school leaders are well informed.**
- **Explain the design principles of the new curriculum.**
- **Take views on structure, design and next steps.**
- **Support your engagement with wider staff teams in your schools.**



How the session will run

- **The need for reform.**
- **Understanding the new Curriculum.**
- **Next steps and supporting implementation.**

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Sustained investment in Teacher Professional Learning

Our pledge
***A curriculum
for every learner:
Clear, Coherent,
Connected***



WHAT IS CURRICULUM?



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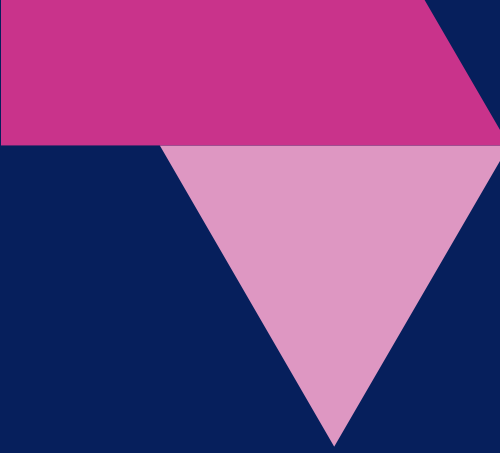
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Understanding curriculum

- Curriculum is the central organising structure of an education system.
- Curriculum defines the knowledge, skills and experiences that children and young people are entitled to learn throughout their education.
- Curriculum shapes how learning is sequenced and organised.
- Creates a shared educational entitlement for all learners.
- Helps ensure schools work towards common expectations.



Understanding curriculum

Curriculum answers three important questions:

- 1. What should young people learn?**
- 2. When should they learn it?**
- 3. Why should they learn it?**



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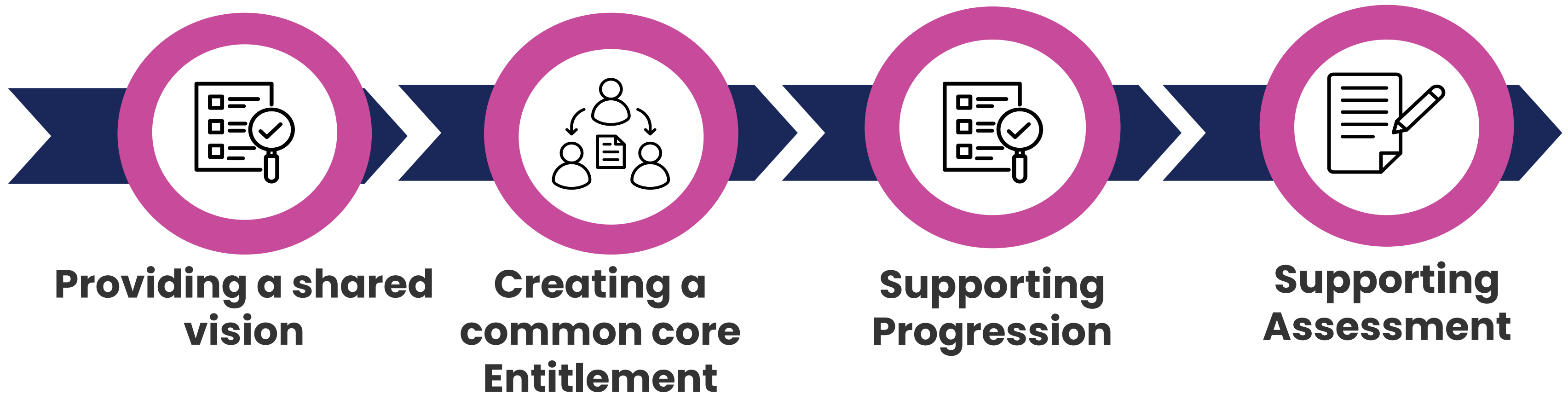


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A National Curriculum

The purpose of a National Curriculum



Curriculum 2028

It is...

- a national document
- a minimum core entitlement for all pupils
- a framework for schools
- progressive and well sequenced

It is not...

- a scheme of work
- a specification
- pedagogy
- lesson plans
- teaching resources
- the totality of provision

WHY THE NEED FOR REFORM?



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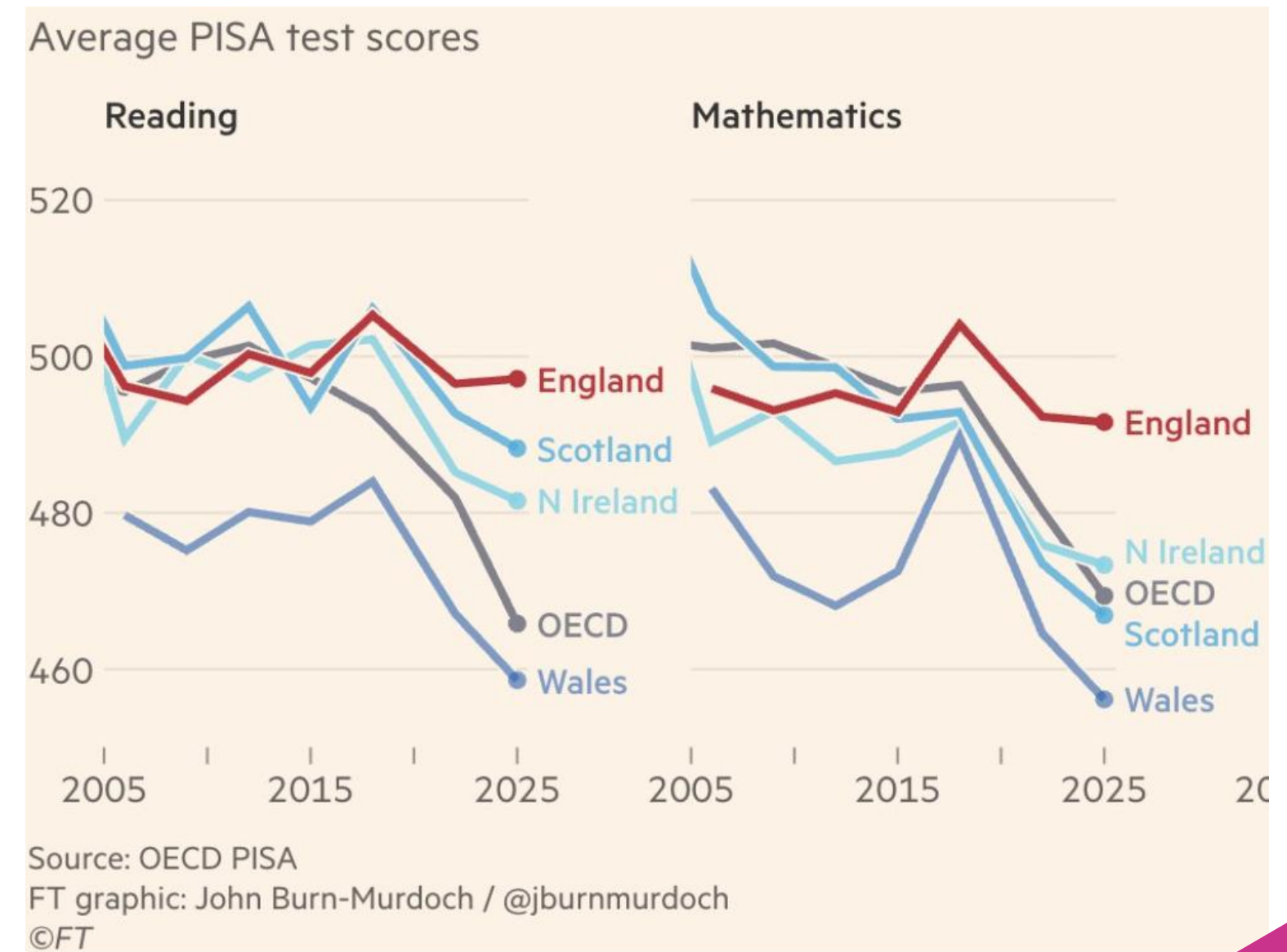
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The evidence we cannot ignore

- **PISA 2025 – decline in reading and maths.**
- **Key Stage Outcome data.**
- **Persistent disadvantage gap, widening post-Covid.**
- **Significant variation in pupil outcomes between schools of similar characteristics at GCSE.**



Challenges in the current curriculum

- **Content outdated.**
- **Lack of specificity on what should be taught, leading to variation and inequity.**
- **Lack of vertical coherence which prevents learning being progressively built upon over time**
- **Fails to meaningfully articulate the role and importance of knowledge and its relationship with broader skills.**
- **No bespoke content for Irish-medium and SEN learners.**

Examples of ambiguity

Two examples from each stage in the current curriculum

FOUNDATION STAGE

MATHEMATICS

Number sense and place value

“Exploring number” and “developing mathematical language” are emphasised, but the curriculum does not specify which numbers, relationships or representations pupils must secure.

WORLD AROUND US

Scientific vocabulary

Pupils may “explore materials” without securing vocabulary such as hard, soft, living and non-living, which means there is no assurance that pupils secure the language which serves as the gateway to scientific thinking.

KEY STAGE 1

ENGLISH

Reading comprehension and grammar

The curriculum does not consistently require grammatical knowledge such as noun, verb or sentence.

WORLD AROUND US

Chronology and place

No historical periods, chronological sequences or core locational knowledge are specified. Pupils may reach Key Stage 2 without a stable sense of time or place.

KEY STAGE 2

MATHEMATICS

Fractions and proportional reasoning

Fractions are included, but without a clear sequence or depth expectation. Schools interpret this differently, leading to fragile understanding.

ART & DESIGN

Historical and cultural knowledge

Pupils may “study artists” or “draw inspiration from different cultures”, but the curriculum does not specify which artists, periods or traditions pupils should learn about.

KEY STAGE 3

ENGLISH

Disciplinary reading

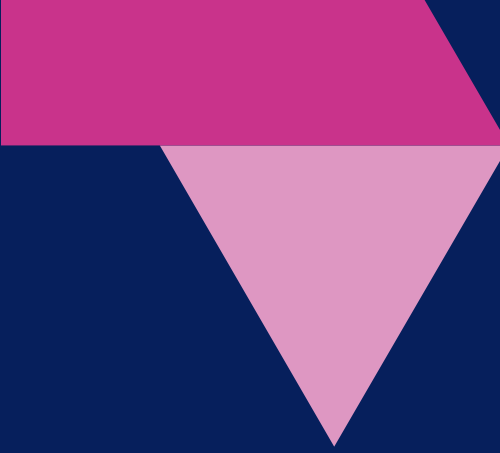
Key Stage 3 assumes pupils can already access complex texts yet due to earlier vagueness this is often not the case. Without shared literary and linguistic knowledge from Key Stage 2, Key Stage 3 may stall.

MUSIC

Disciplinary progression

Analytical listening and composition may be expected, but teachers cannot rely on shared prior knowledge of notation, structure or historical conventions.

The consequence: challenges with sequencing, progression, variability and overload.



Starting again: a clear entitlement

- **Curriculum as entitlement**
- **Curriculum as a progression model**
- **The role of memory and knowledge in learning**
- **Key knowledge, skills and understanding – what to teach and when**
- **Bespoke content for SEN and Irish-medium learners**

Journey to Curriculum 2028

2023

Independent Review of Education recommended curriculum renewal, grounded in how children learn

**OCTOBER
2024**

Strategic Review Commissioned of curriculum design, evidence and practice

**AUGUST
2025**

Curriculum Taskforce established

**NOVEMBER
2025**

Subject Working Groups Established Local teachers, academics and subject specialists

**JUNE
2026**

Curriculum 2028 Public Consultation

➤ Designed by and for Northern Ireland > Internationally informed > Evidence-led



CURRICULUM AIM AND OBJECTIVES

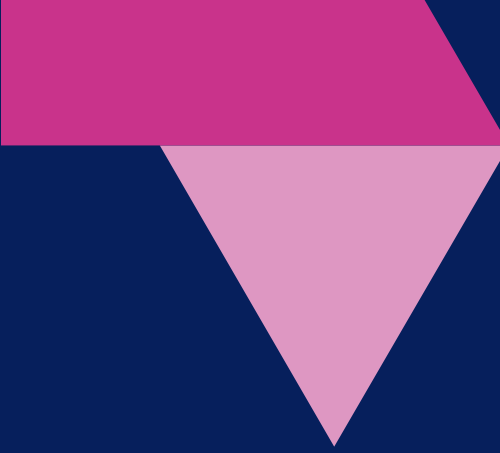


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Aim of Curriculum 2028

"To support young people to develop their capabilities by equipping them with the knowledge, skills and experiences that enable them to have genuine choices and empower them to make informed and responsible decisions throughout their lives."

Objectives of Curriculum 2028

Every young person should develop as:

- **an individual;**
- **a member of society;**
- **a contributor to the economy;**
- **a steward of the environment; and**
- **a lifelong learner**

within a system that expects excellence and places no limit on what young people can achieve.



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Discussion

What current curriculum challenges resonate most with your experience?

What, if anything, is missing from the current aim and objectives of the new curriculum?



THANK YOU



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