Your guide to the 2014 Primary English curriculum

www.pearsonprimary.co.uk/WordsmithEng14
With the new primary curriculum in England statutory from September 2014, you will be thinking more and more over the coming months about the steps you’ll need to take to ensure your school is prepared. We know that curriculum change brings with it uncertainty and upheaval. This year in particular the demands of the new curriculum will be challenging, with children and teachers being pushed further and faster than ever.

This guide is designed to help you tackle the new primary English curriculum with confidence, and make it your own. It highlights the key changes to the programme of study for English, and how and when they will affect you and your children. We’ve also included practical tips and suggestions for you to consider as part of your preparations for September.

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What are the key changes to the Primary English curriculum?

The new primary curriculum will be statutory from September 2014. Its focus is very much on core knowledge, and the ‘nuts and bolts’ of subjects that will ensure children have a strong basis on which to build future learning.

So, what does this mean for English?
The new programme of study for English is set out on a year-by-year basis; however schools have some flexibility in when they teach content within each key stage. Saying that, it is worth noting that although flexibility is allowed, schools are required to set out their school curriculum for English on a year-by-year basis and make it available online.

Phonics fast and first
The government has been clear and vocal in its support of systematic synthetic phonics as the principal strategy for teaching reading in the early years, with the phonics reading test already in its third year. However, the new curriculum recommends that those struggling with decoding in Year 2, lower Key Stage 2 and upper Key Stage 2 should be provided with continuing phonics instruction.

Focus on the fundamentals
There’s a much deeper focus on learning grammar explicitly. Two extensive appendices for grammar and spelling to the programme of study for English present year-by-year objectives for grammar, punctuation and spelling that require children to be able to identify and label rules as well as use them. However, the Spoken Language programme of study, which covers all primary year groups, is given little over a page and the statutory guidance is simply a list of twelve bullet points.

Reading for pleasure
While there is a perception that the new curriculum is a little dry and technical, this view overlooks the new curriculum’s clearly stated intention that children should read widely and voraciously for pleasure and for meaning.

Speaking and Listening
Where the old curriculum uses drama as an important vehicle for children to explore and convey a range of situations, characters and emotions, the new curriculum relegates drama to ‘role-play’ as part of a wider assortment of oral performance that includes presentation, improvisation and debate. There is more emphasis on structure and convention: the new curriculum seems to go in stronger on children being able to organise their thoughts and ideas for the purposes of debate, discussion, explanation and narration. There is also more around social awareness: the new curriculum pulls out ‘gaining, maintaining and monitoring the interest of the listener(s)’ as a separate objective.
At a glance, how does the new curriculum compare to the Primary Framework (2006)?

**Year 1**

**What’s gone?**
- Chronological & non-chronological texts
- Requirement to write non-narrative texts
- Typing skills

**What’s been added?**
- Reading of phonically-suitable texts
- Reading words with contractions
- Reading words with regular endings
- Making inferences from texts
- Learning and reciting poetry
- Re-reading own writing to check for sense
- Using capital letters for proper nouns
- Name the letters of the alphabet
- Spell the names of the days of the week
- Adopt a suitable writing position
- Form capital letters and digits 0-9
- Practise handwriting letter ‘families’

**Year 2**

**What’s gone?**
- Use of syntax & context for reading unfamiliar vocabulary
- Use of different presentational features
- Word processing

**What’s been added?**
- Sooner use of phonics without overt blending
- Contemporary & classic poetry
- Reciting poetry
- Evaluating & proof-reading own writing
- Increased use of subordination
- Higher expectations of spelling, including from dictation
- Required introduction of joined writing

**Year 3 + 4**

**What’s gone?**
- Identifying presentational features of broadcast texts
- Explicit mentions of drama (except performing scripts)
- Use of layout, graphics & font for presentation
- Keyboard/typing skills

**What’s been added?**
- Recognise different forms of poetry
- Prepare poetry for performance
- Using fronted adverbials
- Increased requirements for spelling & grammar
- Evaluate, edit & proof-read own writing

**Year 5 + 6**

**What’s gone?**
- Specific mention of working in groups
- Specific mention of dramatical skills
- Creating multi-layered texts

**What’s been added?**
- Preparing poetry for performance
- Learning poems by heart
- Formal presentations about reading
- Précising long passages of writing
- Greatly detailed grammar specifics

These summaries come from Michael Tidd’s core curriculum comparisons.
What’s happening and when?

January 2011
National curriculum review launched.

February 2013
Draft programmes of study released for consultation.

July 2013
Revised programmes of study released for consultation. Consultation on primary assessment and accountability launched.

September 2013
Final programmes of study released.

September 2013 – July 2014
‘Old’ national curriculum disapplied in many subjects and year groups, to enable schools to start planning and implementing the new curriculum.

September 2014
New national curriculum becomes statutory for all maintained schools (except in English, maths and science in Years 2 & 6).

October 2013
Consultation on primary assessment and accountability closed.

June 2016
New SATs begin and whatever baseline assessment is decided after consultation.

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Five top tips for getting curriculum-ready in English

Audit your existing provision

While it is always a good idea to regularly evaluate your provision of English as a whole, the introduction of the new curriculum adds the new dimension of subject knowledge in grammar, punctuation and spelling. Most teachers probably feel quite comfortable with identifying and labelling parts of a sentence, but some might struggle to explain complex concepts in a child-friendly way and respond to questioning from their pupils - especially as the terminology is changing. For example ‘articles’ are now ‘determiners’, and ‘compound’ sentences are now ‘multi-clause’ sentences. It’s important to acknowledge that there may be a training need, and to find ways of supporting colleagues across the school, or even across schools in the local area. The additional grammar and spelling requirements may also require you to do some thinking around how much additional space you need to find on your timetable for it, and how you can embed it with the rest of your Literacy teaching - reading, writing and talk.

It’s also worth looking at your existing resources for grammar, punctuation and spelling. Are they engaging for 21st century children?

Wordsmith was written specifically for the new Primary curriculum, so you know it covers all of the new objectives. As a complete programme for English, it takes the headache out of timetabling because the balance of activities is already planned in. With a huge bank of support for teaching grammar, you’ll be supported – and Wordsmith’s Professional Development is on hand to polish up your subject knowledge and get you confidently teaching grammar.

Turn to pages 13-15 for additional questions to guide your evaluation of English as a whole.
School communities need to consider the values they place on reading and writing, and develop a coherent ethos around English. Considerations might include:

- How do you ensure your English teaching continues to support and develop creativity in thinking, avoiding an approach to curriculum delivery which involves treating it as a ‘tick list’ from the appendices?

- If you’re delivering the English language curriculum in multilingual settings, how do you acknowledge the language experience children bring to school? Is there room to acknowledge children’s overall linguistic abilities?

- How can you involve the children in shaping their own curriculum? English teaching should motivate children through purposeful activities that allow them to explore and make personal responses.

- What weighting do you give to digital literacy? Children today read more than ever before but not necessarily in traditional ways.

Wordsmith balances out the harder, more formal objectives of the new curriculum with fun, engaging activities and full, rounded units of work that ensure that creativity and enjoyment is never lost. Our Live units offer fantastic purposeful activities, and with interactive eBooks and teaching materials there’s plenty to encourage digital literacy. Wordsmith is designed to be flexible and allow you to put your own flavour to it.
The Language and Literacy introduction to the new programmes of study begins with the instruction that ‘Teachers should develop pupils’ spoken language, reading, writing and vocabulary as integral aspects of the teaching of every subject.’ Not only is fluency in English essential for pupils to access the rest of the curriculum, but Literature is hugely important in helping children to engage with different perspectives - shining a light on the world beyond their own immediate experience, culturally, emotionally, intellectually, socially and spiritually. Exploring language in different contexts can help children understand different styles of language – formal versus informal, private versus public, slang, dialects and so on – and enable them to make use of them in their own writing.

Lots of the texts in Wordsmith are ideal for looking at topics across the wider curriculum. For example, the non-fiction texts in particular are great for teaching Science (E.g., All about Orangutans, Wanted : Space Explorer!) History (Was Tutankhamun Killed? Mission: Save Pompeii), and Geography topics (E.g., Animals on the Move; Where's the Best Place to Live?). Even the fiction and poetry – while primarily chosen for being brilliant literature – can be really useful in exploring other topics – such as World War II (Friend or Foe), Human Geography/Citizenship (Christophe’s Story).
The new curriculum takes a strong line on the school’s role in helping children to develop good reading habits, stating: ‘Schools should do everything to promote wider reading. They should provide library facilities and set ambitious expectations for reading at home.’ Pupils should ‘develop their love of literature through widespread reading for enjoyment’. When choosing texts, look for a balance of fiction, non-fiction and poetry; emotionally powerful texts which deal with important human situations and strong feelings, and - in the early years - traditional tales with clear narrative structures and texts which have a strong musical quality and make use of ‘poeticised speech.’ Reading is one of the most important ways in which children observe and absorb the best language skills. So, while components such as grammar and vocabulary are important in the new curriculum, they should be taught in a contextualised way, through the enjoyment of shared reading.

We understand that with all the pressures on your time already, it’s not always easy to sift through the vast array of literature on offer to select the best. With Wordsmith that’s done for you. Wordsmith uses real books and picture books by award winning authors and whole texts that have been very carefully selected both for being engaging and as the best models for children’s own writing. Wordsmith deliberately only uses whole books (as opposed to extracts) to give children a real reading experience. Wordsmith also comes with fantastic interactive non-fiction – so there’s something for everyone.

For ideas on creating, or building on a reading for pleasure culture in your school, visit Michael Rosen’s Reading Revolution website
www.readingrevolution.co.uk
With the Spoken Language (formerly Speaking and Listening) requirements reduced to a single twelve-point programme of study across both key stages, it’s important that you give some thought to ensuring speaking and listening retain their foundational position in the English curriculum. Speaking and listening are fundamental to effective English teaching as they are central to language development, helping children to express their ideas and to empathise with others. Talk is also fantastic for helping children generate ideas and to think through a story plot or argument. For young children, oral rehearsal separates the formulation of a sentence from the very difficult demand of writing it, while for older children it helps them try out different possibilities for sentences and to hear their writing aloud. And of course, talk is essential for reflection and evaluation.

“Good-quality oral work engages pupils, including boys and pupils who might otherwise take little interest, and yields benefits in all areas of English.”

Ofsted Excellence in English.

In Wordsmith, each unit of work contains plenty of reading aloud to support children’s comprehension when reading a shared book. Suggestions and prompts are given for children and teachers reading their own work aloud, too. Throughout the lesson plans, you’ll see plenty of references to encouraging oral rehearsal when children are writing their own pieces. The ‘Grammar blasts’ in Wordsmith help children to learn grammar terms so they are equipped to talk about the language choices in the whole texts they read and their own language choices when writing.

These tips are based on ‘The new national curriculum for English’ article by Wayne Tennent of the United Kingdom Literacy Association, available to download in its entirety at www.pearsonprimary.co.uk.
SATs – which years do what and when?

Children currently in Years 3 and 4 will be the first two groups to be assessed on the new national curriculum in their Year 6 SAT in 2016 and 2017. All other year groups will be assessed in their next SAT on the old curriculum.

Disapplication – what’s it all about?

The ‘old’ national curriculum for maths has been ‘disapplied’ for Year 3 and 4 children from September 2013 to give schools the freedom to change what they teach in order to prepare for the new national curriculum. Children currently in Years 1, 2, 5 and 6 will be tested on the old curriculum at the end of KS1 or KS2 in the summer of 2014 or 2015 and the more demanding SATS in 2016. This doesn’t mean to say that children cannot be taught the new curriculum requirements, which will better prepare them for later in their school careers.

Which curriculum is statutory?

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<tr>
<th>Year 1</th>
<th>Year 2*</th>
<th>Year 3</th>
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<th>Year 5</th>
<th>Year 6*</th>
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<td>2015-16</td>
<td>New</td>
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Professor Debra Myhill, author of the Grammar for Writing pedagogy, and grammar and spelling consultant to the DfE, looks at how you can adapt your current teaching to suit the requirements of the new curriculum.

Watch the full series of videos by Debra Myhill at www.pearsonprimary.co.uk.
Auditing your provision and planning for the future

There’s a lot to think about when auditing your English provision, and it can be difficult to spot the gaps. The Wordsmith team has pulled together a list of questions to help you review your current capacity and identify any areas that need further consideration.

Reading for pleasure

How do we ensure we keep up-to-date with and recognise a wide range of current high quality texts for both adults and children and foster others’ interest in these?

Wordsmith offers eBooks from not just some of the best-loved authors and award-winners, but also hidden gems and upcoming classics. Each fiction book has suggestions for wider reading, specially selected to be of the best quality.

How do we find out about and assess children’s ability to read a range of forms of text, including digital, online and moving image?

Wordsmith contains a wide range of text forms, including print but also online, digital and film texts to develop children’s experience of all kinds of text.

Reading comprehension

How do we frame questions to encourage the development of higher order reading skills/comprehension?

Each Wordsmith comprehension lesson is filled with specific questions to ask to stretch children’s comprehension levels into inferential and deductive reasoning.

How do we provide opportunities for developing comprehension through opportunities for recitation and performance?

Recitation and performance are given a 21st century twist in Wordsmith’s Live units, for example Poetry Star and Rap Star, as well as drawing on the best in Shakespeare’s A Midsummer Night’s Dream. Through rehearsing and reciting texts, children deepen their understanding and enrich their vocabulary.

How do we provide opportunities for developing comprehension through contexts where pupils are genuinely motivated to find out information, for example, related to museum, gallery or theatre visits?

Wordsmith’s Live units are brilliant for this. They give you a framework that can be easily edited to fit your school’s local area and your class’ activities. For example, Newshounds can be tailored to fit a recent event, and The Grand Tour is all about your local area.
**Grammar**

- Are we aware of the importance of developing a language to talk about reading, grammar and text structure? How do we show an understanding of the importance of teaching grammar in context?

- One of Wordsmith's key principles is the teaching of grammar in context. Discrete grammar ‘blasts’ teach the terminology in a fun and memorable way, then the unit plans reinforce learning by showing how the grammar is used in context.

- How do we plan for:
  - explicit teaching of the metalanguage necessary for children as they discuss and respond to texts
  - the teaching of grammar in the contexts of texts the class are sharing?

- Wordsmith’s fun grammar ‘blasts’ teach children the metalanguage and terminology they need. Every unit plan reinforces the learning done in the grammar ‘blasts’ in a carefully-planned sequence.

- Are we aware that the Grammar, Punctuation and Spelling SAT will change in 2016 to cover the new, more demanding requirements from the new National Curriculum?

- Wordsmith will help prepare your children for the new Grammar, Punctuation and Spelling SAT by teaching them the terminology and skills they need. You can start teaching Year 4 children now to prepare them for the SAT.

- How do we monitor children’s ability to adopt different styles for a range of audiences and purposes?

**Writing**

- How do we monitor children’s ability to use oral rehearsal, drafting and editing to improve their writing?

- Children following Wordsmith learn about different styles and registers for a wide variety of audiences and purposes, from news reports in Newshounds through to a business case in Pitch It! Through the Live units we offer real purpose and audience that takes learning outside of the classroom.

- Wordsmith’s composition activities remind teachers and children of the importance of oral rehearsal. Lesson time, and useful teaching strategies, are given over to drafting and editing too.

- How do we monitor children’s ability to use writing to communicate ideas?

- Throughout the Wordsmith units, children write to communicate ideas, thoughts and opinions for a range of purposes.

- How do we monitor children’s ability to adopt different styles for a range of audiences and purposes?

- Wordsmith challenges children to write in a range of forms, including audio (e.g. Spooky Stories), online (Newshounds) and digital presentations (All About Me).

- How do we monitor children’s ability to effectively compose a range of texts including digital, online and moving image?
**Spelling**

- **Q** How do we develop children’s ability to use language in a creative and playful way?
  - Wordsmith’s support for spelling is based on this evidence. We give suggested spellings based on the content of the unit plans, in an age-appropriate progression. For example, the spellings for *Was Tutankhamen Killed?* include the short /i/ sound for ‘y’ (Egypt, pyramid, mystery).

- **Q** Are we providing play environments that give children the chance to use language in more varied and sophisticated ways as their play progresses?
  - Wordsmith’s Language Booster (featuring LEGO® DUPLO® StoryTales) takes a play-based approach to language for children in Reception and Year 1. The lesson plans give you progression so that children quickly acquire and use more sophisticated language.

**Talk**

- **Q** How do we balance and integrate the compositional and technical aspects of learning to write?
  - Wordsmith units give you an excellent balance between composition (ideas, audience and effect) and technical (grammar, punctuation).

- **Q** Are we aware of evidence that isolated learning of lists of spellings are unlikely to be retained in long-term memory?
  - Wordsmith’s support for spelling is based on this evidence. We give suggested spellings based on the content of the unit plans, in an age-appropriate progression. For example, the spellings for *Was Tutankhamen Killed?* include the short /i/ sound for ‘y’ (Egypt, pyramid, mystery).

**Spoken language**

- **Q** How do we develop children’s ability to use language in a creative and playful way?
  - How do we support children’s ability to use language in a creative and playful way? Are we providing play environments that give children the chance to use language in more varied and sophisticated ways as their play progresses?

- **Q** How do we support children’s development of a range of registers for different contexts, listeners and purposes?
  - Wordsmith gives ready-made opportunities for children to develop language for different contexts and listeners, from formal language for *The Great Debate* to rhythm and rhyme in *Rap Star!*

- **Q** How do we provide children with suitable texts for memorising and learning by heart across the different age ranges?
  - Wordsmith helps children develop a delight in language from a young age, and this is carried all the way through, from *Poetry Star* in Year 1 to Shakespeare’s *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* in Year 6.

**Language development in EY/Reception**

- **Q** How do we support children’s development of a range of registers for different contexts, listeners and purposes?
  - Wordsmith’s grammar ‘blasts’ and unit plans give explicit teaching on the subject of Standard and non-Standard English, helping children hear the differences between these.

For more like this we recommend you consult:
- [The English Association](https://www.theenglishassociation.org.uk)
- [The Literacy Trust](https://www.literacytrust.org.uk)
Harder grammar, punctuation and spelling requirements

Adverbials, cohesive devices, determiners, modifiers, subordinates… we all use them without even thinking about it, but could you explain them? Even for teachers who are confident in their grammar knowledge the new curriculum throws up a couple of potential issues:

Content coming forward

The new curriculum expects children to tackle harder grammar earlier, for example:

- Subordination and co-ordination in Year 2 (was Year 4).
- Prepositions in Year 3 (was Year 5).
- Modal verbs in Year 5 (not previously taught).
- Subject and object in Year 6 (not previously taught).
- The subjunctive in Year 6 (not previously taught).

Changing terminology

A lot of the more child-friendly terms we’ve become used to are out, and the proper, formal terminology is in, for example:

- The ‘progressive form of verbs’, conjunctions and prepositions instead of ‘connectives’.
- ‘Determiners’ instead of ‘articles’.
- We now say ‘multi-clause’ sentence instead of ‘compound sentence’.

Children are changing

The world has moved on since the last time grammar was taught in such detail at a Primary level. The dusty old books and worksheets at the back of the cupboard might not cut it with today’s digital natives. Plus, research shows that grammar knowledge is more likely to stick if it is taught in a fun and active way.
**Grammar highlights by year**

**Year 1**
- Joining words and clauses using ‘and’.
- How the prefix ‘un-’ changes the meaning of verbs and adjectives.

**Year 2**
- Forming nouns and adjectives using suffixes.
- Subordination and coordination.
- How grammatical patterns in a sentence indicate intent.

**Year 3**
- Forming nouns using a variety of prefixes.
- Expressing time, place and cause using conjunctions, adverbs or prepositions.
- Present perfect.

**Year 4**
- Noun phrases expanded by the addition of modifying adjectives, nouns and preposition phrases.
- Apostrophes to mark plural possession.

**Year 5**
- Relative clauses beginning with who, which, where, when, whose, that, or an omitted relative pronoun.
- Linking ideas across paragraphs using adverbials of time, place and number.

**Year 6**
- Use of the semi-colon, colon and dash to mark the boundary between independent clauses.
- The difference between vocabulary typical of informal speech and vocabulary appropriate for formal speech and writing.
What’s the same?
- The phonics check is staying.
- All tests will remain teacher-assessed.
- Teacher assessment still required for speaking and listening.

What’s new?
- The reading test will be updated to reflect the comprehension requirements in the new curriculum.
- There will be a new Grammar, Punctuation and Spelling test from 2006.
- Scores will be reported as a scaled score rather than a level.
- The score will be combined with your teacher assessment of writing.

What’s yet to come?
The government will release performance descriptors for the new tests in autumn 2014.
Always use formative assessment to decide next steps for your children and your class. This might seem really obvious, but can be too easily overlooked when preparing for high-stakes assessments under time pressure. Look at the grammar and punctuation in children’s actual writing – their stories, their reports, biographies and explanations – as well as any grammar testing you might do. And begin lessons with Assessment for Learning challenges such as, “Compose a sentence about how our young evacuee might feel, using an adverbial phrase.” This will show you what kinds of adverbials children use, where they place them in the sentence, and, indeed, who has yet to know what one is. Have children evaluate examples, and then you will have an extremely clear idea of what to teach next.

Teach grammar in a way that is purposeful and meaningful, even if it feels that the skills test is neither of those things. Grammar sessions can be discrete, but they should always be part of a teaching sequence: play with each new skill together, then compose using it together (making shared writing an intrinsic part of the process), then have the children apply the new skill in their writing. Whatever the skill is, be overt about its impact on meaning. For example: only use adjectives to add descriptive impact, and consider using a more precise noun instead. Rather than referring to verbs as “more interesting”, discuss how precisely a verb relates to its context.

Never neglect reading. Children who love reading and read enthusiastically are more likely to fair well in the new test (they are statistically more likely to succeed in Maths and Science too). We must all do everything we can to enhance the love of reading. It is always worth noticing together how any author uses a skill that you have recently been practising to enhance the text’s impact (we use the word “noticing” as “underlining all the adverbs” is a pretty good way of killing reading enthusiasm!).

Demonstrate and model an enthusiasm and love for language; relish a wonderful subordinate clause and take joy in a well-chosen verb. If grammar is reduced to a dreary exercise, learning is unlikely; positive emotional resonance supports memory and deep learning.

Keep the discrete teaching of grammar multi-sensory and game-based. As a class, celebrate mistakes and risk-taking as these are the routes to new learning. Spend time returning to the new language skill to ensure mastery: hear it, speak it and write it in as many different contexts as possible.

Read the full article and get a further 5 top tips at www.pearsonprimary.co.uk/
What is Ofsted looking for?

Ofsted’s 2012 report Moving English Forward recommended that all schools should:

• Develop policies to promote reading for enjoyment throughout the school

• Ensure that preparation for national tests and examinations is appropriate, does not begin too early, and does not limit the range of the curriculum or pupils’ opportunities for creativity in English

• Improve transition and continuity in curriculum and assessment in English between Key Stages 2 and 3

• Simplify lesson plans in English to concentrate on the key learning objectives and encourage teachers to be more flexible in responding to pupils’ progress as lessons develop.

“A constant criticism from inspectors was that pupils rarely had extended periods to read, write or discuss issues in class. Indeed, inspectors observed lessons where pupils were asked to self- or peer-assess work before they had been able to complete more than a sentence or two.”

How does Wordsmith help?

Wordsmith provides straightforward lesson plans. They give the main aim of the lesson, a brief description of what the teacher does and what the children do. There is no unnecessary information. They focus clearly on “the key learning objectives”.

Each lesson plan has only one main focus – or two at the most. All the teaching, and whatever the pupils do, is geared to this clear focus rather than addressing multiple different outcomes.

Many teachers are moving away from the traditional three- or four-part lesson (starter, main, activity, plenary) already. Wordsmith lesson plans reflect this – sometimes, it is better to spend the whole lesson writing than to have artificial starters and group activities.
Please tell us a little bit about your school.

The school is a rural primary school in a large village in Somerset. We have 140 pupils on roll, and teach in mixed- age classes. Many of the children have identified speech and language delay or specific difficulties. There are limited facilities for families in the village and some children have very few opportunities to experience the world outside village life.

How did you tackle understanding the new curriculum and working out how you were going to approach it?

We started using the objectives from the new curriculum for Maths and English as soon as they were published in draft format. We also raised our expectations for how well children can achieve in line with the new expected standard. Since September 2013 we have been using the new curriculum alongside the old one, making sure that children are still covering what they will be tested on at the end of the year while making links to the new curriculum where applicable. The Wordsmith Year 2 Orang-utan unit, for example, had excellent links to the new Geography and Science curriculum. We are going to use the Wordsmith units as our main cross-curricular topics and plan the rest of the curriculum around them. We are planning the links to the rest of the curriculum and then identifying where there are ‘gaps’. We will maximise teaching time by using the English as our main subject with cross-curricular links. This will also mean that the resulting curriculum will be creative: to allow time to follow children’s interests and develop the areas that we have identified as a school to be our local priorities – this includes outdoor learning, arts and local geography and history.

In February, we had a whole day INSET and began to plan the curriculum together as a staff. This process will continue through staff meetings.

How far in advance would you recommend schools start planning for the new curriculum?

As the plans need to be ready by September, now if not before!

What have you identified as the main challenges of the new English curriculum for your school?

We have had to ensure that teachers are all confident with the expected level and content of the new curriculum for English – it is essential that teachers identify and address any weaknesses in their own grammar, for example. As Literacy coordinator, I am asking staff to ensure they teach the Wordsmith grammar units at the expected level to raise the profile of grammar and the children’s levels throughout the school. This is essential to make sure that the Year 6 teachers don’t have to teach it all in a panic!

We have had training through our CLP but found that we were well-informed as we had started when the draft was first available.
Some teachers think that the new curriculum won’t mean a large change in what they do. Is this the case in your school/ for other teachers that you know?

The most fundamental change for us is getting to grips with the new expectations – especially as the assessment in levels has been so embedded in our practice. Assessment without levels is the area that has been consistently raised by our staff, and other teachers. We are viewing the need to totally re-design our whole curriculum and make it relevant to us and our community as an exciting opportunity – clearly there will also be challenges to overcome too. We are emphasising that we have ‘permission’ to do what we think is right for the children in our care and that the curriculum can and should be tailored to them and their needs and interests.

What prompted you to look for a new resource to support you in teaching the new curriculum?

I worked on the Wordsmith units and thought they were brilliant. We wouldn’t have been looking for this type of resource as we like to plan our own Literacy units. They were too good to miss!

What were your criteria for looking at resources?

We have been looking for flexible, well-planned lessons that could be tailored to the children’s needs and interests, and used for mixed-age classes. We wanted plenty of talk for writing strategies, a high level of challenge and enough opportunities for writing. Most importantly, we want exciting activities and inspiring resources.

It’s early days, but how do you think Wordsmith will help you?

We hope it will be at the heart of our whole creative curriculum.

What evidence do you have so far that it’s working?

The best evidence we have is our very motivated children who love the resources and can’t wait for Literacy lessons. They are achieving a high standard of work. And our teachers say they love it!

What would be your recommendations to other schools who haven’t yet tackled the English curriculum?

Take the opportunity to make a curriculum that is tailored to your children and local community. Make sure everyone is fully aware of the new standards expected and the content of the curriculum. Support teachers quickly who have identified weaknesses in grammar or other areas.
Want to find out more?

Try **FREE** units and book a demo for your school at:

[www.pearsonprimary.co.uk/WordsmithEng14](http://www.pearsonprimary.co.uk/WordsmithEng14)
Because the new curriculum brings harder content forward you may see the typical composition of your class shifting; at least in the early days of the curriculum and particularly in Key Stage 1.

To help your low attainers catch up fast and stop them falling behind in the rest of the curriculum, we recommend using the Rapid Family.

**RAPID READING**

Shown to treble the rate of progress, Rapid Reading gives you print and eBooks with cool illustrations, chunked texts and a special dyslexic-friendly font. Each book is age-appropriate and finely levelled to ensure you’ll always have the right book for each child.

**RAPID PHONICS**

At the core of Rapid Phonics are fast-paced sessions and quick and easy assessments that reinforce the basics of phonics in a way that children really enjoy.

**RAPID WRITING**

With fun topics and fantastic-looking resources, brilliant text-to-speech story writing software that your children will love and excellent teaching support for your guided writing sessions.

Find out more at: [www.pearsonprimary.co.uk/rapidfamilyEng14](http://www.pearsonprimary.co.uk/rapidfamilyEng14)