



NEWTON BLUECOAT CE PRIMARY SCHOOL



Physical Education Progression of Key Learning

Nursery to Year 6 • 2026–27

MOVE • DEVELOP • COMPETE • COOPERATE • FLOURISH

“Shine from the inside out”

Purpose

This document makes the progression from EYFS physical development into the school’s Physical Education curriculum explicit. It shows how children move from fundamental movement and physical literacy towards increasingly controlled sport-specific skills, tactical thinking, creative performance, outdoor learning, evaluation and positive sporting character.

Progression at a glance

EYFS foundation. Children develop physical literacy through travelling, balance, coordination, sending and receiving, body control and simple movement sequences. They learn to use space safely, cooperate, persevere and enjoy being active.

Key Stage 1 foundations. Pupils develop and begin to master fundamental movement skills, apply them in simple games, gymnastics, dance and athletics, take part in simple competition and begin to describe and improve performance.

Lower Key Stage 2 development. Pupils apply increasingly secure fundamental skills in sport-specific contexts, develop attacking and defending tactics, create longer sequences, develop dance expression, use map orientation and evaluate performance against simple criteria.

Upper Key Stage 2 depth. Pupils perform with increasing consistency, accuracy, control, confidence and speed; apply tactics collaboratively; create sophisticated sequences; navigate more independently; and evaluate performance using precise terminology.

The PE learning journey

MOVE	APPLY	CREATE	EVALUATE	CHARACTER
Develop physical skills	Use tactics & make decisions	Link actions & perform	Observe, reflect & improve	Cooperate, persevere & lead

Fundamental movement & physical competence

Stage	Key learning
Nursery	Explore travelling in different ways; develop balance, coordination and body awareness; begin sending and receiving objects; negotiate space and obstacles safely.
Reception	Develop running, jumping, hopping, skipping, balancing, throwing, catching and rolling through themed movement contexts; combine movements with increasing control.
Year 1	Develop FMS through baseline work, overarm/underarm throwing, rolling, catching and bouncing; improve coordination, balance and control.
Year 2	Consolidate FMS and apply travelling, sending and receiving with greater consistency across games, gymnastics, dance and playground activities.
Year 3	Master fundamental skills with improving control and apply them in creative games, netball, handball, rounders, net/wall, athletics and gymnastics.
Year 4	Apply movement skills with increasing accuracy, coordination and control across basketball, net/wall, target games, athletics, gymnastics and swimming.
Year 5	Perform sport-specific techniques in rugby, netball, hockey, cricket, rounders, tennis and athletics with greater consistency, control and speed.
Year 6	Apply a broad range of movement and sport-specific skills with control, accuracy, confidence and increasing speed across games, gymnastics, dance, athletics and OAA.

Games: sending, receiving, striking, attacking & defending

Stage	Key learning
Nursery	Roll, throw, kick or pass simple equipment; begin to receive or stop an object; take turns and play simple movement games.
Reception	Send and receive balls and equipment with growing control; begin simple partner games and understand basic rules and boundaries.
Year 1	Use overarm/underarm throwing, rolling, catching and bouncing; begin simple 1v1/2v2 games and make basic choices about space.
Year 2	Apply skills in Piggy in the Middle, striking/fielding and net/wall contexts; develop simple tactics and begin 3v1 decision-making.
Year 3	Apply attacking play in netball, handball and creative games; develop striking/fielding in rounders and make decisions about passing, moving and space.
Year 4	Develop collaborative defending and attacking in basketball, net/wall and target games; choose appropriate techniques and respond to opponents.
Year 5	Apply attacking and defending strategies in modified rugby, netball and hockey; use striking/fielding tactics in cricket/rounders and develop court positioning in tennis.

Stage	Key learning
Year 6	Apply attacking and defending tactics thoughtfully in modified competitive games; anticipate play, adapt tactics, communicate and make increasingly independent decisions.

Gymnastics & dance: sequence, creativity & performance

Stage	Key learning
Nursery	Explore body shapes, levels, directions and simple actions; copy movements and link a small number of actions through story and theme.
Reception	Create short movement phrases; respond to rhythm and themes; link 2–3 actions with growing control and remember simple sequences.
Year 1	Link 2–3 actions in gymnastics and short dance phrases; explore shapes, balances, travelling and themed dance such as Fire Fire and Robots.
Year 2	Create 4–6 action sequences; use levels, direction and simple dynamics; develop expressive dance through Explorers and Wind in the Willows.
Year 3	Use matched and mirrored work; create and perform increasingly fluent gymnastics and dance sequences, including Ironman and Superheroes.
Year 4	Create 6–8 action partner sequences; refine control and expression; develop audience awareness through Sparks Might Fly and The Great Plague.
Year 5	Create longer, increasingly sophisticated gymnastics sequences and expressive dance such as Food Glorious Food and Earthlings; refine transitions and performance quality.
Year 6	Create, perform and refine 8–10 action sequences with fluency, control and audience awareness; use expressive dynamics and performance qualities in Highwayman and Heroes and Villains.

Athletics: running, jumping & throwing

Stage	Key learning
Nursery	Run freely, change speed and direction, jump from two feet and explore throwing objects safely.
Reception	Develop running, jumping and throwing through playful challenges; begin to control take-off, landing, direction and force.
Year 1	Explore basic running, jumping and throwing techniques and apply them in simple athletics activities.
Year 2	Develop running, jumping and throwing with improved coordination; begin to compare performance and recognise effective technique.

Stage	Key learning
Year 3	Apply increasingly secure technique in running, jumping and throwing and begin to measure or compare outcomes.
Year 4	Develop more efficient technique, control and consistency; apply skills in competitive athletics contexts.
Year 5	Refine running, jumping and throwing technique; apply pace, power and accuracy and use performance information to improve.
Year 6	Run, jump and throw with improving technique, efficiency and consistency; apply skills strategically in athletics and evaluate performance against success criteria.

Outdoor & adventurous activity / navigation

Stage	Key learning
Nursery	Follow simple routes around familiar spaces, negotiate obstacles and cooperate in outdoor movement challenges.
Reception	Follow simple directions and routes; solve physical problems with others and begin to use positional language.
Year 1	Develop spatial awareness and simple route-following through movement tasks and games.
Year 2	Plan simple routes around obstacles, cooperate and solve problems in introductory OAA activities.
Year 3	Orientate simple maps and follow routes in Trust and Trails; communicate and cooperate to solve challenges.
Year 4	Develop navigation and spatial problem-solving through PE contexts; apply direction and teamwork with increasing independence.
Year 5	Use eight compass points and map orientation in orienteering; plan routes, make decisions and work effectively with others.
Year 6	Follow routes on OS-style maps and complete increasingly independent or timed OAA challenges; select strategies, solve problems and evaluate team effectiveness.

Swimming & water confidence

Stage	Key learning
Nursery	Not a discrete swimming strand at this stage; develop general physical confidence, coordination and safe participation in movement.
Reception	Not a discrete swimming strand at this stage; develop body control, confidence and safe routines in physical activity.

Stage	Key learning
Year 1	Swimming is not listed as a discrete Year 1 unit in the supplied curriculum overview.
Year 2	Swimming is not listed as a discrete Year 2 unit in the supplied curriculum overview.
Year 3	Swimming is not listed as a discrete Year 3 unit in the supplied curriculum overview.
Year 4	Develop water confidence and swimming competence through the Year 4 swimming programme; practise safe participation, perseverance, communication and cooperation.
Year 5	Build on prior swimming experience where opportunities arise; statutory outcomes continue to be monitored through school processes.
Year 6	Consolidate statutory swimming competence and water safety where required through monitoring and additional provision, as appropriate.

Evaluating performance & improving

Stage	Key learning
Nursery	Talk about what they can do and celebrate effort; begin to notice when a movement works well.
Reception	Describe a movement or performance in simple terms and say what they enjoyed or might try differently.
Year 1	Describe their own or another performance and identify one possible improvement.
Year 2	Use simple success criteria to recognise effective performance and suggest a specific next step.
Year 3	Assess performance against simple criteria; identify strengths and areas for development using increasingly appropriate PE vocabulary.
Year 4	Observe carefully, give constructive feedback and explain how a specific technical or performance change could improve success.
Year 5	Evaluate individual and team performance using relevant terminology; use feedback, outcomes and success criteria to refine technique and tactics.
Year 6	Observe and evaluate performance with precision; justify strengths and improvements using success criteria and appropriate PE vocabulary; adapt performance independently.

Character, cooperation & leadership

Stage	Key learning
Nursery	Take turns, share space and equipment, follow simple rules, persevere with challenge and begin to cooperate with others.

Stage	Key learning
Reception	Work with partners and groups; listen to instructions; show courage when trying new movements; celebrate others' success and manage simple disappointment.
Year 1	Develop teamwork and honesty; play fairly, follow rules, encourage others and persist when skills are difficult.
Year 2	Develop trust, courage and communication; cooperate in games and OAA and respond positively to success and challenge.
Year 3	Develop self-discipline, motivation, communication and trust; contribute to team decisions and support others.
Year 4	Develop respect, decision-making and responsibility; communicate constructively, compete fairly and show self-control.
Year 5	Develop empathy, resourcefulness and resilience; take increasing responsibility within teams and begin to lead warm-ups, practices or group tasks where appropriate.
Year 6	Demonstrate teamwork, honesty, trust, resilience, courage, respect, empathy, self-discipline, decision-making and responsibility; lead and support others appropriately.

Health, fitness, safety & active lifestyles

Stage	Key learning
Nursery	Enjoy energetic play and begin to recognise simple body changes such as feeling warm or breathing faster; follow safety routines.
Reception	Understand that movement helps bodies grow strong and healthy; notice changes after activity and use space/equipment safely.
Year 1	Recognise that activity affects the body; participate safely and understand simple reasons for warming up and being active.
Year 2	Develop awareness of how regular activity supports health and wellbeing; follow rules and safe practices in different PE contexts.
Year 3	Recognise how practice, activity and fitness support performance; warm up appropriately and participate safely across varied contexts.
Year 4	Develop awareness of stamina, strength and technique; understand safe participation in swimming and other activities.
Year 5	Understand how regular physical activity contributes to fitness, wellbeing and readiness to learn; manage effort and participate responsibly.
Year 6	Understand and explain how regular physical activity contributes to physical health, mental wellbeing and readiness to learn; make responsible choices about safe, active participation.

Year-by-year PE journey

Nursery: EYFS fundamental movement through story/theme contexts including Rosie's Walk, Jack and the Beanstalk, Mini Beasts, Seaside and Transport.

Reception: EYFS fundamental movement through themes including Elmer, Rumble in the Jungle, Space, Hungry Caterpillar, Castles, Rosie's Walk, How to Catch a Star, Seaside, Transport, Mini Beasts and Superworm.

Year 1: FMS baseline • overarm/underarm throwing • rolling, catching and bouncing • gymnastics • athletics • dance: Fire Fire and Robots • Tri Throlf.

Year 2: Piggy in the Middle • striking/fielding • net/wall • dance: Explorers and Wind in the Willows • athletics • gymnastics • FMS • playground games • OAA • end-of-KS1 assessment.

Year 3: Gymnastics • dance: Ironman and Superheroes • creative games • rounders • netball • handball • net/wall • athletics • OAA Trust and Trails.

Year 4: Dance: Sparks Might Fly and The Great Plague • target games including dodgeball and boccia • gymnastics • athletics • swimming • net/wall • basketball.

Year 5: Gymnastics • dance: Food Glorious Food and Earthlings • rugby • netball • hockey • rounders • cricket • tennis • athletics • orienteering.

Year 6: Cricket and rounders • gymnastics • dance: Highwayman and Heroes and Villains • creative games • tennis and badminton • rugby • athletics • OAA.

End-of-phase expectations

By the end of Nursery: Children move confidently in different ways, negotiate space, develop balance and coordination, begin to send and receive equipment, follow simple rules and enjoy active play with others.

By the end of Reception: Children show increasing control in running, jumping, balancing, throwing, catching and movement sequences; cooperate in simple games, follow safety routines and talk about their physical experiences.

By the end of Key Stage 1: Pupils demonstrate developing mastery of fundamental movement skills, apply them in games, gymnastics, dance and athletics, cooperate and compete fairly, and begin to evaluate and improve performance.

By the end of Lower Key Stage 2: Pupils apply fundamental skills in sport-specific contexts, develop attacking and defending tactics, create controlled sequences, navigate simple courses, cooperate effectively and evaluate against success criteria.

By the end of Key Stage 2: Pupils perform with consistency, accuracy, control and speed; apply tactics thoughtfully; create and refine complex sequences; navigate independently; evaluate precisely; and demonstrate the confidence, character and attitudes needed for KS3 PE and an active lifestyle.

Thinking like a sportsperson

- What skill am I trying to perform and what does successful technique look like?
- Where is the space, and how can I use it effectively?
- When should I pass, move, attack, defend or change my tactic?

- How can my partner or team communicate and cooperate more effectively?
- What is working well in this performance and what specific change would improve it?
- How can I respond positively when something is difficult or does not work first time?
- How can I participate safely, fairly and respectfully?
- How is physical activity helping my body, wellbeing and confidence?