

## What Children Learn In the Classroom

### A Parents' Guide to Primary Education in England

They don't seem to 'do' Maths at school any more.

When my parents were young, they were taught the 'Three R's': Reading Writing and Arithmetic (...only one of which, of course, actually began with an 'R', but then it was a very long time ago!) In my day, we stopped all that, and instead we learnt English and Maths – with some Art and History thrown in if the teacher was keen on that sort of thing. That has all changed now.

Now, children in Primary School learn Literacy and Numeracy, Core Subjects and various other parts of the National Curriculum. This didn't bother me when my daughter started school. After all, 'A rose by any other name...' and all that. Surely, what she actually learnt would not have changed?

Not so. As an English graduate, I was flummoxed when her Year One teacher told me she could blend her phonemes. Was this good or bad? By year four she was Chunking. I was lost. How could I help her when I hadn't the faintest idea what her teachers were talking about? I watched her doing her homework. This wasn't what I had learnt when I was at school...

It has been a steep learning curve for me, especially as – when our son was diagnosed with Asperger syndrome at the age of 4 – we decided to take him out of school for part of the time and teach him ourselves. Suddenly, I *had* to be familiar with those wretched blended phonemes. I’m still working on the chunking....

This book is a ‘Cook’s Tour’ of what your child learns in school these days, as we steam towards the second decade of the twenty-first century. It will give you an idea of what to expect, a working knowledge of what is going on and the vocabulary to hold your own in parents’ evenings. Most importantly, it will give you a window into your child’s world. If you know what she is doing at school, you are well placed to help and support her, to encourage and assist, to know when to lavish praise and when to give a helping hand. If you have a basic understanding of what she is learning, you are in a position to let her teach you and to share the journey with her. Good luck!

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