Athletics Curriculum Objectives - EYFS to Year 2

Progression from EYFS fundamental movement skills to the KS1 National Curriculum requirements for running, jumping, throwing and catching, with increasing agility, balance, coordination, confidence and accuracy.

Curriculum rationale: Athletics should build on the physical foundations established in EYFS. Development Matters emphasizes developing overall body strength, balance, coordination and agility, refining fundamental movement skills, and developing confidence, competence, precision and accuracy in ball skills. At KS1, pupils should master basic movements including running, jumping, throwing and catching and apply these in a range of activities, while developing agility, balance and coordination and experiencing competitive and cooperative activity. The progression below therefore moves from Explore → Develop → Apply → Refine, with personal-best and team challenges used to develop confidence and motivation.

Curriculum reference points

EYFS – Development Matters	KS1 – National Curriculum PE
Physical Development: develop overall body strength, balance, coordination and agility; refine fundamental movement skills; use large and small apparatus safely and confidently; develop confidence, competence, precision and accuracy in ball skills such as throwing, catching, passing and aiming.	Pupils should develop fundamental movement skills and become increasingly competent and confident; extend agility, balance and coordination; master basic movements including running, jumping, throwing and catching; apply these in a range of activities; and take part in competitive (including against self) and cooperative physical activities.

Athletics progression

Aspect	EYFS	Year 1	Year 2
Running	Revise and refine walking, running, hopping and skipping. Run safely around obstacles and in different directions. Explore changing speed, stopping and starting, and following a simple trail.	Develop running techniques and control. Run in straight and curved pathways and change direction in response to signals. Begin to sprint over short distances and negotiate low obstacles/hurdles safely. Take part in simple relays.	Develop greater speed, control and fluency when running. Sprint over short distances with an increasingly effective technique. Run over low hurdles/obstacles with control. Take part in relays and begin to understand how teamwork can improve performance.
Jumping	Experiment with different ways of jumping. Explore two-foot and one-foot take-offs and different landing positions. Develop safe landing, balance and body control.	Develop a controlled one-foot take-off and safe landing. Explore jumping for height and distance. Coordinate arms and legs and practise repeated jumps/hops.	Develop jumping technique for greater height and distance. Explore different approaches, take-offs and landings. Apply jumping skills in personal-best and simple competitive challenges.
Throwing	Throw beanbags and other suitable objects for height and distance. Aim at targets. Explore different ways of throwing and develop confidence, precision and accuracy.	Develop a range of throwing actions, including two-handed push throws and simple one-handed throws. Throw towards targets and for distance. Explore how force, direction and body position affect the throw.	Refine a range of throwing techniques and select an appropriate action for distance or accuracy. Develop a more effective preparation and release. Introduce a simple approach where appropriate to increase distance.
Agility & change of direction	Move around, under, over and through equipment. Change speed and direction in response to obstacles or simple instructions. Develop spatial awareness and safe movement around others.	Change direction when running or walking. Respond to signals. Negotiate cones, markers and low hurdles. Develop pathways and controlled changes of speed.	Change direction quickly and under control. Combine running with changes of speed and direction. Apply agility in obstacle courses, relays and competitive activities.
Balance & coordination	Develop overall body strength, balance and coordination through running, jumping, climbing, throwing, catching and apparatus. Move and land with increasing control.	Coordinate arms and legs during running, jumping and throwing. Combine two or more movements and maintain balance when landing or changing direction.	Combine running, jumping and throwing with greater fluency. Maintain control at increased speed and during more complex athletic challenges.
Relays & teamwork	Take part in simple group movement activities. Develop turn-taking, cooperation and awareness of others.	Develop familiarity with relay activities. Carry or pass an object to a partner and follow simple relay rules.	Participate in relay races and work cooperatively as part of a team. Develop awareness of efficient running and changeovers.

Aspect	EYFS	Year 1	Year 2
			Receive objects travelling at different speeds and heights. Apply catching within relays, games and cooperative challenges.
Personal best & competition	Compare performance informally: Can I run to the marker? Can I jump further? Can I hit the target? Celebrate effort, improvement and confidence.	Take part in simple personal-best challenges. Begin to compare performances and recognise improvement.	Take part in personal-best and team competitions. Compare performances, celebrate improvement and identify how technique can be refined.

Suggested progression model for teachers

Stage	Core progression	What this means in practice	Key teacher look-fors
EYFS	Explore → repeat → control	Children explore running, jumping, hopping, skipping, throwing and catching through adult-led sessions and continuous provision. They use indoor and outdoor spaces and equipment confidently and safely.	Movement becomes increasingly fluent and controlled; children develop strength, balance, coordination, agility and spatial awareness.
Year 1	Control → practise → apply	Children develop basic running, jumping, and throwing skills and begin to apply them in relays, obstacle activities, target challenges and personal-best tasks.	Pupils demonstrate improving technique, consistency and confidence. They can apply a skill in more than one context.
Year 2	Apply → refine → perform	Children apply and refine running, jumping, and throwing in increasingly challenging activities. They combine skills and participate in competitive and cooperative challenges.	Pupils show greater control, fluency, accuracy and confidence; can identify simple ways to improve performance and work effectively with others.