Swimming and water safety progression

Year 5 | Individual starting points and aquatic progression

Year 5 pupils learn swimming and water safety with qualified instructors at Hillingdon Leisure Centre. Tasks build from each pupil's starting point. Assessment focuses on aquatic movement, effective strokes and safety skills.

Stage and vocabulary	Outcome	Evidence	Teaching focus
A Water confidence and safe routines entry, exit, breathe, support	Enter and exit as instructed; manage water on the face; move with suitable support and begin controlled breathing.	The instructor observes routine entries, exits and short supported movement. Record the support used and a specific next step.	Build trust and predictable routines. Use appropriate depth and support. Rehearse breath control without pressure or forced submersion.
B Independent movement and flotation float, rotate, recover, alignment	Travel independently over a manageable distance, float and return to a stable position using taught methods.	The instructor observes unsupported travel, a controlled float and recovery in conditions suited to the pupil's readiness.	Develop body alignment, coordinated kick and breathing. Teach flotation, rotation and recovery through small steps before adding distance.
C Effective strokes and safe self-rescue stroke, propulsion, self-rescue, signal	Work towards 25 metres of competent swimming, effective use of different strokes and a taught self-rescue sequence.	Record the three national curriculum outcomes separately using provider-agreed criteria. A single stroke distance does not establish self-rescue.	Refine efficient propulsion and breathing. Qualified instructors teach and assess survival actions using the current Swim England and STA guidance.
D Consolidation and wider competence efficiency, adapt, judgement, consolidate	Maintain efficient strokes and adapt a taught safety response to different controlled situations appropriate to readiness.	The instructor checks retained competence across repeated observations, identifies weaker components and records next steps.	Increase technical challenge through improved efficiency and varied tasks; continue water-safety teaching for pupils who already swim 25 metres.

These stages describe the school's aquatic learning pathway. They are not Swim England award numbers or fixed age standards. Progress in stroke development and self-rescue can differ. Instructors select tasks and conditions to match each pupil's readiness.

The three swimming and water-safety outcomes

Each outcome is assessed separately

Curriculum outcome	Assessment evidence	Further teaching
Distance and control: swim at least 25 metres with competence, confidence and proficiency.	Dated instructor evidence of independent swimming over the required distance with appropriate control.	Refine coordination, breathing, propulsion and stamina according to the observed need.
Stroke effectiveness: use different swimming strokes effectively.	Instructor evidence of effective use of a range of strokes. A distance achieved in one stroke does not establish this outcome.	Develop weaker stroke components through manageable practice and focused feedback.
Safe self-rescue: respond safely in different water situations using taught survival skills.	Instructor assessment of the taught self-rescue sequence, with reasonable adjustments documented where appropriate.	Develop the safety or survival components still needing support. Water confidence alone does not demonstrate self-rescue.

Teaching and assessing self-rescue

Self-rescue teaching draws on Swim England and STA guidance. It covers entry and recovery, flotation, rotation, treading and signalling, survival movement, use of a floating aid, group protection and exit. Qualified instructors select controlled conditions and suitable adjustments, with teaching and assessment matched to pupils' readiness.

Professional guidance supports the self-rescue outcome. The national curriculum retains three swimming and water-safety outcomes. All pool activities follow the provider's safety arrangements.

DfE: PE programmes of study | Swim England and STA: self-rescue guidance

Assessment, support and water-safety knowledge

Using evidence to guide the next teaching step

Stage of programme	Assessment focus	How this supports pupils
Before lessons	Prior experience, access needs, water confidence and an instructor assessment of starting points.	Suitable grouping, initial tasks and individual support.
During lessons	Specific aquatic skills, support used and a clear next teaching step.	Teaching responds to what each pupil can demonstrate.
At programme review	Separate evidence for distance, stroke effectiveness and self-rescue.	The particular components needing further teaching are identified.
Before Year 6 reporting	Existing instructor records, subsequent learning and current cohort membership.	Published outcomes accurately reflect the Year 6 cohort.

Instructor evidence distinguishes outcomes that are met, need further teaching or have not yet been observed. Individual pupil records remain within school; published summaries identify the relevant cohort year.

Further learning

Teaching targets the particular skill or safety response that needs development. Swimming 25 metres does not, on its own, demonstrate effective use of different strokes or safe self-rescue. Progress is reviewed through further instructor observation.

Water-safety knowledge

Pupils learn to recognise pool and open-water hazards, follow signs and adult advice, and seek help if someone is in difficulty. They learn why entering the water to rescue another person can put them at risk. Short classroom scenarios reinforce the safety decisions taught during pool lessons.