



THE VALLEY SCHOOL

CURRICULUM, TEACHING AND LEARNING

JUNE 2020 (SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT COMMITTEE)

KEY PRINCIPLES

“Learn to Believe – Learn to Achieve”

“Different for Different”

Our commitment is to ensure that all our pupils become good at learning, so that they can access anything they meet in their future, with the required skills and attributes to be influential, engaged and independent.

CRACKING LEARNING

All learning is planned to develop at least one of the following elements of being a learner. Curriculum mapping ensures that all are covered within a broad and balanced learning experience:

Curiosity	the desire to know and learn more, to be interested in the world around us and the people and opportunities that we meet
Resilience	the skills to face challenge and to overcome adversity
Access	the essential levels of literacy, numeracy, visual/aural reception and use of technology that allow us to engage with what is around us
Confidence	self-belief, high self-esteem, the ability to enjoy what makes us different
Knowledge	information, techniques, understanding and skills that we hold with us and can recall when we need to

We underpin our planning to ensure that our pupils build and strengthen the following core **relationships**, so that learning can happen successfully:

With ourselves	self-belief, confidence, self-awareness, resilience
With our learning	belief that learning is possible, enjoyable and successful
With each other	problem-solving, working collaboratively, listening and understanding, empathy,

We believe in “different for different”, so we aim to provide a learning experience that meets the needs of individual pupils and helps them to overcome their learning barriers.

KEY STATUTORY REGULATIONS AND SIGNIFICANT LINKS

- The National Curriculum for England
- The SEND Code of Practice

Key Stage 3:

Throughout Key Stage 3, the thematic-based curriculum is followed. The thematic-based curriculum aims to offer children access to teaching that challenges and supports them to make excellent progress, but that is presented in a way best suited to the individual.

There is strong evidence that teaching subject knowledge and skills as part of a linked thematic-based curriculum allows learners to make useful links to the information. Memory and understanding have been proven to increase in direct proportion to the significance and number of connections made to information. The use of a connected, rather than fragmented, curriculum aids learners to deepening their understanding and ability to apply knowledge to new and unfamiliar circumstances. Additionally, children are more likely to actively participate in learning and apply skills if they can see a purposeful link throughout what is taught.

Themes

Themes are designed to:

- CRACK!
- Be drawn from the real world and reflect the interests and issues that our learners may face.
- Make clear connections across the different curriculum disciplines, where possible, without compromising the integrity of the information. At times, subject specific skills will be taught aside from the theme.
- Ensure that the learner's question, 'Why are we learning this?' is answered.

Structure

The thematic-based curriculum has the following structure:

- 6 half-termly cross-curricular themes for all year groups in KS3.

The curriculum framework consists of:

- Long term plans: A KS3 theme web for the academic year (*under development – will be added over time*)
- Medium term plans: Theme overviews/Theme maps (1/2 termly) showing the subject specific skills being taught (*under development – will be added over time*)
- Short term plans: Detailed half termly planning with learning objectives and suggested activities. (*under development – will be added over time*)

Key Stage 4:

Throughout Key Stage 4, subjects are taught by specialist teachers and/or teams. The focus remains on “CRACKING the Learning Code”, enjoying the excitement of becoming an effective learner for whatever they will face in the future. Option choices are added, which are reviewed on a termly basis. This allows for some pupils to focus on a chosen subject and to achieve full qualifications and, for others to experience a range of subjects and to achieve alternative qualifications.

Enterprise is added in Year 10 and allows pupils to understand the world of business and to take on big and small projects, interacting with others in the community. Money that is raised is spent according to the choices made by the pupils.

All of Year 11 and some of Year 10 start to experience college and to prepare for their future. Pupils are supported to travel independently, to make good social choices and to be safe and resilient in current and new relationships, in the workplace or their personal life.

Long term plans show a clear overview of learning across the Key Stage (*under development – will be added over time*) and are put together by Learning Leaders, in conjunction with the Deputy Headteacher.

Medium-Term plans are schemes of work, developed by Subject leaders and overseen by Learning Leaders and the Deputy Headteacher.

Short term plans have detailed progression of activities. They are developed from the medium-term plans to suit the needs of the specific learners within the cohort. These plans are then personalised for the specific class. This is the responsibility of the main class teacher/teacher of those lessons.

Accreditation

We support our pupils to access qualifications of which they are capable, academically and emotionally, and which open up life choices and life chances in their futures. They access a range of accreditation routes while they are pupils at The Valley School (updated annually in appendix 1 of the SEF). Our curriculum also prepares them for accessing higher level courses at college by providing a wide range of vocational subjects and activities, preparation for work & college and advice & guidance on post 16 choices. Quality is more important than quantity. Some of what The Valley School curriculum provides does not lead to a qualification, but may prepare pupils for accessing more advanced qualifications in Further Education provision.

We have a dedicated area of the school that is used solely for exams and pupils are prepared with great care to access the rules and routines that apply in this formal setting.

Subject leaders are responsible for maintaining up to date knowledge of what is available in their subject area and for making decisions about what can be accessed in line with the needs of our pupils. The overall accreditation offer is monitored by learning leaders and senior leaders, so that pupils are neither overwhelmed nor disadvantaged in their provision. Choices take account of pupils' abilities, emotional development, interests and future plans.

Modular and sequential graded qualifications (for example, ASDAN, The Arts Award, Instrumental Grades etc) are available on a “stage not age” basis and can be in either

Key Stage. GCSEs, BTecs, and other examinations that are determined by end of course assessments are delivered in KS4 and pupils are entered when their learning and/or emotional development has reached the highest relevant level. Early Entry is not part of common practice.

Learning is closely tracked throughout every pupil's journey and a wide range of data is used to support decision making. Pupils and families are fully involved in making appropriate choices.

Our pupils have the right to access additional time, scribes, reader pens or other aids for some, but not all, qualifications. Teachers ensure that pupils are used to accessing support in these ways and ensure that the Exams & Data Officer is kept informed and can apply in good time. Details are recorded on ILPs.

The Learning 4 Life curriculum and progress trackers support and record a variety of practical, emotional and developmental steps which increase our pupils' ability to access and achieve well in public examinations and nationally recognised qualifications. This information is also used to support decision making.

Home learning policy

Homework is not a compulsory element of learning for every pupil. There are pupils who do not manage the crossover between home and school. Tutors agree homework models for individual pupils, in line with their capacity to engage with and benefit from tasks to be completed at home. There is a programme of home learning to celebrate a range of purposeful activities that can be completed within a home environment. Some pupils enjoy engaging in a recognisable homework model to remain in line with the experiences of their siblings.

When home learning tasks are set, teachers are required to ensure that they are clearly defined, broken down into manageable chunks, linked to a tight and defined timescale, celebrated appropriately, closely monitored and evaluated in line with the school's marking policy.

A home learning booklet is in place for each year group and Learning Leaders are responsible for ensuring that it is relevant and appropriate, updated on a yearly basis.

Guidance for revision will be provided, where appropriate.