



Inspiring All to Excellence



Violet Way Academy

Teaching and Learning Policy

Document Control

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1. Purpose and Aims

At Violet Way Academy we aim to provide an exciting and engaging curriculum which will inspire children and nurture a passion for learning. The driving force behind the delivery of a well-planned, interesting and creative curriculum is a clear focus on high-quality teaching and learning which engages children in a range of challenging and meaningful learning experiences.

Our Curriculum Vision: At Violet Way Academy we intend that all pupils, regardless of background, develop the **knowledge and character** needed to flourish in life. We aim to 'inspire all to excellence' through the provision of:

1. A rich, broad and balanced curriculum presented in a vibrant, exciting and imaginative manner, enriched through a range of meaningful experiences.
2. A character education that runs through all that we do, nurturing and fostering the values our pupils need to thrive as individuals, ready for the next stage of their education.

We will achieve this together through high-quality teaching, which is underpinned by:

- Excellent subject and pedagogical knowledge (content and how we teach the content)
- A deep understanding of how children learn
- A planned programme of professional development
- A well-sequenced and well-planned curriculum
- All adults modelling the values and behaviours we expect to see

Our fundamental goal as educators is to improve outcomes for pupils and the best available evidence indicates that high-quality teaching is the most important tool schools have to improve pupil attainment. Ensuring every teacher is supported in delivering high-quality teaching is essential to achieving the best outcomes for all pupils, particularly the most disadvantaged. At Violet Way Academy, we believe that teaching and learning should be evidence-informed and, in creating this policy, we have referred to relevant educational research papers and texts. In writing this policy, we aim to:

- help our teachers make better decisions about what they can best do to improve their effectiveness through an evidence-informed approach
- enable teachers to work together and learn from each other
- enable all children to gain knowledge, skills and understanding, make progress and achieve well
- provide an inclusive education for all children irrespective of their religion, culture or background

2. Evidence-Informed Teaching and Learning

The quality of teaching plays a large and important role on pupil learning, progress and outcomes. Being evidence-informed enables us to focus on what works well and avoid learning myths which have impacted negatively on classroom practice, such as 'learning styles' which resulted in lessons being tailored to meet perceived ways of learning. Using an evidence-informed approach to teaching and learning means that we base our decisions about what practice to use based on evidence rather than on speculation or assumptions. As a result, we can improve teaching, learning and pupil outcomes.

In addition, evidence-informed teaching can help us identify practices that have a large impact on teacher workload but limited impact on pupil learning, for example, teachers at Violet Way Academy are now able to make informed decisions about the feedback they provide to their learners rather than prescribed amounts of written marking (refer to Feedback to Learning Policy for further information).

3. Curriculum

Through the effective delivery of a well-planned curriculum, we equip children with the knowledge, skills and understanding necessary to achieve and succeed now and in the future. Our curriculum vision and key curriculum drivers (Aspirations, Collaboration, Connections, Creativity, Expression) have

informed the content we expect children to learn at Violet Way Academy. We use the EYFS Framework in Reception and National Curriculum in Y1 and Y2 as the basis for our Violet Way Academy Curriculum. Each subject's curriculum is planned and sequenced so that new knowledge and skills build on what has been taught before, and towards agreed end-points, as identified on the academy's Progression Grids for each subject. Our curriculum builds on prior knowledge and prepares pupils for what comes next. Please refer to our Curriculum Policy for detailed information about our Curriculum Intent, Implementation and Impact.

At Violet Way Academy, we understand that teachers need a good knowledge of the curriculum ('what we teach/the content') and pedagogical knowledge ('how we deliver the curriculum content') in order to secure good pupil outcomes. Understanding how children learn and how they can be supported results in the application of teaching approaches that ensure long-term retention of knowledge, skills and understanding. Teachers at Violet Way utilise our Knowledge, Skills and Understanding (KSU) Progression grids for each subject, Long Term overviews and Medium Term plans to ensure that the curriculum is well-sequenced and lessons are carefully planned to build on prior knowledge. As well as ensuring our curriculum is well-sequenced, broad, balanced and relevant to our young learners, continued and sustained improvement is dependent upon sustaining high-quality teaching and learning opportunities for our pupils.

4. Teaching and Learning at Violet Way Academy

Through evidence-informed research, including reference to the Great Teaching Toolkit: Evidence Review (Coe et al 2020), What makes great teaching? (Coe et al 2014), The Learning Curriculum (Fletcher-Wood et al, 2019) and Rosenshine's Principles in Action (Sherrington, 2019), we have created our Teaching and Learning at Violet Way 'In a Nutshell' document. The document provides a framework for teaching and learning across the academy. It summarises the four key priorities for teachers to help their pupils learn more, as identified in the Great Teaching Toolkit:

1. Understand the content they are teaching and how it is learnt
2. Create a supportive environment for learning
3. Manage the classroom to maximise the opportunity to learn
4. Present content, activities and interactions that activate pupils' thinking

Teaching and learning can be monitored and developed with reference to the key points within the framework and it can provide a basis for professional discussions about improving standards through consistently good-quality teaching and learning for all.

5. Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND)

We set high expectations for **every** pupil. We aim to deepen the knowledge and understanding of all our pupils by planning suitable learning challenges for them, but we also plan carefully for the needs of pupils who experience difficulty in learning. This ensures that all pupils receive a level of challenge appropriate for them to thrive. For pupils with SEND, EAL or vulnerable learners, lessons are planned to ensure that there are no barriers to pupil achievement and progress. The evidence tells us that teachers should prioritise familiar but powerful strategies, like scaffolding and explicit instruction, to support their pupils with SEND. The strategic deployment of Teaching Assistants will also be important in ensuring pupils with SEND are supported, complementing, not replacing, high-quality provision from the class teacher. There are staff in school that can offer advice for teachers in supporting needs of SEND, EAL and vulnerable learners, including the SENDCO, Inclusion Manager, SLT, teaching staff and experienced teaching assistants. Teachers should speak to the SENDCO in the first instance, who will signpost them to relevant resources or personnel. The SEND Code of Practice includes advice on approaches to identification of need which can also help teachers to ensure that they are offering appropriate support to learners with SEND.

3. Teaching and Learning at Violet Way in a Nutshell

Understanding the Content

Teacher Subject Content Knowledge

Teachers have a deep and fluent knowledge of the content they are teaching.

The curriculum content is well-sequenced and teachers are knowledgeable about curriculum sequencing in relation to the content they teach.

Teacher Pedagogical Content Knowledge

Teachers are able to solve the kinds of problems they must help children to solve, and produce model answers that exhibit the knowledge, skills and understanding they need the children to learn.

Teachers understand what prior knowledge is required to enable new learning, hence the requirements for sequencing. For each new idea, teachers need to know what connections learners need to make with previous knowledge. If a pupil is struggling with a particular idea or technique, teachers need to be able to identify the kinds of gaps in underpinning knowledge that might be the explanation. This kind of teacher curriculum knowledge is exemplified in our curriculum planning, schemes of work and lesson plans.

Direct Instruction

Teachers generate varied explanations, demonstrations, multiple representations, powerful analogies, illustrations, models or examples for the ideas they are teaching. For example, the use of manipulatives and representations in teaching early mathematics (EEF, 2020), which can be effective in helping children to engage with and understand abstract ideas about number.

Common Misconceptions

Teachers are knowledgeable about common misconceptions and sticking points in relation to the content they are teaching.

Teachers design their presentations and learning activities to anticipate and address misconceptions directly and explicitly, both by exposing and challenging the misconception and by presenting the correct conception clearly and directly. *To support teachers, common misconceptions are identified in our academy Medium Term planning.*

Teachers need to have more than one way of explaining or presenting the idea, and multiple examples and non-examples (ideally tailored to a child's particular misconception or gap), so that they can keep going until the child does get it.

Creating a Supportive Environment

Teacher-Pupil Relationships

Promote positive interactions and relationships with all children that are based on mutual respect, care, empathy and warmth. Avoid negative emotions in interactions with their pupils and are sensitive to their individual needs, emotions, culture and beliefs.

Pupil-Pupil Relationships

Promote a positive climate of pupil-pupil relationships, characterised by respect, trust, cooperation and care. Children are encouraged to respect and pay attention to each other's thoughts, feelings and opinions and feel safe to express their own thoughts and ideas. Effective cooperation and interactions with each other support learning. The teachers and teaching assistants play a vital role in promoting these positive pupil relationships and interactions.

Learner Motivation

Promote learner motivation through teaching our academy values and teach children that making mistakes is part of learning. Teachers have high expectations for behaviour and learning and encourage pupils to be 'Star Learners', developing good learning behaviours, including a positive attitude and perseverance.

High Expectations for All

Create a climate of high expectations for all, with high challenge and high trust, so learners feel it is okay to have a go. Learners are encouraged to attribute their success or failure to things they can change (such as how hard they worked or the strategies they used).

Maximising Opportunities to Learn

Time Management and Routines

Time and resources are managed efficiently by teachers in the classroom to maximise productivity and minimise wasted time (e.g. settling at the start of a lesson or after a transition).

Teachers provide clear and simple instructions so all children understand exactly what they should be doing. Routines are established quickly and embedded so that children learn the pattern of behaviour regularly used in the classroom and there is no lost learning time.

Rules and Expectations

Rules and expectations are established quickly and rewards and consequences for behaviour are explicit, clear and consistently and fairly applied.

Preventing Disruption

All staff consistently use praise and positive reinforcement to promote desired learning behaviours. They prevent, anticipate and respond to potentially disruptive incidents, minimising the effect on learning. They know how to signal awareness of what is happening in the classroom and respond appropriately (with a 'look' or movement for example). Teachers draw on targeted approaches that are tailored to the individual needs of pupils with a history of challenging behaviour and seek advice where required.

Classroom Organisation

A well organised, tidy, safe, learning environment with appropriate resources (available and accessible), clear routines, visuals and welcoming environment and ethos is conducive to learning.

Activating Hard Thinking

Structuring

- Establishing and sharing the learning intention ('My learning is ...') provides the teacher and pupil with a shared understanding of the 'concept of quality' that they are aiming for, helping children to understand what success looks like. Teachers will introduce the learning intention ('My learning is ...') to the children and include modelled examples to ensure they are clear about what the learning is and what success looks like. NB: Learning Intentions may be for a lesson or a series of lessons.
- Tasks should present an appropriate level of difficulty for each pupil: hard enough to move them forward, but not so hard that they cannot cope, given the existing knowledge and resources they can draw on.
- Tasks must be sequenced appropriately so that prerequisite knowledge, skills and understanding are accessible and fluent when they are needed.
- Complex tasks often require scaffolding beginning with a simplified or limited version of the task to make it manageable. Scaffolding is gradually removed as ideas and procedures become secure and fluent: by the end, those complex tasks are accessible to all.

Explaining

- Present and communicate new ideas clearly, with concise, appropriate, engaging explanations.
- Avoid overloading pupils' working memory by breaking down new or complex material into smaller steps.
- Activate prior knowledge, connecting new ideas to what children already know.
- Use examples (and non-examples) appropriately to help learners understand and build connections.
- Modelling or demonstrating new procedures with appropriate scaffolding and challenge.
- Using worked/part-worked examples.

Questioning (to promote children's thinking and to assess children's thinking)

- *Questioning to promote children's thinking* - Questioning is a tool to promote deep and connected thinking. Teachers should use questioning as part of a dialogue in which children are engaged and stretched. They should prompt children to give explanations and justifications for their answers, to improve an initial response, to describe their thinking processes and to elaborate on their answers helping them to connect ideas. Teachers should use strategies to garner responses from all pupils.
- *Questioning to assess children's thinking* - When used for the purpose of assessment, questions should be seen as tools to elicit insights into children's thinking. Questions provide information if they discriminate between those who know and those who don't yet. Teachers plan and adapt their teaching to respond to what assessment tells them, checking for understanding and providing additional instruction, models and addressing misconceptions.

Interacting (feedback to teachers / feedback to pupils)

- Teachers are responsive to the information they receive from interactions with pupils about their thinking, knowledge and understanding. The feedback teachers receive informs their decisions and responses.
- Feedback to pupils that helps them learn can be in a variety of forms and provides actionable feedback that guides their learning. *For further information on types of feedback, please refer to our Feedback to Learning Policy.*

Embedding

- Guided and independent practice is needed for new learning to become fluent, automatic and secure.
- Plan review and retrieval activities to increase long term retrieval strength and help children remember more.

Activating

- Teaching children how to plan, regulate, monitor and evaluate their own learning begins with teacher modelling. Teachers draw attention to their own planning and self-regulation when they model the process of completing complex tasks and they encourage children to 'self-explain'/'talk-through' their own thinking.
- Teachers enable pupils to progress from structured to more independent learning as they develop knowledge and expertise needed.

References

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