

Valley Road School

Curriculum Rationale

Family is what springs to mind when observing how adults and pupils are together. Caring relationships lie at the heart of Valley Road. Leaders make sure that pupils' individual personalities are brought to the fore. Pupils are eloquent and zestful. They eagerly welcome visitors and can talk at length about how they enjoy learning.

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The curriculum at Valley Road is designed to provide a broad and balanced education that meets the needs of all pupils and gives them the skills, knowledge and understanding to prepare them for their future lives.

It ensures that academic success, creativity and problem solving, reliability, responsibility and resilience, as well as physical development, well-being and mental health are key elements that support the development of the whole child and promote a positive attitude to learning.

The curriculum celebrates the diversity and utilises the skills, knowledge and cultural wealth of the community while supporting the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

At Valley Road, we also believe that:

Each pupil is entitled to receive the best education possible and to achieve the highest standards

- The curriculum should prepare children for secondary school and beyond
- The curriculum should meet pupil's individual needs
- Pupils learn best from a broad and challenging curriculum
- The curriculum should involve first-hand experience and be taught in ways which make sense for pupils
- Achievement in a range of subjects across the curriculum and beyond improves pupils' confidence and self-esteem, enabling them to tackle more challenging work and develop a positive attitude to school

The school aims to:

- Cater for the needs of individual children of both sexes from all ethnic and social groups, including the most able and those who are experiencing learning difficulties
- Facilitate children's acquisition of knowledge, skills and qualities which will help them to develop intellectually, emotionally, socially, physically, morally and aesthetically, so that they may become independent, responsible, useful, thinking, confident and considerate members of the community
- Create and maintain an exciting and stimulating learning environment
- Ensure that each child's education has continuity and progression
- Ensure that there is a match between the child and the tasks s/he is asked to perform
- Provide a broad and balanced curriculum
- Recognise the crucial role which parents play in their children's education and make every effort to encourage parental involvement in the educational process
- Treat children in a dignified way

We aim that all children should:

- Learn: to be adaptable; how to solve problems in a variety of situations; how to work independently and as members of a team
- Develop the ability to make reasoned judgements and choices, based on interpretation and evaluation of relevant information from a variety of sources
- Be happy, cheerful and well balanced
- Be enthusiastic and eager to put their best into all activities
- Begin acquiring a set of moral values, such as honesty, sincerity, personal responsibility, on which to base their own behaviour
- Be expected to behave in a dignified and acceptable way and learn to become responsible for their actions
- Care for and take pride in their school
- Develop tolerance, respect and appreciation of the feelings and capabilities of others in an unbiased way
- Develop non-sexist and non-racist attitudes
- Know how to think and solve problems mathematically in a variety of situations using concepts of number, algebra, measurement, shape and space, and handling data
- Be able to listen and read for a variety of purposes and be able to convey their meaning accurately and appropriately through speech and writing for a variety of purposes
- Develop an enquiring mind and scientific approach to problems
- Have an opportunity to solve problems using technological skills
- Be capable of communicating their knowledge and feelings through various art forms including art/craft, music, drama and be acquiring appropriate techniques which will enable them to develop their inventiveness and creativity
- Know about geographical, historical and social aspects of the local environment and national heritage and be aware of other times and places and recognise links among family, local, national and international events
- Have some knowledge of the beliefs of the major world religions
- Develop agility, physical co-ordination and confidence in and through movement
- Know how to apply the basic principles of health, hygiene and safety

Productive discussions between leaders and staff have led to a new and improved curriculum. Together they have mapped out when and why ambitious content is taught.

Pupils' knowledge journey is clearly set out from Reception to Year 6. Staff work in small teams to lead all subjects. This enables shared expertise and wider professional development. Additionally, staff have worked with the main secondary feeder school to check what pupils must master before moving on.

The core subjects are of high quality. Here, leaders are crystal clear about what teachers need to do. They have trained all staff to deliver the curriculum extremely well. In mathematics, teachers' subject knowledge is excellent. They explain concepts simply which helps pupils to grasp some trickier ones. For example, in early years, children show aptitude for spending money up to 10 pence. In Year 2 pupils work well with reading time on an analogue clock. Furthermore, in Year 4 pupils are knowledgeable about multiplying and dividing decimals by 10. Staff use practical apparatus skilfully to deepen pupils understanding. They revisit regularly to check what pupils remember. This helps teachers swiftly pick up on any misconceptions.

In teaching pupils to read, staff are following a new phonics programme. They have received the right training from the programme's makers. Not only that, but staff also revisit and review the expert learning modules. This is embedding greater consistency and flair across classes. Despite the COVID 19 pandemic, most pupils are firmly on track.

Those who need extra help are prioritised daily. Leaders ensure that staff follow the programme's plans for the keep up sessions. Pupils have access to reading books that match the sounds they know.

Older pupils read avidly. They relish the school's library where there is no limit on the number of books they can borrow. An impressive and diverse range is on offer. Pupils even read adapted versions of Shakespeare's key plays. What is so heart-warming is that pupils donate books to the library. They are keen to spread the joy of reading to others.

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Curriculum Statement 2022-23

At Valley Road Primary School, we offer a curriculum which is broad and balanced, and which builds on the knowledge, understanding and skills of all children, whatever their starting points, as they progress through each Key Stage. The curriculum incorporates the statutory requirements of the National Curriculum 2014 and other experiences and opportunities which best meet the learning and developmental needs of the pupils in our school. The aim of our curriculum is for pupils to have the requisite skills to be successful, independent and motivated learners in readiness for their next stage of education. It is important that the curriculum considers the development of the whole child and does not only concentrate on academic success. This is particularly appropriate at the present time with the after-effects of COVID-19 on pupils still being felt.

Pupils are still working on the Early Learning Goals of the Early Years Foundation Stage Curriculum as they enter Year 1. There is a period in the Autumn Term where the majority of children progress to the National Curriculum. Throughout this period and beyond all children are still developing their phonic knowledge through the Letters and Sounds Programme and developing their fluency in reading. Like all schools, we have been involved in the new(ish) baseline assessment introduced by the government. Any date the school acquires is always used to help a child move forward with confidence and enthusiasm.

The National Curriculum is delivered partly using an integrated topic approach as a basis to ensure coverage and progression throughout the school. The more able are challenged further in their learning and children who find aspects of their learning more difficult are appropriately supported so that they too are enabled to experience success. National requirements and school requirements are mapped out by the school and then individual year groups plan the curriculum for their pupils accordingly. The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of our pupils and their understanding of the core values of our society are woven through the curriculum. We continue to spend a significant amount of time updating our teaching of the curriculum. In our recent Ofsted inspection our curriculum and approach to teaching was highly praised.

The school does not believe in a “one size fits all” curriculum which works exclusively from a scheme. Nonetheless we do access a variety of published resources such as Hamilton Maths Plans and Charanga Music resource. These give a cohesive framework from which we can use a variety of resources choosing the most appropriate one for the aspect we are teaching at that point.

We care deeply about providing children with opportunities to apply their knowledge and understanding of the curriculum and we offer a range of trips and visits to complement their learning in school.

We have very high expectations for attainment and progress in all subjects, but we also offer a wide range of art, musical and sporting opportunities throughout key stage one and two. Children are given opportunities to participate in after school clubs linked to these curriculum areas and are often invited to participate in competitive events such as sport and Music events. This is very important to us as we return out of the challenges of the last eighteen months. It is essential that pupils have opportunities to develop their interests and to learn new skills with excellent coaches. The socialisation offered by clubs is also very important at the moment.

These subjects are sometimes taught in mixed ability groups but we also will use a variety of methods depending on the class so all pupils can work effectively and make progress. In all year groups there are small group interventions in order to support pupils in gaining the key skills to become successful readers, writers and mathematicians.

Specialist teachers and instructors support music and physical education and the school also ensures there a range of visiting guests to stimulate the children's interest in the wider world. After school clubs and events extend these opportunities further. Additional whole school programmes and approaches support quality teaching and learning, and the school is well resourced in terms of learning materials, books, and technology. We regularly review our resources to make sure they reflect the wider world of Britain in the current era not just our local environment.

The outdoor environment and the local community are considered an opportunity for active learning for all our pupils. The school grounds have been developed so they can enrich different curriculum areas, particularly science.

Pupils have opportunities to share their learning with each other, their parents and carers and other learners through school-based and external exhibitions, performances, competitions and events involving other schools. Developing their independence and motivation as learners and their sense of responsibility as future citizens is at the heart of all our teaching and learning.

Outside, pupils play imaginatively and happily. Leaders deliberately do not overload them with too many things on offer. Instead, they teach pupils how to socialise, play team games and admire the natural world of the school's location. Pupils' behaviour is impeccable. There is a strong ethos through which every child knows they must behave. If they struggle, the other pupils act as role models. Leaders make sure that pupils are safe. Bullying, for instance, does not happen.

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