



STOCKPORT
METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL



Teaching and Learning Policy

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Date Amended	

This or any policy can be made available in a range of formats, large print or translation.



Teaching and Learning Policy

Introduction

This document is a statement of the principles underpinning teaching and learning at Valley school. It overarches other teaching and learning documents in our school.

The policy reflects the aims of the school, our school motto '**Small steps, giant strides**' and the values which guide our work.

Valley School has paid due regard to the need:

to eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act

to advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it

to foster good relations between persons who share relevant protected characteristics and persons who do not share it.

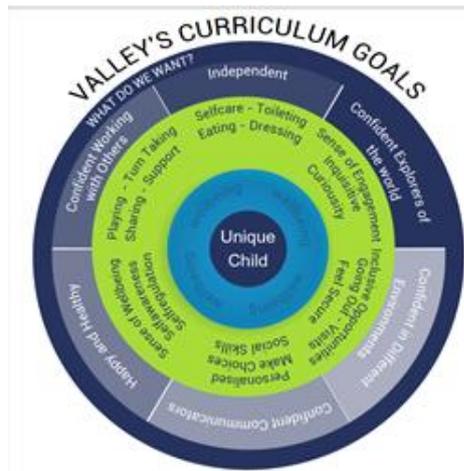
Values

We believe that the children are at the centre of all that we do. Therefore, our curriculum and approach to teaching and learning is child centred. Every child is a unique individual and is respected, valued, nurtured and supported to express their likes, dislikes, thoughts, feelings and ideas. This means that there is a high level of personalised teaching and learning.

In practice this means: -

- Learning starts each morning, as children are greeted by familiar staff and continues to the very end of their day.
- Both children and adults in school are learning every day.
- We are committed to life-long learning.
- Developing confidence and independence in all areas of learning.
- We believe learning is about knowing more and remembering more and know that this is about the development of knowledge, skills, understanding and including experiences.
- We strive for excellence. Our goal is that all pupils make outstanding progress relevant to their abilities.
- Outstanding learning is achieved through skilful teaching where every opportunity for learning is maximised.
- All effort is acknowledged. We believe that 'trying' is an achievement in itself.
- Our curriculum is creative, relevant, engaging and carefully sequenced.

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Curriculum

There is no single curriculum model, teaching approach or strategy that meets the needs of all our learners.

The curriculum at Valley has evolved over many years based on our collective experience of working with our pupils. It takes account of Early years foundation stage statutory framework, the National curriculum and the curriculum for children with learning difficulties.

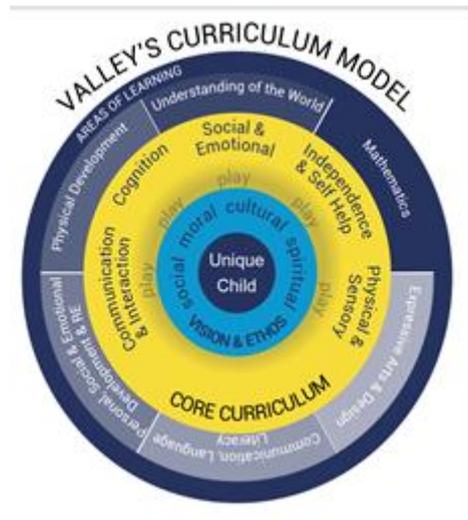
It is dynamic and continues to be modified to meet the changing needs of the children. We are proactive in introducing current evidence based approaches.

The curriculum is the vehicle for the delivery of each child's key skills. In our setting these are predominantly communication and interaction, cognition and learning, sensory and physical difficulties and social, emotional and mental health.

It contains both personalised and school designed parts. The personalised elements are based around each child's EHCP and IEP including their own strengths and interests and can be key in engaging a pupil. The school designed parts are based on topics and areas of learning/subjects and provide breadth and balance and a different vehicle for delivery. These parts overlap.

We have a strong emphasis on 'readiness to learn' using a variety of approaches to ensure that our children are in optimum physical, sensory and emotional state to learn.

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How we deliver our curriculum.

There are 3 Steps (phases) in school each with their own characteristics.

Step 1 - youngest children

- Key worker and more 1:1 learning
- Opportunities to play and learn alongside others
- Developing confidence in exploring their environment - more class-based learning
- EYFS framework principles underpins work (including for children in Year 1 and Year 2) - continuous provision, free play, resources generally toys,
- Providing them opportunities to develop a degree of independence. (Establish routines in the school setting).
- Begin to feel comfortable and secure with a range of professionals, therapies for example sensory integration, physio, SaLT, OT, SSS
- More multi-disciplinary assessment

Step 2 - middle phase of school

- Increased confidence in working with more adults - less reliance on one key worker
- Developing confidence in the larger environment - more learning around school, some teaching and learning in the biggest playground, more off-site visits
- More sessions focussed on one area of learning and continuing with a great deal of play
- Becoming more independent in your approach to learning - less reliant on adults for



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transition, greater independence with personal care, less hand reliant on prompts, less hand holding

- Increasing awareness of their own emotions and ability to self-regulate
- The setting, music and language becomes more age appropriate as you make your way through Step 2

Step 3 - oldest pupils

- More using and applying in real life situations and more opportunities to problem solve
- More opportunities to generalise your learning
- More working with a wider number of adults
- More learning with real life objects - play continues to be a key
- More group activities and learning around turn taking and waiting
- More learning outside the classroom and in the local community
- More upper KS2 relevant music and websites
- Preparation for moving onto High School

Each Step follows their own **topic cycle** and the curriculum and the content of these develops as children move e.g. Step 1 - Pets at Home, Step 2 - Down on the Farm and Step 3 - Zoos and Safaris.

Curriculum maps outline the carefully sequenced coverage of subject/area of learning content. (**See EYFS Policy** for more details around delivery for our youngest learners.)

Play and a sensory approach to learning is at the heart of our delivery.

Children groupings are based on need or learning style.

Lessons are delivered in a series of **repeated sessions** over a half term.

IEP learning may be delivered in a 1:1 situation, integrated across the day or frequent sessions including snack time, 'Ready to Learn' and 'Look and Listen'.



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The Learning Environment

We aim to provide a learning environment that is appropriate and responsive to pupil's needs and enables them to make the best possible progress.

We do this by the creation of: -

- a safe and secure site
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- a total communication approach including accessible and appropriate symbols
- specifically designed areas - White Room (switch accessible light room), Rainbow Room (room for communication, physical development and play including a ball pool), Sensory Integration room (a range of swings for occupational designed programmes), hydrotherapy pool (warm water swimming)
- learning environments that can be adapted according to different teaching and learning activities
- a flexible environment to approach to support emotional well-being (quiet spaces or areas to be physically active available when required)
- low distraction areas in each classroom
- attractive and motivating outdoor spaces that offer a range of areas to accommodate varied interests
- specific features such as a tactile trail
- features to enhance children's visual skills
- access to Moss Hey Primary School field for specific curriculum activities

How we assess learning, progress and achievement

Our prime focus is to develop the knowledge, skills and understanding of each pupil. To do this we strive to ensure that all activities taught are appropriate to each pupil's unique profile of need delivered in ways appropriate to their level of attainment.

We see praise and encouragement as key to children's emotional well-being and self-esteem. Through the positive feedback they receive our children feel safe and secure to try (and try again) to achieve the next steps in their learning.



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The whole staff team is knowledgeable about children's IEP targets and curriculum end goals. The skilled Teaching Assistants support pupil progress by targeted teaching, detailed observation and feedback of pupil's learning. They contribute to regular team meetings. Their work is well monitored by teachers and jointly they assess children's progress over both short and long term.

Multidisciplinary work

Collaboration with a wide range of other professions is key including: -

- Joint target setting in relevant areas
- Jointly planned sessions
- Therapist / specialist teacher led sessions
- Skill sharing, coaching and mentoring
- Staff working holistically
- Inputting into children's home and supporting families when required
- Therapy approaches and techniques are embedded into the curriculum e.g. sensory integration, Intensive Interaction, communication boards, PECS and Positive Looking.
- The provision of an on-site nurse and nursing team including Education and Health Care Workers facilitates the inclusion of children with significant medical needs. These staff maximise children's learning opportunities including working on IEP targets and curricular end goals.

Whole school approach

Children's learning is supported by the wider team of staff, students and volunteers in school. They all contribute to the achievement of outstanding learning; they uphold high expectations of pupils and personal expectations as learners themselves within the school.

Links with families and the wider community

We are proud of our partnerships within our community and value the contribution that these bring to both our pupils and staff. We have an outward looking perspective and a long



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tradition of collaboration which has promoted and enabled inclusive opportunities and practices. We maintain a range of inclusive links with a number of local primary schools

These include an arrangement whereby small groups of local EYFS children join a class for a weekly group session. When appropriate, we support individual Valley pupils in, usually, their neighbourhood primary school for a weekly session. We actively explore local community facilities and activities to enrich our children's learning. We continue to develop our links with other schools and our own practice in order to develop our teaching and learning.

We see parents and carers as the child's first educators and we aim to work in partnership with parents regularly and in a proactive manner. High levels of communication with parents are maintained by:

- Seeking and valuing parents' /carers thoughts, ideas and contributions about their child's learning
- A variety of methods of communication e.g. Class Dojo, text and email messages, letters, telephone calls, meetings and reports
- Parents / carers helping in school on a regular basis
- Families attending a wide range of school events over the year
- An annual parent questionnaire
- A good level of parental representation on the Governing Body
- Parents / carer meetings and parent input to working parties
- Home learning where appropriate
- A responsive and open policy to addressing any issues which parents may raise

We continue to examine our practice in school to ensure that families are enabled to support their child's learning.

Governors

Our Governors determine, support, monitor and review the school policies on teaching and learning.

In particular, they:



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- Monitor the effectiveness of teaching and learning strategies in terms of raising pupil attainment
- Support teaching and learning by helping to allocate resources effectively
- Ensure that school buildings and premises are best used to support successful teaching and learning
- Ensure that staff development and appraisal policies promote good quality teaching and learning
- Monitor the effectiveness of the teaching and learning policy through the school self-review processes. These include reports from subject leaders, the Headteacher's termly report as well as the impact of in-service training.