



Inspiring All to Excellence



Violet Way Academy

Curriculum Policy

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Violet Way Curriculum Policy

1. Fierté Trust Curriculum Principles

A set of aligned principles underpin the intent of the Fierté curriculum offer; the evidence informed curriculum is:

- *Deep, broad and balanced.*
- *Coherent and progressive through and across key stages, subjects and year groups building on children's prior learning.*
- *Ambitious; underpinned by the highest of expectations.*
- *Founded on developing knowledge, understanding and skills.*
- *Inspiring so pupils are equipped with the 'cultural capital' they need to succeed.*
- *Flexible, inclusive, and responsive to needs.*
- *Memorable and sensitive to the local context.*
- *Rich in outdoor learning experiences for all.*

2. Legislation and Guidance

This policy reflects the requirements for academies to provide a broad and balanced curriculum as per the Academies Act 2010, and the National Curriculum programmes of study which the academy has chosen to follow.

It also reflects requirements for inclusion and equality as set out in the Special Educational Needs and Disability Code of Practice 2014 and Equality Act 2010, and refers to curriculum-related expectations of governing boards set out in the Department for Education's Governance Handbook.

In addition, this policy acknowledges the requirements for promoting the learning and development of children set out in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) statutory framework 2021.

3. Roles and Responsibilities

3.1 The Governing Body

The governing body will monitor the effectiveness of this policy and hold the Headteacher to account for its implementation. The governing board will also ensure that:

- The school is complying with its funding agreement and teaching a "broad and balanced curriculum" which includes English, maths, and science, and enough teaching time is provided for pupils to cover the requirements of the funding agreement
- Proper provision is made for pupils with different abilities and needs, including children with special educational needs or disabilities (SEND)
- It participates actively in decision-making about the breadth and balance of the curriculum
- The school implements the relevant statutory assessment arrangements

3.2 Headteacher

The Headteacher is responsible for ensuring that this policy is adhered to, and that:

- The curriculum is consistent with the academy vision, values and curriculum aims
- The amount of time provided for teaching the required elements of the curriculum is adequate and is reviewed by the Governing Body
- The school's procedures for assessment meet all legal requirements
- The Governing Body is involved in decision-making processes that relate to the breadth and balance of the curriculum
- Proper provision is in place for pupils with different abilities and needs, including children with SEND

3.3 All Staff

All staff will ensure that they are familiar with the curriculum policy. Teaching members of staff in school have curriculum responsibilities for the development of curriculum subject areas to ensure that there is a consistent approach across the school and that we continue to maintain high expectations across all curriculum subjects.

4. Our Academy Vision





At Violet Way Academy we want all of our pupils to **‘Reach for the Stars’**. This means setting aspirational goals, persevering in the face of challenge and striving for excellence in all that they do.

‘Inspiring All to Excellence’



5. Values

Our values are the thread that drive excellence and create the culture in which we can all excel. We expect all members of the school community, parents, families and staff, to work collaboratively with high aspirations and expectations of everyone, consistent with our values. Below, we have identified some of the key character traits, linked to our four key values, that our pupils will learn at Violet Way to help them flourish as individuals, ready for the next stage of their education.

	<u>Values</u>	<u>Key linked character traits</u>
	We care We treat people, living things and delicate objects with gentleness. We offer support to someone who needs help or is sad. We care about and look after our environment. We look after ourselves by eating healthily, exercising, keeping clean and staying safe.	caring, cleanliness, kindness, helpfulness
	We are brave We will try new things even if we feel afraid of doing them. We do what we know is the right thing, even when it is difficult. If we find things challenging, we keep trying and never give up. We support each other to face our fears and persevere. We aim to be the best that we can be.	courage, perseverance, independence, honesty
	We celebrate individuality We celebrate that each child is unique and special. We respect each other's ideas and opinions. We know who we are as individuals and are happy with who we are. We celebrate our individual strengths and talents and encourage one another to live life with joy.	respect, curiosity, fairness, understanding
	We leave no one behind We take responsibility for our own behaviour and learning. We work together for the benefit of everyone. We are patient and supportive, taking time to listen and consider the feelings of others. We follow the school rules and encourage one another to be the best we can be.	responsibility, cooperation, patience, supportive

6. 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.**

Every pupil at the Violet Way is encouraged, and supported, to 'Reach for the Stars' and broaden their ambitions, irrespective of their background or their individual circumstances. Our broad and balanced curriculum follows the National Curriculum and is enriched with an excellent forest school provision, specialist teaching, bespoke parental engagement events, visits, visitors and extra-curricular activities. Through our curriculum provision we intend to provide our pupils with memorable and meaningful experiences realised through well planned, differentiated, creative planning and high-quality inclusive teaching.

7. Curriculum Drivers

Five key drivers form the backbone of our curriculum with each being built around the most significant areas of need for our children and our community.

Aspirations – We want our pupils to have high aspirations for themselves and others. We want them to be confident, independent and persevere in the face of challenge.

Collaboration - We want our pupils to be able to build respectful relationships, communicating effectively with each other and working together towards shared goals in a supportive climate.

Connections – We want our pupils to make connections between prior knowledge and new learning. We want them to make connections between their experiences at home, school, within the community and the wider world.

Creativity - We want to inspire our pupils, opening their eyes to what the world has to offer. We want them to justify and think independently, presenting their understanding in creative ways.

Expression – We want pupils to effectively communicate their ideas, thoughts and opinions verbally and in writing. We want them to ask questions and express their individuality.

8. Curriculum Intent

Our school vision and values, curriculum vision and key curriculum drivers have informed the content we expect children to learn at Violet Way Academy. We use the EYFS Framework (2021) and National Curriculum 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.

8.1 English

A high level of proficiency in English is a huge advantage in life and English is the foundation of our curriculum. Our main aims are to develop children's spoken language; ability to read, understand and enjoy a wide range of literature and authors; and become confident writers. Through using high-quality texts, immersing children in vocabulary-rich learning environments and ensuring a carefully planned approach to the curriculum, we aim to enable all learners to develop purposeful spoken language, a love of reading and creative writing skills.

There is very strong evidence that reading is fundamental to children's success at school and in their lives beyond school (Ritchie and Bates, 2013). We believe that it is important to teach our children early phonics as soon as possible because fluent readers will learn more as they can read and gain knowledge for themselves. We want to give our children a good foundation by building their phonic knowledge and reading skills. Reading for pleasure is also given a high priority. It is recognised that children who read for pleasure improve their life chances, not just in education, but in mental well-being and social relationships. At Violet Way, we ensure children have the opportunity to hear, share and discuss a wide range of high-quality books, as part of the curriculum and beyond, to develop a love of reading and broaden their vocabulary. We want all children, regardless of background, to read early, build on their success and become confident, independent readers.

To ensure our children read fluently and with understanding we:

- Teach the phonological skills required to decode texts in our daily phonics Read Write Inc (RWI) lessons in Reception and Y1. Children in Y2 will have a daily phonics/reading lesson (moving from RWI books to Rigby Star by the end of the Autumn term)
- Assess children's phonic knowledge half-termly and use this information to check progress from their starting points and re-group accordingly
- Ensure that, whilst children are learning to read, they read from books carefully matched to their developing phonic knowledge
- Ensure that teachers and teaching assistants are aware of the children in their class that are making the slowest progress (the lowest 20%) and provide extra practice through the day for them
- Carefully plan the English learning journey, including key texts, ensuring opportunities for children to talk about the texts they read and develop their understanding
- Build upon prior knowledge and teach reading strategies
- Ask and answer questions about our key texts and class stories
- Ensure opportunities for 1:1 reading

To promote reading for pleasure and a love of reading we:

- Develop children's engagement with, and understanding of, key texts when reading as part of our English lessons, wider curriculum and class stories
- Create a reading rich learning environment, including inviting reading areas
- Visit the school library at least once per week
- Read books to children daily in story time
- Offer reading workshops for parents
- Invite an author or poet into school at least once per year
- Encourage and motivate children's independent reading through our reading reward scheme
- Ensure that children are exposed to a range of fiction and non-fiction texts
- Record, praise and celebrate children's reading across the curriculum

At Violet Way Academy, we have chosen to utilise Read Write Inc for phonics because it is a systematic, synthetic phonic scheme which engages children in phonics and reading. Teachers and the SLT monitor pupils' progress together until every child can read. Children practise reading lively phonics books consistent with their developing phonic knowledge and skill and their knowledge of common exception (tricky) words. This is so that, early on, they experience success and gain confidence as readers. Re-reading and discussing these books with the teacher, supports their increasingly fluent decoding. Once children have completed the Read Write Inc programme, they will participate in daily shared reading sessions to further develop both their decoding and comprehension skills, which are necessary to become confident and competent readers. The children will be taught to use strategies to develop and monitor their understanding of a text which include prediction, questioning, clarifying, summarising and activating prior knowledge. These will be introduced by the teacher using modelling and structured support, which will be strategically reduced as a child progresses until they are capable of completing the activity independently.

In addition to daily reading lessons, phonics and teaching phonic strategies takes place throughout the school day. To raise the profile of phonics and reading in school, signs around school and classrooms will be displayed with sound buttons visible for children to read, recognise and decode.

Every child has a Read Write Inc or Rigby Star book to take home weekly, which is closely matched to their phonic knowledge. In addition, children also have the opportunity to choose a library book, from our school or classroom library, to read for pleasure. This is a book that the children individually select and may not be matched to their current phonic phase and can be read to them by parents. Children will enjoy

listening to a class story, read to them daily by the class teacher. They will be able to collectively make choices about the books that are read to them in class, for example, by engaging with a voting system. Teachers will also recommend books and authors to children, based on their interests, books they have enjoyed previously, book genres they enjoy or authors.

As part of each English unit of work, teachers plan the spoken language, reading and writing objectives children need to achieve, utilising the English Curriculum Progression Grid. Each unit of learning is linked to one or two quality texts to tie the whole curriculum together. Teachers decide on the final writing outcomes and 'plan backwards' from that to ensure children build the knowledge, skills and understanding they need to confidently create an independent piece of writing. Opportunities to write within the wider curriculum are also planned. At Violet Way Academy, talk is a key element of the writing process as it enables learners to compose a sentence that makes sense, rehearse the sentence they want to write, hear the words they want to write in order and think about the phonemes they can hear in each word. Talk partners are a consistent feature of every classroom, ensuring that all pupils have the opportunity to share their ideas, ask questions, problem solve and rehearse sentence composition. Violet Way Academy aim to create a 'writing for pleasure' ethos where children are given the opportunity to write at length. As writing is a complex process, different strategies are utilised such as various pre-writing activities, drafting, editing, revising and sharing.

The physical processes of handwriting is promoted through extensive and purposeful practice to support the development of fluent transcription skills, with effective feedback to aid precise formation of letters. The aim is for children to develop fluency in these skills, so they become automated, which will enable children to concentrate on the content of their writing. In addition to this, spelling is taught explicitly, and the chosen spellings are derived from an ordered approach so children can apply phonic skills and are introduced to spellings in context where possible. At the planning stage, children will find out what the purpose of the writing is; such as to describe, narrate, inform or persuade. Children will be exposed to a rich variety of genres and regularly discuss their key features. When writing for various purposes, children will also consider the audience they are writing for and the role of the audience. The 'I do...we do...you do' method, of modelling and instruction will be used to support children when emulating the features of effective writing. This will allow them to learn from their teachers and peers and then reflect on their own approaches to quality writing.

8.2 Maths

We want our children to:

- **securely learn maths facts, concepts, rules and accurate methods** so that they can **recall and use those facts and methods efficiently**
- **confidently apply their maths knowledge** in order to deepen their understanding and really master the curriculum
- have opportunities to **express and articulate their thinking** in different ways, **explaining their reasoning**
- think about problems, question their own understanding and make links
- **communicate mathematically**, give sound mathematical explanations, and justify their solutions
- to be **resilient and independent**, to not become discouraged when things don't go right the first time and learn from their mistakes

Through our Maths curriculum, teachers:

- **plan to enable all learners to make connections between prior and new learning** and make links across different units of work
- plan opportunities for spaced retrieval to ensure long term learning
- encourage children to **communicate their ideas and understanding orally, in writing, and by using a variety of representations.**

- plan **retrieval practice** in maths, where **pupils must try to remember without any priming** or re-teaching from us because we want memory strengthening to happen. Teachers recognise that retrieval practice is a learning technique, not an assessment technique

We utilise the White Rose schemes of learning and resources along with NCETM mastery resources. We have chosen the White Rose schemes of learning because they make sure topics are introduced to children in a logical order and revisited throughout the year to encourage deep learning and ensure children have the foundational knowledge they need, before moving on to more advanced maths concepts and tackling more challenging number problems. The scheme includes a sequence of 'blocks' of mathematics including 'small steps' which are again sequenced in order of difficulty and dependency. Each step builds carefully from the previous step, building on pupils' prior knowledge to develop new skills. We recognise that spending longer on topics to help gain deeper understanding, making connections, keeping the class working together on the same topic and a fundamental belief that, through effort, all pupils are capable of understanding, doing and improving at mathematics. We also recognise that just spending a good chunk of time on a topic doesn't mean that all pupils will 'master' it the first time they see it, and that they need to see it again and again in different contexts and in different years to help them truly develop their understanding on their journey to mastery and opportunities to revisit and reinforce learning is also built into the White Rose schemes of learning.

In our daily Maths lessons, we support our children to become confident mathematicians following the STAR maths philosophy:

See it – provide an example ('I do' - explaining / demonstration / modelling)

Try it – together ('We do' - input from the pupils) and then on their own ('You do' - Pupils practice using the new knowledge/skill - *remember varied fluency and about 6*)

Apply it – pupils practice and apply their new knowledge (pupils independently demonstrate their understanding using concrete objects, numbers, pictures and words)

Reason it – explain it (pupils answer reasoning and problem solving questions, explaining their understanding using multiple representations)

8.3 Wider Curriculum

At Violet Way, we teach the following National Curriculum subjects as part of our 6-week units of learning:

- Science
- Geography
- History
- Art and Design
- Design and Technology

Rationale

We have chosen to teach the curriculum through Learning Units in order to ensure that there is a focus on knowledge acquisition whilst keeping our curriculum connected, rich and engaging for our young pupils. While we recognise that it is important to teach subject-specific knowledge, we believe that children learn best through a broad and balanced curriculum that enables them to make purposeful connections between subjects. Pupils learn subject-specific vocabulary and knowledge that allow them to build links and enhance their learning across other subjects. Curriculum subject plans are formulated to ensure that there is a clear progression of knowledge, skills and understanding in each subject and that the learning in each year group is well-sequenced in order to build on prior knowledge.

Our approach offers a creative way to develop children's knowledge, skills and understanding while motivating them to learn through stimulating, interconnected units of learning. It also gives teachers opportunities to encourage active enquiry, taking the initiative, and discussion and debate by children. Links between subjects are real, not contrived. Learning Units have been carefully mapped out for each

year group to ensure that the curriculum remains broad and balanced. Our long term and medium term plans map the learning objectives for each separate subject to be included in the Learning Units. Even though the teaching may be integrated, objectives are identified by subject, enabling us to plan for progression in each subject.

The following curriculum subjects are taught discretely with links made where appropriate and purposeful:

- PE (including swimming in Y1) - Power of PE
- Computing - Purple Mash
- RE – Discovery RE
- PSHE – Jigsaw PSHE
- Relationship and Health Education (covered through our Jigsaw PSHE scheme of learning)
- Music - specialist teaching weekly - Rock It!

The National Curriculum is used to plan all of these subjects and, even though PSHE is not a National Curriculum subject, in line with National Curriculum, we make “provision for personal, social, health and economic education (PSHE), drawing on good practice” through the delivery of the Jigsaw PSHE scheme.

Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural development - We believe that SMSC is about developing the whole child through spiritual, moral, social and cultural activities in an environment which enables all children to grow and flourish, become confident individuals and appreciate their own worth and that of others. Further information about how we promote SMSC at school can be found on our school website and SMSC policy.

British Values - The DFE expects all schools to play a part in preparing pupils positively for life in modern Britain and promoting the fundamental British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect for and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs and those without faith. We actively promote the British values through our school ethos and culture, our curriculum (including RE and PSHE) and by engaging our pupils in wider curriculum events throughout the year. Further information can be found on our school website and British Values Policy.

8.4 Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS)

In Reception we ensure that the curriculum offered is inclusive and comprises of learning opportunities and experiences that support children’s holistic development. Rich learning experiences and a well-balanced curriculum not only enhances children’s learning and development but also enables them to develop independence, resilience, problem solving and critical thinking skills. The curriculum for Reception is planned to enable children to acquire new knowledge and skills and demonstrate their understanding through the seven areas of learning in the EYFS Framework 2021. We carefully plan the transition process to ensure we have a good understanding of pupils' starting points and that our provision meets their needs and allows them to explore their interests and fascinations.

The approach to learning in Reception takes into account each child’s individual needs and abilities and gives the children opportunities to make choices and decisions as they develop their self-awareness and independence. They are encouraged to become independent learners, exploring their interests and abilities within a balance of child-initiated and planned, adult-directed learning experiences. Teachers and Teaching Assistants support children’s learning and development by planning a range of learning opportunities, which are delivered through whole class, one-to-one and small group sessions. Children have the opportunity to explore their own interests through play during continuous provision and the role of staff, during this time, is to develop children’s talk, play and wider curriculum experiences. Teachers and Teaching Assistants build a ‘language-rich’ environment by **playing alongside** and **talking with** the children. Please see the EYFS Policy and visit our EYFS website page for information about our EYFS curriculum and how it is delivered.

8.5 Enhancing our Curriculum Offer

Specialist teaching is a significant feature of the Violet Way. In Year 1 pupils have swimming lessons and all children benefit from the expertise of specialists in music and Forest School. All pupils receive weekly music lessons from a professional musician from the 'Rock It!' music company. The schemes of work cover the entire National Curriculum for Music and every pupil plays an instrument in every lesson. In their music lessons at Violet Way, children learn to appreciate, compose and enjoy music as they become a Caribbean steel band or a Keyboard based pop band.

Our 'Well-being Wednesdays' are planned to support children to develop holistic understanding of their own health, including their physical, emotional and mental well-being.

In addition to their PE lessons, we provide all children with resources to support active break and lunch times as well as access to our trim trail and woodlands. We also provide extra-curricular sports clubs for the children to supplement our PE curriculum, for example, yoga, dance, Karate, gymnastics, football (vary term to term).

Children in Year 2 have the opportunity to go to Kingswood for a residential trip, where they participate in a range of physical activities, including team games, obstacle courses and climbing. In Reception, pupils visit Conkers at the end of the year, exploring, discovering and getting active and adventurous in the heart of the National Forest. Not only do these trips help to promote positive, active lifestyles, they also help pupils develop confidence, teamwork and resilience. Year 1 visit a local castle to 'bring to life' their learning about castles. There are other planned trips and experiences throughout the academic year, including a farm trip, Victorian day and Space Dome in school. Every year group plans their Curriculum Enrichment for the year e.g. trips, visitors, parental engagement, community and partnership learning and specialist curriculum days.

9. Curriculum Implementation

Our children deserve high-quality teaching and learning through effective strategies that we know are effective across all subjects, including: modelling, explanations, scaffolding, effective questioning, practice. Different curriculum areas and learning units do lend themselves to being taught in different ways though and we want to ensure that the subject itself shines through and is reflected and celebrated in the chosen pedagogical approach. Teaching and the content need to be matched, whilst consistently using those effective quality first teaching and learning strategies. Please refer to our Teaching and Learning Policy for further information.

We use the National Curriculum to plan our KS1 curriculum, utilising our Knowledge, Skills and Understanding Progression Grids, Curriculum Overviews and Medium Term plans. In Reception, the curriculum is planned based on the EYFS Framework 2021 and Development Matters 2021.

Through our curriculum, teachers plan to enable all learners to make connections between prior and new learning. We utilise Knowledge, Skills and Understanding (KSU) Progression Grids for each subject, which clearly show the progression from Reception to Year 2 in each curriculum subject and Long Term overviews and Medium Term plans for each year group. These enable teachers to develop a good grasp of the required prior knowledge, expectations for their year group, common misconceptions and where the learning will move onto the following year. Teachers utilise these documents to plan their lessons. All learning units must incorporate curriculum enrichment opportunities to widen the learning experiences of our pupils and engage them in the learning.

Teachers utilise the academy's planning documents for planning. The Knowledge, Skills and Understanding (KSU) Progressions Grids for each subject and the year group Medium Term plans will support teachers with short term planning for their year group. We have full schemes of work for PE,

Computing, PSHE and RE (including Relationships and Health Education, SMSC and British Values). Teachers should use the schools planning documents to create their weekly plans. There are academy proformas for planning, which teachers can utilise. Included in their short term plans are 'I do, We do, You do' modelling so that this is explicitly clear, as well as identifying the provision for SEND, EAL.

10. Curriculum Impact

Teachers regularly check and assess what pupils have learnt through their formative assessment: questioning, quizzes, spaced retrieval and internal assessments. If children can recall it independently and their fluency and mastery is incrementally improving, teachers can be confident of the impact. Ultimately, we want our curriculum, and how it is implemented, to lead to improved outcomes for all pupils. The impact of our curriculum offer is regularly monitored and evaluated. Pupil progress meetings ensure that teachers are fully aware of any individuals or groups of pupils that are not making expected progress. We would revisit and review the curriculum and teaching and learning provision to ensure that pupils make progress. Teachers need to make responsive decisions for the children in their class that complement the overall vision of our curriculum.

11. Inclusion

Teachers set high expectations for all pupils. They will use appropriate assessment to set ambitious targets and plan challenging work for all groups, including:

- Pupils with low prior attainment
- Pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds
- More able pupils
- Pupils with SEND
- Pupils with English as an additional language (EAL)

Teachers will plan lessons so that pupils with SEND can study every subject, wherever possible, and ensure that there are no barriers to every pupil achieving. Teachers will also take account of the needs of pupils whose first language is not English. Lessons will be planned so that teaching opportunities help pupils to develop their English, and to support pupils to take part in all subjects. Further information can be found in our equality statement and SEND policy and Teaching and Learning Policy.

12. Continued Professional Development (CPD)

The Developing Great Teaching report (Teacher Development Trust, 2015) found that, in terms of impact on pupil outcomes, sustained subject-specific CPD is more effective than the one-off generic pedagogic activities. At Violet Way, we recognise that subject leaders need to be well-supported and be able to support and develop subject CPD with the teaching team. The role of the subject leader is to ensure that the curriculum is coherently planned and sequenced. It is their role to ensure that teachers understand the rationale and the vision for effective curriculum planning and delivery and can create a coherent and consistent offer that deepens knowledge and enhances skills over time.

Being part of Fierte Trust enables us to ensure that subject leaders are well-supported through coaching, sharing of expertise across the Trust and external CPD. Teachers are encouraged to plan in time for developing their subject knowledge and staff meetings are carefully planned to ensure subject-specific professional development.

13. Monitoring

Governors monitor whether the academy is complying with its funding agreement and teaching a "broad and balanced curriculum" which includes the required subjects, through:

- Peer Governor visits to the school (learning walks and pupil conversations)

- Meetings with subject leads (including looking at books)
- Evaluation and review of the academy's curriculum and T&L monitoring cycle

Subject leads monitor the way their subject is taught throughout the school by undertaking:

- Pupil conversations
- Book scrutiny
- Learning walks
- Planning scrutiny
- Data analysis

Subject leaders also have responsibility for monitoring the way in which resources are stored and managed and how curriculum enrichment opportunities are planned, evaluating their success.

This policy will be reviewed at least annually by the Headteacher. At every review, the policy will be shared with the full governing board.

References: Cordingley, P., Higgins, S., Greany, T., Buckler, N., Coles-Jordan, D., Crisp, B., Saunders, L., Coe, R. Developing Great Teaching: Lessons from the international reviews into effective professional development. Teacher Development Trust. 2015.