

# Vallis First School

## Teaching and Learning Policy



Version	Reviewed By	Date Approved	Approved by	Revision Date
1.0	Tracey Messenger	October 2024	FGB	October 2025

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Holly Lawton  
Chair of Governors

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Holly Lawton', is positioned below the printed name and title.

## Teaching and Learning Aims at Vallis

At Vallis, we believe that children learn best in different ways and high-quality personalised learning enables children to achieve their full potential. Children will be encouraged to take responsibility for their own learning, to be involved in reviewing the way they learn and to reflect on how they learn in order to develop their skills and abilities to achieve their full potential.

Therefore, we are committed to high quality teaching and learning to raise standards of achievement for all our children at Vallis which leads to exceptional outcomes. This policy summarises expectations and common working practices: it reflects what has been agreed in terms of our approach and consistency and makes explicit the best practice to which the school aspires. It also reflects the aims and objectives of the school and supports its vision.

At Vallis we aim to continually improve the quality of learning experiences offered to our children and to raise achievement by:

- *providing a supportive, positive, healthy, caring and safe environment, which has high expectations and values all members of the school community;*
- *ensuring consistent practice across the school in teaching, learning, assessment and provision of learning environment;*
- *recognising the needs and aspirations of all individuals and providing opportunities for all children to make the best possible progress and attain the highest personal achievements;*
- *providing rich and varied contexts and experiences for children to acquire, develop and apply a broad range of knowledge, skills and understanding;*
- *providing a curriculum which promotes the spiritual, moral, social, cultural, physical, mental and emotional development of the children; providing opportunities and experiences to build children's cultural capital;*
- *encouraging all children to be enthusiastic and committed learners;*
- *promoting their self-esteem, self-worth and emotional health and well-being;*
- *develop children's confidence and capacity to learn and work independently and collaboratively;*
- *develop our core values of exceptionality, respect, integrity and collaboration in line with our school values*

## Effective Teaching

### Teaching and Learning expectations for a great lesson

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At Vallis we believe that quality Teaching will be promoted and achieved by:

- **Learning is child centred:** Children are at the heart of the teaching and learning at Vallis. Given their starting points, children are provided with learning opportunities that are challenging, open-ended, investigative and collaborative enabling all groups of learners to achieve, grow and reach their true potential.
- **Learning Objectives** are made explicit to the children. This is done visually in some way so they are clear and transparent and delivered in a way that hooks children – they are also recorded as a topic page at the start of a unit of learning.
- **New Learning** is made explicit in every lesson to ensure the children are clear about what they have got to do in order to make progress. This new learning is rehearsed and reviewed frequently using our 'Flashback Four' structure at the beginning of lessons and through our daily quiz boxes.
- **Prior Knowledge** will be built upon and meaningful and memorable connections made across the curriculum. We ensure that prior knowledge is
- **The relative starting points** of all the children are taken into account when planning and delivering learning to ensure that in all parts of the lesson, learning matches the children's needs.
- In every lesson a **range of different strategies** will be used to ensure the children are engaged and supported in their learning, these will be varied and be used to best meet the needs of the learners
- **Lessons are paced** so that all groups of learners make progress, therefore no time is wasted, learning is moved on appropriately to meet the needs of learners ensuring they make progress.
- **Planned learning** in all parts of the lesson is matched to the age-related expectations and relative starting points of all children so that they make progress in all parts of the lesson leading to rapid progress in all parts of the lesson and over time.
- All **learning is adapted** across the lesson to meet the needs of all the learners. Lessons are never 'one size fits all'.
- **Modelling and demonstrating** (I do, we do, you do) will be used in to share the learning steps, making thinking explicit and showing the learning process (metacognition) to support all our children in being successful in their learning
- **Assessment** will be used in all parts of the lesson by the teacher, the other staff and the children to identify what the children can do and what they need to do in order to improve.
- The **learning environment** will be set up so that children can access all learning resources independently to support them in their learning. The learning environment will be clutter free and all health and safety risks eliminated
- The **learning opportunities** engage the children; as a result they are interested and inspired and display good learning behaviours. A thriving learning culture is explicit and noticeable.
- All staff act as an activator and facilitator of learning, skilfully intervening and moving learning on in all parts of the lesson so they make rapid progress.
- Children are active in all parts of the lesson and it is children that lead the learning. Teachers do not talk for too long and over direct.

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- In all parts of the lesson there will be opportunities to collaborate in the learning, giving children opportunities to share ideas, questions each other and rehearse their learning that has been introduced so they are successful in the lesson
- Interactions between adults-children and children-children are positive and there is a respect agenda where everyone's contributions are valued
- 'Flashback Fours' and 'low stake' quizzes are used effectively to review prior and new learning and make next steps explicit. Mini plenaries happen throughout the lesson to assess and check understanding and progress so learning can be moved rapidly on.

## Learning Environments for Excellence

- Each of our learning environments aims to foster independence with clearly labelled resources, are clutter free and kept tidy.
- Furniture is suitable for learning and promote independence within the classroom.
- Work areas for key curriculum areas where appropriate and high-quality continuous provision in Early Years.
- Classroom organisation and groupings reflecting purpose and showing flexibility and learning resources are freely accessible to the children.
- Visual timetable is clearly displayed.
- Displays are varied in terms of materials used show progression in our learning within key curriculum subjects: 2D/3D; board; table displays; tactile and pure observation/ children's voices. They are interactive and present children with challenges, photos, prompts such as QR codes, hooks and provocations and subject specific vocabulary
- They show the process of learning and not just the finished product and reflect a range of curriculum areas/ Early Learning areas. Where children's work is attractively mounted and clearly labelled with child's/ children's names.
- Reading areas will be organised in an engaging and inviting way providing a range of fiction and nonfiction reading materials for the children to access freely. Children should have refreshed reading shelves to enrich their diet within the classroom. In our classrooms, we have a '**Wonderbook**' selection chosen by the children from our library and an '**Enrichment**' selection which complements their learning topics that term.
- Interactive whiteboards are used for a range of purposes and is integral to teaching and learning.

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- School rules, behaviours for learning, child friendly marking policies and key vocabulary will be creatively displayed to support children and referred to.

## Characteristics of Quality Teaching






	<b>Know the purpose</b>	What are we doing and why are we doing it? The lesson is part of a wider sequence. Be clear on where this lesson fits in. The purpose should be shared with the children. Learning objectives (when used) should be simple and child friendly.
	<b>Effective Experiences</b>	Experiences that are stimulating, exciting, creative, interactive and relevant, and relate directly to individual needs. They build upon, consolidate previous learning and knowledge. Children experience range of visits/ visitors to extend and enrich their learning and building their cultural capital.
	<b>Ask questions</b>	The best teachers ask a lot of questions. Questions allow you to determine how well children have understood your lesson. Teaching the content of a lesson does not equate to the content being learnt, so ask and ask again. Questioning that is direct, and varied, according to the ability of the individual. Range of questions used to promote learning. Range of talk used to develop oracy skills. Questioning that involves all children. Questioning will be used to promote critical thinking, logical reasoning, problem solving and deepen their understanding.
	<b>Aspirational Vocabulary</b>	The use of aspirational vocabulary that expands their lexical store (word bank).
	<b>Effective Planning</b>	Effective planning, showing clear learning objectives, differentiation to meet the needs of all groups of learners given their starting points, challenging learning opportunities and resources, differentiated success criteria, next steps in learning identified and children's building blocks to support in personalising the learning.
	<b>Small steps</b>	Avoid overloading children's working memory. Break down complex material into smaller steps. Avoid too much 'teacher talk' or lengthy carpet time.
	<b>Revisit prior learning</b>	Encourage the retention of learning by the retrieval of key information, knowledge and skills. Revisit key ideas to ensure children know and remember more.
	<b>Build in guided and independent practice</b>	Children need time to try out, rephrase or elaborate on their learning in order to move it to long term memory and remember. Ensure there is adequate time put aside in each lesson to do both structured and guided practice as well as time to work independently. Learning opportunities planned are challenging,

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		open-ended, investigative and collaborative provide all groups of learners with choices and opportunities to lead their own learning.
	<b>Scaffold learning</b>	A scaffold helps children to achieve an end goal. They come in multiple forms e.g word banks, key vocabulary, sentence stems, teacher and pupil models, checklists, think out louds etc. Scaffolds may provide an idea of the end product but do not over model nor expect replica pieces of the teacher's work.
	<b>Assess and Feedback</b>	Be aware of common misconceptions and prepare strategies to counter them. Make deliberate mistakes to see if children spot them. Circulate, talk to children and look at books.
	<b>Explain</b>	Tell children what you mean and what you want them to do. Explain the concept, the idea or the task in hand so they are clear on what to do or what you mean.
	<b>Provide models and representations</b>	Quality of instruction through Modelling and demonstrating and effective intervention in the moment will be used in to share the learning steps, making thinking explicit and showing the learning process. Children may need further cognitive support to help them understand a concept. Provide models (verbal, diagrams or written) to support and develop their thinking e.g tens frames and part-whole models in maths, practical tools in science or a worked example.
	<b>Reflect and Adapt</b>	Lessons will not always go to plan. Following your in-lesson assessment you may need to adapt all or part of the lesson on the spot. Do not plough on with a lesson if children do not understand - pause, rewind and spend time ensuring understanding is there. Provide whole class, group or individual live feedback to move learning on.

## Effective learning

At Vallis, we realise that children learn in many different ways and we recognise the need to develop strategies that allow all children to learn in ways that best support them. We encourage children to take responsibility for their own learning, to be involved as far as possible in reviewing the way they learn, and to reflect on how they learn – what helps them learn and what makes it difficult for them to learn.

We feel that for effective learning to take place children must:

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- *Have first-hand experiences to bring their learning alive and give it real-life value, this includes hooks to learning, trips, visitors, investigations, first hand observations*
- *Experience a variety of different learning styles*
- *Be able to practise and transfer newly acquired knowledge through cross-curricular work:*
- *Be made aware that learning does not take place in isolation and should be explicitly taught so that knowledge can be transferred from one area of learning to another, rather than expecting them to just realise this themselves.*
- *Be able to work collaboratively within different groupings e.g. as individuals, in pairs, small groups, mixed ability pairings/groups*
- *Have access to relevant equipment and learning prompts which they can access and use independently or with partners/groups to scaffold more independent learning*
- *Have opportunities to rehearse their learning orally and practically to build confidence and fluency and develop their understanding*
- *Have access to a spiral curriculum which revisits and connects, building on knowledge*

## Behaviours for Learning

At Vallis, good behaviour for learning is expected and encouraged at all times. It is our aim that children develop self-discipline and take responsibility for their own behaviours for learning. Good learning behaviour is more than compliance and it must include high levels of engagement and focus with children developing independent learning skills and good co-operative skills.

We believe that exceptional learning behaviours will be promoted and achieved when:

- Children learn best when they are **ready**, focused, settled and engaged.
- Children should be able to see the board and the teacher.
- Children should sit up in their chairs or on the carpet and listen attentively using our '**listening five**'.
- Children should be respectful towards one another and to staff at all times.
- Every member of staff is expected to adhere to the behaviour policy to ensure a calm and consistent approach.

## Roles and Responsibilities

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Learning and teaching is a shared responsibility and all members of the school community have an important part to play.

All members of the school community should work towards the school's aims by:

- *Championing all our children, working as a team supporting each other;*
- *seeing children as individuals and respecting their rights, values and beliefs;*
- *fostering and promoting good relationships and a sense of belonging to the school community;*
- *providing an enabling learning environment in which all are fully aware of behavioural expectations;*
- *offering equal opportunities in all aspects of school life and recognising the importance of different cultures;*
- *encouraging, praising and positively reinforcing good relationships, behaviours and work.*

## ***The Role of All Staff***

All staff should:

- *provide a challenging and world class inspiring curriculum designed to encourage all children to reach the highest standard of achievement;*
- *recognise and be aware of the needs of each individual child;*
- *ensure that learning is progressive and continuous;*
- *be an exceptional role models, punctual, well prepared and organised;*
- *keep up-to-date with educational research and share good practice;*
- *have a positive attitude to change and the development of their own expertise;*
- *build cultural capital to prepare children for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of life;*
- *work collaboratively with all involved in education to develop a shared philosophy and commonality of practice.*

## ***The Role of Families***

Parental involvement is fundamental to helping children to learn. Parents and carers have a responsibility to support their children and the school in implementing the school policies by:

- *Ensuring that their child arrives at school on time and keep their punctuality and attendance a high priority, which includes avoiding taking holidays during term-time*
- *Reading with and/or to their child regularly and ensure that home learning opportunities are completed on time and to a good standard*
- *Attending parents' evenings and striving to work positively in partnership with school staff*
- *Promoting a positive attitude towards school and learning in general by taking an active interest in the life of the school and their child's learning journey*
- *Ensuring that their child is equipped for school with the correct uniform and PE kit*

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- *Informing school if there are matters outside of school that are likely to affect a child's performance or behaviour*
- *Supporting the school values, vision and mission to work collaboratively*

## The Role of our Governors

Our Curriculum and Subject Leads challenge, support, monitor and review the school's approach to teaching and learning here at Vallis. In particular they:

- *Champion children and staff*
- *Monitor the effectiveness of the school's teaching and learning approaches through the school's self-evaluation processes, which include discussions with subject leaders*
- *Ensure that the school buildings and premises are used optimally to support teaching and learning and are compliant with health and safety regulations*
- *Seek to ensure that our staff development and our performance management promote good quality teaching*
- *Monitor how effective teaching and learning strategies are in terms of raising pupil attainment*
- *Ensure that staff appraisal is undertaken systematically and according to school policies*
- *Share their expertise and talents with the school*

## Planning

Excellent planning is an essential part of excellent teaching. At Vallis we are committed to following the programmes of study as required by the National Curriculum 2014, our curriculum is ambitious and extends learning beyond what is expected, it is designed to give all learners the knowledge and cultural capital they need to succeed in life.

### **We expect teachers to:**

- *be fully aware of and deliver the carefully-sequenced curriculum which teaches essential concepts, knowledge and skills.*
- *build on children's prior knowledge and experiences*
- *take ownership of the lesson and adapt where required to suit the needs of their class, even if the lesson was planned by another teacher*
- *Class teachers must plan for any children with SEND in their class, using the guidance provided by the SEND team. It is the class teacher's responsibility to plan for these children, although a TA may support in the delivery of the planning. This planning will be monitored to ensure that pupil progress is sustained.*
- *To plan well, staff should engage with research and pedagogy and enhance their own subject knowledge.*

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Teachers are expected to plan weekly for their maths, reading and writing lessons. Curriculum Subject Spines of core skills and knowledge to be taught are in place in all subjects alongside their ready-to-progress assessment criterions. The school does not require additional or overly detailed planning for foundation subjects if this is not useful for the teacher or team. However, it may benefit some teachers, including our ECTs, to plan in detail to begin with to ensure that the lessons are well thought out.

All subjects are taught individually to enable children to develop and build the knowledge and skills of the subject in their own right and subjects have been organised so that they encompass a broad theme that enables them to make links in learning.

The curriculum is reviewed regularly to ensure that the curriculum overview, schemes of work and planning is up to date, relevant, builds on prior learning and there is a consistency of approach and standards.

The curriculum overview for all year groups is organised in consultation with subject leaders and senior leaders to ensure the curriculum is inspiring, builds cultural capital, supports children in preparing for life in modern Britain by equipping them to be responsible, respectful, active citizens who contribute positively to society and develops their understanding of fundamental British values and their understanding and appreciation of diversity.

Our teachers take on the role of Subject leaders, this role is varied and includes:

- taking the lead in policy development and the production of schemes of work designed to ensure progression of knowledge and continuity in their subject throughout the school;
- supporting colleagues in their development and implementation of the scheme of work, and in assessment and record-keeping activities;
- monitoring progress in their subjects and advising the Headteacher and Curriculum Lead on action needed; taking responsibility for the purchase and organisation of central resources for their subjects;
- using release time to support colleagues;
- keeping up-to-date through research and continue professional development to develop subject pedagogy;
- teachers ensure breadth and balance to the curriculum and endeavour to make use of cross curricular opportunities to enhance learning.

## Assessment

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Assessment is an integral part of high-quality teaching and learning, we believe that it lies at the heart of the learning process and starts and ends with the learner. At Vallis we see assessment as an integral part of teaching and learning, and it is inextricably linked to our curriculum.

We use three broad overarching forms of assessment: day-to-day in-school formative assessment, in-school summative assessment and nationally standardised summative assessment. For more detailed information regarding assessment at Vallis, then please see our Assessment Policy.

### **Formative Assessment**

Formative assessment is used to inform teaching and learning and to identify children's gaps and misconceptions. Learning can then be tailored to meet the needs of each child, no matter what their attainment or starting point. Children have regular opportunities to engage in formative assessment and demonstrate their learning in a variety of ways.

### **Summative Assessment**

Summative assessment enables school leaders to monitor the performance of pupil cohorts, identify where interventions may be required, and work with teachers to ensure children are supported to achieve sufficient progress and attainment. Teachers are able to evaluate learning at the end of a unit or period and the impact of their own teaching and it supports children to understand how well they have learned and understood a topic or course of work taught over a period of time.

Summative assessments enable parents to stay informed about the achievement, progress and wider outcomes of their child across a period.

## **Special Educational Needs and Disabilities**

When planning for teaching and learning we consider the wide range of abilities of our children. Where necessary children are identified as having additional needs and placed on the school SEND register. These children are then assessed individually and individual education plans are created where appropriate. Extra support is given and the curriculum is differentiated to meet their individual needs, whilst ensuring access to a full and varied curriculum along with their peers.

Reasonable adjustments will be made so that every SEND child can fully access the curriculum.

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**This policy also needs to be in line with other school policies and therefore should be read in conjunction with the following:** Marking and Feedback Policy; Assessment Policy; SEND Policy; Equal Opportunities Policy and Health and Safety Policy

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