



Project Based Learning Policy

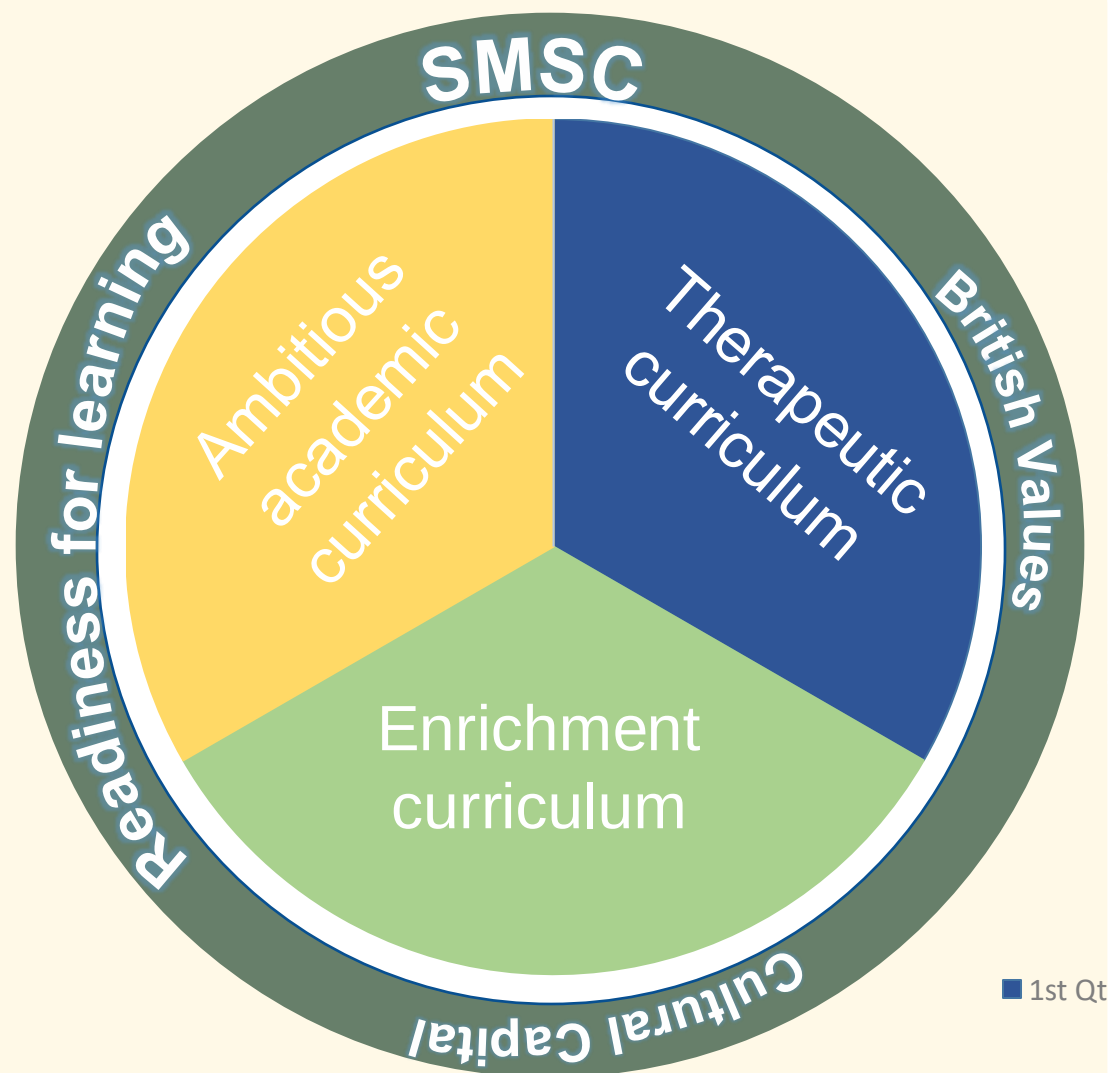
Belonging – Engaging – Compassion – Learning

ARBOUR ACADEMY MISSION STATEMENT

“Caring for young people and their families, providing them with opportunities to learn and flourish.”.

Policy developed by:	Leadership team
Policy to be reviewed:	Summer 2025
Summary of changes	· New policy

Main aims of the Arbour curriculum



Provide an **ambitious academic curriculum** so that students can access a wide range of qualifications and vocational options that can support and impact on their further education and their employability.

To provide wide-ranging out of school opportunities to offer the our students the best understanding of how to be successful in 21st Century Britain. At Arbour Academy we explore and develop all opportunities that allow pupils to experience activities beyond the classroom in line with their more socially advantaged peers

We offer a therapeutic curriculum to support our students' holistic development, fostering emotional well-being alongside academic progress. By integrating therapeutic approaches into our curriculum, we create a nurturing environment where students can thrive socially, emotionally, and academically.

To ensure that our students are in the best position to be ready to access and participate in their acadmic lessons. To develop our students **cultural capital**, for us this is providing students with the opportunities to experience people, places and things that contribute towards the essential knowledge that pupils need in order to be educated citizens. To promote pupils physical health and personal development which includes the spiritual, moral, cultural, mental development of pupils at the school in order to prepare our students for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of later life

Project Based Learning (PBL) Policy – Rationale

- The rationale of this PBL policy is to:
 - introduce the key aims and objectives of the PBL department.
 - to explain the curriculum design and coverage.
 - to explain the effective Teaching and Learning strategies involved in PBL

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Arbour's PBL Policy Vision (Why)

- To ignite pupils' curiosity and enthusiasm for learning through engaging, real-world themes.
- To encourage independent inquiry, critical thinking, and collaboration by exploring historical, geographical, and social topics.
- To connect learning across subjects, deepening pupils' understanding of the world and their role within it.
- To provide opportunities for pupils to engage in meaningful discussions around ethical, cultural, and social issues.
- To develop problem-solving skills by working on real-life challenges and projects related to current events or historical themes.

About the Curriculum

Research by the Sutton Trust highlighted the challenges Year 6 students faced transitioning from one teacher to many, leading to a drop in Key Stage 3 attainment. Ten years later, these issues persist, with student wellbeing and attainment affected by negative transition experiences. Ofsted's 2015 report "Key Stage 3: The Wasted Years?" identified national trends and urged secondary leaders to prioritize Key Stage 3 in school planning. This approach is particularly relevant for students with mental health challenges, as smoother transitions can support their wellbeing and academic progress.

About the Curriculum

At its core, the Project-Based Learning (PBL) approach aims to address transition-related anxieties by offering a cohesive, integrated curriculum delivered by one teacher. It strengthens relationships between staff, students, families, ensuring that Key Stage 3 students are a high priority.

PBL focuses on literacy, numeracy, careers, and both academic and pastoral development, particularly supporting disadvantaged students through an emphasis on cultural capital.

Thematic learning helps students experience rich, memorable learning while maintaining familiar elements of primary school and introducing the academic challenges of secondary school. PBL develops transferable skills that prepare students for success in Key Stage 4, Key Stage 5, and beyond, making it especially suitable for supporting students with mental health challenges.

About the Curriculum

At Key Stage 3, each theme is designed to offer a rich and structured learning experience. Themes are centered around a driving question to guide learning and provide a big-picture view. The theme overview gives a snapshot of curriculum coverage, learning outcomes, key knowledge, and vocabulary. Lessons are flexible and come with detailed teacher notes, teaching slides, and student resources. Formative assessments are built into the lessons, with student outcomes linked to a competency framework, alongside a low-stakes quiz at the end of each unit to check understanding. The People, Place, and Time feature helps students contextualize their learning by exploring key figures, places, and events, encouraging them to see connections between themes.

The PBL Competancies

We believe that students need a holistic approach to education, focusing on their academic and personal growth. The competency framework helps students be self-reflective and believe in improving their skills, knowledge, and abilities through hard work. It covers nine areas of development—six focused on academics and three on personal growth.

Competencies progress from Entry Stage to Stage 3, becoming more challenging as students advance. Each lesson includes at least one competency, with students moving from Emerging to Advanced as they engage with content.

Hook Lessons

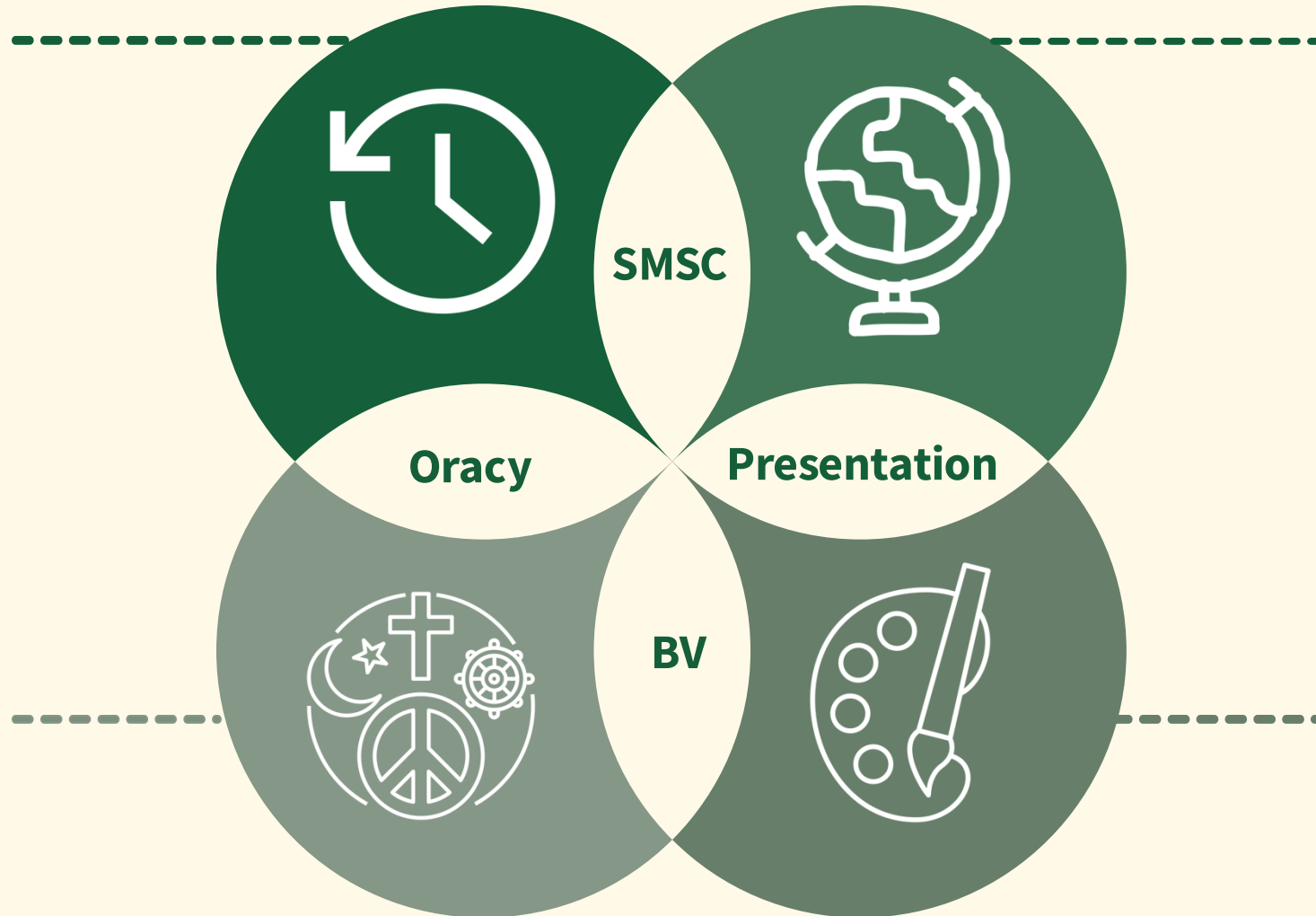
Our project-based learning approach includes the use of hook lessons, designed to spark curiosity and engage students from the outset. These lessons are planned as often as appropriate to introduce key topics in an exciting and meaningful way, helping to immerse students in the subject matter. By using creative and stimulating activities, hook lessons aim to capture students' interest and sustain their engagement throughout the project, fostering a deeper connection to their learning journey.

PBL Coverage

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History

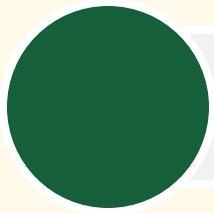
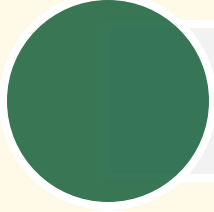
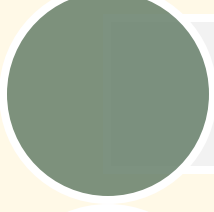
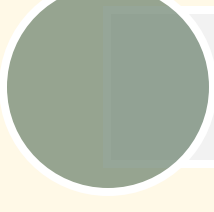
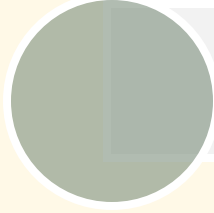
Geography



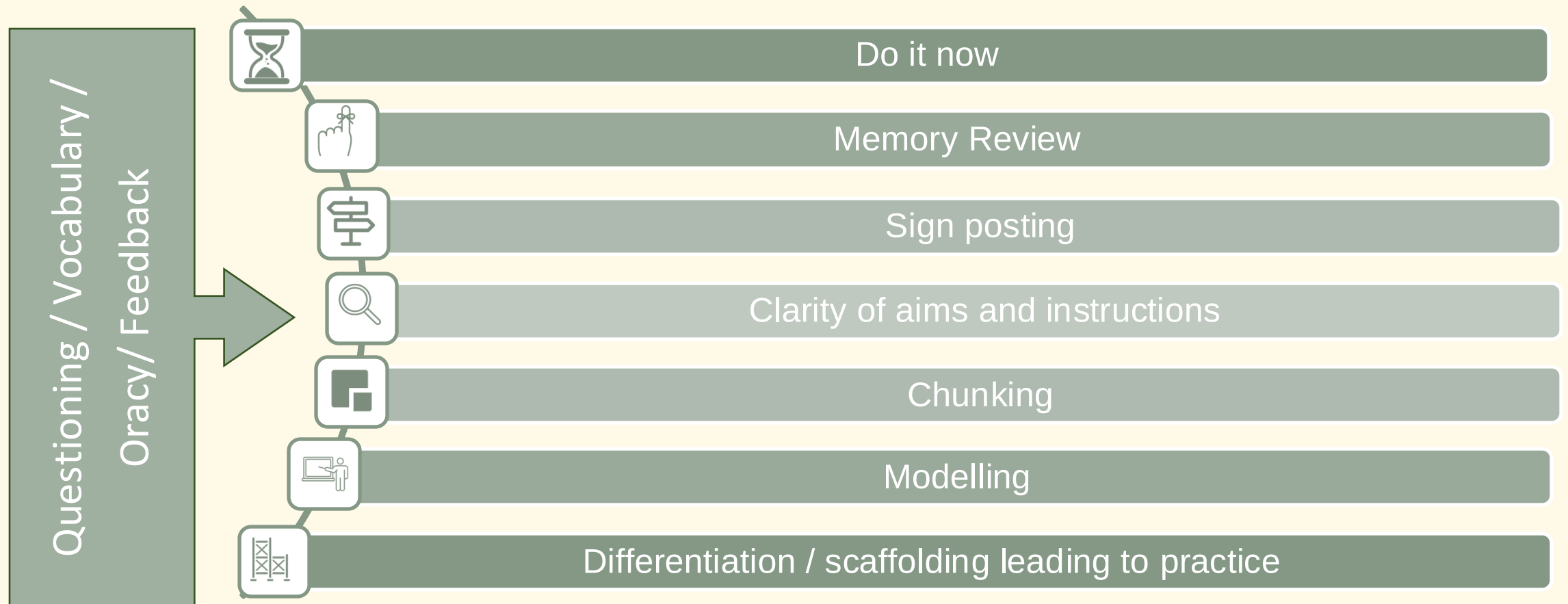
Religious Studies

The Arts

The PBL Competencies

	Communication	Speaking and listening
	Social and environmental	Geography, History, Religious Education
	Personal Social	Community service, Healthy living, Personal responsibilities, Social cultural
	Creative	Confidence, Experimenting, Health & Safety, Original thought, Refine and develop. Reflect, Response to stimuli
	Personal Learning	Independence, Reflection, Self management, Team Player

Lesson structure



Assessment Type	Details	Frequency
End of unit tests	Tests based specifically on the work covered during a topic. These are not always completed at the immediate finish of the topic so that we can test that long-term remembering has been achieved.	Ongoing
Pupil assessment	Self- assessment sheets for pupils to assess their progress against unit objectives	Ongoing
Teacher assessment	Teachers to assess pupils progress against the intended outcomes for a unit.	Ongoing
Low Stake assessments	Ongoing teacher assessment used to direct planning on the outcomes of low stakes testing.	Ongoing
Data capture	Formal data captured across all strands of the curriculum using formative and summative methods.	Once per term baselining new students

Subject enhancements

At Arbour, we believe in providing a wide reaching science education that goes beyond the classroom. We recognize the value of subject enhancements, such as trips, in-school visits, projects, theme days, and the inclusion of famous scientists throughout the curriculum. These enhancements aim to deepen students' understanding of scientific concepts, foster a love for the subject, and highlight the importance of science in the world around us. By incorporating these activities, we create a holistic learning experience and promote cultural capital among our students.

Trips: Trips offer students the opportunity to witness scientific concepts in real-life situations and develop practical skills. The following table highlights the proposed trips and activities by year group and their focus:

Year	Trip	Focus
Cycle 1	Local Area Visits	Journey - use directional language / maps
Cycle 1	Using transport to go to Manchester	Journey
Cycle 2	Formby Beach	Coast
Cycle 2	Manchester Art Gallery	DaVinci
Cycle 3	Eyam	Days of Old

Year	On site activities	Focus
KS3 Cycle 3	Escape Room	Journey
KS3 Cycle 2	India Theme Day	India
KS3 Cycle 2	China Theme Day	Made in China