



# Votes for Schools Policy

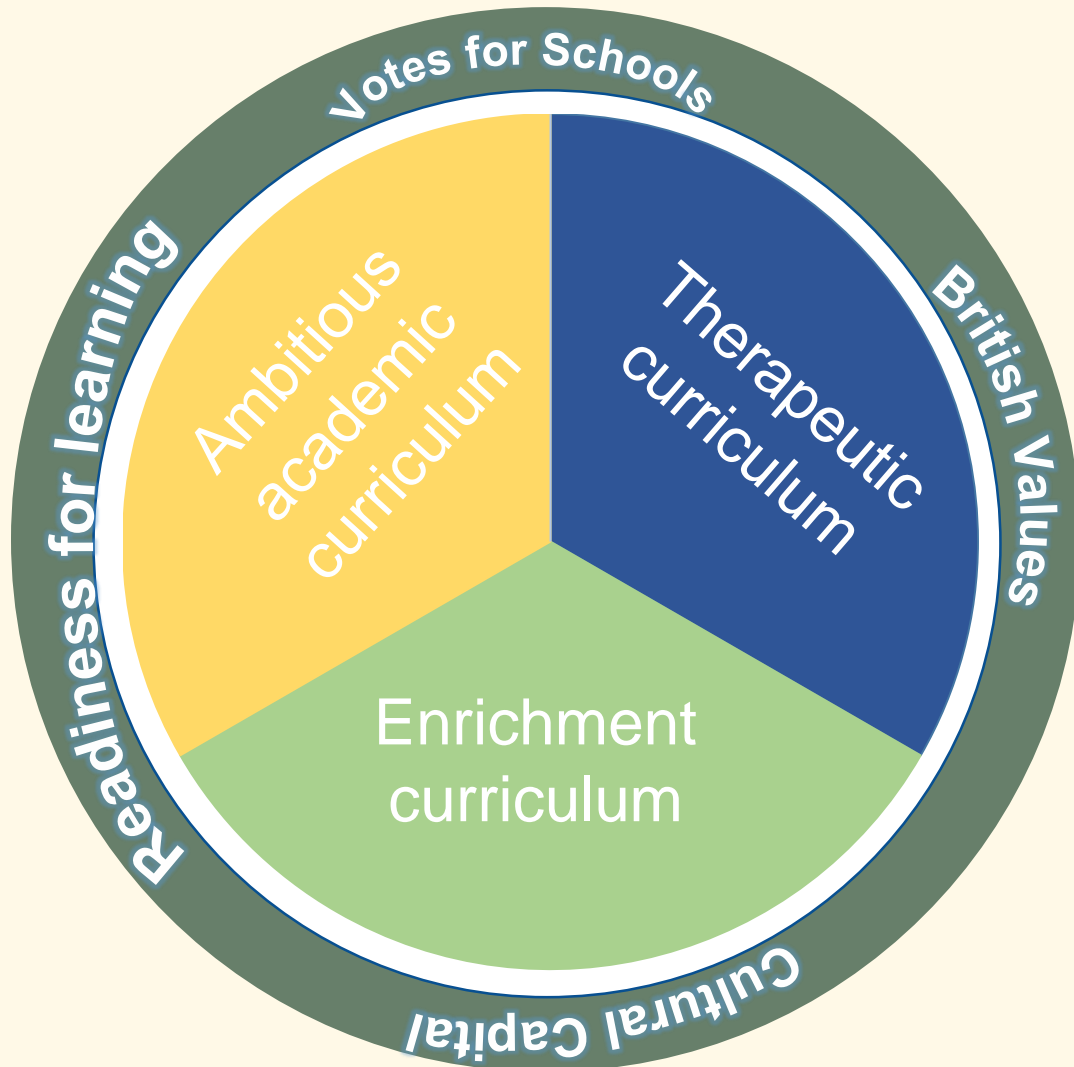
Belonging - Engaging - Compassion - Learning

## ARBOUR ACADEMY MISSION STATEMENT

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

Policy developed by:	
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 academic 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

## Votes for Schools Policy – Rationale

The rationale of this Votes for Schools policy is to:

- introduce the key aims and objectives of Votes for Schools at Arbour
- to explain the curriculum design and coverage.
- to explain the effective Teaching and Learning strategies involved in how we deliver Votes for Schools .

## Votes for Schools Policy - Vision (Why)





- To develop an enduring understanding of personal, social, and cultural well-being through high-quality, relevant learning experiences that foster respect for diverse perspectives and lifestyles.
- To use Votes for Schools as a subject to support the emotional and mental health of our pupils, fostering resilience, empathy, and well-being through discussions and reflections on topical issues.
- To support pupils in becoming responsible, active citizens who can make informed decisions and positively contribute to society by engaging in debates, discussions, and voting on current events and ethical dilemmas.
- To foster practical life skills that equip pupils to manage their lives now and in the future, including critical thinking, effective communication, and informed decision-making through structured debates and discussions.
- To build confidence, self-esteem, and the ability to express their views and opinions effectively, both orally and in writing, by participating in classroom debates and voting on various topics.
- To promote, value, and celebrate diversity and inclusion, encouraging respect and understanding for different cultures, perspectives, and lifestyles by exploring and discussing topical issues with an Votes for Schools link.

# Coverage






At Arbour Academy, we use the Votes for Schools program as an effective way to support students' learning and development in multiple areas. We have chosen this approach for several reasons:

- **A Vehicle for Teaching Citizenship:** Votes for Schools serves as a key method for teaching students about citizenship, which involves understanding their rights and responsibilities, the importance of community participation, and how to actively engage in society. Through this program, pupils learn about key democratic principles and what it means to be a responsible, informed citizen in Modern Britain.
- **Comprehensive Coverage of SMSC Strands:** The program allows us to ensure thorough coverage of the Social, Moral, Spiritual, and Cultural (SMSC) strands, as its weekly topics are carefully designed to address relevant themes. This helps students develop their understanding of important issues and values, while keeping up to date with current events and discussions.
- **Promoting Student Voice and Expression of Opinions:** At Arbour, encouraging students to express their views is a significant focus area. Votes for Schools not only gives pupils the chance to voice their opinions on a range of topics but also connects these discussions to our oracy framework. This framework supports students in making articulate contributions, helping them develop the skills needed to express themselves clearly and confidently.

# Golden Threads

Health & Wellbeing	Equalities & Identity	Environment & Climate Change	Global issues & Politics
			
<p>In our Health &amp; Wellbeing thread, students will explore topics related to physical, mental, and emotional health. Through discussions and debates, they will learn about the importance of maintaining a balanced lifestyle, understanding mental health issues, and promoting overall wellness. Pupils will also evaluate current health trends and policies, fostering a deeper understanding of how personal and societal choices impact health.</p>	<p>The Equalities &amp; Identity thread focuses on the principles of equality, diversity, and inclusion. Students will engage in conversations about race, gender, sexuality, and other aspects of identity. They will examine historical and contemporary issues related to discrimination and privilege, and discuss ways to promote equality and respect for all individuals.</p>	<p>Our Environment &amp; Climate Change thread encourages students to delve into the pressing issues of environmental conservation and climate action. They will discuss the science behind climate change, its global impact, and the importance of sustainable practices. Through debates and projects, pupils will explore solutions and strategies to protect our planet for future generations.</p>	<p>In the Global Issues &amp; Politics thread, students will gain a deeper understanding of international relations and political systems. They will debate current global events, political ideologies, and the role of governments and organizations in addressing worldwide challenges. This thread aims to develop informed, engaged citizens with a global perspective.</p>

# Golden Threads

Science & Technology	Community & Charity	Crime, Justice and Extremism	Culture, Media & The Arts	Jobs, Economy & Education
				
<p>The Science &amp; Technology thread invites students to explore the rapidly evolving world of scientific discovery and technological innovation. They will discuss the ethical implications of new technologies, the role of science in society, and the impact of technological advancements on everyday life. Pupils will also investigate the potential future developments in various scientific fields.</p>	<p>In our Community &amp; Charity thread, students will learn about the importance of civic engagement and philanthropy. They will explore how communities can come together to support those in need, and the role of charities in addressing social issues. Through discussions and hands-on projects, pupils will be encouraged to contribute positively to their own communities.</p>	<p>The Crime, Justice &amp; Extremism thread addresses the complexities of the legal system, criminal behavior, and the roots of extremism. Students will debate issues such as criminal justice reform, the causes and consequences of crime, and strategies to prevent radicalization. This thread aims to foster a nuanced understanding of justice and security in society.</p>	<p>In the Culture, Media &amp; the Arts thread, students will explore the rich tapestry of human expression. They will discuss the role of media in shaping public opinion, the importance of cultural heritage, and the impact of the arts on society. Pupils will engage with various forms of artistic expression and consider how culture and media influence our worldviews.</p>	<p>The Jobs, Economy &amp; Education thread provides students with insights into the interconnectedness of work, economic systems, and education. They will debate topics such as the future of work, economic policies, and the role of education in personal and professional development. This thread aims to prepare students for the challenges and opportunities of the modern economy.</p>

# Curriculum

We utilise a spiralized curriculum design. This means that key concepts are revisited each year. This approach ensures that students reinforce and build upon their knowledge over time, helping them to understand and apply information more effectively. By consistently revisiting these concepts, our students are able to deepen their understanding and develop a more comprehensive skill set as they progress through their education.

The taught content falls into one of nine areas, these are the golden threads that run through our curriculum.

# Curriculum

Week	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19
Topic	9	8	5	3	2	7	1							1	6	1	9	8	7
Oracy Focus	1		2		3		4							4	5		6		7

Week	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38
Topic							7	9	3	8	6	1							
Oracy Focus							7	8		9		all							

Theme	Theme
Key Theme 1	Health & wellbeing
Key Theme 2	Equalities & identity
Key Theme 3	Environment & climate change
Key Theme 4	Global issues & politics
Key Theme 5	Science & technology
Key Theme 6	Community & charity
Key Theme 7	Crime, justice & extremism
Key Theme 8	Jobs, economy & education
Key Theme 9	Culture, media & the art



# Teaching Approach in Votes for Schools

## Oracy Through Votes for Schools

In our commitment to fostering comprehensive education, the Votes for Schools lessons are pivotal in enhancing pupils' oracy and communication skills. These lessons are designed to prioritize the quality of verbal interaction among students, ensuring they develop the ability to articulate their thoughts clearly and confidently.

- **Oracy Development:** Votes for Schools lessons place a strong emphasis on verbal communication, encouraging students to engage in meaningful discussions and debates on various topics.
- **Oracy Prompts:** To aid in this development, we provide structured oracy prompts. These prompts guide students in forming well-rounded and articulate responses, ensuring they can express their ideas effectively and respectfully.
- **Quality of Interaction:** By concentrating on the quality of verbal interactions, we aim to cultivate a classroom environment where every pupil feels confident in voicing their opinions and contributing to discussions.

Through this approach, our Votes for Schools lessons not only cover important spiritual, moral, social, and cultural topics but also play a crucial role in developing essential communication skills that will benefit our pupils throughout their lives.

# Oracy Through Votes for Schools

To avoid cognitive overload, pupils will focus on a specific oracy area each lesson, encouraged to use the prompts provided. This approach does not exclude the use of other aspects of the oracy framework; however, teacher modeling and feedback will concentrate on the targeted oracy area.

## Talk Prompts

### SAYING OR STATING AN IDEA

- In my view,
- From my perspective,
- I would argue that

### CLARIFYING OR CHECKING

- Could you elaborate on that point?
- Can you provide more details about what you just said?

### SUPPORTING OR AGREEING

- I support that idea because...
- I share the same opinion as Alex because...

### CHALLENGING OR DISAGREEING

- I see it differently because...
- I respectfully disagree with that point because...
- I have an alternative perspective because...
- I question that viewpoint because...

### SEEING THINGS FROM A DIFFERENT PERSPECTIVE OR VIEWPOINT

- Have you considered it from this angle...
- Another way to look at it might be...

### EXPANDING OR BUILDING ON

- To expand on Mia's point...
- Following on from what Leo mentioned...
- I'd like to elaborate on what Jordan said...

### ASKING FOR THINKING TIME OR HELP

- Can I have a moment to gather my thoughts?
- Could you give me a little more time to think about this?
- I need a bit of time to reflect on that question.
- Can I get some assistance with this concept?
- Could you explain that again, please? I need some clarification.

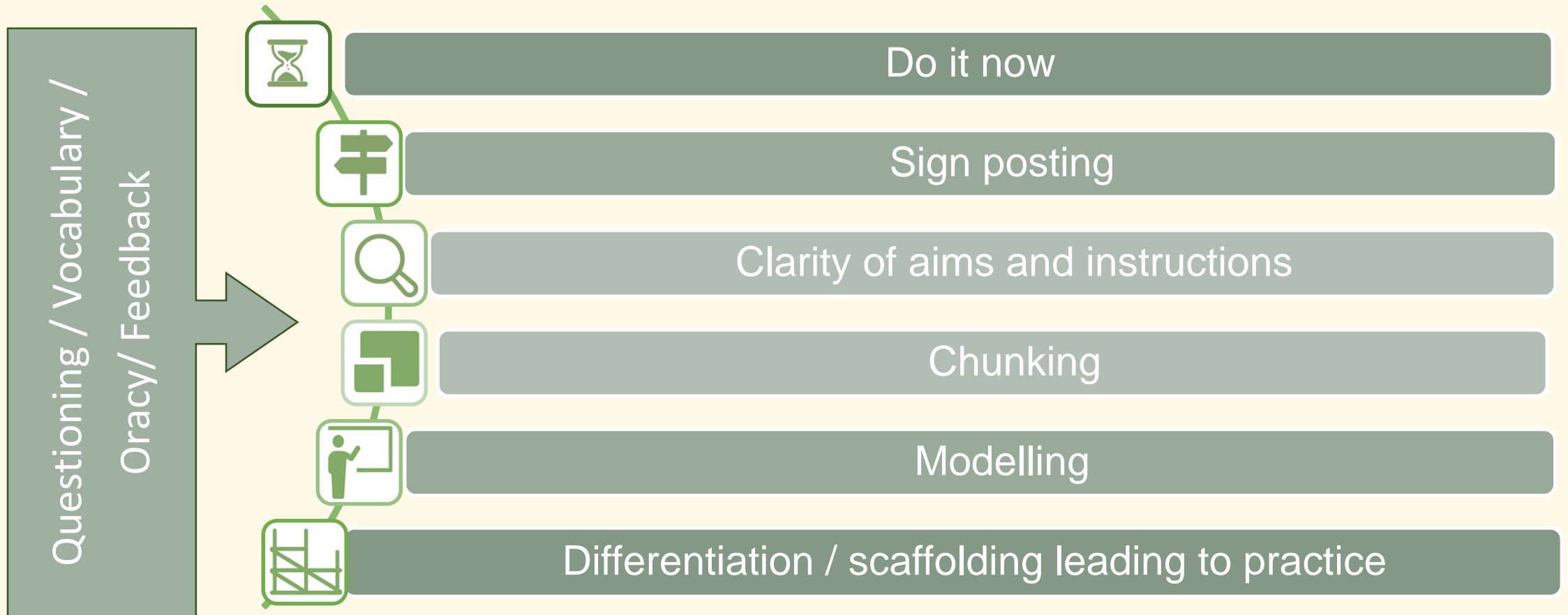
### JUSTIFYING AND GIVING REASONS

- One reason for [something] is...
- This is important because...
- An example of this can be seen in...
- To illustrate, ...
- This supports the idea that...

### FINISHING & CONCLUDING

- To conclude, ...
- In summary, I believe that...
- To summarise my perspective, ...
- Overall, it is clear that...
- After considering all aspects, I am convinced that...

# Lesson structure





### Classroom environment

We expect all classrooms to be welcoming, safe and nurturing. Classrooms should be tidy, well organised and free of unnecessary distractions









### Know your pupils and develop relationships

Teachers are expected to develop good relationships with their pupils. The importance of knowing pupil's needs, strengths and weaknesses cannot be underestimated. If the student has an EHCP or a Boxall profile, teachers are expected to have read it and plan lessons accordingly.



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Do It Now		'Do it now' tasks focus student attention on content or ask students to recall background knowledge relevant to the lesson. Having this ready on entry helps students to settle and engage early in the lesson limiting wasted lesson time.
Signposting		Signposting cues students in to what they can expect from each stage of their lesson. It provides them with structure and clarity. Signalling changes between activities help students to track where they are up to and what to expect next.
Clarity of Aims and Instructions		Setting clear and specific lesson outcomes that all students understand and can work towards achieving. Focus on providing clear and concise instructions without creating cognitive overload.
Chunking		Breaking down information and tasks into smaller manageable chunks or sections, through for example success criteria or sub sections reduces the pressure on pupils working memory.
Modelling		This involves providing worked examples with the teacher modelling self-regulation and thought processes. Remember to model the key steps and give pupils opportunities to join in gradually so you can guide their thinking before they have a go independently.
Differentiation/ Scaffolding		Scaffolding involves using a range of strategies to provide temporary support for pupils, encouraging them to think of their own problem solving and moving towards them being more independent.

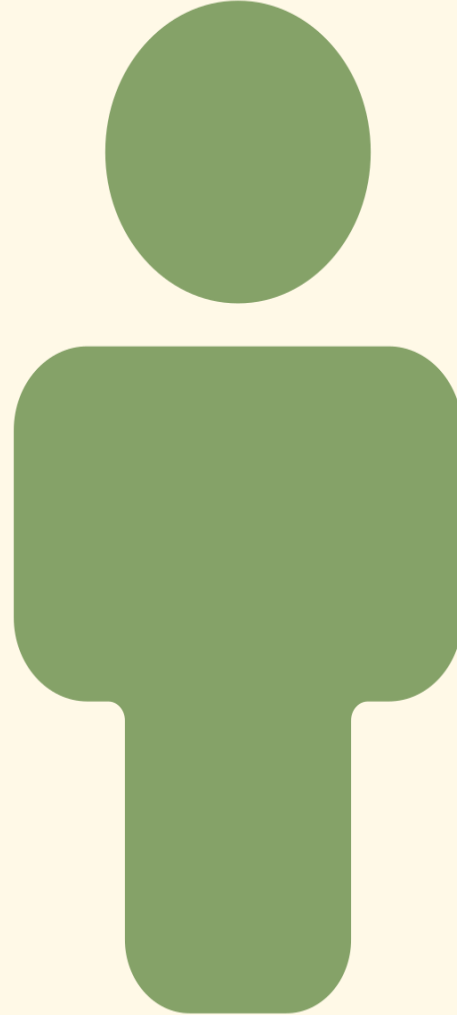


# Accessibility and inclusivity

# Adaptive Teaching






At Arbour Academy, we believe adaptive teaching is the cornerstone of a dynamic and responsive educational experience. It is an approach that recognises each student's unique needs, strengths, and learning styles, fostering an environment where every individual can thrive. Adaptive teaching involves continuous assessment, reflection, and adjustment of instructional strategies, materials, and activities to ensure that they align with the evolving needs of our students. Proactive approaches are planned in advance of learning, whereas reactive adaptations are when the teacher, armed with their formative assessment techniques, judges who need increased support.

Proactive
Having an understanding of pupils individual needs
Firm knowledge of IEPs and pupil passports
Using summative assessment to define starting point.
Making reasonable adjustments ahead of learning.
Use TA support
Identification of common misconceptions to look out for during teaching
Improve accessibility e.g. Font size, proximity to the teacher, visibility of the screen.
Use videos / pictures to dual code and contextualize.
Plan to explicitly teach vocabulary.
Plan to model.
Plan to scaffold.
Plan with cognitive load in mind
Provide alternative ways of answering in class.
Provide exemplars.



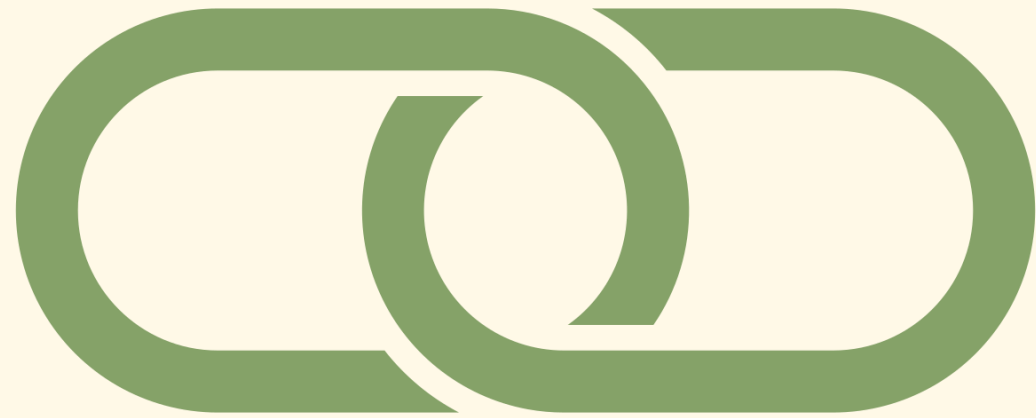
Reactive
Being confident to deviate from the original plan.
Using formative assessment to increase or decrease support.
Use live feedback
Adjust language
Clarify tasks
Re-explain or explain in a different way.
Use flexible groupings to respond.
Use an analogy.
Provide a prompt.
Use more live modelling for smaller groups / individuals.
Provide a check-list as a prompt.
Use questioning.

# The six S of Adapted Teaching

Scaffolds	Scale	Style	Synthesise	Solidify
				
<p>Help scaffold students' thinking and organisation of their ideas. Use aids to support, with the aim of gradual removal. Examples could include graphic organisers, pictures, keywords, sentence starters, writing frames, checklists and structure strips.</p>	<p>Scale is about making adaptations to the scale of a given task to adjust the degree of challenge. For example, shortening or lengthening a descriptive writing task, increasing or decreasing the scale of distance in PE, reducing quantity, assigning fewer problems, and focusing on quality and depth of understanding rather than quantity.</p>	<p>Style is about making adaptations to the task structure for some students. Is there an alternative way they can demonstrate their understanding? For example, could a writing frame help provide structure for an extended piece of writing in RE.</p>	<p>Connect new learning to pupils' prior learning and knowledge. If there are gaps in prior knowledge, new learning will not be secure; pre-teaching or extra recap over prior content can be used.</p>	<p>Provide opportunities for extra practice for those who need it. This can reinforce learning and mastery.</p>

## Safe

All other scaffolds—scaffolding, scale, style, synthesize, and solidify—depend on a culture of safety. This means fostering a classroom where students know their responses are valid and they can make mistakes without fear, ensuring a secure, supportive space for learning.



# Cross-curricular links

# British Values & Votes for Schools

## Moral Development

Moral development in Votes for Schools involves understanding right and wrong, respecting others, and developing ethical values. This is directly linked to Votes for Schools topics such as developing empathy, understanding the impact of actions on others, and learning about laws and societal norms.



# British Values & Votes for Schools

## Social Development

Spiritual development in Votes for Schools encourages students to explore beliefs, experience a sense of wonder, and reflect on their own values and the world around them.

This aligns with the curriculum's focus on personal identity, self-awareness, and understanding different perspectives and beliefs.



# British Values & Votes for Schools

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Spiritual development in Votes for Schools encourages students to explore beliefs, experience a sense of wonder, and reflect on their own values and the world around them. This aligns with the curriculum's focus on personal identity, self-awareness, and understanding different perspectives and beliefs.



# British Values & Votes for Schools

## Cultural Development

Cultural development in Votes for Schools focuses on appreciating cultural diversity, understanding cultural influences, and participating in cultural activities. This ties in through lessons on respect for diversity, global citizenship, and learning about the cultural backgrounds and traditions of different communities.

