

VLC Response to Addressing Lost Learning Time During the Pandemic

Meeting the bespoke needs of all VLC pupils

Academic Learning:

VLC has an absolute conviction that all pupils can and will succeed.

VLC remained open to all young people throughout the pandemic. Where pupils were not able to attend physically, we provided education in a bespoke manner to meet individual learning styles, family circumstances and needs (please also see our Distance Learning Policy and Remote Learning information)

Nevertheless, VLC recognise that the learning of all pupils has been impacted by the pandemic. The aim of our AP pupils is to return to mainstream learning, they are with us for shorter periods and may not have benefitted from VLC being open throughout lockdown. They have often missed time in education. Most of our on-roll pupils have joined our roll during or after the pandemic and have spent time out of school. Pupils that have benefitted from VLC education throughout lockdown will still have had their education disrupted in a variety of ways.

In this context and, due to the bespoke needs of the pupils who attend VLC, it is inappropriate to identify individual topics which have been missed as a whole school or year group and allow for catch up in this way. Addressing lost learning time must be much be carefully thought through for our context. VLC will actively avoid the temptation to continue with what we were doing “only faster”. Undue pace of learning will not help progress at VLC, nor will it aid the emotional and mental health of our pupils who have experienced a pandemic whilst navigating their own individual additional needs.

Learning:

Research, linked to Dillan William and Paul Black shows that learning must consist of 4 components:

* Self-study – pupils at VLC are becoming life-long learners. Learning how to study is key
* Social learning – pupils at VLC must learn alongside and from other people, peers, staff and the community
* Contact time – pupils at VLC must have enough contact time to engage fully with the school curriculum
* Quiet reflection – pupils at VLC must have time to reflect on their own learning and improve

Identifying areas for targeting for catch up:

Research from Hattie suggests that the best ways to identify bespoke areas for catch up in our pupils would include:

* Formal testing
* Focus on individual needs
* Focus on fundamental concepts in each subject area without a strong understanding of which, other learning is impossible
* Strong and thorough formative assessment to include high quality questions, addressing misconceptions immediately. Flexing planning around findings from this formative assessment

Testing:

Our Achievement Ladder at KS4 recognises the trigger that formal assessments pose for some of our pupils.

Where a pupil is working towards GCSE exams, testing will be centred around GCSE examination questions. These help teachers to identify gaps in learning and plan to address them.

Where pupils are not working towards GCSE examinations (whether that be through individual need in KS4 or in younger pupils, then we will focus our testing initially on the following:

* Reading
* Spelling
* Mathematics

We use GL assessments for these and the bespoke outcomes will lead to individualised plans for catch up.

Where possible (taking pupil emotional health into account), we will then add additional English assessments and science assessments in the same way.

Key Concepts and Skills in Subjects:

We identify key areas in our subjects which we will prioritise for teaching in Autumn term 2021 in order that the young people can access other topics:

English (KS4): Language Techniques, descriptive writing, persuasive writing, comprehension, skimming and scanning

English (KS3): Language Techniques, comprehension, reading, spelling,

Science (Ks3 and 4):

Science, Biology: Cells, Enzymes and Transport in Cells

Science, Physics: Energy Transfer and Changes of state

Science, Chemistry: Risk assessments, Atomic Structure, Periodic Table, Bonding

Religious Education:

1. Understanding how individuals develop a sense of [identity](http://archive.teachfind.com/qcda/curriculum.qcda.gov.uk/key-stages-3-and-4/subjects/key-stage-3/religious-education/programme-of-study/index.html#note2_5_a) and belonging through faith or belief.
2. [Exploring the variety, difference and relationships](http://archive.teachfind.com/qcda/curriculum.qcda.gov.uk/key-stages-3-and-4/subjects/key-stage-3/religious-education/programme-of-study/index.html#note2_6_a) that exist within and between religions, values and beliefs.

Mathematics:

We will focus on number topics until the GL and GCSE baseline assessment identify individual areas to improvement.

History:

Social, Emotional Health and Well Being:

Prior to lockdown, we had the following in place:

* SMSC curriculum
* PSHE curriculum
* Emotional Literacy App (to include general emotional literacy lessons planned and developed by Dr Marie Fitzer in collaboration with staff)

Following lockdown, we have put the following in place in addition:

* Every pupil in VLC is screened using the Alex Kelly Talkabout for Teenagers emotional literacy screening tool. Bespoke emotional literacy lessons are put into place to enable improved emotional regulation during challenging times. Emotional literacy is now a key part of the learning for every young person at VLC
* CBT counselling is now available for those who need it
* Music lessons are often found, by our pupils, to be calming. Our music teacher is now in school for a greater number of hours (5 hours a week – increase from 1 hour). Every pupil who would like 1:1 or group music work can learn in a calm environment
* Emphasis in the afternoons for many pupils place on a broad based curriculum which gives pupils access to the awe and wonder of the world. In afternoons, we focus on widening experience. Going places, meeting people, doing, making and exercise. Pupils report an increase in feel good during these times
* Others that remain on site at VLC in the afternoons, have quieter time to reflect on their learning and gain 1:1 bespoke 1:1 support
* Additional fitness sessions provided by ex-Miltary in the mornings help focus for the day

Bespoke transition planning:

For some pupils, attending school after lockdown can be daunting and scary. In these instances, we have developed bespoke transition programmes for reintegration. These programmes are under frequent and regular review and appear on pupils’ ILPs and may involve the following (depending on individual need and VLC capacity):

* Temporary shortened days (only in agreement with parents/carers, PLANCO or commissioner)
* Home visits and tuition
* Social stories and written photos or videos of the new class set up
* Taster sessions for the first day including activities of particular interest to the pupil
* Counselling
* Visits from key workers
* Visits to site after school, when no other pupils are around
* Other transition activities (only planned in conjunction with parents/carers, PLANCO or commissioner)