St. Illtyd's Catholic High School

Learning & Teaching Policy

December 2021

"It turns out that as long as you go to school (and that's important), then it doesn't matter very much which school you go to, but it matters very much which classroom you sit in"
(How do we prepare students for a world we cannot imagine? - Dylan William 2011)

At St. Illtyd's Catholic High School, we believe that learning and teaching is central to our work as educators and we expect all of our staff to deliver high quality, stimulating and dynamic lessons where all pupils are supported and challenged to make good progress in their learning. The aim of this policy is to set out the school's expectations and the responsibilities of different staff in contributing to an outstanding learning experience.

Professional standards

It is an expectation of the Diocese, Governors, the Headteacher, teachers, higher level teaching assistants and learning support staff, to be familiar with the standards required of professionals within the school.

The Welsh Government have developed a professional standards framework for teaching and leadership in Wales. These teaching standards were made available for use from 1 September 2017 with all serving teachers being required to move to the new standards from September 2018.

https://hwb.gov.wales/api/storage/19bc948b-8a3f-41e0-944a-7bf2cadf7d18/professional-standards-for-teaching-and-leadership-interactive-pdf-for-pc.pdf

Key priorities

At St. Illtyd's we reject the notion of lessons following a set format (i.e. that all lessons should be in three parts) as this can constrain the creativity of the individual teacher. We encourage teachers to be as innovative as possible when planning their lessons and look for three key aspects to be the centre of and present in, all lessons:

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Pupil engagement
Challenge for all
Progress

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Lesson Framework:

In September 2018 we introduced a framework for successful lessons that has been designed by all teaching staff. These are the key features that we feel are needed for an excellent lesson. As a teaching staff, we will continuously focus on developing specific areas on this lesson framework, introducing strategies that can be embedded in all lessons across the school in order to raise standards of learning and teaching. We aim to build on these strategies each academic year, to ensure that learning and teaching is the best that it can be, consistently across the school.

New lesson planning and lesson observation forms have been developed in line with this framework. We have also designed a criteria to support staff in identifying the aspects they should include in each area in order to be successful (see below).

Successful Lessons
at St. Illtyd's Catholic High School

Excellent Expectations
Promoting a positive, Catholic learning environment

Plan for Progress
Differentiation- challenge and progress for all

Maximise Motivation
A range of activity to engage learners, best use of time and pace

Quality Questioning
To stretch, support and deepen thinking

Strengthen Skills
Improve and develop the skills needed for life

Check Comprehension
Regularly assess the progress of every individual in order to inform next steps

'Gyda'n gilydd yng Nghrist, fe wnaun gwahaniaeth'

St. Illtyd's Catholic High School
Ysgol Uwchradd Gatholig Illtud Sant

Nearly all = Very few exceptions; **most** >80%, **many**>70%, **majority**>60%, **around half**>50%, **minority**<40%, **few**<20%, **very few**<10%.

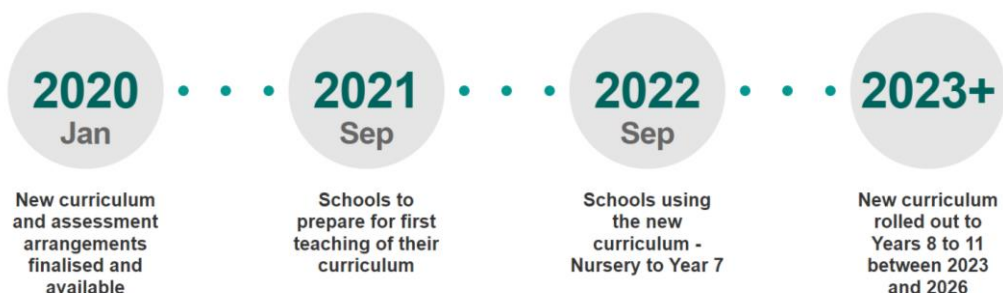| Successful Lessons	4	3	2	1
Excellent Expectations	• Low expectations of many pupils. • Pupils are disengaged. • Limited skill to control behaviour. • Praise and sanctions do not follow school policy. • Class routines are not established or followed.	• Expectations are appropriate. • The majority of pupils are on task. • The teacher is positive and able to control behaviour. • Behaviour management is not specific enough for a minority of pupils. • Clear routines are in place.	• High expectations are set and reached. • Most pupils are well-focussed. • The teacher has good relationships. • Persistence and resilience is developing; pupils try new things. • The teacher manages behaviour well. • Routines are consistent and an effective attention strategy is used.	• The teacher demonstrates a belief that all pupils can achieve well. Pupils thrive on this and vulnerable learners engage. • Pupils demonstrate persistence, resilience and independence. • Pupils show excellent self-management and good social relationships. • Routines are embedded.
Plan for Progress	• Awareness of prior learning is limited. • Lesson objectives lack accuracy. • Pupils lack clarity about the success criteria and therefore their work. • Missed opportunities to model. • No clear understanding of the learner's individual needs. • Differentiation is usually by outcome. • Challenge is wrongly pitched. • There are no scaffolds. • Many pupils underachieve.	• Awareness of class achievement. • Work is not at the appropriate level. • Objectives set including success criteria. • Lack of accuracy can cause confusion. • Lack of challenge for the more able. • Outcomes are generally matched to capabilities of learners. • The teacher finds managing the different needs of learners challenging. • Support for groups of learners is not precise enough for a minority. • Appropriate scaffolds. • Progress is reasonable.	• Use of achievement to drive learning. • Clear links from prior learning. • Work set at the level to challenge. • Success criteria are shared and re-visited as necessary. Most pupils use these to determine their success. • The teacher is skilled at using modelling. • A range of differentiated approaches used. • A good range of relevant scaffolds are available and used with independence. • Good progress occurs.	• Pupils review their own learning and describe their next steps. • Objectives are differentiated according to the different groups identified. • Pupils devise their own success criteria. • High quality modelling • Pupils experts act as role models. • Pupils are used to high challenge and respond with resilience. • Most identify the scaffolds they need themselves. • Pupils can accurately describe what has been achieved and how.
Maximise Motivation	• The teacher has insecure knowledge. • The start of a lesson is inadequate. • No review of prior learning. • Lesson activities are not linked. • The pace of the lesson is too slow and time is not managed effectively. • One approach to learning dominates, usually teacher-led. • The lesson is not put into context. • Pupils are not used to group work.	• The teacher has satisfactory knowledge. Planning can be over-dependent on worksheets or textbooks. • A clear start to the lesson to engage. • A series of linked activities. • Timings and pace are adequate. • Some pupils are off-task. • Group activity often lacks precision. • Context is often teacher-led. • Most pupils work collaboratively when directed by the teacher.	• The teacher has good knowledge. • Purposeful and engaging start. • A review of prior learning. • Activities are varied. • Timings and pace are good. • The teacher adjusts as necessary. • A good balance of teacher/ pupil voice. • Off-task pupils are rare. • Contexts engage the majority. • Groupings are those most suitable for effective learning. Collaborative practices are embedded. Pupils show respect for their peers.	• In-depth knowledge, connections to deepen understanding. • Activities are stimulating, emotionally engaging and challenging. • Variety and pace -no pupils off-task. • Pupils lead group sessions. • Whole class teaching inspires. • Contexts planned around learner interests. • Pupils have input into the work, roles, rules and outcomes. Relationships are strong.
Quality Questioning	• Questioning techniques are poor and only involve a few pupils. • Little processing time is given. • Closed questions are mainly used. • No probing for further response. • Mainly question and answer through the 'hands up' approach.	• A range of techniques is used including open and closed questions. • At times, probing is used. • Processing time is used inconsistently. • A majority of pupils respond. • The teacher uses a range of approaches including 'hands up', random selection, pair and group responses. • Responses are usually to the teacher rather than to peers.	• Both open and closed questioning is used appropriately. • Process time is well used. • Pupils increasingly ask questions of each other. • The teacher builds a pupil response system including 'hands down'. • There is more evidence of pupil to pupil discussion. • Most pupils enjoy responding.	• Probing for full understanding. • The teacher acts on responses. • There are frequent opportunities for pupils to ask questions of each other. This is done well. • ICT may be used through electronic voting systems and the teacher uses this to support outcomes. • Pupils are keen to respond.
Strengthen Skills	• There is little evidence that the teacher has planned to incorporate skills into their lessons. • The teacher uses over-simplified or complex language. • When digital skills are used, it is with activities that have little relevance, breadth or progression. • Very limited use of Welsh phrases by the teacher only. • The work set offers little choice. • Pupils need regular assurance and prompting.	• There is some evidence of planning for skills, however, there are missed opportunities, they are not expanded on, or not referred to in the plenary. • Digital opportunities are missed. • Limited use of Welsh phrases by the teacher only. • The teacher provides a few opportunities to act independently through constrained choices with specific directions. • Many are able to concentrate when alone.	• Appropriate skills planned. Continuity and progression of these skills is evident. Skills are referred to during the plenary. • ICT is used when it can make a valid contribution to extending learning. • Welsh phrases are regularly used by the teacher. There is some development of Welsh identity. • Choices are given as to the format of the work. Pupils are required to use their own ideas, plan, make decisions and solve problems.	• Progression in skills is well defined. Opportunities are identified by pupils and skills form part of the plenary. • The teacher encourages and facilitates ICT appropriately and is not afraid to learn from the pupils. • The teacher uses Welsh phrases frequently. Subject specific Welsh is available. Most pupils respond. • There are many opportunities in terms of how the learning is developed and of the product. Pupils are motivated and empowered.
Check Comprehension	• No review of learning so many pupils are unclear as to what they have achieved. • Verbal feedback is not given or is unhelpful. • Little evidence of marking. Pupils do not respond. • Pupils cannot self-assess. • Data available is not used to support next steps.	• An end of lesson review adequately assesses the learning. • There is some grasp of progress. • Verbal feedback is helpful. • Written feedback is helpful, but is not specific. About half the class react to improve their work. • Self-assessment tends to be stronger than peer assessment. A lack of understanding of either how or what to assess means a minority underachieve. • The teacher uses data but for a minority of pupils there is a need to delve more deeply.	• Mini plenaries occur in the lesson. These effectively evaluate learning. • A wide range of effective strategies is used to elicit pupils' understanding, the teacher acts on this information. • Verbal feedback is helpful, detailing successes and specific ways to improve. • Written feedback is specific in terms of the way forward. Most pupils act on this. • Pupils are shown how to assess their own work and that of others. They are given opportunities to do this. Most pupils set their own 'next steps'.	• Pupils evaluate the impact of their learning. • A final plenary brings the whole lesson together. • The plenary is predominantly pupil-led. • Verbal feedback is personalised. • Written feedback is followed up through discussion and is acted upon. • Self/peer assessment is accurate and builds confidence in learning. • Data is well used to determine precise needs. Where appropriate, this is shared.

'Gyda'n gilydd yng Nghrist, fe wnawn gwahaniaeth'

All staff agreed that they would like to continue with the grading of formal lesson (where 1=excellent, 2=good, 3= satisfactory and 4= unsatisfactory), although this will be reviewed in 2022-23 following the implementation of the new curriculum in Year 7 and with the school's move towards a pupil-experience review.

New Curriculum

In June 2018 St. Illtyd's formally began its journey in planning for the implementation of the new curriculum for Wales in readiness for September 2022. All staff have received training in understanding the context of the new curriculum and a number of staff have also engaged in external training. Senior Leaders have completed a 'Curriculum Readiness Tool' to ascertain how to move the school forward in planning for the new curriculum and are also working with Central South Consortium and colleagues in other schools to share good practice and keep up to date with further developments.

2020 Jan · · · **2021** Sep · · · **2022** Sep · · · **2023+**

| New curriculum and assessment arrangements finalised and available | Schools to prepare for first teaching of their curriculum | Schools using the new curriculum - Nursery to Year 7 | New curriculum rolled out to Years 8 to 11 between 2023 and 2026 |

The new curriculum is based on: https://hwb.gov.wales/curriculum-for-wales/

- Three cross-curricular skills- literacy, numeracy and digital skills- plus wider skills
- Four core purposes (aims) for learners
- Six areas of learning and experience
- Twelve pedagogical principles

The 4 main aims of the curriculum

All schools must write a curriculum that helps children and young people to achieve 4 main aims.

The 4 aims are to help children and young people be:

1. **Ambitious and capable learners**
This means they believe in themselves and what they can do. They want to learn and do better. They have the skills to learn.

2. **Enterprising and creative**
This means they can be creative and think of new ideas. They can solve problems. They can use this in their work.

3. **Ethical and informed citizens**
This means they understand their rights and responsibilities. They take part in their community. They care about the world.

4. **Healthy and confident**
This means they have healthy minds and bodies. They feel good about themselves and what they believe in.

Areas of learning and experience

Expressive Arts

Health and Well-being

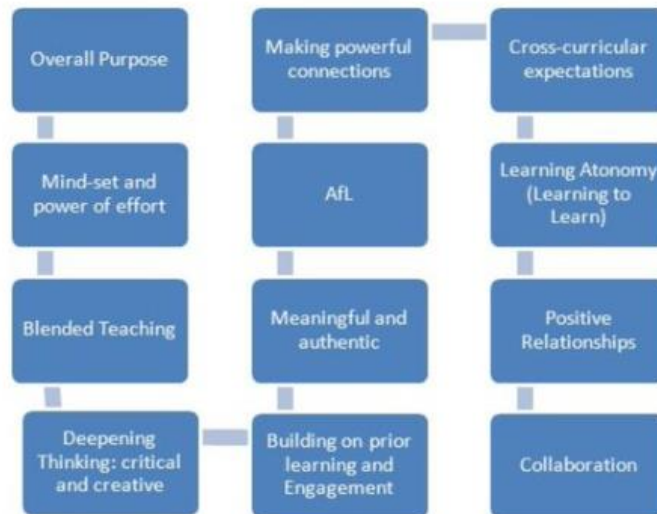Humanities

Languages, Literacy and Communication

Mathematics and Numeracy

Science and Technology

➢ Donaldson 12 Pedagogical Principles

Overall Purpose	Making powerful connections	Cross-curricular expectations
Mind-set and power of effort	AfL	Learning Atonomy (Learning to Learn)
Blended Teaching	Meaningful and authentic	Positive Relationships
Deepening Thinking: critical and creative	Building on prior learning and Engagement	Collaboration

For each Area of Learning and Experience (AoLE) the curriculum will be built around *What Matters?* statements, under which 'descriptors for learning' will guide teachers/ curriculum planners towards the knowledge and experience that they should provide, in order for pupils to develop the four core purposes.

Planning will link continuously to the three key skill areas of literacy, numeracy and digital competency, plus the wider skills, whilst continuing to keep the four core purposes of learners at the forefront of all planning.

St. Illtyds' approach towards the new curriculum, including assessment and reporting strategies, is currently being led by all teaching staff within their faculties, guided by their Head of Faculty and overseen by the Senior Leadership Team.

Self-Reflection

While the support of the Learning and Teaching team and subject leader is in place to improve classroom teaching, developing their own teaching and learning is ultimately the responsibility of the classroom teacher.

We expect all teachers at St. Illtyd's to

- be reflective practitioners
- be responsible for setting and working towards their own performance management targets
- work to establish whole school strategies in their own teaching, ensuring consistency across the school
- encourage pupil's aspirations and develop independent learners

- be responsible for keeping records of their own training
- keep abreast of the current educational context in Wales

There are a number of ways in which the school supports staff to reflect on their teaching and to continue their professional development. Strategies include:

- regular learning and teaching training sessions
- a regular departmental focus/ discussion on learning and teaching
- training in understanding the professional standards in Wales (including development of this into a self-reflection tool for teachers)
- encouragement to complete peer observations where possible
- attendance to pedagogy club
- following St. Illtyd's learning and teaching on Twitter: @pedagogyfridays

Teaching and learning is effective when:

- lessons are well planned
- the teacher displays strong subject knowledge
- skills in literacy, numeracy and digital literacy are developed
- the teacher has high expectations of all pupils
- strong relationships are evident and pupil's self-esteem is high
- positive learning environments are created
- the learning objectives are clear
- all pupils are challenged
- questioning is deep and effective
- independent learning is encouraged
- the teacher models language well to develop pupil's oracy skills
- lesson activities are stimulating and meaningful
- high quality instruction is evident
- the teacher is able to adapt their teaching to meet the needs of learners
- resources are high quality and interesting
- lesson pace is strong
- classroom routines are clear and the teacher successfully manages the classroom
- high quality verbal and written feedback encourages pupils to advance and improve their work
- there are shrewd opportunities for self and peer assessment
- there is use of incidental Welsh and Welsh history and culture where appropriate.

Teacher's responsibilities:

- ensure there are clear objectives and success criteria which the children understand
- provide feedback which informs the next steps in pupils' learning

- give pupils opportunities to reflect on their learning
- plan lessons which have pace and structure
- provide a working environment where expectations are high
- provide appropriate resources and support materials
- continue to widen their subject knowledge and developments in education
- use differentiation and groupings to enable all pupils to learn effectively
- keep effective assessments and accurate records which inform planning
- communicate with parents and keep them informed of their children's progress

The Learning Environment

Our purpose is to create a learning environment that fosters motivation and allows all pupils to flourish.

This will be organised to ensure that children have the opportunity to:

- work individually, in pairs, and as a class
- make decisions
- solve problems
- be creative
- develop social skills
- develop independence and use initiative
- participate in enrichment and in school life

Learning will take place in a stimulating learning environment that:

- is welcoming, happy and caring
- is both challenging and supportive
- celebrates success and supports children to realise their full potential
- encourages mutual respect
- is well organised, safe, tidy with well-presented displays
- has resources that are attractive and accessible
- has an agreed code of behaviour

Planning

- Teachers should plan lessons in line with departmental schemes of work.
- Teachers should be aware of detailed information regarding individual pupils' prior learning, reading ages, ALN status, MAT status and eFSM. These factors should inform lesson planning, seating plans and group work.
- Teachers should bear in mind their responsibility to ensure the welfare and safety of all pupils and should take into account issues of a sensitive or controversial nature and any impact that these might have on individuals within their class.

All teachers should:

- begin and end lessons on time and in a structured manner, establishing clear and appropriate routines
- plan lessons that allow all pupils to progress in their learning, differentiating where appropriate
- maintain engagement, pace and challenge, and spend as high a proportion of lesson time as possible on learning (as opposed to teaching)
- employ a range of strategies/ approaches/ activities within a lesson and ensure an efficient shift from one activity to the next
- identify where it is necessary to change or adapt plans
- include a variety of active questioning techniques and, where possible, pre-plan questions
- value pupil contributions and praise or reward to show the value of their achievement
- ensure pupils are given feedback on completed work and that they know how to move on to the next level
- check progress during the lesson in a variety of ways
- identify key subject specific language and develop key skills
- review all lessons and use this evaluation to inform future planning

Strategies for ensuring progression and continuity planning

- schemes of work developed and reviewed
- medium term plans and yearly curriculum mapping
- staff meetings to discuss curriculum developments and initiatives
- monitoring of progress by feedback and marking, assessment and record keeping
- ensure continuity by moderating pupil's work

Learner's responsibilities

We believe that children learn best when they:

- are interested and motivated
- achieve success and gain approval
- are clear about expectations in their work and behaviour
- are given appropriate tasks
- feel valued, secure and confident
- are challenged and stimulated
- receive feedback about their performance

Excellent learners at St Illtyd's Catholic High School...

- have a **positive** attitude to learning,
- are **resilient**,
- give their maximum **effort** in every lesson,
- have **high expectations** of themselves,
- work well **independently** and as part of a **group**,
- are **curious** and ask **questions** about their learning,
- learn from their failures and understand that learning is a **process**,
- understand that dedicating **time** to their learning is essential to help them to improve.

Learner's responsibilities include:

- be positive and eager to make use of all opportunities
- have pride in their work, their class and the school
- take responsibility for their learning
- understand that hard work is the key to achievement
- respect other children, be considerate and thoughtful
- respect the school environment and equipment
- be punctual and organised with appropriate kit
- be respectful to all staff and visitors

Parents' responsibilities

- ensure their children attend regularly and punctually
- support the ethos of the school
- share responsibility for their children's learning, be realistic and offer encouragement and praise
- attend reporting days
- support the children in terms of homework
- encourage independence in their children
- communicate with staff any concerns about their children
- respect other members of the school community

Governors' responsibilities

- work in partnership with staff, pupils and parents to support the aims and objectives of the school
- support initiatives for pupils and parents
- be accessible to parents and staff
- take responsibility for own training and development
- carry out monitoring and support staff where appropriate

Linked Policies:

Feedback policy

Literacy policy

Numeracy policy

More Able and Talented policy

Linked documents:

Lesson observation form (MSJ September 2018 (updated in line with lesson framework))

Feedback review form (MSJ July 2017)

Monitoring and Evaluation

This policy will be reviewed annually by the Senior Leadership team and Governors.