



St. Illtyd's Catholic High School

Learning & Teaching Policy

December 2024

Role	Name(s)
Head of Centre	David B Thomas
SLT Lead	Maree John
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“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 1st September 2017 with all serving teachers being required to move to these 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:

Pupil engagement
Challenge for all

Progress

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.

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.



During formal observations of teachers we do not grade lessons. The emphasis is instead placed on strengths and specific areas for development against the successful lessons framework.

New Curriculum

St. Illtyd's implemented its new curriculum for Year 7 in September 2022 and this rolled into Year 8 for September 2023 and Year 9 for September 2024. With the publication of the new GCSE specifications, we are currently re-designing our schemes of learning for Years 10 and 11. The new GCSE courses will begin in September 2025 for the majority of subjects and in September 2026 for the remainder.

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



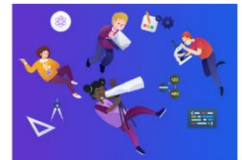
Humanities



Languages, Literacy and Communication

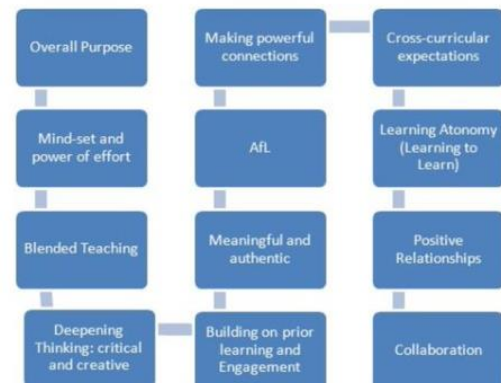


Mathematics and Numeracy



Science and Technology

➤ Donaldson 12 Pedagogical Principles



For each Area of Learning and Experience (AoLE) the curriculum is built around *What Matters?* statements, under which 'descriptors for learning' 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.

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 sessions
- a regular departmental focus/ discussion around learning and teaching
- training in understanding the professional standards in Wales
- encouragement to complete peer observations where possible
- attendance at professional learning provided by the regional consortium or other providers
- collaboration with other schools and educational settings in order to share good practice.

Teaching Walkthrus

As part of our professional learning offer the school uses the Teaching Walkthrus designed by Tom Sherrington and Oliver Caviglioli.

The strategies that we have focused on so far include:

- Excellent Expectations- Signal, Pause, Insist
- Excellent Expectations- Getting Lessons Started
- Excellent Expectations-Ending Lessons: The Last 10 Minutes
- Excellent Expectations-Modelling Mindsets
- Strengthen Skills- Silence is Golden
- Plan for Progress- Scaffolding
- Plan for Progress- Teach to the Top
- Plan for Progress- Live Modelling
- Check Comprehension- Strategies to Check for Understanding

- Check Comprehension- Process Questions
- Plan for Progress and Check Comprehension- Success Criteria which our teachers and pupils call our 'Secrets to Success'

All staff have access to a range of additional Walkthrus that they can access in line with their own development priorities.

As part of the school's improvement priority of developing formative assessment strategies, we have begun to look at setting up for effective classroom talk.

This includes:

- Creating an environment where pupils are willing to take chances by showing them that it is okay to be wrong. For this, we have used the Walkthru 'Normalising error and uncertainty'.
- Supporting pupils to be able to respond better by implementing the Walkthru 'Scaffolding verbal responses'.
- Ensuring teachers give the time and process for pupils to be able to formulate responses by using Doug Lemov's 'Means of Participation':



Building Resilience

In 2023-24 we implemented a strategy for pupils to build resilience. All teachers and pupils have received training in this model and discuss how they are developing aspects of our GROWTH programme as they face challenges with their work, recognising how they can overcome these by implementing the strategies we have focused on.



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 objective is clear
- secrets to success are shared and revisited
- 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 Cymraeg and Cymreig as often as appropriate.

Teacher's responsibilities:

- ensure there is a clear objective and secrets to success which the children understand and use to inform their progress
- 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 and Preparation

- Teachers should plan and prepare 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

Our pupil leaders from the Lit Group and Emerald Greens have worked on developing what they believe are the principles of an 'excellent learner'. They have presented this to all year groups in assembly and teachers are asked to refer to these principles whilst encouraging pupils during lessons:

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

- Take pride in their work
- Set high expectations of themselves and those around them
- Reflect on ways to make improvements by using the Secrets to Success
- Ask questions to develop further knowledge and learning
- Are resilient
- Dedicate time to being the best they can be



Pupils will display these attributes 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

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 parents evenings
- 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

Linked documents:

Successful Lessons Framework

Lesson planning form

Lesson observation form

Lesson observation criteria

Feedback review self-reflection forms

Feedback reviews- published twice per academic year

Monitoring and Evaluation

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