



St Patrick's RC High School

Teaching and Learning Policy

November 2024

Introduction

This Teaching and Learning Policy outlines our commitment to providing high-quality education for all students at St Patrick's RC High School. In alignment with the National Curriculum and the expectations set forth by Ofsted, this policy aims to ensure that all teaching practices are effective, inclusive, and focused on promoting student engagement and achievement.

Our guiding principles

At St Patrick's, we believe that effective teaching and learning is the cornerstone of student success. Our vision is to create a stimulating learning environment where students are inspired to achieve their potential. By promoting high standards of teaching, we aim to foster a lifelong love of learning and prepare our students for their future challenges. We are guided in our work by our strong Catholic ethos, based on the Gospel Values, which drives us to be the very best we can be, using our God-given talents and gifts. It is our mission at St Patrick's to ensure that children experience a truly great Catholic education that enables them to flourish academically and shine personally, preparing them for a happy and successful adult life.

Aims

- To ensure that all students receive high-quality teaching tailored to their individual needs.
- To promote a culture of high expectations, where students understand their role in their own learning.
- To provide a stimulating and safe learning environment that encourages risk-taking and creativity.
- To develop students' critical thinking and problem-solving skills through engaging and purposeful activities.
- To assess and monitor student attainment and progress effectively, using this data to inform teaching strategies.

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Objectives

1. **Curriculum Design:** The curriculum will be designed in-line with the National Curriculum and the Religious Education Directory, ensuring that it is broad, balanced, ambitious and appropriate for all learners. We aim to prepare pupils for life and work in modern Britain.
2. **Quality First Teaching:** All staff will provide quality first teaching that meets the diverse needs of students, employing adaptive teaching strategies and inclusive practices as well as stretching and challenging the most able pupils.
3. **Assessment for Learning:** Continuous formative assessment strategies will be employed to inform teaching, identify areas for improvement, and provide constructive feedback.
4. **Student Engagement:** Lessons will be designed to engage students through creative and interactive methodologies, encouraging a variety of learning styles and promoting collaboration.
5. **Professional Development:** Ongoing professional development will be provided for all staff to ensure excellent teaching practices are shared and implemented across the school.
6. **Parental Engagement:** We will maintain strong communication with parents and carers, providing them with opportunities to engage with their child's learning and progress.

Teaching Strategies: St Patrick's Essentials

In the classroom, the following are considered staples at St Patrick's and are woven consistently throughout all lessons across the school in the implementation stage of the curriculum:

- **Retrieval Tasks:** Regular retrieval tasks will be incorporated to enhance memory and understanding.
- **Effective Questioning:** Teachers will employ effective questioning techniques to stimulate discussion and deepen understanding.
- **Adaptive Teaching Practices:** Instruction will be adapted based on student responses and engagement, ensuring all learners are supported.
- **Effective Teacher Positioning:** Teachers will position themselves effectively in the classroom to support engagement and facilitate learning.
- **Formative Feedback:** Ongoing formative assessment and live marking approaches will be employed to give immediate feedback to students.
- **A Range of Pupil Activities:** Lessons will include a variety of activities and resources to keep students engaged and cater to different learning preferences.
- **Oracy Tasks:** Oracy tasks will be integral to developing students' verbal responses and preparing students for extended writing tasks.
- **Collaborative Learning:** Opportunities for collaborative learning and group work will be maximised to develop social and communication skills.

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- **Reciprocal Reading:** An instructional approach that promotes comprehension through active reading. The four key aspects involved are:
 - ✓ **Predicting:** Students make predictions about the text content based on titles, headings, and illustrations.
 - ✓ **Questioning:** Students formulate questions about the text before, during, and after reading to enhance understanding.
 - ✓ **Clarifying:** Students identify words or phrases they do not understand and seek clarification.
 - ✓ **Summarising:** Students summarise key ideas and concepts from the text to reinforce understanding.

It aims to:

- Establish a clear and systematic approach to the teaching of Reciprocal Reading and disciplinary reading strategies across all subject areas.
- Develop students' ability to use reading as a tool for learning and understanding disciplinary concepts.
- Promote independent reading habits among students, encouraging them to critically engage with texts.
- Provide ongoing professional development and support for staff in the effective delivery of reading strategies.

Formative Assessment

Formative assessment plays a critical role in our teaching and learning framework at St Patrick's. We are actively participating in the SSAT's EFA (Embedding Formative Assessment) programme, which equips our teachers with effective strategies to assess student learning during instruction. This approach prioritises feedback that helps students understand their learning processes and enhances their educational achievements.

We work against the five Formative Assessment strands from educational researcher, Dylan Wiliam:

1. Clarifying, Understanding, and Sharing Learning Intentions:

Teachers articulate clear learning objectives at the start of lessons, using language that students can comprehend. This includes demonstrating what success looks like and discussing how students can achieve these goals.

2. Engineering Effective Classroom Discussions

Engaging students in dialogue through strategies like Socratic questioning and structured debates encourages deeper understanding and critical thinking. Tasks should be designed to elicit student ideas and gauge their understanding.

3. Providing Feedback that Moves Learners Forward

Constructive feedback should be specific and actionable, aimed at guiding students on their learning journey. Regular check-ins and opportunities for dialogue regarding feedback can further enhance its impact.

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4. Activating Students as Learning Resources for One Another

Peer assessment and collaborative learning activities foster an environment where students can learn from one another, enhancing communication and critical evaluation skills. This approach develops a sense of community in the classroom.

5. Activating Students as Owners of Their Own Learning

By incorporating goal-setting and self-assessment strategies, teachers encourage students to take responsibility for their learning paths. This empowers them to reflect on their progress and make informed decisions about their educational journey.

Adaptive and Responsive Teaching

- Teaching and learning at our school will take the diverse backgrounds, needs and abilities of all pupils into account. Teachers and Teaching Assistants adapt to cater for the needs of all of our pupils, including:
 - Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND)
 - Pupils with English as an additional language (EAL)
 - Disadvantaged pupils
 - The most able

We will do this by:

- First and foremost, ensuring we know our pupils – their needs, their barriers to learning and what helps them learn best/what removes these barriers for them.
- Monitoring teaching and learning to ensure all pupils receive Quality First Teaching from all teachers across all subjects. This will include the use of resources and strategies such as the provision of writing frames, word banks and other scaffolds, as well as materials designed to stretch and challenge.
- Deploying support staff effectively to provide extra support for identified students, both in class and through additional interventions as appropriate.
- Working with our SEND Co-ordinator (SENDCO), our pupils with SEND and their parents/carers to establish the appropriate level and means of support to ensure these pupils make at least expected progress.
- Using ability groupings for certain subjects as appropriate.
- Using formative and summative assessment methods effectively, responding to what this data tells us about students' learning and progress.

Homework

Homework will support pupils to embed what they learn in class, practice applying their learning and make links between what they have learnt in school and the wider world. It's most effective when done in a supportive, secure environment, with focused time set aside.

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All homework will be made available on Class Charts and/or the Google Classroom and/or specific online platforms offered by different departments across the school such as Seneca, Maths Watch and Vocab Express.

Homework will be reasonable in challenge and length, and its purpose will be clearly outlined alongside each task.

Marking, feedback and progress

Feedback will clearly explain to pupils what they're doing well and what they need to do next to continue to improve their work. As well as formative feedback, pupils are assessed on that they have learned at the mid-year point and end of year.

Assessment, recording and reporting

Aspiration is at the core of the learning experience of every child at St. Patrick's. Pupil progress will be tracked based on their starting points, which are measured from their KS2 SATs outcomes. We understand that progress is not linear. Teachers will have a full understanding of this data, but will not limit pupils by it. At KS4, GCSE target grades will be shared with pupils and parents so that they are empowered to make the best choices for their future. These target grades will be based on a combination of their KS2 starting points, KS3 assessment and professional judgement.

Pupil progress will be tracked using a combination of formative and summative assessment.

- **Formal Assessment Schedule:** All pupils in Years 7-10 will undergo formal assessments twice a year. These assessments will be designed to measure pupils' knowledge and skills in each of their subjects.
- **KS3 rank ordering:** We will generate a rank order of pupils based on their KS3 assessments which will identify whether a pupil is on track based on their starting points. Starting points are measured from KS2 SATs scores.
- **Year 11 PPEs/Mock Results:** For Year 11 pupils, the results of Pre-Public Exams (PPEs) or mock exams will replace the two formal data-drops used for pupils in Years 7-10. These results will serve as the primary indicators of progress for Year 11 students.
- **Teacher Judgement on Attitudes and Effort:** In addition to academic progress, comments and scores related to how the pupil's behaviour supports their learning, their homework completion and effort will be recorded. These elements are integral to our assessment process and will be used to acknowledge and value teacher judgement. This allows us to consider a holistic view of the pupil's development and approach to learning.
- **Use of Data for Planning:** The data collected through both formal and formative assessments will inform lesson planning, enabling teachers to provide targeted opportunities for pupils to make progress. The aim is to tailor teaching to the needs of each pupil, ensuring that they continue to develop their knowledge, skills, and understanding across all subjects.

- **Reporting home to parents:** Parents will receive two written reports per academic year. The first will be at a mid-point in the year and include the information outlined above and the second, towards the end of the year which will include a form tutor comment; outlining how well the pupil embodies the St Patrick's Values and their holistic development.

Monitoring and Review

- **Quality Assurance:** Annual lesson observations, regular learning walks and book looks are conducted by both Heads of Department and the Senior Leadership Team to ensure the consistently strong application of this policy and to celebrate effective practices.
- **Feedback Mechanisms:** Staff and students will be encouraged to provide feedback on teaching and learning practices. This feedback will inform future improvements.
- **Policy Review:** This policy will be reviewed annually by Senior Leaders, the Headteacher and Governors to ensure it reflects current best practices and the evolving needs of our school community.

Professional Development

- Continuous professional development for staff will be facilitated at a whole school level (e.g. SSAT EFA Programme) and departmental level (e.g. Examination Board Training), with self-led CPD encouraged too, focusing on innovative teaching practices and new pedagogical research.
- Regular sharing of best practices among staff will be facilitated through peer observations and departmental meetings.

Roles and responsibilities

Teaching and learning at St Patrick's is a shared responsibility, and everyone in our school community has an important role to play.

This is how we will create the above conditions for pupils' learning at all times:

Teachers will:

- Follow the expectations for teaching and professional conduct as set out in the Teachers' Standards
- Actively engage parents/carers in their child's learning through the use of: termly newsletters; social media posts showcasing pupil work; our school website; letters to parents; open mornings, as well as home learning
- Update parents/carers on pupils' progress
- Meet the expectations set out in this policy, our behavior policy and our SEND policy

Teaching Assistants will:

- Know pupils well and adapt support to meet their individual learning needs

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- Support teaching and learning with flexibility and resourcefulness
- Use agreed assessment for learning strategies
- Use effective marking and feedback as required, especially those strategies outlined in the SSAT EFA programme
- Engage in providing inspiring lessons and learning opportunities
- Feedback observations of pupils to teachers
- Ask questions to make sure they've understood expectations for learning
- Identify and use resources to support learning
- Have high expectations and celebrate achievement
- Demonstrate and model themselves as learners
- Meet the expectations set out in this policy, our behavior policy and our SEND policy

Heads of department at our school will:

- Help to create well-sequenced, broad and balanced curriculum plans that build knowledge and skills at the intent stage.
- Sequence lessons in a way that allows pupils to make good progress from their starting points
- Use their budget effectively to resource their subject, providing teachers with necessary resources for learning
- Drive improvement in their subject, working with teachers to identify any challenges
- Timetable their subject to allocate time for pupils to:
 - Achieve breadth and depth
 - Fully understand the topic
 - Demonstrate excellence
- Moderate progress across their subject by, for example, systematically reviewing progress against a range of evidence and reviewing qualitative and quantitative performance data
- Improve on weaknesses identified in their monitoring activities
- Create and share clear intentions for their subject
- Encourage teachers to share ideas, resources and good practice
- Meet the expectations set out in this policy, our behavior policy and our SEND policy

Senior leaders will:

- Have a clear and ambitious vision for providing high-quality, inclusive education to all
- Celebrate achievement and have high expectations for everyone
- Hold staff and pupils to account for their teaching and learning
- Plan and evaluate strategies to secure high-quality teaching and learning across the school
- Manage resources to support high-quality teaching and learning
- Provide support and guidance to other staff through coaching and mentoring

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- Input and monitor the impact of continuing professional development (CPD) opportunities to improve staff's practice and subject knowledge
- Promote team working at all levels, for example by buddying teachers up to support one another where appropriate
- Address underachievement and intervene promptly
- Meet the expectations set out in this policy, our behavior policy and our SEND policy

Pupils will:

- Take responsibility for their own learning, and support the learning of others
- Meet expectations for good behaviour for learning at all times, respecting the rights of others to learn
- Attend all lessons on time and be ready to learn, with any necessary equipment for the lesson
- Be curious, ambitious, engaged and confident learners
- Know their targets and how to improve
- Put maximum effort and focus into their work
- Complete home learning activities as required
- Meet the expectations set out in the home-school agreement and the behaviour policy

Parents and carers will:

- Value learning
- Encourage their child as a learner
- Make sure their child is ready and able to learn every day
- Support good attendance
- Participate in discussions about their child's progress and attainment
- Communicate with the school to share information promptly
- Provide resources as required to support learning
- Encourage their child to take responsibility for their own learning
- Support and give importance to home learning
- Support the expectations set out in the home-school agreement and the behaviour policy

Governors will:

- Monitor that resources and funding are allocated effectively to support the school's approach to teaching and learning
- Monitor the impact of teaching and learning strategies on pupils' progress and attainment
- Monitor the effectiveness of this policy and hold the Headteacher to account for its implementation

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This Teaching and Learning Policy establishes our commitment to fostering an exceptional Catholic education at St Patrick's for all students. The engagement, progress, and well-being of our learners are at the heart of our teaching practice. It ensures that they are well-prepared for the next stage of their educational journey and are equipped to venture confidently out into God's world to be of service to others.
