

# St Joseph's RC High School Curriculum, Teaching, and Learning Policy 2025-26

This document should be read alongside our [St Joseph's RC High School Curriculum Summary](#).

## PRINCIPLES

St. Joseph's RC High School is committed to the provision of a Catholic education for all its students in accordance with the principles and teachings of the Catholic faith.

Through our mission statement, summarised by 'Serving God Through Learning Together', we endeavour to keep faith as the foundation of curriculum so that Gospel values and Catholic Virtues permeate and affect all aspects of our curriculum and school life.

*'The parish community is a place for religious and spiritual education. School is a place for cultural education. The two dimensions must be integrated, because the same values inspire them: they are the values of Christian families who, in a society dominated by relativism and threatened by existential emptiness, intend to offer their children an education based on the unchangeable values of the Gospel.'*

(Pope John Paul II, *Address to Teachers and Students of the Catholic Villa Flaminia Institute*, Rome, 23 February 1997)

Religious Education is "the core of the core curriculum" in a Catholic school. (Pope St John Paul II)

As a Catholic school, we:

- recognise the privilege of promoting the whole person
- place social justice at the heart of our mission
- promote the idea that 'life in all its fullness means being exacting, rigorous, ambitious and having an appetite for all excellence demands.' (Rt Revd Stephen Conway)
- provides a religious education which studies 'the relationship between faith and life' (Mgr Marcus Stock).

We embrace Welsh Government's vision of a new curriculum for Wales which supports us in our mission to nurture the whole child to prepare them to serve their communities in an uncertain world.

- *'The children and young people of today are entering a fast-changing world that is increasingly competitive, globally connected and technologically advanced. Schools are having to prepare our young people for jobs that have not yet been created and challenges that we are yet to*

*encounter. This will require a renewed commitment to improving both the skills and knowledge of our young people, as we raise standards in our transformational curriculum. Education has never been more important. Education reform is our national mission.'*

*(Education in Wales: Our national mission)*

- We are committed to continuing to work alongside our pupils, our parents/carers, our staff, and our governors to ensure that all are actively involved in the construction of a curriculum in which all can flourish. We will continue to provide opportunities for all in our Catholic community to work alongside the staff at St Joseph's to help to design our curriculum and approaches to teaching and learning.

### **Our vision for *Virtue* driven curriculum, teaching and learning**

'The core purpose of St Joseph's RC High School is ***Serving God Through Learning Together***. This philosophy is at the heart of everything we do for each member of our community.'

The ***Why***, which drives our vision, is that we create pupils who are:

- **faith-filled** for themselves, others, and in God
- **hopeful** for their futures and the future of society
- **loving** of each other and their environments.

Our curriculum vision is the ***What*** and the ***Where***:

- **powerful knowledge** through inspiring provision
- **challenge thinking** through progression of knowledge and skills
- **authentic experiences** which reflect our SJHS and Wales context.

Our teaching vision is the ***How***:

- **high expectations** for all
- **innovative** and creative
- **responsive** to the needs of pupils.

These are our guiding principles, our ***Why***, which articulate our Mission as a Catholic school and our curriculum promise. We believe that, when fully aligned and integrated, our staff and pupils will provide and experience a *Virtue* driven, authentic and responsive curriculum, guided by the Four Purposes, and founded on the unchangeable values of the Gospel.

In order to fulfil our curriculum promise, our What has been designed in consultation with our school community to reflect the ideas/concepts/topics/themes we believe are most important for our pupils to learn. To deliver on this, our How is founded on pedagogical research and professional learning for all staff, so that they are confident in adapting to the needs of pupils in their care.

## **Religious Education**

As a Catholic school, religious education is the core of our school curriculum and provides opportunities for pupils to reflect on their relationship with God and to learn Catechism and the lives of the saints, reflecting on world religions, and how their lives can be enriched by keeping Gospel values at the centre of all they undertake.

Religious Education is concerned not only with intellectual knowledge, but also includes emotional and affective learning. It is in the mystery of the Word made flesh, that the mystery of what it is to be human truly becomes so clear.

Our Catholic school with Religious Education at our core exists in order to support parents and carers, along with our priests and teachers, to hand on the 'Deposit of Faith' in its fullness to a new generation of young people, so that they may come to understand the richness of the Catholic faith, and thereby be drawn into a deeper communion with Christ in his Church.

## **ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

### **Governing Body**

The governing body are responsible for ensuring that:

- the school's curriculum fulfils the Learning Measure
- the curriculum, teaching, and learning plan is agreed by governors at least annually or at any time where significant changes are made.
- the school's curriculum, teaching and learning plan is fully in line with the Curriculum for Wales and the Bishops of England and Wales Religious Education Directory, fulfilling the statutory/mandatory elements.

### **Headteacher**

**Deputy Headteacher, oversees curriculum, teaching, and learning**

**Assistant Headteacher with responsibility for curriculum**

**Assistant Headteacher with responsibility for teaching and learning**

**Head of Department**

**Class teacher**

## **LEGISLATION AND GUIDANCE**

This policy reflects the requirements of the Welsh Government's Curriculum for Wales, Professional Standards for Teaching and Leadership (2018) and the Conference of Bishops of England and Wales:

[Curriculum for Wales](#)

[Catholic Education Service](#)

[Bishops Conference of England and Wales](#)

[Professional Standards for Teaching and Leadership](#)

[SJHS Sex and Relationships Policy](#)

[Statements of What Matters Code](#)

[Progression Code](#)

[Reading and numeracy assessments](#)

[The Religious Education Directory of Catholic Schools, Academies and Colleges in England and Wales](#)

## **Organisation and Planning of the curriculum**

This policy reflects the requirements of the [Curriculum for Wales](#) which all maintained schools in Wales must follow. As a Catholic school in Wales, we are directed by the Bishops' Conference of England and Wales to provide a Religious Education which allows our pupils to flourish in their faith and in the Virtues. This is reflected in the requirements of the [Religious Education Directory](#).

Students are grouped in ways we feel are most appropriate to their age and ability. Where students are organised in sets there is appropriate flexibility for student progression with regards to setting and examination tiers at all stages. Effective provision for students with additional language or learning needs is made whenever possible by targeted classroom learning support and withdrawal sessions. The school operates on fifty, one-hour, periods per fortnight.

## **Years 7, 8, and 9**

Effective transition arrangements between primary and secondary school allow for an appropriate level of knowledge of the curriculum in readiness for Year 7. All pupils in the first three years study, religious

education, English, mathematics, science, computer science, art, music, drama, physical education, Welsh, personal and social education, either French or Spanish, and technology (including CAD/CAM, food, RM, electronics, systems control, textiles, product design). In Years 7, 8 and 9, the majority of students are taught in mixed ability form classes. The exceptions are:

- in mathematics, pupils are set by ability after the first half term of Year 7
- in English, pupils are set by ability in years 8 and 9
- in religious education and in science, pupils are set by ability in year 9.

### **Years 10 and 11**

All pupils study the curriculum that meets [The Learning and Skills Measure \(2009\)](#). Within the compulsory core curriculum all pupils study in sets: English Language, English Literature, mathematics, numeracy, science (triple science / double science) and religious education. All pupils study: Games, Welsh and Skills Challenge Certificate. In addition, pupils choose option subjects from a range of GCSE and vocational courses. Option subjects are taught in mixed ability groups.

### **YEARS 12, 13**

All students have the choice of studying a local curriculum that significantly exceeds the 14-19 Learning Pathways. The curriculum is offered in collaboration, as part of the Newport West Post-16 Partnership. The partnership includes: Bassaleg School, The John Frost School and Newport High School. The Welsh Baccalaureate qualification is undertaken by all students. All students follow the year 12 and 13 general religious education course.

### **Collaborative design within school**

Our departments are grouped in Areas of Learning and Experience (AOLEs). This is to enable connected subjects to work collaboratively along similar lines of interest, but we have kept the discrete nature of subjects to allow for autonomy in creating curriculum content. Our AOLEs have been established to reflect those identified in the Curriculum for Wales, namely Languages, Literacy, and Communication; Mathematics and Numeracy; Science and Technology; Humanities; Expressive Arts; and Health and Wellbeing.

Each of our AOLEs has designed curriculum content which is based on the [Statements of What Matters Code](#), enabling them to provide opportunities for all of our pupils to experience authentic and purposeful learning. The curriculum content in AOLEs and individual subjects, has been designed with the intention to fulfil the Four Purposes of the Curriculum for Wales and our Catholic Virtues, to provide pupils with opportunities which develop their learning in line with the [Progression Code](#). AOLEs have collaborated to discuss which 'big ideas' and 'essential questions' pupils will need to engage with and

use this to draw an AOLE learning intention to emphasise the connections in learning. Departments have used the Descriptions of Learning as the starting point to establish what we want pupils to know and be able to do, as they progress through the 3 to 16 learning continuum.

As part of the design process, we have strategically planned opportunities for pupils to work with teachers in creating and reviewing curriculum content and approaches. Parents, carers, and governors have all contributed at various stages to the creation of our curriculum, and we continue this dialogue as part of our iterative process of curriculum design. Along with reporting back to teachers on the content of their new curriculum plans, the pupil Ministry of Curriculum, Teaching, and Learning, have discussed and influenced the creation of this policy.

### **Collaboration across schools**

For the move between primary and secondary sectors, colleagues have collaborated in AOLEs across our cluster, to enable seamless transition between primary and secondary education, whilst maintaining ever increasing levels of sophistication and challenge in learning. Collaboration with other schools in Newport occurs through the Curriculum Deputies Network meetings, Peer Partnership, and through programmes, meetings, and research with other providers in the area via the EAS.

### **Assessment**

Continuous formative assessment lies at the centre of the curriculum and ensures that teachers will use a range of methods to assess how well pupils have understood their learning which will inform next steps in teaching and learning and also allow staff, pupils and parents/carers to monitor how well pupils are progressing in their learning.

In line with the [Assessment Arrangements for Reading and Numeracy \(Wales 2013\)](#), we conduct the National Reading and Numeracy tests on at least one occasion per year in Years 7–9. On new entry to the school, pupils are also required to undertake baseline testing (CATs in Year 7) and we use this information to inform planning for curriculum delivery, progression mapping, and teaching.

### **Teaching and Learning**

Combined with our monitoring and evaluation, our How is developed in line with the [12 Pedagogical Principles](#) of the new curriculum. This policy demonstrates how, as part of our curriculum design process, the most appropriate pedagogical approaches have been considered, so that we are able to ensure there are high expectations for all pupils, that delivery is innovative, and that it responds to the needs of the pupils in each class. We embrace the intrinsic connection between Curriculum, and Teaching and Learning, which is informed by our programme of Professional Learning, and only when our What and How are aligned in this way, will we fulfil the Why of our promise for our pupils.

In light of these pedagogical principles, and using Tom Sherrington's [summary](#) of Barak Rosenshine's Principles for Instruction as our guide, all teachers at St Joseph's RC High School will:

- utilise a variety of teaching styles and appropriate tasks to engage, motivate and challenge students of all abilities, facilitating progress at every opportunity
- use a variety of methods to assess pupil progress and provide students the chance to regularly assess their own learning
- follow our established set of routines, which include, but are not limited to, meet and greet at the door; do nows for start of lessons; use of high frequency questioning; establish high levels of pupil participation; create opportunities to develop independent practice following purposeful modelling
- build on prior learning to consolidate understanding and develop new learning.

This will enable all pupils to:

- link new learning to existing knowledge, making learning stick and developing schema
- experience activities which will promote independent study, enquiry and research skills
- understand the relevance of their learning and apply it to other areas of their lives
- be encouraged to progress to higher levels of knowledge, skills and understanding.

### **Professional Learning**

Improving teaching and learning is a standard item on the SDP, as we recognise that we can all improve our practice. To facilitate this, we operate a full programme of [Professional Learning](#) which is aligned to our Professional Development Review framework and reflects the [2018 professional standards for teaching and leadership](#).

Alongside the PL hour, all teaching staff will have a full complement of INSET days and 10 Twilight sessions, which will cover whole school development priorities and provide opportunities to reflect on our experimentation with different pedagogical approaches. Individual research and practice is supported through a half-termly Teaching and Learning newsletter, and 15-minute Tweak It sessions from the Spring term. These are based on what is highlighted during self-evaluation processes and depend on relevance to DDPs and the SDP. An A5 booklet of [SJHS Teaching Strategies](#) is issued to all teaching staff, which exemplifies some of the approaches to be adopted in lessons. Coaching is mandatory for any NQTs but is encouraged for staff who may be identified following evaluative or quality assurance processes, or those who are new to a role, e.g. a TLR holder. A full list of scheduled sessions can be found in our [MRE policy](#).

### **Cross-curricular skills and cross-cutting themes**

To ensure that our pupils grow in their ability to achieve the 4 Purposes of the Curriculum for Wales, we recognise the importance of providing an education which enables them to develop their progress in [Cross-curricular skills](#), Integral skills, and the [Cross-cutting themes](#). Our understanding of progress in both literacy and numeracy is founded on our evaluation of performance in the NRNTs, and these results are used strategically to inform planning and teaching. Through Professional Learning

opportunities, all subjects are involved in teaching and promoting understanding of literacy, numeracy and digital competence, and through curriculum design we highlight where and how these skills are addressed and developed. Our initial focus with the Cross-cutting themes is our celebration of Diversity, and through including all members of our school community, we have established department pledges, which are monitored during curriculum conversations. Our aim is to build on how we address the Cross-cutting themes on an annual basis, however, as a Catholic school, we are exempt from delivering RVE (Religion, Values, Ethics). We ensure through an AOLE audit of provision, that all pupils are exposed to the Integral skills across the continuum of learning, and that staff are explicit when teaching pupils these skills which will enable them to progress in the 4 Purposes. Provision for skills is monitored through curriculum conversations, AOLE/Department documentation, Book Looks, and Learning Walks.

## **Inclusion**

Part of our What and How is having high expectations and challenge for all, but we are mindful of certain groups. Responsive teaching with high expectations is key to ensuring each individual pupil in the class is included and thrives. Individual teachers are responsive to needs, including those who are more able, deprived, vulnerable or ALN. Teachers are empowered to adapt the curriculum and its delivery to suit the individual needs of all pupils. This is achieved through the school's universal, targeted and specific support provision platform, especially through the guidance provided by the Inclusion department, and allows learners to develop at their own pace with clear progress targets and methods of assessment designed to recognise a wide range of achievement. Learning materials are scaffolded to ensure all pupils can access the set outcome, and we implement reasonable adjustments for those pupils who are identified as being in need of this support, such as enlarged papers, extra time for the completion of classed based learning activities, home based learning activities, test and examinations, resources provided electronically or in paper format, access to technology for the recording of work, and in some specific cases the reading of written materials.

## **Evaluating the curriculum, teaching, and learning**

As we continue to design our curriculum, we will ensure that careful evaluation of the curriculum and its delivery will be undertaken. This monitoring will occur at a whole school, departmental, and class-based level, all focused around SDP priorities, ensuring that all stakeholders have a 360 degree understanding of whether our What and our How are impacting on pupil progress and how this can be further improved.



We have a strategic approach to evaluating the quality of our curriculum, teaching, and learning which aligns with our SDP through our [MRE cycle](#). However, a summary of our evaluation processes is as follows:

- whole school monitoring includes learning walks and talks; book looks; listening to learners; listening to parents; listening to governors
- curriculum, teaching, and learning conversations take place termly where Heads of Department meet with SLT curriculum, teaching, and learning leads to evaluate their progress in line with the school development plan
- Heads of Department undertake scheduled and regular monitoring activities to evaluate the effectiveness of the curriculum, teaching, and learning, and share these with their SLT link Line Manager
- school leaders with responsibility for self evaluation, teaching and learning, curriculum and skills meet at least half-termly to share and triangulate findings regarding the quality of curriculum, teaching, and learning
- where the monitoring activities identify strengths and areas for improvement, heads of departments, guided by senior leaders, make appropriate changes to ensure that all pupils progress at an appropriate rate.
- the Ministries linked to curriculum, teaching, and learning are consulted on a scheduled basis and are able to provide strengths and areas for improvement
- surveys are used to elicit feedback from pupils, parents/carers, staff, and governors to identify strengths and areas for improvement and this information is used as part of the strategy to make improvements to curriculum, teaching, and learning
- implementation of Newport wide approach to Peer Partnership to collaborate with other schools and amongst our own staff.

#### **Links with other policies**

- More Able and Talented Policy
- Inclusion Policy
- Strategic Equalities and Accessibility Policy
- Sex and Relationships Education Policy
- Food Nutrition and Healthy Lifestyle Policy
- Education for Sustainable Development and Global Citizenship Policy

At St Joseph's, we accept that if we are going to design and maintain a curriculum which fulfils the needs of all our pupils, we have to see, as Claire Hill states, that 'curriculum development is an ongoing process; it's not going to be finished – ever.' While this may seem a daunting task, we will never stop in our mission, 'Serving God through Learning Together', providing an education for our pupils which is driven by our Catholic Virtues and instils in the young people we serve a sincere faith and trust in God's love and His eternal beneficence.

*'My child, don't forget what I teach you. Always remember what I tell*

*you to do. My teaching will give you a long and prosperous life.*

*Never let go of loyalty and faithfulness. Tie them around your neck;*

*write them on your heart. If you do this, both God and people will be*

*pleased with you. Trust in the Lord with all your heart.*

*Never rely on what you think you know. Remember the Lord in everything*

*you do, and he will show you the right way.'*

(Proverbs 3:1-6)