

Teaching and Learning

2026–27



FINAL DRAFT – October 2026

Our Mission

**‘At SS John and Monica’s we learn through the example of Jesus to love,
respect, understand and value each other’**

Contents

Main policy sections

Section	Page	Section	Page
1. Purpose and Scope	5	11. Developing Independence and Metacognition	17
2. Principles of Teaching and Learning	5	12. Learning Focus and Clarity of Learning	18
3. Skills for Life	6	13. Practice, Retrieval and Secure Learning	20
4. Relationships and the Learning Environment	7	14. Organisation of Teaching and Learning	22
5. Teaching and Learning in EYFS	8	15. Assessment, Feedback and Responsive Teaching	23
6. Planning for Learning	10	16. Curriculum Enrichment and Wider Learning	24
7. Teaching: Explicit Instruction, Explanation and Modelling	11	17. Homework and Learning Beyond School	25
8. Oracy: Listening, Speaking and Learning Through Talk	13	18. Roles and Responsibilities	26
9. Checking for Understanding	13	19. Monitoring, Evaluation and Professional Development	28
10. Adaptive Teaching and Inclusion	15	20. Implementation, Professional Development and Review	29



Our Approach to Teaching and Learning

ONE PAGE SUMMARY



To learn through the example of Jesus to love, respect, understand and value each other

RELATIONSHIPS

Positive relationships provide the foundation for learning.

Pupils learn best when they feel safe, valued, known and appropriately challenged. Adults build positive relationships while maintaining high expectations for learning, behaviour and independence.



PLAN

Know what we want pupils to learn.



Planning is a process, not a product.
The purpose of planning is to enable high-quality teaching, not to produce paperwork.



Start from the curriculum and prior learning.



Identify the important knowledge, vocabulary and concepts.



Anticipate likely misconceptions and barriers.



Plan how all pupils, including SEND, will access ambitious learning.



Plan the purposeful use of additional adults.

TEACH

Teach new learning clearly and explicitly.



Teach in a logical sequence, explaining and modelling in manageable steps.



Make expert thinking visible through modelling and think-alouds.



Use examples, non-examples and appropriate representations.



Provide guided and independent practice.



Use rich language and explicitly teach subject vocabulary.

CHECK

Find out what pupils actually understand.



Use purposeful questioning, discussion and observation.



Look at pupils' work and listen to their thinking.



Use hinge/diagnostic questions where useful.



Check all pupils rather than relying on volunteers.



Use assessment to decide what happens next.

ADAPT

Respond to what the checks tell us.



Address misconceptions promptly.



Re-model, re-teach or provide further practice where needed.



Adapt explanation, resources, grouping, scaffolding or pace.



Provide further challenge through depth and application where learning is secure.



Keep the intended learning ambitious for all pupils.

INDEPENDENCE

Gradually enable pupils to do more for themselves.



Model → guide → practise → independent application.



Use scaffolds when they enable access to ambitious learning.



Reduce scaffolding as pupils become increasingly secure.



Teach pupils how to plan, monitor and evaluate their own learning.



The goal is successful, increasingly independent learners.

'Let your light shine' (Matthew 5:16)



High expectations for all



Inclusion and equality



A love of learning



Skills for life



Positive contribution to our community

Policy Information

Policy	Teaching and Learning Policy
Academic Year	2026-27
Status	Final Draft – Post Working-Party Review
Date	September 2026
Applies to	Teachers, support staff, subject leaders and senior leaders
Linked policies	Feedback and Response; Assessment; SEND; Curriculum and subject policies; Homework; Behaviour
Review	In accordance with the school policy cycle, or sooner if guidance or school practice changes

1. Purpose and Scope

SS John & Monica is a Catholic school enriched by a variety of cultural and faith backgrounds and founded on partnership with parents, parish and the wider community. Our teaching and learning is rooted in our mission and in the belief that every pupil should experience an ambitious, inclusive curriculum and high-quality teaching.

This policy establishes our shared whole-school principles for planning, teaching, checking understanding, adapting teaching and developing pupils' independence. It should be read alongside subject-specific curriculum documentation and the school's Feedback and Response, Assessment, SEND and Homework policies.

Our whole-school approach is: PLAN → TEACH → CHECK → ADAPT → INDEPENDENCE.

This policy should be read alongside the Feedback and Response Policy. Together, the two policies establish our whole-school approach to responsive teaching: teachers plan and teach an ambitious curriculum, deliberately check what pupils understand, respond and adapt appropriately, and ensure that pupils have opportunities to improve and become increasingly independent.

2. Principles of Teaching and Learning

Positive relationships provide the foundation for learning. Pupils learn best when they feel safe, valued, known and appropriately challenged. Warmth, consistency and high expectations should sit together.

Principle	What this means
Learning is the priority	Lessons are designed around what pupils should learn, not simply what they should do.
Prior knowledge matters	New learning is connected to what pupils already know and can do.

Principle	What this means
Teaching is explicit and carefully sequenced	Teachers explain and model in manageable steps and make expert thinking visible.
All pupils access ambitious learning	SEND, disadvantage or other barriers should lead to thoughtful adaptation, not unnecessary reduction of ambition.
Checking understanding is part of teaching	Teachers deliberately find out what pupils understand rather than relying on task completion or confident volunteers.
Teaching is responsive	Evidence from pupils informs prompts, practice, re-modelling, re-teaching, grouping, scaffolding, pace and challenge.
Practice makes learning secure	Important knowledge and skills are practised, retrieved and applied over time.
Language matters	Vocabulary, talk, questioning and explanation are deliberately developed across the curriculum.
Support develops independence	Scaffolds and adult support enable access and are reduced appropriately as pupils become more secure.
Pupils are active participants	Pupils think, explain, question, practise, reflect, improve and increasingly take responsibility for learning.
We distinguish between successful performance in a lesson and secure learning over time.	

Teachers should revisit important knowledge and provide opportunities for pupils to retrieve and apply previous learning. What pupils can remember, explain and use later matters.

3. Skills for Life

Essential Skills



Alongside strong academic knowledge, we want pupils to develop the skills and dispositions that help them learn, contribute and flourish. We use the Skills Builder framework to support the development of eight essential skills: Listening, Speaking, Problem Solving, Creativity, Adapting, Planning, Leadership and Teamwork.

- Listening
- Speaking
- Problem Solving
- Creativity
- Adapting
- Planning
- Leadership
- Teamwork

These skills should be developed through everyday curriculum learning rather than as a separate bolt-on. Adults should model and name the language of these skills where useful; pupils should increasingly recognise when and how they use them; and enrichment, projects, assemblies and wider opportunities may provide purposeful contexts for further development.

The development of essential skills should enhance curriculum learning rather than create additional activities without a clear learning purpose.

4. Relationships and the Learning Environment

Positive relationships are fundamental to effective teaching. Adults should create classrooms where pupils feel safe to contribute, make mistakes, think hard, ask for help and take increasing responsibility.

Pupils need to...	Adults support this by...
feel safe to contribute	responding positively to participation and treating mistakes as useful information.
think hard	allowing thinking time and avoiding rescuing pupils too quickly.
listen and communicate	modelling and reinforcing purposeful talk and listening.
become independent	making appropriate resources accessible and teaching pupils how to use them.
take pride in learning	maintaining age-appropriate expectations for organisation, presentation and care.
ask for help appropriately	making non-understanding safe while teaching strategies for productive help-seeking.
show respect	modelling respectful relationships and applying expectations consistently.

The physical learning environment

Classrooms should support learning and independence. This may include accessible resources, visual timetables, working walls or reference materials, subject vocabulary, books, adaptations and visual supports.

There is no expectation that every available wall space is filled or that displays are changed simply for appearance. The effectiveness of a learning environment is judged by how well it supports pupils' learning, inclusion and independence.

Mistakes and productive struggle

Teachers should create conditions in which pupils reveal what they do and do not understand. An incorrect response can be useful when it enables the teacher to identify a slip, gap or misconception and respond. We should avoid a culture that values speed, being right first time or apparent confidence over thinking, explaining and improving.

5. Teaching and Learning in EYFS

The principles within this policy apply equally within the Early Years Foundation Stage. Effective teaching remains a process of planning, teaching, checking understanding, adapting appropriately and developing increasing independence. The difference lies not in the principles, but in how those principles are implemented.

In Reception, learning is often delivered through a combination of adult-led teaching, high-quality interaction and carefully designed continuous provision. Adults continually observe, question, model, explain and respond to children's thinking in order to move learning forward.

PLAN → TEACH → CHECK → ADAPT → INDEPENDENCE in EYFS

The whole-school model remains the same.

PLAN

Adults identify the important knowledge, vocabulary, skills and experiences children need to develop. Planning should be rooted in the EYFS curriculum, children's starting points and what adults know about children's current understanding. Continuous provision should be purposeful and should provide meaningful opportunities for children to practise, apply and deepen learning.

TEACH

Teaching may include direct instruction, modelling, shared experiences, demonstrations, stories, discussion, structured activities and high-quality interactions during continuous provision. Adults should explicitly teach important vocabulary, concepts, routines and behaviours while creating opportunities for children to practise and apply learning in meaningful contexts.

CHECK

Adults continually gather information about what children know, understand and can do through:

- observation;
- discussion and careful questioning;
- child-initiated activity;
- adult-led learning;
- interactions during continuous provision;
- class books and learning journals; and
- professional knowledge of the child.

Checking understanding in EYFS often happens through conversation, interaction and observation rather than written recording. Adults should seek to understand children's thinking rather than relying only on whether an activity has been completed.

ADAPT

Adults should use what they discover about children's understanding to influence what happens next. This may involve:

- providing an additional explanation;
- modelling again;
- introducing or revisiting vocabulary;
- adjusting resources or provision;
- providing guided practice;
- revisiting learning;
- working with an individual or small group; or
- extending learning where understanding is already secure.

For example, if a child repeatedly builds an unstable tower, the adult would not simply correct the child or rebuild it for them. The adult would observe, question and explore the child's thinking before providing an appropriate prompt, model or explanation. The child then uses this support to improve and refine the way the blocks are stacked.

INDEPENDENCE

Independence remains an important outcome in EYFS. Adults should provide support that enables children to access learning while gradually encouraging children to:

- make choices;
- solve problems;
- select and use resources;
- persevere when learning is challenging;
- communicate their thinking; and
- increasingly do more for themselves.

As with older pupils, support should enable learning rather than create unnecessary dependence.

Evidence of Learning

Evidence of effective teaching and learning in EYFS may be seen through:

- children's responses and explanations;
- observations;
- adult interaction;
- learning journals and class books;
- subsequent application of learning;
- increasing confidence and independence; and
- what children can remember, explain and do over time.

The effectiveness of teaching should not be judged by the quantity of written evidence or photographs collected. Photographs may record that an experience took place, but they do not by themselves demonstrate what a child understood or learned. Professional dialogue, observation, interaction and children's responses will often provide the most valuable evidence.

Relationships, Play and Purposeful Learning

Play is an important vehicle for learning in EYFS. However, as throughout the school, the activity serves the learning and is not the learning itself. Adults should remain clear about the knowledge, vocabulary, skills and understanding they are seeking to develop. High-quality relationships, purposeful interactions, careful observation and responsive teaching remain central to ensuring children make strong progress.

Consistency of Principle

Teaching and learning in Reception may look different from teaching and learning in Year 6. Interactions are often shorter, learning may take place in small groups or through continuous provision, and adults may respond more immediately to emerging understanding. However, the underlying principle remains the same:

PLAN → TEACH → CHECK → ADAPT → INDEPENDENCE

Consistency of principle does not mean uniformity of practice. Children learn best when adults understand their thinking, respond appropriately and help them know more, remember more and do increasingly more for themselves.

6. Planning for Learning

Planning is a process, not a product.

The purpose of planning is to enable high-quality teaching and learning. Planning should support professional thinking and preparation rather than generate paperwork.

Start with the curriculum

Teachers should begin by considering what pupils are intended to know, understand or be able to do; what prior learning this builds upon; and how the learning fits within the curriculum sequence.

Planning consideration	Useful question
Intended learning	What should pupils know, understand or be able to do?
Prior learning	What do pupils need to remember or already understand?
Sequence	How does this connect to what came before and what comes next?
Vocabulary	Which words and language structures are important?
Explanation and modelling	What will require explicit explanation, demonstration or think-aloud?
Misconceptions	What are pupils likely to misunderstand?
Checking	How will I find out what pupils actually understand?
Practice	What practice will help learning become secure?
Access and adaptation	What barriers may prevent pupils accessing the intended learning?
Challenge	How might secure pupils deepen, connect or apply learning?
Additional adults	How can adult support have the greatest impact while promoting independence?

Planning expectations

Effective planning is not measured by the quantity of written planning produced.

There is no whole-school expectation to produce lengthy individual lesson plans, separate activities for predetermined ability groups, three versions of every task, extensive differentiation notes where adaptations are already understood, an extension activity every lesson, every planned question, a hinge question every lesson, or copied information already contained within an agreed scheme.

Where a high-quality scheme or published resource is used, teachers should use it intelligently rather than rewrite it. Teachers remain professionally responsible for understanding what is being taught, how it builds on previous learning, likely misconceptions and how they will check understanding.

The activity serves the learning

Planning should begin with 'What do I want pupils to learn?' rather than 'What do I want pupils to do?'. Making a Roman shield or creating a poster about evaporation may be engaging activities, but the teacher must remain clear about the curriculum learning the activity is intended to secure.

The activity serves the learning; the activity is not the learning.

Different starting points and challenge

Adaptive teaching should normally be preferred to routinely creating separate tasks or worksheets for fixed groups. Teachers should maintain ambitious goals, anticipate barriers and use appropriate scaffolds, representations, resources, explanations or additional teaching.

Adaptation should retain the intended curriculum ambition wherever appropriate, while recognising that some pupils may require teaching from an earlier stage.

Challenge is not simply more work. It may involve:

- depth,
- explanation,
- reasoning,
- connections,
- unfamiliar application,
- increased abstraction,
- comparison,
- evaluation,
- complexity
- or greater independence.

Planning is provisional

Planning is provisional.

Teachers should be prepared to pause, re-explain, model, address a misconception, provide guided practice, change a representation, revisit prior learning, move pupils to independent practice or deepen learning according to what checks reveal. We should not move on simply because the plan says so, nor keep pupils completing repetitive practice once learning is secure.

Know what pupils should learn. Know what they already know. Anticipate what might get in the way. Plan how to teach and check. Be prepared to adapt based on actual understanding.

7. Teaching: Explicit Instruction, Explanation and Modelling

High-quality teaching should be clear, accessible and appropriately challenging. There is no single prescribed lesson structure. New or complex learning will often benefit from clear explanation, modelling, guided practice and increasingly independent application.

Explicit teaching does not mean pupils are passive. Good explicit teaching enables pupils to think, participate, practise and increasingly do more for themselves.

Clear explanation

Teachers should connect explanations to prior knowledge, break complex ideas into manageable steps, highlight important features, explicitly teach vocabulary, use examples and non-examples, make appropriate use of representations or demonstrations and check understanding during explanation.

Modelling and think-alouds

Modelling should show both what to do and how an expert thinks. A teacher may model a completed example, a process, the beginning of a response, how to organise ideas, how to use vocabulary, how to check work or how to respond to an error.

For example, in English the teacher might compare 'The tower was tall' with 'The tower towered over the narrow street' and think aloud about precision and effect. In mathematics, the teacher might notice that 3,996 is close to 4,000 and model why adjusting can provide an efficient strategy.

The aim of modelling is not to create pupils who copy the teacher successfully. It is to equip pupils eventually to succeed without the model.

Guided and independent practice

Guided practice allows teachers to question, prompt, identify features, provide immediate feedback, correct slips, identify misconceptions and re-model where needed. Guidance should reduce as pupils become secure.

Independent practice provides opportunities for pupils to apply learning without unnecessary support. This does not mean pupils must spend most of every lesson working alone. The important question is whether pupils are increasingly able to use what has been taught for themselves.

Vocabulary and classroom talk

Important vocabulary should be taught explicitly and in meaningful context, modelled accurately, revisited and expected in pupils' talk and work where appropriate. Sentence stems may be used to help pupils rehearse subject-specific language, structure explanations and participate in discussion. They should be adapted and reduced as pupils become increasingly fluent and independent. Partner talk, rehearsal, reasoning, debate and discussion should be purposeful rather than included as routines for their own sake.

Participation is not the same as learning.

There is no expectation that every lesson contains a demonstration, a fixed 'I do - we do - you do' structure, partner talk, manipulatives, a worked example, a practical activity, a prescribed number of questions or a plenary.

Model enough to make the learning accessible. Guide enough to enable success. Then reduce support so that pupils increasingly think and act for themselves.

8. Oracy: Listening, Speaking and Learning Through Talk

Oracy is the purposeful development of pupils' listening and speaking so that they can think, learn, communicate and participate effectively. It is both a means of learning across the curriculum and an important outcome in its own right.

Teachers should create purposeful opportunities for pupils to listen attentively, rehearse ideas, explain thinking, ask and answer questions, build on the contributions of others, justify viewpoints and use subject-specific vocabulary.

Teaching Oracy Explicitly

Effective classroom talk should be taught, modelled and practised. Depending on age, subject and purpose, this may include modelling how to give a complete explanation, disagree respectfully, build on another pupil's contribution, summarise a discussion, ask a clarifying question or present ideas to an audience.

Sentence stems can provide temporary support for participation and academic language. For example: “I agree with ____ because...”, “The evidence suggests...”, “My method differs because...” or “I would like to build on that idea by...”. Stems should support thinking and communication, not turn discussion into recitation, and should be reduced as pupils become more confident and independent.

Purposeful Talk Across the Curriculum

Talk may be used to activate prior knowledge, rehearse vocabulary, reveal misconceptions, develop reasoning, compare approaches, prepare for writing, reflect on learning or deepen understanding. The structure should follow the learning purpose. Pupils may think independently before speaking, talk with a partner, contribute to a group or address the whole class.

Teachers should ensure that classroom talk is inclusive. This may involve additional thinking time, pre-teaching vocabulary, visual prompts, communication supports, carefully chosen groupings or alternative ways to contribute. Pupils with SEND or English as an additional language should be supported to participate meaningfully without unnecessary reduction of intellectual challenge.

Listening and Speaking Expectations

Adults should model attentive listening, clear expression and respectful exchange. Pupils should increasingly learn to listen for meaning, respond to what has been said, speak audibly and appropriately for the context, organise ideas and use relevant vocabulary.

Oracy should strengthen learning, inclusion and confidence. There is no expectation that every lesson contains partner talk, group discussion or a formal speaking task.

9. Checking for Understanding

Checking is an essential part of teaching. Teachers should not assume that because something has been taught, pupils have been engaged or work has been completed, learning has taken place.

The purpose of checking is not to prove that teaching has taken place. It is to find out whether learning has taken place.

In this policy, CHECK enables teachers to ADAPT. In the Feedback and Response Policy, CHECK enables teachers to RESPOND and pupils to IMPROVE. The overlap is intentional.

What the teacher finds	Likely response
Slip or isolated error	PROMPT - where the underlying knowledge is secure, a brief prompt or correction may be sufficient.
Misconception or gap	TEACH - where understanding is incorrect or incomplete, further explanation, modelling or teaching is required.
Accurate but underdeveloped understanding	DEEPEN - use questioning, explanation, connection or application to extend thinking.

Checking during learning

Teachers may use questioning, discussion, observation, pupil explanations, mini-whiteboards, retrieval, practical responses, work, diagnostic questions, examples and non-examples, self-assessment or hinge questions. No single strategy is required in every lesson.

Check the pupils you need to understand, not only the pupils who volunteer.

A question such as 'Does everyone understand?' provides little diagnostic information. A whole-class response to 'What is the value of the 4 in 347,562?' gives the teacher much more useful evidence.

Questioning reveals thinking

The same incorrect answer can arise for different reasons. If Daniel calculates $347 + 286 = 623$, questioning may reveal that he understands the method but wrote 2 instead of 3: a slip. If he says, ' $7 + 6 = 13$, so I put the 3 there but I don't know what happens to the ten,' the underlying place-value understanding requires teaching.

Hinge and diagnostic activities

A hinge question can be useful at an important point in learning when it quickly reveals whether pupils hold a key concept or misconception and the teacher can act on the response. There is no expectation for a hinge question in every lesson or for hinge questions to be separately recorded.

A hinge question is only useful if the response influences what happens next.

Checking over time

Teachers should also revisit important learning after time has passed. Successful performance immediately after teaching does not necessarily demonstrate secure learning.

Checking for pupils with SEND

Checks should be adapted where necessary so that recording or communication barriers are not confused with lack of understanding. Pupils may demonstrate learning by speaking, pointing, selecting, matching, manipulating, drawing, using communication supports or technology.

A heavily scaffolded correct response does not automatically demonstrate independent security. Information about the level of support should inform teacher judgement.

The evidence that checking has been effective is not that the teacher has recorded the check. It is that the information has influenced teaching and learning where necessary.

10. Adaptive Teaching and Inclusion

Adaptive teaching is central to our approach to inclusion at SS John & Monica. High-quality teaching, informed by Birmingham's Ordinarily Available Guidance (OAG) and the graduated approach to SEND, is the starting point for meeting the needs of pupils with SEND.

Adaptive teaching is not about creating a different lesson for every pupil. It is about maintaining ambitious learning while making thoughtful adjustments that enable pupils to access, understand and increasingly succeed independently.

Assess → Adjust → Check

Teachers should assess what the pupil currently knows or understands and identify the barrier; adjust teaching or support; and check whether the adjustment worked and what should happen next.

An adaptation is only useful if it helps the pupil learn.

High expectations

Having SEND should not automatically mean easier work, fewer opportunities to think, permanently simplified vocabulary, constant adult support, a separate worksheet or a reduced curriculum. Teachers should ask: 'What is the barrier preventing this pupil accessing the intended learning?' and 'What is the least intrusive adaptation that will enable successful participation and learning?'

Equity does not mean every pupil receiving exactly the same teaching or completing exactly the same task.

Possible barrier	Possible adaptation
Vocabulary is unfamiliar	Pre-teach or revisit vocabulary; use visuals; model language in context.
Too much information at once	Chunk information; reduce competing information; present one stage at a time.
Process is difficult to remember	Use a worked example, visual checklist or model; then reduce support.
Recording is the barrier	Reduce unnecessary transcription; scaffold or use an appropriate alternative recording method.
Concept is insecure	Re-model using a different representation; revisit prerequisite knowledge; provide guided practice.
Processing takes longer	Provide additional thinking and response time.
Pupil relies on adult reassurance	Redirect to a model, resource or strategy and deliberately reduce prompting.
Several pupils share the same gap	Use a temporary, flexible group for targeted teaching.
Learning is already secure	Remove unnecessary scaffold and deepen through reasoning, application or independence.

These are examples, not a menu or checklist. A diagnosis or area of need does not tell a teacher exactly how an individual pupil should be taught. Teachers should use pupil profiles, SEND Support Plans, EHCP provision where applicable, ongoing assessment and professional advice.

Birmingham's Ordinarily Available Guidance (OAG)

Our approach to adaptive teaching is informed by Birmingham's Ordinarily Available Guidance (OAG). The OAG sets out the inclusive support and provision that mainstream schools and settings across Birmingham are expected to provide as part of everyday practice for children and young people, including those with SEND.

Staff should use the as a whole-school resource, not only once a pupil has an EHCP or only through the SENDCo. [Birmingham Ordinarily Available Guidance \(OAG\)](#)

Teachers and support staff should use the OAG alongside knowledge of the pupil, ongoing assessment, the graduated approach, SEND Support Plans/EHCP provision where applicable and professional advice. Its 'What you might see' and 'What you can try' guidance can support staff in recognising barriers and identifying appropriate classroom strategies.

The starting point is not 'Does this pupil have an EHCP?' but 'What does this pupil need in order to access learning successfully?'

The OAG should support professional decision-making rather than become a checklist.

EEF Five-a-Day

Approach	Classroom application
Explicit instruction	Small steps, clear explanations, modelling, worked examples and guided practice before independence.
Cognitive and metacognitive strategies	Teach pupils strategies for remembering, organising, planning, monitoring and evaluating learning.
Scaffolding	Use temporary verbal, visual or written support targeted to need and reduce it as independence grows.
Flexible grouping	Use temporary groups based on current shared learning need rather than fixed ability.
Technology	Use digital or assistive tools purposefully to support access, practice, recording or independence.

These approaches are not a SEND checklist and there is no expectation to use all five in every lesson.

Scaffolding and independence

A scaffold is temporary support.

Scaffolds may include worked examples, sentence stems, vocabulary banks, visuals, manipulatives, writing frames, checklists, partial examples, chunking, prompts or technology. Teachers should regularly consider whether the pupil still needs the scaffold and what can be reduced next.

Daniel might initially use a worked example, place-value chart and adult prompt; later the chart with occasional prompting; then the chart independently; and eventually no scaffold. Success is not simply getting the answer correct - it is increasing understanding and independence.

Class teacher responsibility

The class teacher remains responsible for the learning and progress of every pupil in the class, including pupils with SEND.

Teachers should directly teach and interact with pupils with SEND, know what they understand, check their work and responses, deploy additional adults purposefully and receive useful feedback about learning.

Adapt the route, not the ambition unnecessarily.

11. Developing Independence and Metacognition

Our aim is not simply successful task completion with support. Over time, pupils should develop the knowledge, strategies and confidence to become increasingly independent learners.

Independence is taught, modelled, practised and gradually transferred to the pupil.

A useful progression is: Teacher models → pupils practise with guidance → prompts and scaffolds reduce → pupils practise independently → pupils apply learning in a new context. This is not a rigid sequence and pupils will require different levels of support.

We do not remove support before pupils are ready, but neither do we maintain support simply because it has become familiar.

Plan, monitor and evaluate

Metacognitive process	Questions pupils can increasingly ask
PLAN	What am I trying to achieve? What do I already know? Which strategy might help?
MONITOR	Is this working? Does this make sense? Do I need to change my approach?
EVALUATE	Did the strategy work? What helped? What would I do differently next time?

Teachers should model this thinking within subject learning. For example, in mathematics: 'That answer is much larger than I expected. I need to check the operation and estimate again.' In writing: 'I've used dark three times. I need a more precise word here.'

Knowing what to do when stuck

Independent learning does not mean never asking for help. Pupils should develop productive help-seeking. Depending on age and task, they might think, reread, retrieve prior learning, look at a model, use an appropriate resource, try a taught strategy and then ask a purposeful question.

If Daniel repeatedly asks 'Is this right?' after successfully completing similar examples, an adult might ask, 'How could you check that for yourself?' If Daniel genuinely lacks the underlying understanding, repeatedly telling him to 'try again' is not independence; he needs teaching.

SEND and independence

For pupils with SEND, independence may include using a visual timetable, communication aid, word bank, manipulatives or assistive technology independently. Using an appropriate resource independently is still independence.

Is the pupil increasingly able to use the knowledge, strategies and appropriate resources available to them without unnecessary adult dependence?

Reflection

Reflection may take the form of discussion, self-assessment, correcting or improving work, explaining a strategy, comparing approaches, responding to feedback, choosing a resource or applying learning later. There is no expectation for lengthy written reflections after lessons.

The purpose of reflection is to improve pupils' ability to regulate their learning, not to generate additional written evidence.

The ultimate purpose of scaffolding, modelling and adult support is not successful task completion. It is successful learning which enables pupils to do increasingly more for themselves.

12. Learning Focus and Clarity of Learning

Pupils learn more effectively when they understand what they are learning and what successful learning involves. We use a concise Learning Focus (LF).

The Learning Focus should answer: 'What are we learning today?' in the fewest words needed to make the learning clear.

From LO to Learning Focus

From 2026-27, we move away from an expectation that learning objectives are routinely written as 'I can...' or 'Can I...?'. There is no requirement for a particular grammatical structure. The important issue is that the intended learning is clear, specific and understood.

Less useful / previous wording	Clearer Learning Focus
I can understand numbers up to 100,000	Numbers to 100,000
I can use roleplay to gather ideas for a setting narrative	Gathering ideas for a setting narrative
I can understand reversible and irreversible changes	Reversible and irreversible changes
I can understand why the Romans built roads	Why the Romans built roads
I can make predictions using evidence	Making predictions using evidence

'I can...' statements are not prohibited. They can be useful as success criteria where they help pupils understand what successful learning involves.

Layer	Example
Curriculum objective	Predict what might happen from details stated and implied.
Learning Focus	Making predictions using evidence
Success criteria	I can make a sensible prediction; identify evidence; explain how the evidence supports my prediction.

Teachers should be able to articulate the more precise intended curriculum learning and success criteria underpinning the concise Learning Focus.

A Learning Focus should not be so broad that it simply names a topic, such as 'Romans', 'Fractions' or 'Materials'. Where learning continues across more than one lesson, the same Learning Focus may appropriately continue.

Recording the Learning Focus

The purpose of recording the Learning Focus is to provide a clear reference point, not a transcription exercise. It may be pupil-written, provided on a label or slip, pre-printed, adult-recorded or presented in another accessible form according to age, need and purpose.

Fluent writers will normally record a short Learning Focus where this is quick and purposeful. In Year 1 and for younger pupils, providing or sticking the Learning Focus may be more appropriate. For pupils with SEND, teachers should consider whether copying contributes to learning or creates an unnecessary barrier.

Understanding the Learning Focus is more important than copying it.

Success criteria

Success criteria should be used where they genuinely help pupils understand, evaluate or improve learning. They may be taught, modelled, discussed, co-developed, displayed or referred to during learning. There is no expectation for success criteria to be written or stuck into books every lesson.

Success criteria are a teaching tool, not an evidence requirement.

Dates

In EYFS and KS1, writing the day or date may be used purposefully to support knowledge of days and months, capital letters, spelling, handwriting or transcription. In KS2, a short numerical date such as 10.09.26 will normally be sufficient unless there is a specific learning purpose for writing the long date. Expectations may be adapted where recording creates a barrier.

Link to Feedback and Response

The Learning Focus provides a reference point for checking, feedback and reflection. Pupil traffic-light self-assessment and teacher assessment of the Learning Focus are set out in the Feedback and Response Policy.

Learning Focuses exist to make learning clearer, not to create another compliance routine.

13. Practice, Retrieval and Secure Learning

Successfully completing work during a lesson does not necessarily mean learning is secure.

Learning is demonstrated when pupils can remember, understand and use important knowledge and skills over time, with increasing independence.

Teaching should therefore provide appropriate opportunities for pupils to practise, retrieve, revisit and apply important learning.

Using curriculum schemes and published resources

Agreed curriculum schemes and programmes provide an important framework for curriculum coverage, sequencing, progression and subject-specific teaching. Where the school has adopted an agreed scheme or programme, teachers are expected to use it as the starting point for planning and understand the intended learning within the sequence.

We follow the intended curriculum, not a script.

Teachers should use professional judgement to adapt the teaching of the curriculum while maintaining intended knowledge, concepts and progression wherever appropriate. Adaptations may include explanations, examples, modelling, amount or structure of practice, questioning, vocabulary support, representations, scaffolds, recording expectations, grouping, resources, pace, support for SEND/EAL and opportunities for depth or application.

If checks show that pupils are not ready to move from a modelled mathematics example into independent practice, the teacher should pause, re-model, use another representation, provide further guided practice and check again rather than continue through slides because they are there.

The scheme supports teacher decision-making; it does not replace it.

Adaptation does not mean routinely replacing agreed curriculum materials with unrelated activities or changing intended learning because another resource appears more engaging. Significant concerns about curriculum sequence, content or an agreed scheme should normally be discussed with the subject leader so that curriculum change is coherent.

Teachers are not expected to rewrite information already contained within an agreed scheme simply to create additional planning documentation.

Practice with purpose

Practice helps pupils develop fluency, accuracy and confidence. It may involve rehearsing newly taught knowledge or skills, completing carefully selected examples, revisiting previous learning, explaining a process, correcting errors, applying learning differently, making connections and moving from supported to independent practice.

More work does not necessarily mean more learning.

If Daniel has accurately completed several four-digit by one-digit multiplication calculations, another page of almost identical calculations may add little. It may be more valuable for him to explain his method, identify an error, compare two methods or apply the calculation within a problem. Another pupil who is not yet fluent may benefit from further carefully structured practice.

Retrieval and revisiting

Retrieval involves pupils attempting to bring previously learned knowledge to mind rather than simply being shown it again. This may happen through brief questions, recalling vocabulary, mental mathematics, low-stakes quizzes, explanations, application to new learning or cumulative practice. Flashbacks are one established way of revisiting and checking prior learning, but they should be used responsively rather than treated as a fixed template or task-completion routine.

Retrieval is not simply an activity pupils complete; it provides information about what has been remembered and what may need further teaching.

Important learning should be encountered on more than one occasion. Pupils may learn, practise, retrieve later, apply differently and connect to new learning.

Previous learning should become a resource for future learning.

Fluency and application

Some knowledge and processes require sufficient routine practice to become fluent, including number facts, multiplication facts, phonics, spelling patterns, handwriting and transcription, mathematical procedures, vocabulary and subject-specific facts. Routine practice is not low-level where fluency itself is important.

Practice should continue for as long as it is helping learning become more secure, accurate, fluent or independent.

Secure learning should increasingly enable pupils to select strategies, solve unfamiliar problems, explain and justify, make connections, compare examples, combine knowledge and use previous learning in new contexts.

Practice for pupils with SEND

Some pupils may need smaller steps, additional repetition, more frequent retrieval, carefully selected examples, visual or concrete support, reduced recording demands, additional guided practice or more time before a scaffold is removed.

Is the pupil remembering more, understanding more or requiring less support than before?

What this does not mean

There is no whole-school expectation that every lesson begins with a retrieval quiz, every class uses an identical retrieval template, pupils complete a fixed number of retrieval questions, retrieval is always written, every piece of previous learning is continually revisited or teachers create additional resources simply to demonstrate retrieval.

Teach it clearly. Practise it purposefully. Revisit what matters. Check what has stuck. Use what pupils remember to build what comes next.

14. Organisation of Teaching and Learning

Teachers should organise learning in ways that best support the intended curriculum, pupils' current understanding and increasing independence. Pupils may learn through whole-class teaching, individual work, paired or collaborative work, practical activity or temporary teacher/adult-led groups.

Organisation should follow the learning need, rather than a fixed classroom routine.

Whole-class teaching and grouping

Whole-class teaching enables pupils to access common curriculum content, explanations, modelling, vocabulary and discussion. Teaching the class together does not mean every pupil requires exactly the same support.

Grouping should be purposeful and flexible. Pupils may work independently, with a partner, collaboratively, in a temporary group or with a teacher/additional adult according to the learning need. We should avoid fixed ability groups determining the level of curriculum pupils experience.

After checking understanding, a teacher might identify five pupils who have misunderstood exchanging in subtraction and provide short additional modelling while others practise or apply learning. The group exists because of what those pupils need now, not because they permanently belong to a 'lower group'.

Resources

Resources should be selected because they improve access to or understanding of intended learning. These may include manipulatives, models, images, diagrams, vocabulary resources, worked examples, reference materials, technology or assistive tools.

Using a resource independently is not a lesser form of independence.

Additional adults

Additional adults should know what pupils are learning, what successful learning looks like, likely barriers or misconceptions, how they should support and when support should reduce. Their role is not simply to ensure that pupils finish the task.

Successful adult support should increasingly make the adult less necessary.

Challenge and greater depth

Challenge should be built into thinking and learning rather than treated as an additional worksheet for pupils who finish. Where learning is secure, teachers may deepen challenge through reasoning, explanation, connections, unfamiliar application, choice of strategy, abstraction or greater independence.

Challenge is demonstrated through the quality of pupils' thinking, not the presence of an extension activity.

Pace and routines

Effective pace is not the same as moving quickly through activities or slides. Teachers should allow sufficient time for explanation, thinking, practice and checking, slowing down or moving forward according to what pupils understand.

The curriculum determines where we are going; assessment helps determine the most appropriate route and pace for getting there.

Consistent routines for transitions, resources, questioning, discussion, independent work, help-seeking and care of work can protect learning time and support independence. There is no prescribed whole-school routine for every classroom interaction.

15. Assessment, Feedback and Responsive Teaching

Assessment is integral to teaching and learning. Teachers continually gather information about what pupils know, understand and can do and use it to inform teaching.

Assessment becomes useful when it influences teaching, support or future learning.

Day-to-day formative assessment may include questioning, discussion, observation, pupil explanations, mini-whiteboards, retrieval, practical work, scrutiny of pupils' work, self-assessment, diagnostic or hinge questions and formal assessment where appropriate.

Formative assessment

Formative assessment should be embedded within teaching. Information gathered may lead the teacher to continue, prompt, question, provide further practice, re-model, re-teach, adapt a resource, adjust grouping, deepen learning or revisit content later.

The evidence of effective formative assessment is that teaching responds appropriately to what pupils understand.

Feedback and response

Detailed whole-school expectations for feedback, teacher engagement with pupils' work, pupil response, self-assessment, feedback conventions and the treatment of errors and misconceptions are set out in the Feedback and Response Policy.

The emphasis is teacher engagement with learning, rather than teacher marking of books.

Summative assessment

Summative assessment may establish attainment at particular points, identify patterns in pupil or cohort performance, inform reporting, support curriculum evaluation and identify pupils or groups requiring further consideration. Detailed arrangements for statutory assessment, assessment points, data collection, tracking and reporting are contained within the Assessment Policy and procedures.

Assessment and SEND

Assessment should enable teachers to understand what pupils with SEND know and understand rather than simply whether they can meet the same recording demands as peers. Teachers should distinguish curriculum knowledge from language, communication, memory, processing, recording, transcription or support barriers.

An adaptation to how a pupil demonstrates learning should not automatically be interpreted as an adaptation to the intellectual ambition of the learning.

Workload

There is no expectation to create additional records simply to prove that formative assessment has happened where the information is already evident through teaching, pupils' work, assessment systems or professional knowledge.

Collect information because it will be used, not simply because it can be collected.

16. Curriculum Enrichment and Wider Learning

We value enrichment as an important part of a broad, ambitious and engaging curriculum. Enrichment should extend, deepen or bring learning to life, providing experiences that may not be available through classroom teaching alone.

Enrichment is not an optional extra around the curriculum; where purposeful, it is part of how pupils experience and understand the curriculum.

Purposeful enrichment

Enrichment may help pupils experience places, people and environments first-hand; deepen curriculum knowledge; apply learning in authentic contexts; encounter expertise; broaden vocabulary and background knowledge; develop curiosity, confidence, teamwork, leadership and independence; and understand their local community and wider world.

The question is not simply 'Is this enjoyable?' but 'What does this add to pupils' learning and development?'

Visits and visitors

Teachers should consider what pupils will learn from an experience, how it connects to the curriculum, what prior knowledge will help them access it and how the experience will be revisited or built upon afterwards.

The experience should serve the learning, rather than the learning being created simply to justify the experience.

Catholic Life, Mission and Enrichment

As a Catholic school, enrichment should provide pupils with meaningful opportunities to encounter, understand and live out the school's mission. These opportunities may include prayer, retreat experiences, parish and diocesan events, visits to churches and other places of worship, charitable action, service, social-action projects and opportunities to reflect on dignity, justice, stewardship and the common good.

Such experiences should help pupils make connections between what they learn, what they believe, how they act and how they contribute to others.

Our mission should be experienced through the life of the school, not simply displayed or discussed.

Broadening horizons and inclusion

Across the school, pupils should encounter a rich range of people, places, ideas, cultures, occupations, arts, sport, nature and community experiences. Enrichment should be planned with equitable participation in mind. Pupils should not be unnecessarily excluded because of SEND, disability, disadvantage, medical need, behaviour need, language or family circumstance.

Inclusion means thinking about access at the planning stage, not after an opportunity has already been designed.

Preparation and follow-up

Preparation may include relevant background knowledge, vocabulary, expectations, questions and support for unfamiliar environments. Follow-up may revisit learning, reflect, connect to later curriculum content or use the experience as a reference point.

The value of an experience is not demonstrated by the amount of work produced afterwards.

Extracurricular opportunities

Clubs, teams, performances and other extracurricular opportunities can further develop pupils' interests, talents and confidence. Leaders should consider participation over time and, where possible, ensure opportunities are accessible to pupils less likely to access similar experiences outside school.

Enrichment should be memorable because it is meaningful, not simply because it is different.

17. Homework and Learning Beyond School

Homework can provide useful opportunities to practise, consolidate, retrieve and extend learning beyond the school day. This policy sets out the broad teaching and learning principles only. Detailed frequency, year-group expectations and arrangements are contained in the school's separate Homework Policy.

Homework should support learning, not simply create additional work.

Homework may reinforce important knowledge and skills, provide additional practice, support retrieval, develop reading habits, encourage independence and responsibility, enable sharing with parents and prepare older pupils for increasing independence.

The quality and purpose of homework matter more than the quantity completed.

Reading, practice and retrieval

Reading should remain a particularly important part of learning beyond school. Short, regular practice may also be useful for phonics, spelling, number facts, multiplication tables, arithmetic, handwriting where appropriate, vocabulary and retrieval of important curriculum knowledge.

Homework should normally reinforce or revisit learning pupils have already been taught, rather than require them to teach themselves substantial new content.

Independence, family support and equity

Parents and carers have an important role in encouraging routines, reading with children and supporting positive attitudes. However, homework should increasingly be completable without parents becoming the teacher or requiring specialist resources, costly materials, printing or significant adult time.

Parents should support learning, but the child's homework should remain the child's learning.

Teachers should recognise that pupils have different access to technology, quiet spaces, books, resources, adult support and family capacity. Homework should be reasonable and inclusive, with appropriate alternatives or support where needed.

Feedback and workload

Not every homework task requires detailed written marking. Useful responses may include acknowledgement, discussion, self-checking, reviewing answers, retrieval in subsequent teaching or teacher checking where it will inform teaching. The Feedback and Response Policy applies.

Homework should complement childhood, not overwhelm it.

18. Roles and Responsibilities

Teachers

Teachers are responsible for:

- know the curriculum they teach and how learning is sequenced;
- plan from intended learning and pupils' prior learning;
- use agreed schemes intelligently, adapting teaching without unintentionally diluting curriculum ambition;
- provide clear explanation, modelling, guided practice and opportunities for independent application;
- explicitly teach important vocabulary;
- check what pupils understand and identify errors, gaps and misconceptions;
- adapt teaching in response to assessment;
- know and implement the needs and provision of pupils with SEND;
- deploy additional adults purposefully and promote increasing independence;

- provide appropriate challenge through depth, reasoning and application;
- ensure important learning is practised, retrieved and applied;
- engage sufficiently with pupils and their work to know how well they are learning; and
- maintain positive relationships, high expectations and a commitment to professional development.

Teachers are professionally responsible for knowing how well their pupils are learning and for using that knowledge to inform what happens next.

Learning Support Assistants and additional adults

Additional adults should understand intended learning, reinforce explanations and vocabulary, use appropriate questioning and prompts, support without completing pupils' thinking, recognise when teaching is required, encourage independent strategy use, reduce support where appropriate and communicate useful information about understanding to the teacher.

The aim of additional adult support is learning and increasing independence, not simply task completion.

Pupils

As they develop, pupils should participate actively, listen and contribute, think and explain, practise and retrieve, use appropriate strategies and resources, respond to mistakes and feedback, ask purposeful questions, reflect on confidence and understanding, care for their work and become increasingly independent.

Independence is something we teach pupils to develop, not something we simply demand from them.

Subject leaders

Subject leaders should:

- maintain a clear understanding of curriculum intent, sequencing and progression;
- support teachers' subject and pedagogical knowledge;
- ensure agreed schemes and resources are used appropriately;
- help distinguish appropriate adaptation of teaching from changes to the agreed curriculum;
- consider how pupils with SEND and disadvantaged pupils access and achieve within the subject;
- monitor what pupils know, remember and can apply;
- identify strengths and priorities for development; and
- evaluate the impact of curriculum and teaching developments over time.

Subject leadership is not primarily about checking whether teachers have complied with a scheme. It is about understanding how successfully the intended curriculum is being taught and learned.

SENDCo

The SENDCo supports leaders, teachers and additional adults to understand barriers, implement the graduated approach, use Birmingham's OAG, implement SEND Support Plans and EHCP provision, select and evaluate adaptations, work with families and professionals and maintain ambitious expectations.

SEND is not delegated to the SENDCo. Every teacher remains a teacher of pupils with SEND.

Senior leaders

Senior leaders communicate clear expectations, ensure curriculum, assessment, feedback and SEND approaches work together, provide professional development, support subject and phase leadership, monitor proportionately, identify strengths and priorities, consider workload, provide support where practice needs to improve and evaluate impact.

Consistency means consistency of principle and entitlement, not identical teaching in every classroom.

Governors

Governors provide strategic oversight by ensuring a broad, balanced and ambitious curriculum, holding leaders to account for the quality of education, considering outcomes and experiences for different groups, ensuring appropriate SEND and disadvantaged provision and supporting and challenging school improvement. Governors do not prescribe particular classroom teaching methods.

19. Monitoring, Evaluation and Professional Development

Monitoring is undertaken to understand the quality and impact of the curriculum and teaching, identify strengths, recognise where development is required and ultimately improve pupils' learning.

Monitoring is about understanding learning, not collecting evidence of compliance.

Wherever possible, subject leaders and senior leaders should use a blended approach, bringing together different sources rather than reaching conclusions from a single lesson visit, book look or conversation.

CURRICULUM → VISIT → BOOKS/WORK → CHILDREN → EVALUATE → RESPOND

Curriculum - what should pupils be learning?

Monitoring should begin with the planned curriculum: what should have been taught, where current learning sits in the sequence, important knowledge, vocabulary, concepts and skills, and what pupils should already know. Leaders should establish whether the agreed curriculum and schemes are being followed while recognising appropriate adaptations to teaching, resources, pace and practice.

Are pupils receiving the curriculum we have collectively agreed they are entitled to?

Visit - what does teaching look like?

Lesson visits may consider clarity of intended learning, subject knowledge, explanation and modelling, vocabulary, prior learning, questioning and checking, participation and thinking, adaptive teaching, SEND, use of additional adults, challenge, practice and independence.

A lesson visit provides a snapshot. It should not normally be used in isolation to make a judgement about the quality of teaching, curriculum or learning over time.

Leaders should not expect every lesson to contain every strategy in this policy. We are not looking for a prescribed SS John & Monica lesson.

Books and work - what can we see over time?

Pupils' work can help leaders explore whether work reflects the intended curriculum, standards and expectations, development of knowledge and skills, challenge, SEND adaptation, independence, presentation and whether significant misconceptions appear to have been recognised and addressed.

Book monitoring should evaluate teacher engagement with pupils' learning and the impact of feedback and response, not the quantity of marking.

Leaders should not count ticks, comments, highlighting or symbols as proxies for effective feedback. Where relevant, they should follow the learning: initial understanding → teacher response → subsequent learning.

Children - what have pupils actually learned?

Talking to pupils should, wherever possible, form a central part of subject monitoring. Questions should be rooted in the curriculum pupils have actually been taught and explore what they are learning, what they remember, vocabulary, concepts, connections, strategies when learning is difficult, SEND access, feedback and independence.

Pupil voice should explore what pupils know and understand, not simply whether they enjoy a subject.

Bringing evidence together

No single source tells the whole story. A planned curriculum, an apparently strong lesson and neatly completed books may still sit alongside pupils who cannot explain or retrieve important learning. Equally, a pupil with a recording barrier may show much stronger understanding in discussion than is immediately visible in a book.

No single source tells the whole story.

Standards, expectations and action

Monitoring should establish whether the agreed curriculum is taught, expectations are ambitious, pupils learn important content, standards are appropriate, SEND and disadvantaged pupils access and achieve, teaching responds to difficulty and agreed whole-school principles are evident over time.

Where an issue is identified, leaders should diagnose whether it relates to curriculum, subject knowledge, teaching, resources, assessment, adaptation, expectations or implementation. Responses may include recognising and sharing effective practice, resources, clarification, coaching, modelling, CPD, curriculum adjustment and proportionate follow-up.

Monitoring which produces information but no appropriate response has limited value.

20. Implementation, Professional Development and Review

High-quality teaching develops through clear expectations, professional knowledge, collaboration, reflection and appropriate support. Implementation should therefore be viewed as an ongoing process of professional development rather than the introduction of a checklist of techniques.

Teaching is a professional craft. Consistency comes from shared principles and expectations, not identical lessons.

Embedding, reviewing and refining

During 2026–27, the school will focus on embedding, reviewing and refining the approach established in this policy so that it becomes a secure and sustainable part of everyday classroom practice.

Implementation should ensure staff understand what we have agreed, why we have agreed it and what it means in practice. Where practice is new or developing, staff should have opportunities to see examples, discuss implementation, practise approaches and receive support.

Professional development and dialogue

Professional development may include whole-school and subject-specific development, collaborative planning, coaching, professional dialogue, modelling, observation of colleagues, examination of pupils' work, pupil discussion, engagement with relevant research and guidance, and support from subject leaders, SENDCo, senior leaders or external expertise.

Knowing the curriculum and knowing how to teach it effectively are both essential.

Useful professional dialogue explores why an explanation worked, what misconception pupils revealed, why a scaffold helped, which pupils remained dependent, what pupil discussion revealed, whether curriculum ambition was sufficient and what might be taught differently next time.

Professional development should develop teachers' decision-making, not simply increase the number of techniques they use.

Supporting improvement

Where monitoring identifies development, the response may include clarification, resources, collaborative planning, modelling, coaching, observation of effective practice, CPD and further monitoring. An isolated issue should not automatically become a whole-school initiative; recurring or significant weakness should be addressed.

Support and accountability are not opposites. High expectations should be accompanied by the support required to meet them.

Refining curriculum and practice

Feedback from teaching should inform curriculum development: planned curriculum → taught curriculum → pupil learning → evaluation → refinement. Significant changes to agreed curriculum sequence or schemes should normally be considered with the subject leader so that changes remain coherent.

We should adapt classroom teaching responsively while refining the agreed curriculum deliberately.

Workload

When introducing or reviewing expectations, leaders should consider workload. No new routine, template or recording requirement should be introduced simply because it might provide additional evidence. Leaders should ask what problem is being solved, whether the change will improve teaching or learning and whether there is a simpler way.

Evaluating implementation

Success should not be judged by whether every classroom looks identical. Over time, leaders should consider whether the planned curriculum is taught effectively; pupils know and remember more; standards remain high; assessment informs adaptation; misconceptions are addressed; SEND pupils access ambitious learning; scaffolding promotes independence; feedback leads to improvement; pupils can talk meaningfully about learning; professional development responds to need; and unnecessary workload is avoided.

Review

The policy will be reviewed in accordance with the school policy cycle and sooner where significant changes to statutory guidance, curriculum arrangements or school practice require it. Feedback from teachers, support staff, subject leaders and pupils should contribute to refinement.

We do not expect teaching to stand still. We expect our shared principles to remain clear while our professional practice continues to develop.

PLAN → TEACH → CHECK → ADAPT → INDEPENDENCE

Appendix 1. Subject Leader Blended Monitoring Template

Use this as a guide to professional enquiry, not as a compliance checklist. Monitoring should normally blend curriculum review, lesson visits, pupils' work and discussion with children.

Area	Prompts / notes
Focus	What aspect of the subject or curriculum am I exploring and why?
CURRICULUM	What should pupils have been taught? Where does this sit in the sequence? What should they know, remember and be able to do? Is the agreed curriculum being followed?
VISIT	What did I notice about how the curriculum was taught? Consider explanation, modelling, vocabulary, checking, adaptation, challenge, practice and independence where relevant.
BOOKS / WORK	Does work reflect the planned curriculum? What do standards and expectations look like over time? What does the work suggest about SEND, challenge, feedback and independence?
CHILDREN	What can pupils explain and remember? Can they use subject vocabulary and make connections? What do SEND and disadvantaged pupils tell us about access and experience?

What does the evidence tell me when considered together?

STRENGTHS	DEVELOP
What is working well? What should we protect or share?	What could be stronger? Is this isolated or a wider pattern?
ACTION	FOLLOW UP

STRENGTHS	DEVELOP
What needs to happen? Who will do it? What support is required?	How and when will we know whether this has improved?

Follow the Learning - link to Feedback and Response

Where relevant, trace: Initial learning → teacher response → subsequent learning.

Do not evaluate feedback by the quantity of written marking.

Appendix 2. Staff One-Page Guide

RELATIONSHIPS underpin everything.				
PLAN	TEACH	CHECK	ADAPT	INDEPENDENCE
Start from curriculum and prior learning. Anticipate barriers, misconceptions, vocabulary and purposeful adult support.	Explain and model clearly. Use examples, non-examples, rich language, guided practice and appropriate representations.	Find out what pupils actually understand. Question, observe, listen, look at work and use diagnostic checks where useful.	Prompt, re-model, re-teach, practise, regroup, scaffold, deepen or adjust pace according to what pupils show.	Model → guide → practise → independent application. Reduce unnecessary support and teach pupils how to plan, monitor and evaluate.

Five reminders

- The activity serves the learning; the activity is not the learning.
- Challenge is the quality of thinking, not simply more work.
- A scaffold is temporary support.
- The emphasis is teacher engagement with learning, rather than teacher marking of books.
- Consistency means consistency of principle and entitlement, not identical teaching in every classroom.

Appendix 3. Key Guidance and Evidence

The policy is evidence-informed and should be interpreted alongside current statutory and local guidance. Key sources include:

- [Birmingham Ordinarily Available Guidance \(OAG\)](#)
- [EEF - Five-a-day: supporting high-quality teaching for pupils with SEND](#)
- [EEF - Metacognition and Self-Regulated Learning](#)
- [EEF - Teacher Feedback to Improve Pupil Learning](#)
- [DfE - National curriculum](#)