



St Cecilia's
R. C. High School

Discover • Develop • Rejoice

Curriculum, Teaching and Learning Policy

Reviewed: July 2026
Next Review Date: July 2027

1. Purpose of this Policy

At St Cecilia's Catholic School, we believe that every pupil has the right to an ambitious, high-quality education that enables them to flourish academically, spiritually and personally.

This policy sets out our shared expectations for curriculum, teaching, learning and assessment. It provides a consistent framework for staff while recognising teachers' professional expertise in meeting the needs of all learners.

Our curriculum is rooted in our Catholic mission and reflects our commitment to developing young people who are knowledgeable, compassionate, resilient and prepared for the opportunities and responsibilities of adult life.

The policy should be read alongside the school's:

- Curriculum Policy
- Assessment and Feedback Policy
- SEND Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Equality Information and Objectives

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is everyone's responsibility. Effective teaching and learning can only take place where pupils feel safe, valued and supported.

2. Our Vision for Teaching and Learning

At St Cecilia's, we are committed to providing an education that enables every pupil, regardless of background, ability or additional need, to achieve their full potential.

Our teaching is underpinned by high expectations, strong subject knowledge and evidence-informed practice. We believe that every teacher is a leader of learning and that continual professional development is essential in securing excellent outcomes for pupils.

We foster a culture in which all staff are lifelong learners who continually reflect upon and refine their practice through collaboration, professional reading, research and high-quality professional development.

Professional learning is supported through:

- departmental and whole-school CPD
- instructional coaching and collaboration
- access to professional learning platforms, including the National College
- research-informed reading and discussion
- curriculum development
- appraisal and professional review
- sharing effective practice across the school.

Our aim is to create a culture where excellent teaching is continually developed through professional trust, collaboration and reflective practice.

3. Our Curriculum

Our curriculum is the vehicle through which pupils develop the knowledge, skills, understanding and personal qualities needed to lead fulfilling lives and contribute positively to society.

Grounded in our Catholic ethos, the curriculum supports pupils to become:

- confident learners
- responsible citizens
- compassionate members of their communities

- resilient young adults who live out the values of the Gospel.

We believe every pupil should experience an ambitious curriculum regardless of prior attainment, background or additional need. Our curriculum is designed to ensure that all pupils learn the essential knowledge required for future success while developing independence, curiosity and a lifelong love of learning.

The curriculum is carefully sequenced so that learning builds logically over time, enabling pupils to know more, remember more and apply their knowledge with increasing confidence and sophistication.

It also promotes:

- literacy, numeracy and communication
- personal development
- Catholic Social Teaching
- Fundamental British Values
- cultural capital
- careers education
- preparation for life in modern Britain.

4. Principles of Curriculum Design

Our curriculum is built upon five key principles.

1. Ambition for All

Every pupil is entitled to study a broad, balanced and ambitious curriculum that provides equal access to powerful knowledge and high expectations for achievement.

2. Carefully Sequenced Knowledge

Knowledge is deliberately organised so that new learning builds securely upon prior learning. This enables pupils to make meaningful connections and develop increasingly complex understanding over time.

3. Secure Foundations

Teachers identify and address gaps in prior learning before introducing new concepts. Where necessary, learning is revisited to ensure pupils develop secure understanding before moving forward.

4. Responsive Assessment

Assessment is used formatively and summatively to identify strengths, address misconceptions and inform future teaching. Feedback supports pupils in improving their understanding and achieving their potential.

5. Retrieval and Long-Term Learning

Key knowledge and concepts are revisited regularly through planned retrieval practice, interleaving and purposeful review so that learning becomes secure in long-term memory.

5. Teaching and Learning

Teaching at St Cecilia's is rooted in high expectations, strong subject knowledge and evidence-informed practice. We recognise that excellent teaching is the most significant school-based factor in improving pupil outcomes.

Teachers use their professional judgement to deliver an ambitious curriculum that enables all pupils to succeed. While teaching approaches may vary according to subject and context, all lessons should reflect the school's agreed principles of effective practice.

Principles of Effective Teaching

Teachers will:

- establish consistently high expectations for learning, behaviour and achievement
- create calm, purposeful classrooms where pupils feel safe, respected and confident to participate
- demonstrate secure subject and curriculum knowledge
- communicate clear learning objectives and success criteria
- present new learning in manageable steps to avoid unnecessary cognitive overload
- model thinking, processes and high-quality outcomes explicitly
- use carefully planned questioning to check understanding, challenge thinking and promote participation
- adapt teaching in response to assessment and pupils' needs
- provide opportunities for guided practice before independent application
- revisit previously taught knowledge through planned retrieval practice
- develop pupils' confidence in using accurate academic vocabulary
- encourage pupils to reflect upon and improve their learning.

Teachers will use assessment continually throughout lessons to identify misconceptions and adapt teaching accordingly.

Adaptive Teaching

We believe that every pupil can succeed within an ambitious curriculum when appropriate support and challenge are provided.

Teachers will use adaptive teaching to ensure all pupils can access learning without reducing curriculum ambition.

Adaptive teaching may include:

- appropriate scaffolding
- carefully structured explanations
- modelling and worked examples
- targeted questioning
- flexible grouping where appropriate
- adapted resources
- additional practice where required
- appropriate stretch and challenge for pupils who are ready to deepen their understanding.

Teachers remain responsible for the progress of every pupil in their class, including those supported by teaching assistants or other adults.

Developing Independent Learners

We aim to develop pupils who take increasing responsibility for their own learning.

Teachers will support pupils to:

- understand what they are learning and why it matters
- make links between prior and new learning
- plan, monitor and evaluate their own progress
- respond positively to feedback
- persevere when learning becomes challenging

- develop effective revision and study strategies
- become confident, independent learners beyond the classroom.

High-Quality Classroom Dialogue

Effective classroom dialogue is central to learning.

Teachers will:

- create regular opportunities for pupils to explain, justify and extend their thinking
- encourage respectful discussion and active listening
- provide sufficient thinking time before inviting responses
- use questioning strategically to assess understanding and deepen learning
- ensure all pupils have opportunities to participate.

Pupils are expected to contribute thoughtfully, listen respectfully and value the contributions of others.

Reading, Vocabulary and Literacy

Every teacher is a teacher of literacy.

Teachers will explicitly develop pupils':

- disciplinary literacy
- reading fluency
- academic vocabulary
- spoken language
- written communication.

Opportunities to read challenging academic texts and engage in meaningful discussion should be embedded across the curriculum.

Effective Use of Technology

Technology should be used where it enhances learning rather than simply replacing traditional methods.

Teachers will consider whether technology:

- improves pupils' understanding
- increases participation
- supports accessibility
- provides effective feedback
- develops independent learning.

The impact of technology on learning should be evaluated as part of teachers' ongoing reflective practice.

6. The Learning Environment

Outstanding learning flourishes within classrooms that are calm, purposeful and well organised.

Learning environments at St Cecilia's should:

- promote high expectations and mutual respect
- be welcoming, inclusive and free from discrimination
- encourage resilience, curiosity and independence
- provide appropriate levels of challenge alongside appropriate support

- minimise unnecessary distraction
- enable all pupils to participate successfully
- reflect the school's Catholic ethos and values.

Classrooms should also be organised to maximise learning through:

- teacher-directed seating plans where appropriate
- layouts that support effective teaching and behaviour
- well-maintained resources
- appropriate lighting, ventilation and temperature
- safe learning environments that comply with health and safety requirements.

Teachers will ensure classroom routines are consistent so that pupils can focus fully on learning.

7. Roles and Responsibilities

Effective teaching and learning are the shared responsibility of all members of the school community. Each role contributes to securing consistently high standards of education for every pupil.

Senior Leadership Team

The Senior Leadership Team (SLT) provides strategic leadership for curriculum, teaching and learning across the school.

SLT will:

- promote a culture of high expectations and continuous improvement
- ensure the curriculum remains ambitious, broad and inclusive
- monitor the quality of education through proportionate quality assurance activities
- support staff through coaching, professional dialogue and high-quality professional development
- use evidence from lesson visits, work scrutiny, assessment information and stakeholder voice to inform school improvement
- hold curriculum leaders to account for the quality of education within their areas of responsibility
- report to governors on standards of teaching, learning and curriculum effectiveness
- ensure quality assurance processes are developmental, supportive and proportionate.

Where formal support programmes are required, monitoring will be undertaken in accordance with the school's appraisal, capability or support procedures.

Curriculum Leaders

Curriculum Leaders are responsible for the quality of education within their subject areas.

They will:

- lead the design, implementation and review of an ambitious curriculum
- ensure curriculum content is coherently sequenced and appropriately assessed
- maintain high expectations for teaching and learning across the department
- monitor pupil achievement and identify priorities for improvement
- use assessment information to evaluate curriculum effectiveness
- support colleagues through coaching, collaboration and professional development
- monitor the consistency and quality of teaching, assessment and feedback
- ensure schemes of learning reflect current curriculum requirements

- promote disciplinary literacy, reading and academic vocabulary
- ensure curriculum provision is inclusive and accessible for all pupils, including those with SEND.

Classroom Teachers

Teachers are responsible for the progress, attainment and wellbeing of every pupil they teach.

Teachers will:

- maintain high expectations of behaviour, effort and achievement
- deliver well-planned, ambitious lessons that reflect the school's agreed principles of effective teaching
- maintain secure subject and curriculum knowledge
- know the needs of individual pupils and adapt teaching appropriately
- use assessment to identify misconceptions and inform future teaching
- create classrooms that are calm, inclusive and conducive to learning
- develop pupils' literacy, numeracy, communication and academic vocabulary
- promote equality, inclusion and respect for others
- fulfil their duties under the Equality Act 2010 and support pupils with protected characteristics
- work collaboratively with colleagues, teaching assistants and parents where appropriate
- set purposeful homework that supports curriculum learning
- recognise achievement and address barriers to learning promptly
- engage fully in professional learning and reflective practice.

Teachers remain responsible for the learning and progress of all pupils in their classes, including those receiving additional support.

EDEN Support and Teaching Assistants

Teaching assistants are valued members of the teaching team and contribute to high-quality classroom practice.

Teachers will:

- plan collaboratively with teaching assistants where appropriate
- communicate intended learning outcomes clearly
- deploy support strategically to maximise pupil independence
- ensure teaching assistants are used to complement, rather than replace, high-quality teaching.

Teaching assistants will:

- promote pupil independence and confidence
- provide targeted support under the direction of the teacher
- understand the learning needs of the pupils they support
- contribute to classroom assessment through professional feedback to teachers
- engage in relevant professional development.

Support should always be focused on improving pupils' access to learning rather than creating dependency.

Form Tutors

Form Tutors play a key role in promoting pupils' personal development and wellbeing.

They will:

- build positive relationships with pupils and families
- monitor attendance, punctuality and pastoral wellbeing
- support pupils' personal, social, spiritual and academic development
- lead daily collective worship in accordance with the school's Catholic ethos
- contribute to the delivery of personal development activities
- encourage positive attitudes towards learning
- monitor key information relating to behaviour, rewards and achievement
- contribute to quality assurance activities where appropriate.

Pupils

Pupils are expected to take responsibility for their own learning and contribute positively to the life of the school.

They will:

- attend regularly and arrive punctually
- come to lessons prepared with the correct equipment
- demonstrate positive attitudes to learning
- follow reasonable instructions promptly
- contribute respectfully to classroom discussion
- listen carefully to others and value different viewpoints
- complete classwork and homework to the best of their ability
- present work with care and pride
- reflect on feedback and seek to improve
- behave in accordance with the school's Behaviour Policy
- demonstrate respect for all members of the school community
- seek support when they experience difficulties with learning.

Parents and Carers

Parents and carers play an essential role in supporting their child's education.

The school values effective home-school partnerships and encourages parents to:

- promote regular attendance and punctuality
- support positive attitudes towards learning
- monitor homework and encourage independent study
- communicate with the school where concerns arise
- engage positively with the school's communication systems
- work in partnership with staff to support their child's academic and personal development.

8. Inclusion and SEND

St Cecilia's is committed to providing an ambitious education for every pupil. We recognise that pupils learn in different ways and may require different levels or types of support to achieve success.

Teachers are responsible for the progress and achievement of all pupils in their classes, including those with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND).

Teaching will be characterised by:

- high expectations for every pupil
- adaptive teaching that enables all pupils to access the same ambitious curriculum

- early identification of barriers to learning
- appropriate scaffolding and support
- effective use of assessment to inform teaching
- collaboration with the SENDCo, parents and external agencies where appropriate.

Pupils with SEND will:

- access a broad and balanced curriculum alongside their peers
- receive support in line with the SEND Code of Practice and the school's SEND Policy
- be encouraged to develop independence, confidence and resilience
- have their views, and where appropriate those of their parents or carers, considered when reviewing support.

Teaching assistants and specialist staff will work in partnership with teachers to promote independence and improve outcomes for pupils requiring additional support.

9. Professional Learning

Continuous professional learning is central to maintaining high-quality teaching.

All staff are expected to engage in professional development that enhances their subject knowledge, pedagogy and understanding of effective teaching.

Professional learning may include:

- instructional coaching
- departmental collaboration
- professional reading
- research-informed practice
- external training
- curriculum development
- lesson study
- appraisal and professional review.

The school is committed to fostering a collaborative culture in which effective practice is shared and all staff are encouraged to reflect upon and continually improve their teaching.

10. Quality Assurance

Quality assurance supports continual improvement by evaluating the effectiveness of teaching, learning and the curriculum.

Our approach is developmental rather than judgemental and is intended to celebrate effective practice while identifying opportunities for improvement.

Evidence used to evaluate the quality of education may include:

- lesson visits and learning walks
- work scrutiny
- curriculum reviews
- assessment information
- pupil voice
- staff voice
- parent and carer feedback
- professional dialogue
- departmental reviews.

Quality assurance activities are proportionate, evidence-informed and aligned with the School Improvement Plan.

Monitoring outcomes are used to inform professional development, curriculum refinement

and whole-school improvement priorities.

11. Homework

Homework is used where it has a clear educational purpose and contributes positively to pupils' learning.

Effective homework should:

- consolidate or extend classroom learning
- develop independent study habits
- promote retrieval and long-term retention
- prepare pupils for future learning where appropriate
- encourage organisation and personal responsibility.
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Homework should be meaningful, proportionate and appropriate to pupils' age, stage and curriculum.

Responsibilities

Teachers will:

- set homework that supports curriculum learning
- communicate homework clearly through SchoolSynergy
- provide sufficient explanation before pupils leave the lesson wherever possible
- ensure resources required to complete homework are accessible
- adapt homework where appropriate to meet individual needs
- provide feedback in accordance with the school's Assessment and Feedback Policy
- support pupils experiencing difficulties through subject support sessions or other appropriate intervention.

Pupils will:

- complete homework to the best of their ability
- organise their time effectively
- seek help before deadlines where difficulties arise
- access homework through SchoolSynergy when absent
- communicate respectfully with staff when requesting support.

Parents and Carers will:

- encourage positive study habits at home
- monitor homework through SchoolSynergy
- support their child in meeting deadlines
- communicate with the school where significant difficulties arise
- encourage their child to access additional support where required.

12. Monitoring and Review

This policy will be reviewed annually by the Senior Leadership Team and Governing Board, or sooner if required following changes to legislation, statutory guidance or school practice.

The effectiveness of this policy will be evaluated through:

- quality assurance activities
- pupil outcomes
- stakeholder feedback
- curriculum evaluation
- school improvement planning.

