
Archbishop McGrath Catholic High School
Ysgol Uwchradd Gatholig Archesgob McGrath

Curriculum Policy

Formulated by:	Mr B Davies, Assistant Headteacher
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Curriculum Policy

As a school community we have three broad aims:

- To assist all those who work in the school, both staff and pupils to flourish.
- To proclaim the Good News of Jesus Christ that the whole creation, including every person in it, is a gift of God and loved by God.
- To nurture faith in Jesus Christ through every aspect of the schools curricular and extra-curricular programmes and activities.

It is our intention that our learners will benefit from experiences at school that will support them in becoming young adults that are:

- ambitious, capable learners, ready to learn throughout their lives
- enterprising, creative contributors, ready to play a full part in life and work
- ethical, informed citizens of Wales and the world
- healthy, confident individuals, ready to lead fulfilling lives as valued members of society

Introduction

The Catholic Bishops of England and Wales in their 1996 statement *Education in Catholic Schools and Colleges* made the following comments on the distinctive nature of Catholic education.

Catholic schools must be committed to promoting:

THE SEARCH FOR EXCELLENCE

The search for excellence is seen as an integral part of the spiritual quest. Christians are called to seek perfection in all aspects of their lives. In Catholic education, pupils and students are, therefore, given every opportunity to develop their talents to the full.

THE UNIQUENESS OF THE INDIVIDUAL

Within Catholic schools and colleges, each individual is seen as made in God's image and loved by Him. All students are, therefore, valued and respected as individuals so that they may be helped to fulfil their unique role in creation.

THE EDUCATION OF THE WHOLE PERSON

Catholic education is based on the belief that the human and the divine are inseparable. In Catholic schools and colleges, management, organisation, academic and pastoral work, prayer and worship, all aim to prepare young people for their life as Christians in the community.

THE EDUCATION OF ALL

Their belief in the value of each individual leads Catholic schools and colleges to have the duty to care for the poor and to educate those who are socially, academically, physically or emotionally disadvantaged.

MORAL PRINCIPLES

Catholic education aims to offer young people the experience of life in a community founded on Gospel values. In religious education in particular, the Church aims to transmit to them the Catholic faith. Both through religious education and in the general life of the school, young people are prepared to serve as witnesses to moral and spiritual values in the wider world.

Aim

Our aim is to offer a broad and balanced curriculum accessible to all students that develops the knowledge, understanding, skills and attitudes which are necessary for each student's self-fulfilment and development as active and responsible citizens. The curriculum prepares students for further study, employment and adult life. The curriculum aims to enable all students to become

- successful students who enjoy learning and make progress;
- confident individuals who are able to live safe, healthy and fulfilling lives; and
- responsible citizens who make a positive contribution to society

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- -To nurture faith in Jesus Christ through every aspect of the schools curricular and extra-curricular programmes and activities.

As a school community we will use the Catholic Pupil Profile to support the broad aims.
Pupils in this school are

Grateful for their own gifts, for the gift of other people, and for the blessings of each day; and **generous** with their gifts, becoming men and women for others.

Attentive to their experience and to their vocation; and **discerning** about the choices they make and the effects of those choices.

Compassionate towards others, near and far, especially the less fortunate; and **loving** by their just actions and forgiving words.

Faith-filled in their beliefs and **hopeful** for the future.

Eloquent and **truthful** in what they say of themselves, the relations between people, and the world.

Learned, finding God in all things; and **wise** in the ways they use their learning for the common good.

Curious about everything; and **active** in their engagement with the world, changing what they can for the better.

Intentional in the way they live and use the resources of the earth, guided by conscience; and **prophetic** in the example they set to others.

As a school we follow Visible Learning “...which means an enhanced role for teachers as they become evaluators of their own teaching. Visible Teaching and Learning occurs when teachers see learning through the eyes of students and help them become their own teachers.”

“Visible teaching and learning occurs when there is deliberate practice aimed at attaining mastery of the goal, when there is feedback given and sought, and when there are active, passionate, and engaging people (teacher, students, peers) participating in the act of learning.”

It is critical that teachers see themselves as evaluators of their effects on students and develop a mind frame in which they see it as their primary role to evaluate their effect on learning. Hattie argues that teacher’s beliefs and commitments are the greatest influence on student achievement.

Nine Mind Frames of Effective Teachers

1. Evaluators of the effect of their teaching on pupil’s learning
2. ‘Change Agents’ who take responsibility for enhancing all pupils learning.
3. Talk about how pupils learn and not about how teachers teach.
4. See assessment as feedback about their impact
5. Engage in dialogue not monologue with pupils.
6. Enjoy the challenge and engage pupils in the challenge.
7. Develop positive relationships with pupils that foster effective learning.
8. Have a common and shared language of learning which is understood by all.
9. Teach students the value of: Concentration, perseverance and deliberate practice.

Aims

Our aims are to:

- Help pupils on their faith journey and offer them the experience of learning in a school based on Gospel values.
- Develop the whole child - spiritually, emotionally, morally, socially, academically, physical and culturally.
- Strive for excellence in all that we do.
- Provide equality of opportunity for all pupils.
- Enable pupils to appreciate their own uniqueness as an individual and to achieve their potential.
- Encourage a life-long love of learning in the search for excellence.
- Enable all pupils to develop and grow, whatever their personal, social, physical or academic circumstances.
- Develop knowledge, skills and concepts and the ability to learn.
- Develop skills in literacy, numeracy and ICT.
- Develop the ability to improve one's own learning and performance, solve problems and work with others with particular emphasis on resilience, resourcefulness, reflectiveness and reciprocity.
- Equip learners with transferable skills.
- Provide opportunities for the development of Welsh language and Welsh culture.

Guiding principles

- Every child is unique and is entitled to learning activities which are suited to his or her individual learning needs.
- Pupils must feel physically and emotionally secure before they can learn.
- Pupils learn best in a state of relaxed alertness best achieved within a stimulating environment where they can take risks.
- Pupils can be intelligent in various ways and may prefer different styles of learning.
- Pupils learn more effectively when they are active participants rather than passive recipients.
- Pupils learn best when they can build patterns of meaning on existing knowledge and experiences.
- Intelligent thinking and behaviours can be developed if expectations are sufficiently high.

- Learning is often developed and deepened through speaking, listening, thinking, practical activities and physical expression as well as through reading, writing and formal recording.
- Effective learners are resourceful and are able to reflect on and evaluate their own learning.
- Successful learners are well motivated, see value in learning and enjoy it.
- Homework is an opportunity for learners to build on learning as well as consolidating new learning.
- Effective learners are confident and accept that learning sometimes involves uncertainty and challenge.
- Successful learners take responsibility for their own learning.
- Effective learners can apply knowledge, skills and concepts in unfamiliar situations.
- Levels, or potential grades, are shared with learners to enable them to take responsibility for monitoring their own learning.
- Learners need individual objectives to help them achieve targets at least once every half term.
- All learners are unique and vulnerable groups need to have their individual needs met.

The School's curriculum will ensure that

- the education of all students has equal value;
- the provision is concerned with developing personal and social values as well as knowledge and skills; and
- while breadth is maintained, an element of individual choice exists to provide students with flexible learning pathways

The school curriculum

- focuses on the student;
- raises aspirations and sets appropriate challenges;
- ensures that appropriate skills development is woven throughout the curriculum;
- offers some reduced subject content with an increased focus on skills;
- focuses on continuity and progression;
- is flexible, balanced, relevant and differentiated;
- reflects Welsh Government priorities; and
- continues to deliver a distinctive curriculum that is appropriate for Wales.

The school will take every opportunity to ensure all students, whatever their ability, make the best progress possible and achieve the highest possible standards in subjects and qualifications. The school will strive to narrow the gaps in achievement and enable those not achieving age-related expectations to catch up with their peers. The school will challenge more able and talented students (MAT) so that they achieve their full potential and their progress is sustained and enhanced making certain all young people develop the skills and abilities needed for success in life and can apply them in a wide range of contexts.

Key elements in excellent lessons and learning activities

- A stimulating learning environment.
- Wrong answers are seen by teachers and learners as an opportunity to develop.
- Lesson 'starters' to engage pupils as quickly as possible in their learning.
- A plenary which draws together/sums up what has been learnt and links to the learning objective(s) used to inform planning/AfL.
- All learners make demonstrable progress during the lesson.
- A secure and comfortable environment in which pupils can be open and take risks.
- Teacher pupil relationships which are positive and which promote pupil motivation.
- Teacher appreciation of how factors such as ethnicity, linguistic background, gender and personal and social circumstances may affect learning.
- Learning built on what pupils already know, understand and can do.
- Thorough planning based on pupils' individual learning needs and the need to progress from prior attainment at a level appropriate to the pupil.
- High expectations of pupils who are set ambitious but attainable challenges.
- Where appropriate, effective planning and collaboration with non-teaching support staff and ALN Department.
- Clear aims and purposes understood by the pupils.
- Promotion of pupils' sense of self-worth and self-esteem.
- Learner Voice is used to ascertain learners' views about their learning at class, Department, House and Whole school level.
- Use of incidental Welsh demonstrated by staff and encouraged and rewarded in the children.
- Differentiation is built into lesson.

- Learning Intentions and shared success criteria so learners understand what they need to do to be successful.
- Targets are shared and reviewed periodically.
- Where appropriate, teachers encourage and reinforce safe practices when pupils are using ICT.
- Opportunities for pupils to focus on the 'how' of learning to make learning more accessible to them.

A variety of activities providing opportunities for pupils to:

- Assimilate new knowledge, skills and concepts.
- Over time, a variety of individual, paired, group and whole class activities.
- Opportunities for critical thinking, creativity and imagination.
- The use of a wide range of ICT experiences to extend and improve pupils' learning.
- Opportunities for pupils to assess themselves and their peers.
- Regular, focussed feedback which helps pupils' progress. Provision of written feedback using WWW (What Went Well) and EBI (Even Better If) and verbal feedback highlighting possible ways to improve.
- Where appropriate, learning activities which take place out of school hours or off site (e.g. field trips).
- Activities which develop the key skills of literacy, numeracy and ICT and the wider skills of improving one's own learning and performance, solving problems and working with others.
- Learning which links to the wider world including the world of work and which, whenever possible, relates to issues of Sustainable Development, Global Citizenship and Health Related Fitness.
- Learning which provides pupils with opportunities to see learning as transferable and relevant in other areas of the curriculum and for everyday life.
- Opportunities which enable pupils to think about how they learn.

General Arrangements

The school will deliver the National Curriculum at Key Stage 3 and 4 and fulfil the requirements of the Learning and Skills (Wales) Measure 2009. The curriculum will be organised in the way that best suits the needs of our students whilst ensuring the delivery of a broad and balanced provision.

At Key Stage 3 (KS3) the school curriculum consists of
Core subjects – English, Welsh, Mathematics, Science and Religious Studies;
Non-core subjects – modern foreign languages, design and technology, ICT, history, geography, art, music, physical education; and PSE

At Key Stage Four the school curriculum consists of
Compulsory subjects – English, Welsh second language, Mathematics, Science and Religious Studies and Physical Education;
PSE; and
a broad range of academic and vocational courses leading to external qualifications.

At Key Stage Five the school curriculum consists of
Through collaboration, a broad range of courses leading to external qualifications; and
All students follow the Welsh Baccalaureate (WBQ).

In line with the increased flexibility, introduced by Learning Pathways, students are given a 'free' option choice although considerable impartial advice and guidance is provided to help students choose a broad and balanced curriculum but also one which is relevant and appropriate to their chosen pathway and career aspirations.