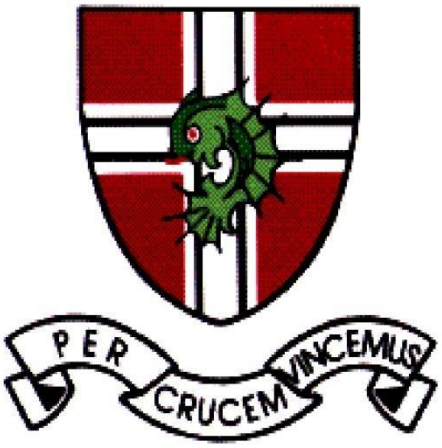
St John Fisher Catholic Voluntary Academy



Learning and Teaching Policy

March 2016

Academy Council Standards Committee

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INTRODUCTION

The Blessed Peter Snow Catholic Academy Trust

The Catholic Voluntary Academies which form the Blessed Peter Snow Catholic Academy Trust are distinctive as we provide grounding in the Catholic Faith for all our children. The special character of our Catholic academies is the quality of the religious teaching, integrated into the overall education of our children. Our beliefs, which are Gospel centred, affect the way we live, making our academies living examples of Christ and His teachings.

"Education is not and must never be considered as purely utilitarian. It is about forming the human person, equipping him or her to live life to the full – in short it is about imparting wisdom. And true wisdom is inseparable from knowledge of the Creator.'" (Pope Benedict XVI, Address to Teachers and Religious, Twickenham, September 2010).

Our Academies therefore operate and are informed by the following four key principles of Christian formation:

- **Places of Discipleship**
- **Places where Communities are created**
- **Places of Learning**
- **Places where we treasure God's World**

In light of the above principles, the Trust aims to:

- ensure secure, welcoming and engaging environments in which all individuals learn to value and respect both themselves and others

- provide all individuals with the opportunities to achieve excellence, to develop their full potential as human beings and to encourage and challenge them to do so

- uphold the unshakable belief in the unique potential of each child, student and member of staff

- provide a curriculum that initiates students into the knowledge, values, attitudes and skills they need to become mature Christian adults in their personal, social, family and working lives.

POLICY STATEMENT

The School's aims and objectives guide the members of our community towards achieving **"excellence in education"**. Our Catholic ethos and values upon which the school was founded inform this policy. It is these foundations which will guide how we live, learn and educate at St John Fisher and therefore they should be in evidence in all that we do. Teaching and Learning will permeate all that we do in school. This policy will help ensure that we can deliver our aims for teaching and learning as set out in our Curriculum Policy.

Why Teaching & Learning?

"The principle goal of education is to create men and women who are capable of doing new things, not simply repeating what other generations have done."
Jean Piaget

RATIONALE

As a school we aim to

- empower teachers with an ideal model upon which lessons are planned in order to maximise learning
- provide common criteria against which excellent teaching and learning practice can be celebrated and develop that which is not, toward excellence
- ensure a common high quality of experience for all students to help maximise each individual's potential, whilst supporting creativity and individuality within teaching and learning (teachers and students)
- help spread and share all teaching and learning practice that is of an excellent standard
- provide an insight into the review and development of current and future teaching and learning practice, which enables staff and students to remain stimulated and focussed.
- reward and celebrate excellent classroom practitioners.

NOTE:

Any work on Teaching and Learning, as functions of its complex nature, must take account of assessment, behaviour, and equal opportunities. There are Policies and/or guidance in place for those aspects of Teaching and Learning and their contents will not be duplicated in this policy. Please refer to those policies for all relevant information.

It is important at the outset to determine what constitutes good teaching and good learning. According to Ofsted outstanding teaching in lessons is when:

"…..ideas and skills are taught in an inspiring and highly effective way."

Quality Teaching:

- provides carefully structured activity matched sensitively to individual student needs based on prior learning and attainment
- gives students some responsibility for their work and independence
- is differentiated to ensure both challenge for the more able students and support for those who need it
- develops well planned, prepared and paced lessons that maintain high levels of interaction with the class
- provides ample, challenging work stemming from expert knowledge of curriculum, how to teach it and how students learn
- maintains high levels of student involvement in tasks
- creates a positive atmosphere in the classroom through excellent relationships
- seeks to ensure the provision of a safe accessible learning environment which is conducive to effective teaching and learning
- recognises the importance of developing personal learning and thinking skills requiring all pupils to develop as independent enquirers, creative thinkers, reflective learners, team workers, self-managers, and effective participators.
- In addition, develops other key skills such as literacy/oracy, numeracy and use of Information, Communication Technology (ICT)
- provides a classroom/learning environment that seeks to engage the attention of all pupils, regardless of disability, in a range of learning opportunities that meet individual need
- provides a classroom/learning environment that values the product of student learning and inspires pupils to do their best
- seeks to broaden the children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness
- incorporates high levels of praise and encouragement
- uses a variety of approaches; strategies and techniques are well selected and time is used productively.
- uses homework effectively; particularly to reinforce and extend what is learned in school, if not, prepare for a new topic

"Give the pupils something to do, not something to learn. And the doing is of such a nature as to demand thinking. Learning, naturally, results." (Dewey)

Quality Learning is:

- when students are captivated and enthused by what they are learning
- an active process – a product of doing rather than receiving
- linked to prior knowledge
- supported by both the teacher and other students, and takes the form of interaction, collaboration and teacher intervention
- collaborative through cooperation, dialogue and creating knowledge with others
- centred on the learners" responsibility for their own learning. They are able to exercise choice, develop goals, plan their approach and work independently
- reflective and enables learners to monitor and review the learning, making improvements to their work to ensure progress
- where learners make considerably better progress than may be expected
- when students display a strong desire to contribute the effort and concentration required to match the teacher's passion for learning

OUR MAIN AIM: TO MAXIMISE EVERY LEARNER'S POTENTIAL

In order to make this aim a reality, as well as implementing the Elements In Practice (outlined below), teachers should as a team of staff always:

- set high expectations of learners at school that clearly define the effort and behaviours that students should put into learning in lessons.
- communicate optimism by using positive language and designing challenging tasks.
- demonstrate a commitment to every learner's success, making him or her feel included, secure and valued.
- create an environment where learners feel able to make mistakes and comfortable to learn from them, without feeling inadequate or foolish.
- create opportunities for learners to develop personal qualities such as considerate behaviour and positive and tolerant attitudes that will enable them to contribute effectively to the community.

- set high expectations of learners at home - engaging parents in their child's learning in partnership with the school. Parental involvement and support in the home is critically important.

- provide a clear moral code as a basis of behaviour which is promoted consistently through all aspects of the school that will enable them to be role models within the wider community.

- create a "high challenge-low stress" environment for learning in which students are relaxed, believe that they can learn (high self-esteem) and want to learn (motivated).

- create opportunities for students to enjoy themselves or have fun: this is when students learn best, because their emotional state is fundamental to learning.

PRACTICE

All lessons should contain the following elements listed below in some shape or form. They are the strategies formulated with staff as being most important to empower us to consistently deliver high quality lessons. In so doing we believe these elements are core to enable us to unlock a student's full potential and hence maximise their progress and level of attainment:

1. **Differentiated Learning Objectives are Identified and Shared**

   This needs to be a two step approach in which students are told not only the purpose of the lesson but also what the teacher expects in terms of learning outcomes from activity. There is a need to communicate why they are doing what they are doing and how it fits into the bigger picture of the subject or their wider learning across the curriculum. Learning Objectives and outcomes should be differentiated to the different layers of ability within the group. This could be done by using the phrasing All, Most, Some or Must, Should, Could at the start of objectives. Be aware, however, that to target all of the class with a level of work which some have already achieved/are working above would not be providing sufficient challenge or enable good progress for those individuals.

   This might be achieved through:

   - the learning objectives being outlined to the students at or near to the beginning of each lesson.

   - the students being clear about the learning objectives in terms of what they are expected to learn. Objectives might be phrased in terms of the stem:

   We are <u>learning</u> to …:

   a. **know that …** (for knowledge – factual information such as names of people or equipment, places, symbols, formulae etc.);

b. **understand how/why …** (for understanding – concepts, reasons, effects, principles, processes etc.);

c. **develop / be able to …** (for skills – using knowledge, applying techniques, analysing information etc.);

d. **develop / be aware of …** (for attitudes and values – empathy, caring, sensitivity towards social issues, feelings, moral issues etc.);

e. **explore and refine strategies for …** (creating, designing, hypothesising, exploring alternatives).

A combination of at least three of these ought to be included in lessons, in order to drive a variety of activity. This will give students some consistency across all learning areas.

The students understand desired learning outcomes. You want to tell students what you expect from them as a high quality outcome of each lesson or part lesson and how they will be assessed on the work they are to do, create or produce? This will usually be done through effective modelling of tasks and describing or showing different possible attainment levels students will produce. They may be related to the levels/grades that different levels of ability will be targeting within the class. Outcomes may be phrased in terms of this stem:

What I am looking For …: ("WILF")

a. from everyone is….."

b. from some of you…." or better, "you to be successful is..."

c. from a few of you….." or "for top marks is……"

2. Review Learning To Link And Consolidate

Review helps create links with previous learning. This helps build secure foundations for subsequent learning, so that learners can progressively develop the skills, knowledge, understanding, attitudes and values contained in the curriculum. An effective lesson should be organised into a sequence of distinct learning **episodes** with a beginning (teacher or student input), a middle (activity for students) and then a quick check for understanding (mini-plenaries) before moving to the next episode – until the end of the lesson, at which there might be a longer review time (plenary). Students remember more from the beginning of a learning activity than they do from the middle. They also learn more from the end of the experience than they do from the middle. It follows that it is beneficial to create lots of beginnings and endings in a lesson. Review should be part of all beginnings and endings of all lessons and episodes, and therefore its effectiveness is important to learning.

This might be achieved through:

- previous learning being recapped by the teacher.
- students being involved in the recap of previous learning.
- recap of learning being done throughout the lesson in relation to learning objectives. Establishing what learners know, understand, can do, are aware of or have explored, correcting existing misconceptions where necessary.
- review of learning done toward the end of the lesson to consolidate learning and its retention (plenary).
- providing time for reviewing and reflecting upon the learning that has taken place, as well as how and why they have learned or to improve work through green pen work

3. Variety of Learning Activity

The main activity episodes of lessons are critical in making learning an enjoyable and challenging experience. It should stimulate learning through matching teaching techniques and strategies to the range of learning styles and needs within your class, and indeed groups within that class, to engage actively all students. Initially this should mean that you ensure that you use teaching techniques and strategies that will regularly facilitate the use of all the different learning styles, so as to maximise students' strengths, and develop relative weaknesses. Ultimately it should involve using student data and assessments to help design different tasks to meet individual student learning preferences. It should provide opportunities for students to show and develop their skills and abilities to work independently and collaboratively.

This might be achieved through:

- being confident, flexible, open-minded, willing to experiment and embrace change in terms of your own teaching style, and adapt appropriately.
- planning and delivering a range of activities that match the maturity of the learners and the material to be learned, reflect different learning preferences and involve high levels of time on task for "making sense" of information. This may often be achieved by offering students choices and by negotiating learning strategies with students.
- using creativity and imagination, and the resources offered by new technology, to engage, enthuse, challenge and support learners, and reward their effort and achievement.
- engaging in a dialogue with students that centres on effective learning; what it looks like and how it can be developed.

- tasks set in a time context or that are "time bonded".

- the students being aware of the timing in the lesson and of the longer-term deadlines.

- activities set in a sequential order that promotes progression and complexity of learning.

- assessment having informed the decisions behind which activities are selected and how the students are grouped for them.

- students being involved in planning, developing and evaluating their own activity and learning experiences.

- activities which are varied in order to access all learning styles and intelligences.

- the sequence of tasks that students are engaged in, allowing for appropriate variation in the pace of learning, and the level of challenge.

When the teacher decides how many tasks or episodes to cover in a lesson, and how long each should be, as a guide try not to exceed the concentration span of your student`s. It has been suggested that the average concentration span corresponds roughly to chronological age plus one or two minutes. With challenging classes take this figure as a maximum – so, for example, keep episodes under 12 minutes for Year 7 students.

With more able classes this may actually cap potential though where more open ended tasks set over longer periods of time will allow them to excel. It is essential therefore to remember that variety doesn't just happen; it needs to be planned according to what best meets the needs of the individuals within your class.

4. Differentiation to Enable All Learners to Succeed

Differentiation can be seen as an on-going process that is accommodating the needs of individual students in our school. It ensures that teaching allows most learners to make at least their expected progress in relation to their capability. It will also stretch the less able to work as close to their capability as possible and the gifted and talented way beyond. Differentiation is best achieved when based upon an informed review of the student's learning.....therefore through a diagnostic and formative assessment procedure.

Differentiation within classes should therefore take account of your students' baseline, benchmark and minimum target grade data that each student has been set in the context of reaching their full potential. Other professional judgements through diagnostic and formative assessment may reshape your initial strategies over time, but this data should remain central to the differentiation you employ for your classes.

Modifications, adjustments and alterations can then be made in the following areas:-

- learning tasks and activities
- teaching and learning methodologies.

These modifications are made at the SHORT TERM PLANNING stage where the decisions about differentiation are informed by assessment.

This might be achieved:

a. **by TASK:** because students work in a variety of ways with their different strengths and aptitudes, a range of tasks spanning the spectrum of abilities can be an effective way of differentiating.

b. **by RESOURCE:** activities which involve resources available to extend the more able as well as support the low achiever. It means changing the resources by which students learn to meet their individual needs. A consideration of the following may be vital in preparation:-

   - Layout, design, graphics and readability of the resource.
   - Using pupil-friendly storage and retrieval systems that will facilitate independent approaches to learning.
   - Training the pupils to use a variety of resources independently
   - Reducing the dependence on whole class texts as a source for teaching.
   - Variety of mediums i.e. bigger striking implements, marker pens and poster paper

c. **by RESPONSE:** the response of the teacher / adult / fellow student is a form by which differentiation can be achieved. This is essential in cases where differentiation by outcome is planned as the teacher's written or spoken response will vary from student to student. Marking of a student's work is an important medium for differentiation by response.

d. **by OUTCOME:** students working on a common un-differentiated task will inevitably produce different outcomes to the task set, as long as the task is not too closed. These differentiated outcomes should be ***used primarily to assess and then inform our planning for differentiation in another way (task, resource, group, support).***

e. **by GROUP:** differentiation by group is an important way to allow purposeful use of resources (including the other students in the group). Students could

belong to semi-permanent groups within the larger teaching groups. The students will have a record of the groups to which they belong. The students need not necessarily be told how they are grouped other than there ought to be a mixed gender dimension to the groupings where appropriate, as per current school procedures on classroom seating arrangements.

f. **by SUPPORT:** the different needs of the different students will inevitably mean that some students need greater support than others. There are a number of strategies that can provide that support. Using the skills of Learning Support Assistants in the classroom to create a positive environment for learning would most certainly be one if they are available.

These strategies adapt teaching to the potential and needs of each individual, from the gifted and talented to those with special educational needs, and as a result create a culture of respect for others and their learning, whatever their gender, social background or ethnic group. We expect to see a number of these different forms of differentiation over a period of time.

5. Assessment used Formatively to Involve Students in their Learning

The key focus of assessment in teaching and learning must be to enable students to be continually aware of where they are now in their learning, where they can or need to get to, and most importantly how best to get there.

- sharing assessment criteria with students very early on in tasks, in a way which is easy for them to understand and is transparent for all.
- recognising the standards to aim for by showing students exemplars of work previously produced by other students
- recognising the standards to aim for by teachers modelling exemplars of work
- providing the basis for varied and effective feedback and development points for students to help them realise their potential by making them active partners in their own learning.
- developing students' questioning skills.
- developing students' self and peer assessment.
- promoting confidence among learners and being aware of students' preferred learning styles.
- providing experiences and activities that enable students to be involved in assessing and monitoring their own achievements.
- Providing opportunities to use teachers' marking comments to return to and improve their own work through green penning activities

- ensuring that assessment yields information that is useful in helping to improve teaching; helping teachers to get to know students and to plan work with appropriate pace and challenge

- ensuring that assessment yields information that is useful in helping to improve *learning*; helping students and parents to understand how they learn best, and how well they have learned.

Assessment is of prime importance to staff to inform their future planning and activity with classes. We must recognise equally that it has a profound influence on student motivation and self-esteem. Therefore it must show consideration and be both constructive and sensitive. Also our ability to share this information with parents effectively is key to students being supported as well as possible at home.

DISSEMINATING AND EVALUATING THE POLICY

This will be achieved and supported by:

- a firm commitment to improving teaching and learning for individuals, faculties, the school and the wider community.

- the development and improvement of learning and teaching as the central component in the school and faculty development planning cycle.

- the use of mechanisms for continuing professional development (quality assurance policy, courses, coaching, inset, mentoring, training and so on) within the cycle and framework of performance management.

This might be achieved through:

- having a faculty policy on marking, assessment and reporting which ensures that feedback is provided to teachers and students about progress in order to support future learning and informs necessary adjustments to teaching.

- sharing learning objectives with students.

- the formal and informal monitoring systems which are already in place including lesson observation, paired and peer observations, teacher planning scrutiny, work sampling, collection of assessment and effort indicator data, Kirkland Rowell EPM surveys and canvassing of staff and student views to inform the assessment of the following **outcomes of effective learning**:

- more connected knowledge – of things, people, action

- greater complexity of understanding

- wider range of skills and strategies

- increased engagement and motivation
- a more reflective and self-directing approach to learning
- more positive emotions about and a greater affiliation to learning
- a sense of membership and participation in a learning community
- a greater facility for interacting and learning with others
- the promotion of oneself as a „lifelong" learner

And importantly… the fun, sense of achievement and sheer enjoyment that learning brings.

Main Sources used in the preparation of this document.

Framework for the inspection of schools in England and Inspectors' Handbook.

A range of material from Key Stage 3 and National Strategy Publications see www.nationalstrategies.standards.dcsf.gov.uk

The National Curriculum

A range of policy documents from schools incl uding St. George"s, Herts.; Newman, Rotherham;
Sacred Heart; Cleveland; Ashcombe, Surrey; Colne, Essex; King Edward VI, Northumberland; Weald of Kent Grammar School; Sacred Heart, Sefton; West Oaks School.

APPENDIX - Post 16

Core Principles – Post 16 Education

- There is no known ceiling to achievement. Intelligence can be developed by good teaching.
- Clarity is essential to allow students to fully access their chosen programmes of study.
- High expectations are important, but to fulfil these high expectations students must be shown how to improve by their teachers. This requires students to be taught to learn and to reflect on their learning, and to assess their progress.
- Learning objectives that challenge each student and take their own learning forward must be shared explicitly with students and reviewed at the end of the lesson.
- Effective formative and summative assessment in the light of learning objectives must be regularly undertaken.
- Lessons must be carefully planned and clearly structured to include an engaging and stimulating variety of learning activities and tasks which contribute to meeting the learning objectives. Teachers must evaluate their lessons so that their own practice can improve.
- Teachers must create and maintain a purposeful learning environment, both physically and in terms of classroom ethos.
- Achievement must be recognised and celebrated, and underachievement must be challenged and addressed by teachers, not simply processed.

Faculty Check List

The check list below consists of actions which we consider most effective in raising student attainment at Key Stage 5. This checklist should be at the forefront of planning for Teaching and Learning Post 16.

Faculty staff who teach Sixth Form students should:			Checklist
· Be made aware of the T & L Checklist			
· Attend relevant KS5 exam board training			
· Share good practice within school or by visiting other Post 16 institutions			
· Develop appropriate schemes of work (long, medium & short term).			
· Have a clear rewards policy for Sixth Form students			
· Provide students with	-	copy of syllabus	
	-	assessment timetable	
	-	resources on "student share"	
	-	past exam papers	

- examiner mark schemes	
- "models" of work at different levels	
· Set homework at least once per week	
· Mark and return work to students within 10 working days	
· Give clear guidance to students about how to improve	
· Encourage students to study outside the classrooms for a minimum of 4 hours per subject per week (homework/coursework/reading/research/condensing notes/note taking/revision etc)	
· Organise mock exams for Jan and/or May exams (same length of time as exam)	
· Provide data at the 5 collection points	
· Organise intervention strategies for students who are underachieving and identify on SIMs marksheets	
· Contact home if there are student concerns (letter/email/telephone)	
· Develop independent learning skills for students through classwork and homework	
· Organise subject reviews twice per year (before Sixth Form Review)	
Ask students to: - redo tests/exams/timed essays that are below target grades	
- complete subject evaluations twice per year	
- hand in their files for checking twice per year	
- attend supervised study on Thursday evening if deadlines are missed consistently	
Students should:	
· Know their target grades	
· Know their progress grades	
· Know how to improve their work	

Equalities Impact Assessment

School	**St John Fisher Catholic Voluntary Academy**
Date	**19th January 2016**
Lead member of staff	**Ms Catherine Hall**
Other involved staff/role	**Dissemination to all staff and governors**

Proposed Plan

Background/ how this proposal has come about

Reason for proposal – to introduce new practice/provision to change or reduce practice/provision to remove practice/provision

Main stakeholders

Any legislation or guidance that informs the proposals

An updating of current policy within school to introduce any new policy and practice which reflects current pedagogy and remove any out of date policy and practice

Is the proposal likely to have an adverse impact on compliance with the Equality Duty?

Eliminating unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation **Y/N**

Promoting equality of opportunity **Y/N**

Fostering good relations **Y/N**

Please explain

Consultation Process
With whom do you plan to consult?
How?
Where is the evidence of the consultation?

Line manager – Headteacher - through line management Governors – through allowing them to see draft policies and comment HoFs – through T and L meeting

Potential Issues

Characteristic	**Impact of proposal (specify if impact is to pupil, parent/carer, staff, governor, other)**	**Positive Negative Neutral**	**Can barrier be removed? Y/N**
Disability		**Neutral**	
Race		**Neutral**	
Sex		**Neutral**	
Gender reassignment		**Neutral**	
Pregnancy, maternity		**Neutral**	
Religion/belief		**Neutral**	
Sexual orientation		**Neutral**	
Marriage, civil partnership		**Neutral**	
Age		**Neutral**	

Explain in more detail

Purpose is to encourage the highest levels of learning and teaching for all students.