

St. Joseph's RC High School  
Ysgol Uwchradd Gatholig Joseff Sant

## Curriculum Policy

### 4. Curriculum Policy



This policy was updated **December 2020** by Jane Morgan

This policy was presented and adopted by the Governing Body March 2021

This staff were made aware of this policy March 2021

This policy will be reviewed **December 2021**

# Curriculum Policy

## PRINCIPLES

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

### Faith in Action

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

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

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

As a Catholic school, we

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

## Religious Education

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

## Learning as equipping young people for life

Learning experiences embrace the various aspects of a broad education: academic, emotional, aesthetic, physical, social, moral and spiritual.

Our curriculum is planned to be broad, balanced, flexible, relevant, inclusive and challenging, matching the needs of the individual irrespective of gender, race or background.

As a school community, we believe that our passion for and commitment to innovative and exciting teaching and learning experiences informs our school curriculum. This means every student is able to excel and make rapid progress towards their personal goals, always achieving their potential. This is effective when

- we develop pupils who are spiritually aware of the world they live in.
- we nurture a curiosity for knowledge.
- we build a range of independent learning skills and develop enquiring minds who are able to adapt to the demands of a changing world.
- we strive to achieve the highest academic results and to realise the potential of every pupil.
- we foster a sense of personal identity and self worth.
- we construct our curriculum to allow maximum choice and flexibility, so that programmes in key stage 4 and 5 have high personalisation.
- we create a climate that stimulates excitement about learning.

- we listen to pupils, colleagues and expert practitioners to inform our practice.
- we allow teachers the flexibility to deliver in more creative ways that suit the learners they teach.
- we work hard to contextualise learning.
- we work towards building a community – locally, nationally and internationally in order to develop active citizens of the world.
- we foster a life long love of learning and equip learners to thrive in an increasingly digital world.

These principles are in line with the key purposes of the four curriculum purposes, outlined in the new Welsh curriculum orders (published January, 2020) which state that our curriculum must enable our students to be

- ambitious, capable learners.
- enterprising, creative contributors.
- ethical, informed citizens.
- healthy and confident individuals.

Ultimately, all these strands combine to give each individual the best life chances and allow them to make choices about their contribution to our community, because this is the basis for a happy and successful life.

This is most effectively achieved through a blend of traditional expectations and creative learning approaches continually updated in line with the latest educational research.

We believe that the essence of education is that teachers know the young people they teach and what they need to know and create a climate of professional learning and collaboration to allow teachers' creativity and innovation to flourish.

The overall result is a dynamic classroom characterised by effective relationships and expectation of success and a high degree of challenge in all that is undertaken.

There is an emphasis on all staff to maintain teaching spaces in such a way that they engage students and provide appropriate stimulation. The school recognises that the organisation of teaching spaces contributes to the ways students learn. This is true whether the teaching space is a physical space such as a classroom or an outside space or whether the teaching space is in a 'virtual' classroom through remote/online learning platforms.

## **CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENTS**

The curriculum we offer is in line with national developments and research and is reviewed at least annually with curriculum plans shared with and agreed by the Governing Body.

The areas of learning and experience as outlined in the new Welsh curriculum orders (2020):

- expressive arts.
- health and well-being.
- humanities.
- language, literacy and communication.
- mathematics and numeracy.
- science and technology.

All pupils study these areas of learning and experience and we are regularly reviewing ways to continue to develop links between departments and through liaison with our partner primary schools as we move towards the adoption of this curriculum by 2022.

The cross-curriculum responsibilities which stretch across the curriculum as outlined in the new curriculum orders:

- literacy.
- numeracy.
- digital competence.

## **Literacy and numeracy**

Literacy and numeracy is built into our curriculum and embedded within our teaching and learning programmes across the school. The curriculum has been mapped to highlight opportunities for developing literacy and numeracy skills across the curriculum, carefully linked to the Literacy and Numeracy Framework (LNF). Regular opportunities to assess these skills to ensure progression are mapped and tracked through departmental schemes of work.

## **Digital Competence Framework (DCF)**

Developing digital skills in our pupils is of the utmost importance in ensuring that our pupils are not only a part of the digital world of the twenty first century but they act safely, responsibly and respectfully within this world.

Digital competence is one of three cross-curricular responsibilities, alongside literacy and numeracy. It focuses on developing digital skills which can be applied to a wide range of subjects and scenarios. At St. Joseph's, departments are developing the DCF through a range of tasks and approaches. The strands include: citizenship, interacting and collaborating, producing; and data and computational thinking.

Google Classroom is proving central to the development of the DCF at St. Joseph's. This virtual learning environment (VLE) allows students to access and submit classwork, homework and coursework.

## **CURRICULUM ORGANISATION**

Students are grouped in ways we feel are most appropriate to their age and ability. Where students are organised in sets there is appropriate flexibility for student progression with regards to setting and examination tiers at all stages.

Effective provision for students with additional language or learning needs is made whenever possible by targeted classroom learning support and withdrawal sessions.

The school operates on fifty, one-hour, periods per fortnight.

## **KEY STAGE 3**

Effective transition arrangements between primary and secondary school allow for an appropriate level of knowledge of the curriculum in readiness for Year 7.

All pupils in the first three years meet the requirements of the National Curriculum, studying religious education, English, mathematics, science, ICT, art, music, drama, physical education, Welsh, personal and social education, Mini-Bac, either French or Spanish, and technology (including CAD/CAM, food, RM, electronics, systems control, textiles, product design).

In Key Stage 3, the majority of students are taught in mixed ability form classes. The exceptions are:

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

## **KEY STAGE 4**

All pupils study the curriculum that meets The Learning and Skills Measure (2009). Within the compulsory core curriculum all pupils study in sets: English language, English literature, mathematics, numeracy, science (triple science / double science / single science) and religious education.

All pupils study: games, Welsh and Welsh Baccalaureate Skills Challenge Certificate.

In addition, pupils choose option subjects from a range of GCSE and vocational courses. Option subjects are taught in mixed ability groups.

## **KEY STAGE 5**

All students have the choice of studying a local curriculum, that significantly exceeds the 14-19 Learning Pathways. The curriculum is offered in collaboration, as part of the Newport West Post-16 Partnership.

The partnership includes: Bassaleg School, The John Frost School and Newport High School.

The Welsh Baccalaureate qualification is undertaken by all students.

All students follow the year 12 and 13 general religious education course.

### **Related documents:**

*Prosperity for All: the national strategy (2017)*

*Qualified for life: an education improvement plan for 3 to 19 year olds in Wales (2014)*

*A curriculum for Wales – a curriculum for life (2015)*

*Teaching Tomorrow's Teachers: Options for the future of initial teacher education in Wales (2015)*

*Taking Wales Forward 2016-2021 (2016)*

*National model for regional working*

*The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act (2015)*

*Curriculum for Wales (2020) (<https://hwb.gov.wales/curriculum-for-wales>)*