

ST MARY'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL



Interim Curriculum, Teaching and Learning Policy

(June 2021)

A purposeful, authentic and relevant curriculum

Other documents and policies to be read in conjunction with this document

- Assessment Policy
- Feedback and Marking Policy
- Additional Learning Needs Policy
- Prospectus

This policy will be updated regularly as we continue to design and develop our curriculum in line with the Curriculum for Wales.

At St Mary's we offer rich and exciting experiences which are authentic, ambitious, empowering and fully inclusive. Pupils' wellbeing is central to the school's philosophy and ethos. We are committed to developing a curriculum which enthuses and inspires all of our pupils to become mature, ambitious, capable and independent learners.

We have a strong emphasis on the acquisition and application of skills and knowledge through experiential and active learning. All children contribute to their curriculum, ensuring that they have ownership over their learning. We enable our pupils to make sense of growing up in contemporary Wales and of issues which will be important in their future. We allow learners to develop an appreciation of the ways identity, heritage and cynefin can influence them emotionally and spiritually, and help build their sense of self and of belonging.

Our curriculum is all that the learner experiences in pursuit of the Four Purposes which are the shared vision and aspiration for every child. It is not simply what we teach, but how we teach and crucially, why we teach it.

We promote the Christian virtues (character strengths) and shape personal values, rooted in the Gospel of Christ, and expressed in the teachings of the Catholic Church. Fostering these character strengths, enables learners to develop, in alignment with the Four Purposes. Our inclusive approach encompasses an entitlement to high-quality learning experiences for every child in the context of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC).

Our personalised curriculum

We believe that every member of the school community is a learner; pupils, staff and parents. Together we develop as a learning organisation, using information from research, through the sharing of good practice and real life experiences to build a culture for improvement.

Our curriculum places emphasis on equipping young people for life. It is engaging, broad, balanced and relevant to our learners. It ensures

progression and continuity for the pupils and provides opportunities for children to acquire knowledge, skills and experiences.

Teachers select a broad, open-ended topic or theme within the context of the Four Purposes and the integral skills underpinned by the principles of progression to ignite pupils' interests. (See Appendix)

Pupils then work individually, with 'talk partners' or in groups to decide what they would like to learn. The information is then collated and the pupils' ideas are mapped to the Areas of Learning and Experience (AoLEs), using the statements of What Matters and Descriptions of Learning to ensure progression. Across all AoLEs, the application of numeracy, literacy and digital competency is robustly planned for.

Teachers and pupils formulate a series of possible 'Big Questions' stemming from the pupils' plans, ensuring that learning is real and purposeful. These are used to create 'challenges'/'challenge boxes', which are holistic, learning experiences with literacy, numeracy and digital competence carefully interwoven. Pupils work either with their 'talk partner', in groups or independently on the challenges. Pupils often have the freedom to choose how they complete challenges. There is a strong emphasis on using workshops, visitors, visits (including 'virtual field trips') to enhance the pupils' learning. Seesaw is extensively used across the school as an online portfolio of pupils' learning experiences and as a platform to engage parents in their child's learning.

Teachers provide effective 'live' feedback to support and extend learning. Effective use is made of assessment for learning strategies such as pupil-generated success criteria, toolkits, working walls, learning powers and zones to support pupils' independence. Teachers provide higher-order vocabulary for each 'Big Question' to immerse the pupils in rich language so that they can discuss and engage with the topic at the highest level.

Expectations for Learning

We have a commitment to high standards and very clear expectations of the staff, pupils and the environment in which we all learn.

Staff will...

- offer learners experience of life in an inclusive community founded on Gospel values
- support Catholic parents in their responsibility for the academic, physical, spiritual, moral and religious education of their children in accordance with the teachings of the church
- support the social and emotional development of learners
- enable learners to make progress towards the four purposes
- provide opportunities for pupils to practise their skills in real life situations
- encourage pupils to take responsibility for their own learning

- encourage independence and active learning
- encourage collaboration and cooperation
- celebrate achievement and foster positive self-esteem
- celebrate and value differences
- create a stimulating teaching and learning environment
- use a blend of pedagogical approaches to promote problem solving, creative and critical thinking
- reinforce cross-curricular responsibilities including literacy, numeracy and digital competency
- focus on identifying each individual learner's strengths, achievements, areas for improvement and, if relevant, any barriers to learning
- from their starting point, effectively track pupil progress to ascertain the next steps required to move the learning forward, including any additional challenge and support required.
- respond to the individual needs of all learners, including those with an Additional Learning Need (ALN) or Medical Need.
- embed assessment into day-to-day practice in a way that engages the learner and makes it indistinguishable from learning.
- use assessment for learning principles and support learners to develop a growth mindset

The learners will:

- be curious about everything; and active in their engagement with the world, changing what they can for the better
- be learned, finding God in all things; and wise in the ways they use their learning for the common good.
- be faith-filled in their beliefs and hopeful for the future.
- be grateful for their own gifts, for the gift of other people, and for the blessings of each day; and be generous with their gifts, becoming men and women for others.
- be compassionate towards others, near and far, especially the less fortunate; and loving by their just actions and forgiving words.
- take risks, challenge themselves to grow and learn within their own learning zone and learn from their mistakes
- value their own and others' ideas
- make choices about their learning including when to use ICT
- use a range of approaches to learning
- enjoy working together and on their own
- recognise that good health and well-being are important to enable successful learning.

The school environment will ...

- be a safe, comfortable and inspiring place for learning
- be calm, purposeful and well-organised

- be equipped with appropriate technology to inspire creative learning
- provide enjoyable opportunities for outdoor learning
- provide learners with opportunities to care for their natural world



Appendix

The four purposes

These four purposes will be the foundation of everything you learn.

All children and young people will get support to be:

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



Areas of learning and experience

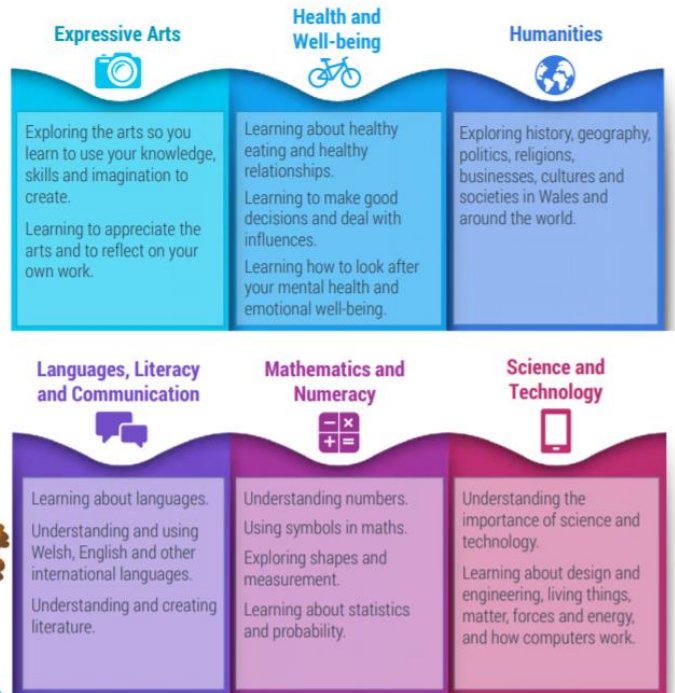
The new curriculum is about helping you connect your learning.

As well as learning **literacy**, **numeracy** and **digital skills**, there will be six areas of learning and experience. You might not have lessons called these, but everything you learn will connect to these areas.

The curriculum your school develops should cover:

- human rights and the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child
- diversity and respecting differences
- experiences and skills for careers and the workplace
- local, national and international aspects of all learning.

They must also teach you about relationships and sexuality education too.



Important life skills

As well as literacy, numeracy and digital competence, the new curriculum will have more opportunities for you to learn skills.



Creativity and innovation skills

You will have opportunities to explore, communicate, create plans and find solutions.



Critical thinking and problem-solving skills

You will have opportunities to ask questions, look at the evidence, make decisions and solve problems.



Personal effectiveness

You will learn to make the most of your time and talents. You'll get support to grow in confidence, become aware of different social, cultural and ethical views and learn from your mistakes.



Planning and organising skills

You will learn to manage your time, set goals, make decisions and check your work.

What Matters

We want to make sure that your learning focuses on things that matter for you now and in your adult life.

Each area of learning and experience has **Statements of what matters in learning**. They help you think about what you're learning. They help you see how topics link to each other, to work and to life.

Statements of what matters can help you join up the dots. As your learning grows, you will link your learning together more.

An example of how it works

In the **Expressive Arts** area of learning and experience, one of the **Statements of what matters** is:

'Engagement in the arts helps nurture and grow your creativity.'

As you progress and think about your learning, you'll have different experiences:

I can understand Welsh literature and can use what I hear, read and view to help create my own work.

By exploring different forms of communication in the arts I am developing my sense of self.

I can create using different materials.



12 Pedagogical Principles

Create authentic contexts for learning	Encourage learners to take responsibility for their own learning	Support social and emotional development & positive relationships	Encourage collaboration
Sustained pupil effort to reach high but achievable targets	Employing a broad repertoire of teaching approaches	Promote problem solving, creative & critical thinking	Build on previous knowledge & experience to engage interest
Focus on the 4 Purposes	Use assessment for learning to accelerate progress	Make connections within & across Areas of Learning & Experience	Reinforce Cross Curricular Responsibilities, Literacy, Numeracy, Digital Competence

Catholic Schools and New Curriculum

Diagram 1

