

Our Lady's Catholic High School

Teaching and Learning Policy

Love, Learn, Grow

At Our Lady's, we place Christ at the heart of everything we do. Through our school 'Being One of Ours' virtues, we nurture each individual to love, learn and grow in their unique, God-given potential, ready to be of service to the world.

Reviewed: Summer Term 2026

Review date: Summer Term 2028

1. Vision and Rationale

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“Leaders and governors have high ambitions for all pupils... Pupils benefit from a well-thought-out curriculum.”

Ofsted, 2022

At Our Lady’s Catholic High School, we place Christ at the centre of all that we do. Through our mission to *Love, Learn, Grow*, we are committed to nurturing each pupil to fulfil their God-given potential and to develop as compassionate, thoughtful and responsible members of society.

Inspired by the Gospel and the Catholic tradition of service, we seek to form young people who are equipped not only for academic success, but also to contribute positively to the world as “men and women for others”. We believe education should develop the whole person spiritually, morally, intellectually, socially and emotionally, enabling pupils to serve others with dignity, compassion and justice.

Our teaching and learning reflect our core virtues. We strive to develop pupils who are:

- attentive to their learning
- eloquent in their communication
- compassionate in their relationships
- discerning in their thinking and decision-making
- intentional and active in their pursuit of excellence

We believe that every pupil, regardless of background or starting point, should access a rich, ambitious curriculum and achieve highly.

Teaching is the means through which our ambitious subject curricula are enacted. While this policy establishes whole-school principles for effective teaching and learning, subject leaders retain responsibility for how these principles are interpreted and implemented within their disciplines.

Our approach is grounded in:

- high-quality, inclusive teaching
- responsive assessment
- purposeful feedback that leads to improvement

2. Principles of Teaching and Learning

Teaching and learning at Our Lady’s Catholic High School are grounded in evidence-informed practice. Our approach draws on Rosenshine’s Principles of Instruction, research from the

Education Endowment Foundation (EEF), and professional learning developed through our two-year SSAT Assessment for Learning programme.

These approaches underpin our focus on high expectations, effective instruction, responsive teaching and the use of assessment to support pupil progress and long-term learning.

2.1 A Culture of High Expectations

At Our Lady's Catholic High School, teachers establish classrooms that are calm, purposeful and rooted in mutual respect. A culture of high expectations is central to all teaching and learning.

Pupils are expected to be attentive and engaged, demonstrate resilience and independence, and take pride in their work. Teachers create this culture through the consistent use of clear routines, the establishment of positive and respectful relationships, and by modelling high standards in all aspects of practice.

Key expectations include:

- Pupils are ready to learn promptly at the start of every lesson
- Pupils sustain attention and complete work with care and pride
- Pupils demonstrate resilience when learning is challenging
- Teachers establish, reinforce and maintain clear routines
- Teachers model high standards of behaviour, effort and presentation

2.2 Adaptive Teaching and Support for All Learners

Teaching at Our Lady's is adaptive rather than reductive. Informed by ongoing assessment and the principles of responsive teaching developed through our SSAT Assessment for Learning programme, teachers adapt explanations, questioning and modelling so that all pupils can access learning successfully.

All pupils are expected to engage with the same ambitious curriculum, with scaffolding and targeted support provided where necessary. This includes collaboration with SEND and pastoral teams to support disadvantaged pupils, pupils known to social care, pupils experiencing attendance or wellbeing barriers, and other vulnerable learners.

As pupils develop confidence and understanding, support is gradually withdrawn to promote independence and secure long-term learning.

Key expectations include:

- Teaching is adapted in response to ongoing assessment
- Explanations, questioning and modelling are adjusted to meet pupil needs

- Scaffolding is used to support access without lowering expectations
- All pupils are supported to access an ambitious curriculum
- Targeted support is provided for disadvantaged and vulnerable learners
- Support is gradually withdrawn to promote independence

2.3 High-Quality Questioning

Questioning is central to effective teaching and is used to assess understanding, deepen thinking and ensure all pupils are engaged. This reflects our whole-school focus on formative assessment, developed through the SSAT Assessment for Learning programme and supported by EEF research on effective classroom practice.

Teachers employ a range of questioning strategies to check understanding regularly and extend pupils' thinking. Pupils are expected to think carefully before responding, justify their answers and build on the ideas of others, contributing to a culture of thoughtful and respectful dialogue.

Key expectations include:

- Teachers use questioning regularly to check, probe and extend understanding
- Questions are directed to ensure all pupils are included
- Pupils are given time to think before responding
- Pupils explain and justify their answers clearly
- Pupils build on and respond respectfully to the ideas of others

2.4 Clear Explanations and Modelling

Teachers present new knowledge in small, carefully sequenced steps to support understanding and avoid cognitive overload. This reflects Rosenshine's Principles of Instruction and EEF guidance on effective teaching.

Expert thinking and processes are modelled explicitly, enabling pupils to understand both the 'how' and the 'why' of their learning.

A range of visual and verbal scaffolds are used to support pupils in accessing new content and developing confidence.

Key expectations include:

- New knowledge is presented in small, clearly sequenced steps
- Teachers explicitly model expert thinking and processes

- Key concepts and processes are explained clearly and precisely
- Visual and verbal scaffolds are used to support understanding
- Pupils are guided from supported practice towards independence

2.5 Oracy and Communication

Oracy is a key priority at Our Lady's Catholic High School and is integral to teaching and learning across all subjects.

Teachers explicitly teach vocabulary, structure opportunities for purposeful talk and model high-quality spoken language. Pupils are expected to actively listen, demonstrate appropriate posture and body language, and communicate clearly using a suitable tone and volume.

Pupils should speak in full sentences where appropriate and use subject-specific terminology accurately. Through this consistent approach, pupils develop as confident and eloquent communicators.

These principles are made explicit through Our Oracy Essentials:

- Pupils actively listen
- Pupils use appropriate posture, positioning and body language
- Pupils speak clearly using an audible voice
- Pupils speak in complete sentences where appropriate
- Pupils use subject-specific vocabulary accurately

2.6 Reading and Literacy

All teachers are teachers of literacy and are responsible for promoting high standards of reading, writing and communication.

Teachers explicitly teach key vocabulary, promote reading across the curriculum and support comprehension through modelling and questioning, in line with EEF guidance on literacy across the curriculum. This ensures that pupils develop as thoughtful, articulate and discerning learners.

Key expectations include:

- Key vocabulary is explicitly taught, modelled and reinforced
- Opportunities for reading are embedded across the curriculum
- Teachers model fluent reading where appropriate
- Teachers use questioning to check and develop comprehension
- Pupils are supported to read accurately and with understanding

2.7 Teaching for Long-Term Memory

Teaching is designed to support long-term retention of knowledge. In line with Rosenshine's Principles of Instruction and EEF research on memory and learning, teachers regularly incorporate retrieval practice, spaced repetition and opportunities to revisit prior learning.

This approach ensures that pupils know more and remember more over time, enabling them to apply their knowledge with increasing confidence and accuracy.

Key expectations include:

- Retrieval practice is used regularly to strengthen memory
- Prior learning is revisited through spaced practice
- Teachers explicitly link new learning to prior knowledge
- Pupils are supported to recall and apply knowledge over time

3. Assessment

Assessment is integral to effective teaching and learning and reflects our sustained focus on formative practice through the SSAT Assessment for Learning programme, alongside EEF guidance on effective assessment. It is used to inform planning, identify gaps and support pupil progress.

3.1 Formative Assessment

Teachers use formative assessment routinely within lessons to identify misconceptions, monitor understanding and adapt teaching. This includes questioning, retrieval practice and live feedback.

Key expectations include:

- Assessment is used routinely to identify gaps and misconceptions
- Teachers adapt teaching in response to assessment information
- Questioning is used to check understanding during lessons
- Retrieval practice is used to assess and strengthen knowledge
- Feedback is provided in the moment to address misconceptions

3.2 Summative Assessment

Summative assessment is used to evaluate pupil progress over time, inform reporting and guide intervention strategies.

Key expectations include:

- Assessment is used to evaluate progress over time

- Outcomes are used to inform reporting to pupils and parents
- Assessment information is used to plan appropriate intervention
- Departments ensure consistency and accuracy in assessment

4. Marking and Feedback

4.1 Principles and Purpose

Marking and feedback at Our Lady's Catholic High School are purposeful, manageable and focused on improving learning. Feedback must identify clear next steps, be specific and actionable, and lead to pupil response.

Feedback may be delivered verbally, in writing, through whole-class approaches, or via peer and self-assessment. Teachers select the most effective method based on the learning context. The primary purpose of feedback is to support pupil improvement and inform future teaching.

4.2 Written Feedback and Response

Where written feedback is provided, it will identify a clear next step for improvement. Feedback should be concise and focused, avoiding unnecessary workload while maintaining high impact.

Written feedback will be provided at planned, meaningful points within a sequence of learning, normally around once every ten lessons, where appropriate and effective. Pupils are expected to engage thoughtfully with feedback, improve their work and take responsibility for their progress. Teachers will also identify key literacy errors and ensure that pupils correct their own work. Accurate use of subject-specific vocabulary is reinforced across all subjects.

Key expectations include:

- Written feedback is provided at meaningful points within learning
- Feedback identifies a clear and actionable improvement target
- Feedback is concise and focused on impact
- Pupils are given time to respond and improve their work
- Pupils correct identified literacy errors
- High standards of written communication are maintained

5. Homework

Homework is an integral part of teaching and learning at Our Lady's Catholic High School. It plays a vital role in securing knowledge, strengthening long-term memory and enabling pupils to become independent, resilient learners.

Homework is purposeful, carefully planned and clearly aligned to the curriculum. It forms part of a coherent sequence of learning and reflects EEF guidance on effective homework. It is used to reinforce, extend and prepare learning.

Key expectations include:

- Homework is set to reinforce and consolidate learning from lessons
- Homework includes opportunities for practice and retrieval
- Homework supports the development of independent study habits
- Tasks are meaningful, manageable and appropriately challenging
- Homework is accessible and inclusive for all pupils
- Teachers set and monitor the completion of homework on Synergy.

Pupils are expected to complete homework to the best of their ability, meet deadlines and take responsibility for their independent learning. Where pupils do not understand the homework, they are expected to seek support from their teacher prior to the deadline.

If a pupil is absent when homework is set, they are still expected to complete the work. Pupils should seek support from their teacher on return to school, and an extended deadline may be provided where appropriate.

Homework contributes to the wider aims of teaching and learning by supporting retention over time, addressing misconceptions, enabling pre-learning of key terms and concepts, and preparing pupils for future learning.

6. Roles and Responsibilities

6.1 Teachers

Teachers are responsible for delivering high-quality teaching, using assessment effectively, providing meaningful feedback and ensuring that pupils respond to it. They also monitor the progress of all student groups and adapt teaching accordingly.

Key expectations include:

- Deliver consistently high-quality teaching
- Use assessment to inform planning and teaching
- Provide clear, meaningful feedback
- Set and record the completion of homework on Synergy
- Ensure pupils respond to feedback

- Monitor the progress of all pupil groups
- Teachers ensure that work which falls below presentation expectations is redone to a higher standard.

6.2 Pupils

Pupils are expected to engage actively in learning, respond to feedback and take responsibility for their improvement. They contribute positively to the learning environment and support others through excellent behaviour and conduct.

Pupils are expected to take pride in the presentation of their work. All work should include the date, classwork or homework label, and a clear title. Presentation should reflect a pupil's best effort, including maintaining a high standard of handwriting and organisation.

Where presentation falls below the expected standard, pupils will be required to redo work to ensure that pride, care and high expectations are consistently maintained.

Key expectations include:

- Engage fully in all learning activities
- Respond to feedback and improve their work
- Take responsibility for their progress
- Demonstrate consistently positive behaviour
- Contribute to a respectful learning environment
- Handwriting should reflect a pupil's best effort

6.4 Curriculum Leaders

Curriculum Leaders are responsible for monitoring the quality and consistency of marking and feedback, overseeing curriculum delivery and tracking the progress of all student groups.

Key expectations include:

- Monitor the quality and consistency of marking and feedback
- Oversee the implementation of the curriculum
- Track the progress of all pupil groups
- Provide support and challenge to improve teaching

6.5 Senior Leadership Team

The Senior Leadership Team ensures the consistent implementation of this policy, monitors its impact and provides appropriate training and support for staff.

Key expectations include:

- Ensure consistent implementation of the policy
- Monitor impact on teaching, learning and outcomes
- Provide training and support for staff
- Review and refine practice based on evidence

7. Monitoring and Evaluation

This policy will be monitored through lesson observations, work scrutiny, pupil voice and analysis of assessment outcomes. Monitoring will focus on the quality of teaching, the effectiveness of feedback and the progress made by pupils over time.