

# Curriculum policy

Blessed Edward Oldcorne Catholic College



Approved by:  
The Governing Body

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## 1. Curriculum Intent

### Why is our curriculum important?

We believe that curriculum and culture are the keys to a successful and thriving school. The aim of the Blessed Edward Oldcorne Catholic College curriculum is to support, guide and inspire our students to discover their vocation. Our vision is that all students should have the opportunity to fulfil their vocation and we believe the best way to do this is to offer a curriculum that:

- enables students to develop a greater knowledge and understanding of the Catholic Faith and other world Faiths
- is academically challenging and ambitious for all students
- is broad and balanced offering both breadth and depth, hence our ongoing commitment to a three-year Key Stage 3
- enables our students to use core skills and knowledge fluently and confidently, including literacy, numeracy skills
- enables our students to develop as people of good character through promoting students' social, moral, spiritual and cultural development and a knowledge and understanding of British Values
- encourages an understanding of the commitment to equal opportunities for all
- offers high quality enrichment activities which will broaden students' horizons.

### Who is our curriculum for and what is unique about it?

Nationally the gap between disadvantaged student and non-disadvantaged student attainment is widening, the gender gap is widening and the impact of new more rigorous GCSE examinations is still under scrutiny. It is essential that we consider how a student experiences our curriculum. Over the last two years we have asked the question "Is our curriculum narrow for some students?" Students, who we class as middle and low starters have traditionally had very little choice apart from GCSE subjects. With them in mind we have widened our vocational offer. These are a suite of subjects in which the outcomes are not solely based on terminal examinations after two years of study. We have considered the "currency" of the subjects which students study. For this reason, we have devised a pathway approach to subjects which we believe will maximise a student's chances of success. This personalised pathway approach will also impact on a student's

well-being, motivation and engagement. At Blessed Edward Oldcorne Catholic College we recognise that the curriculum is deeper than the subjects offered. Alongside the taught curriculum we aim to develop our unique college virtues in our students so that they become people of good character able to contribute to helping society flourish.

## 2. How we deliver our curriculum

At Blessed Edward Oldcorne Catholic College we believe that the taught curriculum is content structured over time. We have deliberately kept Key Stage 3 as a three-year programme of study as we believe that shortening Key Stage 3 has the biggest negative impact on disadvantaged students. We use our curriculum as the progression model against which we have clear assessment points which will provide feedback on the taught curriculum. Teachers also use assessment strategies every lesson as well as providing feedback every three weeks through dedicated “Feedback Lessons”. This enables our teachers to quickly respond to any student who may be experiencing difficulty.

Teachers will be aware of and explicitly teach the big ideas in their subject in an appropriate sequence. This is the conceptual knowledge which students must grasp in order to succeed in the subject. At Blessed Edward Oldcorne Catholic College we recognise that each subject discipline has distinct practices and signature pedagogies. Teachers will teach students how to be and think like a scientist, a historian, a mathematician, for example. Embedded in this taught curriculum will be subject specific skills such as graph plotting, analysing source material and use of tone and shading. Also embedded in the taught curriculum will be our belief that education can do something for long-term memory through the use of low stakes testing, spacing and interleaving. The Blessed Edward Oldcorne Catholic College curriculum will in effect be delivered by teachers who know: the most important ideas in their subject, the most effective ways to teach these ideas and the most effective order in which to teach these ideas. Our college curriculum sits alongside the value we place on teachers continually needing to develop their own practice.

## 3. Legislation and guidance

This policy reflects the requirements of the [National Curriculum programmes of study](#), which all maintained schools in England must teach.

It also reflects requirements for inclusion and equality as set out in the [Special Educational Needs and Disability Code of Practice 2014](#) and [Equality Act 2010](#), and refers to curriculum-related expectations of governing boards set out in the Department for Education’s [Governance Handbook](#).

## 4. Roles and responsibilities

### 4.1 The governing board

The governing board will monitor the effectiveness of this policy and hold the headteacher to account for its implementation.

The governing board will also ensure that:

- A robust framework is in place for setting curriculum priorities and aspirational targets
- Enough teaching time is provided for pupils to cover the National Curriculum and other statutory requirements
- Proper provision is made for pupils with different abilities and needs, including children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND)

- All courses provided for are approved by the secretary of state
- The school implements the relevant statutory assessment arrangements
- It participates actively in decision-making about the breadth and balance of the curriculum
- It fulfils its role in processes to disapply pupils from all or part of the National Curriculum, where appropriate, and in any subsequent appeals
- Pupils from year 8 onwards are provided with independent, impartial careers guidance, and that this is appropriately resourced

## 4.2 Headteacher

The headteacher is responsible for ensuring that this policy is adhered to, and that:

- All required elements of the curriculum, and those subjects which the school chooses to offer, have aims and objectives which reflect the aims of the school and indicate how the needs of individual pupils will be met
- The amount of time provided for teaching the required elements of the curriculum is adequate and is reviewed by the governing board
- Where appropriate, the individual needs of some pupils are met by permanent or temporary disapplication from all or part of the National Curriculum
- They manage requests to withdraw children from curriculum subjects, where appropriate
- The school's procedures for assessment meet all legal requirements
- The governing board is fully involved in decision-making processes that relate to the breadth and balance of the curriculum
- The governing board is advised on whole-school targets in order to make informed decisions
- Proper provision is in place for pupils with different abilities and needs, including children with SEND

## 4.3 Other staff

All teachers, with the support of Learning Support mentors ensure that the college curriculum is implemented in accordance with this policy. Subject teachers meet fortnightly with Heads of Department to discuss the sequencing of lessons and to check that the Schemes of Learning are being taught in the way they were designed. There is opportunity during these planning meetings to discuss misconceptions and ways to address these.

## 5. Organisation and Planning

Our curriculum has carefully been designed in four layers to ensure a coherent and well-sequenced journey for each year group through the different Schemes of Learning.

- Layer one - Teachers in each department collaboratively agree the major themes and fundamental ideas which weave their way through their Key stage 3 curriculum. These 'big ideas' underpin the Schemes of Learning
- Layer two - Heads of department map out the curriculum in terms of topics covered in each half term in each year group. At this level they are looking to ensure that topics are properly sequenced and building on what students already know. They are also looking to make authentic links with other subjects.
- Layer three - Teachers develop an agreed scheme of learning for each topic. This includes lesson objectives and key knowledge to be taught. This also includes subject related reading material beyond what can be found in text books and to highlight areas where students may experience or have misconceptions.
- Layer four - Teachers collaboratively create and share lesson resources such as PowerPoints, and carefully plan lesson activities using the relevant pedagogy to ensure good knowledge and

understanding of the subject matter. At this stage of planning, there is a particular focus on strategies to aid long-term memory, providing feedback and addressing misconceptions. The lessons are designed to be fully inclusive of students with SEND, and all lessons promote good literacy and reading.

When designing their subject Curricula, Heads of Departments have considered questions such as, why have we chosen specific topics in a particular order and why for certain year groups? What is this content doing here and why? How will students' understanding be changed such that when they later tackle particular material or content they will grasp it better or have more sophisticated understanding? Is enough time or too much time given to particular topics?

## **6. Inclusion**

Teachers have high expectations for all pupils. They will use appropriate assessment to set ambitious targets and plan challenging work for all groups, including:

- More able pupils
- Pupils with low prior attainment
- Pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds
- Pupils with SEND
- Pupils with English as an additional language (EAL)

Teachers will plan lessons so that pupils with SEN and/or disabilities can study every National Curriculum subject, wherever possible, and ensure that there are no barriers to every pupil achieving.

Teachers will also take account of the needs of pupils whose first language is not English. Lessons will be planned so that teaching opportunities help pupils to develop their English, and to support pupils to take part in all subjects.

Further information can be found in our statement of equality information and objectives, and in our SEN policy and information report.

## **7. Monitoring arrangements**

The Head teacher, the Curriculum Deputy and the Heads of Department meet termly to review the taught curriculum and consider how effectively students are progressing. Discussions also involve the importance of literacy across the curriculum and other key school 'drivers' such as access for students with SEND or how equality and citizenship is addressed. Heads of Department feedback the outcomes of these meetings at fortnightly Raising Standards meetings and on Curriculum Planning afternoons. They also monitor the way their subject is taught through learning walks and book scrutinies. They have responsibility for monitoring the way in which resources are stored and managed.

There is opportunity for teachers to develop their practice and be made familiar with teaching and learning strategies that take place regularly throughout the year. Every Wednesday morning there is CPD training. This is supported by 'twilight training', Curriculum planning afternoons and dedicated INSET days.

This policy will be reviewed every year by the Headteacher and the Curriculum Deputy Headteacher. At every review, the policy will be shared with the full governing board.

## **8. Links with other policies**

This policy links to the following policies and procedures:

- Assessment policy
- Marking and Feedback policy
- Homework policy
- Literacy
- SEND policy and information report
- Equality policy