

# St Benedict's Catholic High School



## Curriculum, Teaching & Assessment Policy

Reviewed: **Nov 2021**

Reviewed by: CP, JS

Approved by:

Next Review Due by: Nov 2022

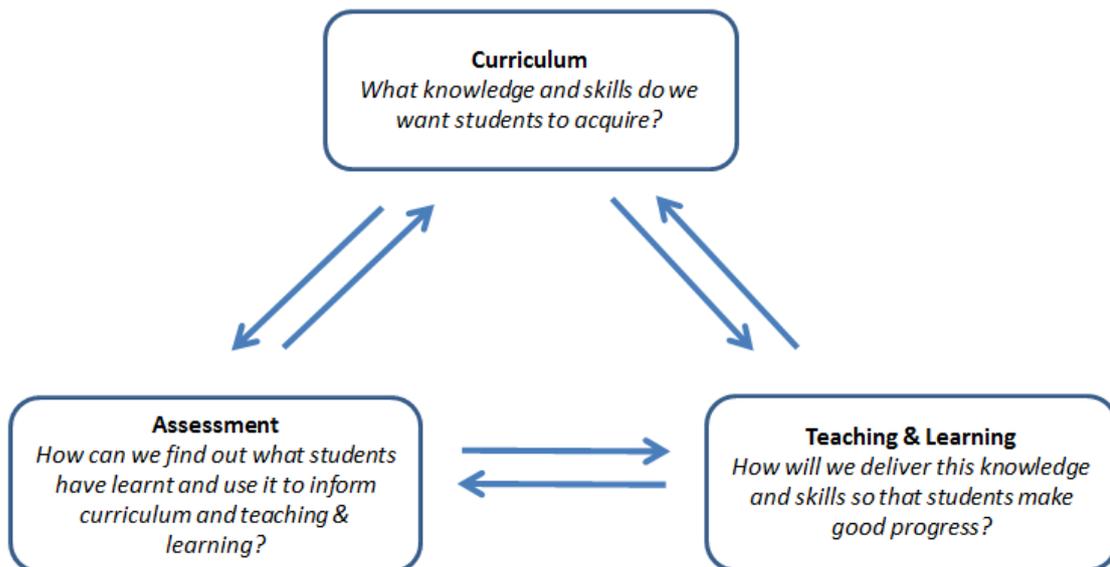
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**Curriculum, Teaching & Assessment Policy**

## Introduction

At St Benedict's, we believe that curriculum, teaching and assessment are inextricably linked. When all three are closely aligned and of the highest quality, they should facilitate effective learning and enable all students to achieve their full potential. The aim of this policy is to ensure that through effective delivery of curriculum, teaching and assessment, all students will:

1. Make significant academic progress and experience good educational outcomes which enable students to achieve their aspirations after school.
2. Learn and retain the skills and knowledge that will enrich their experience and contribute to both their academic development and promote a love of learning.
3. Develop a range of skills, aptitudes and personal qualities, in line with the Catholic ethos of the school, so that students become happy, well-rounded, democratic citizens able to make a significant contribution to society.



## Roles & Responsibilities

### Governors

To ensure the effective and rigorous implementation and monitoring of the policy

### **Leadership Team**

- To provide appropriate support, training and resources for subject areas and individual staff;
- To monitor and evaluate the delivery and impact of the policy;
- To modify and update the policy in the light of ongoing developments and the changing needs of the school and its priorities.

### **Subject Leaders and those with relevant TLRs**

- To be responsible for the co-ordination of long, medium and short-term planning of schemes of learning taking into consideration the aims and objectives of the policy;
- To monitor and evaluate consistent deliver of the policy at Faculty and subject level;
- To provide appropriate support to team members by providing training materials or advice and guidance;
- Support staff to improve their pedagogy and encourage collaboration and sharing of best practice.

### **Teaching Staff**

- To ensure that their own teaching meets the National Teacher Standards;
- To implement this policy by planning and delivering high quality learning experiences;
- Work collaboratively with colleagues to share best practice and improve teaching.

## **Review of Curriculum, Assessment & Teaching**

On a **half** termly basis, a holistic review of Curriculum, Assessment and Teaching will take place in order to identify strengths and areas for development within subject areas and across the whole school.

Reviews will be conducted by Subject Leaders in conjunction with SLT **or peers for both** quality assurance purposes **and sharing of practice** and will encompass all key stages. In line with the holistic approach that the school takes to the delivery of curriculum, assessment and teaching, the review will be three-pronged to include:

- Learning Walks
- Pupil Work Review
- Assessment, Curriculum & Teaching Review (ACT Review)

Documents for each of these activities can be found in the Appendix.

The findings from the reviews will be shared with staff in an open and transparent manner. Leaders will be looking at patterns and trends across departments and also at a whole school level in order to identify areas of good practice and areas for development.

Where standards of teaching & learning fall below expectations, appropriate support will be given and further monitoring will take place as appropriate.

Lesson observations will take place for:

- **Annually for all teaching staff**

With priority given to:

- Teachers new to the school
- Teachers with new responsibilities
- Trainee teachers and NQTs
- Teachers where there are concerns about pupil progress or performance

## Continuing Professional Development (CPD)

Teachers have a responsibility to reflect on their own practice, enhance and update their professional knowledge and skills. The school will provide a programme of CPD delivered through a combination of staff INSET days, twilight sessions and voluntary training. In addition to statutory training that all schools must deliver, the CPD programme will centre on the teaching & learning priorities for the year as outlined in the Teaching & Learning section of this policy.

# Curriculum Intent & Vision

## Introduction

We aim to create an inclusive, nurturing environment where all children can achieve their full potential. We strive to provide a stimulating, challenging educational experience which fulfils both the academic potential of our children while also fostering a genuine love of learning and intellectual curiosity.

As a Catholic school, we recognise that in addition to academic progress it is important to promote students' social, moral and spiritual development. Central to our vision, is the development of the whole child enabling each and every student in our care to achieve their full academic potential while also becoming confident, compassionate members of the school and wider community.

In order to help our young people develop, we believe it is important for our students to explore all their talents and experience a wide range of opportunities. To this end we look to ensure our curriculum is broad, balanced, relevant, and personalised.

## Curriculum Aims

- Create an aspirational climate where students achieve their full potential irrespective of level of ability or social background
- Provide a wide range of subjects and experiences to meet students' interests
- Raise standards of attainment so that students have the necessary skills and qualifications to pursue their career aspirations
- Foster a love of learning and a culture where students are independent and motivated
- Enable all children to become fluent and effective readers in order to access the wider curriculum, develop a rich vocabulary and enjoy reading for pleasure as a door to further learning
- Develop the whole child; academic, social, moral and spiritual.

## Curriculum Principles

- Clear and effective use of assessment with pupil-teacher dialogue to ensure that excellent progress is made. Students' progress will be meaningfully assessed so that teachers can accurately determine what students know and what they need to know in order to make good progress.
- Students' learning time will be maximised in all subjects so there is sufficient time to master subject content and skills
- Key to our curriculum design is the relationship between knowledge and skills. At St Benedict's we believe that there is a body of knowledge that students need to acquire but they must also be taught how to apply the knowledge they have learnt to different contexts and situations. For this reason, we offer a knowledge-engaged curriculum which ensures students acquire the knowledge they need while also promoting the importance of skills and creative and critical thinking.
- Recognising the importance of students' progression in English and Maths for their academic progress across all subjects, additional learning time in these core subjects will be provided.

- Students, regardless of level of academic ability, will have the opportunity to study a broad range of subjects to meet their interests and help them make the next steps towards a future where they can be successful.
- Citizenship and SMSC will be delivered through a range of methods including tutor time, assemblies, trips and events and off-timetable days.
- Students will be provided with a range of extra-curricular opportunities through clubs and trips that will enable them to experience a range of interesting activities to help them develop as well-rounded individuals.

## Key Stage Three Curriculum

At St Benedict's we believe that key stage three is a crucial time in children's learning and that inspiring them with a passion for learning and promoting intellectual curiosity is just as important as preparing them for external examinations. Ensuring that students transition well from primary school to year 7 is key to ensuring students make as much progress as possible in key stage 3. For that reason, our subject leaders liaise closely with colleagues in primary schools to ensure that we build effectively on knowledge already acquired in key stage 2 so that time is not wasted revisiting content already learnt and mastered.

In order to foster a love of learning and promote high levels of student engagement, we offer a broad curriculum (based on the National Curriculum) which is designed to offer students a wide range of subjects to appeal to their individual interests and enable them to make informed choices when the time comes for them to select their key stage four choices. Students from years 7 to year 9, **in addition** to the mandatory subjects of Maths, English, Science, RE, PE and Citizenship, & Computing will also study the following:

- Geography
- History
- Spanish
- Art
- Music
- Design Technology
- Textiles
- Food Technology
- **Compass for Life**

In year 9, for core subjects of Maths, English and Science, students undertake a GCSE transition year. The intention for this GCSE transition year is to introduce to students some content appropriate for their age and ability, and undergo preparatory work so that students are well equipped for study at GCSE from the very beginning of key stage four.

Students select their option choices mid-way through year 9 and begin their GCSEs in year 10. We believe that this enables them to experience a broader range of subjects for longer helping them to make more informed choices about their options at key stage 4.

## Key Stage Four Curriculum

Students begin their option subjects in year 10. In addition to the statutory subjects of English Language & Literature, Maths, Science, RE and core PE, students **are offered a good range of subjects tailored to their ability, interests and aspirations whilst ensuring they can access qualifications that support their progression into KS5.**

The EBACC is at the heart of our curriculum and all students are strongly encouraged to take EBACC subjects recognising its importance in enhancing further education and career prospects.

All students select **three** option choices from the subjects available. Students receive five lessons per fortnight for each option choice. All of the option subjects are GCSEs or courses that are equivalent to GCSE.

St Benedict's will ensure:

- Parents and pupils are fully aware of the opportunities available
- Pupils will receive impartial CEIAG to support their choices **throughout KS3.**
- Pupils are supported in making appropriate options choices linked to their ability, aspirations and interests.

While the vast majority of our students will complete 9 GCSEs, there may be a small number of pupils for whom this is not appropriate due to the need for Alternative provision or SEND requirements. These cases are reviewed on an individual basis by SLT in partnership with pupils, staff, key professionals and the family of pupils.

### **Key Stage Five Curriculum**

Students that transition to Year 12 will follow a vibrant learning programme that consists of three level 3 qualifications, Core RE, Careers and the wider enrichment curriculum. The entrance criteria, and the broad range of qualifications, ensures that the intake is truly comprehensive. Collaborations with other local schools via a consortium model aims to support their personal development with a particular focus on employability and the skills of life-long learners.

### **PSHE, Citizenship & Catholic Life**

All pupils at St Benedict's study these subjects as part of our commitment to nurturing and developing the whole child so that they become confident, caring and well-rounded individuals able to make a valuable contribution to the community and to society.

A full programme in line with the statutory requirements of the National Curriculum for Citizenship is taught and key aspects of Catholic Life are also integrated into overviews and schemes of learning.

The delivery of Citizenship & Catholic Life is facilitated in a number of ways including:

- Tutor periods which are 30 minutes daily
- Assemblies and collective worship
- School Masses and services
- Drop down days
- Work Experience (Year 10/**12**)
- School Trips & Extra-Curricular Events

### **Curriculum Review**

At St Benedict's the curriculum is reviewed regularly at key points throughout the year by Subject Leaders in discussion with their teams. SLT have quality assurance processes to evaluate the impact of the school's curriculum and adapt and review where appropriate.

# Teaching & Learning

## Introduction

The purpose of this policy is to support the implementation of high quality teaching and learning in order to ensure that all children make the best possible progress and realise their full potential. This policy is mindful of the expectations placed on all teachers in the National Teacher Standards.

As a Catholic School, we are committed to providing a learning environment in which all children are challenged and inspired, supported by excellent pastoral care. We believe that an excellent school is one where values, skills and moral attributes are developed and prized just as much as academic achievement.

## Effective Teaching & Learning

At St Benedict's, teaching & learning will be based around the following key principles:

- All students, regardless of ability, will be sufficiently stretched and challenged to ensure that they fulfil their potential.
- Learning activities are planned to meet the specific needs of individuals and groups of students including SEND, EAL, Pupil Premium and the more able.
- Students starting points are taken into account so that learning builds on prior knowledge and understanding.
- Teachers have excellent subject knowledge and impart this to students to create engaging lessons built on in-depth understanding of their subject areas.
- Lessons are designed around medium and long term objectives as outlined in schemes of learning so that there is a clear sense of a learning journey which takes into account student progression over time.
- Teachers revisit and interleave key content in order to aid student retention and ensure that knowledge sticks.
- Behaviour for learning is supported by the school's behaviour policy. Teachers will use **Bromcom** to praise and reward the behaviours associated with effective learning.
- Regular opportunities to develop students' literacy and numeracy skills will be provided.
- Reading is an integral part of lessons and students will be exposed to a rich variety of texts and explicitly taught reading skills and strategies to aid understanding.
- Assessment will be used effectively in order to move students forward in their learning as outlined in the Assessment section of this policy.
- Teachers are flexible and responsive, adapting their lessons/longer term plans to reshape learning as the need arises.
- Students will have opportunities to practise and develop other transferable skills such as team-working, discussion and debate, problem-solving, creative thinking etc.
- Citizenship, PSHE and Catholic Values will be integrated into lessons where appropriate to the topic being covered in order to support the spiritual and moral development of the whole child.
- Teachers will regularly review and evaluate their own teaching practice so that practice is continually improved in order to create a stimulating and effective learning environment.

## Teaching & Learning Priorities for 2021 - 2022

Our CPD programme throughout the year will focus on the following whole school teaching & learning priorities:

- **Curriculum Development**  
We will review and improve our curriculum to ensure that it enables students of all backgrounds and abilities to make excellent progress. To that end, planning for progression and looking at the way in which we sequence the learning journey will be a key focus. As well as providing students with the key knowledge and skills required to achieve well in terms of final outcomes, we also want to ensure that our curriculum develops the whole child preparing them for life in Modern Britain.
- **Assessment & Feedback**  
We will evaluate the way in which we assess students and look at how we can use feedback effectively to move students forward in their learning. We will use information and insights gained from assessment, particularly after formal data drops, to adapt teaching and learning and the curriculum.
- **Progress of Vulnerable Pupil Groups**  
We will ensure that teaching effectively meets the needs of all learners and that vulnerable pupil groups such as disadvantaged and SEND learners are provided with the support that they need in order to make good progress. Teachers and Heads of Department supported by SLT will track, monitor and intervene where appropriate to ensure that students from these groups make the best possible progress and achieve their full potential.

Teachers will be provided with support and training in order to improve practice across the school in these three areas. SLT and Subject Leaders will review the impact of the initiatives introduced in order to define the following academic year's teaching & learning priorities.

### Independent Learning (Homework)

It is important that students develop independent study skills which will equip them for the demands of study for formal examinations as well as for later life for example, colleges, Sixth Forms and Universities.

The following guidelines set out the setting, frequency, and completion of independent learning/homework.

#### Setting

Independent learning activities will be directly related to the learning that is taking place in the classroom and will be designed to help our pupils become independent and successful learners. The purpose of activities set should be clear to pupils.

Tasks will involve a variety of activities that should either consolidate the learning that has taken place in the classroom or prepare pupils for learning that will take place.

Independent learning should be set and recorded on Bromcom and within planners. Clear instructions and suggested timings should be given to the pupils in the lesson and recorded. Pupils will be given reasonable time to complete their independent learning, as judged by the Teacher, which should ideally allow a week for completion but as a minimum may be 48 hours from the date set. Homework will be set on a weekly basis by subjects.

## Completion

In order to promote good routines, pupils are encouraged to complete their independent learning activities on the day that it is set. Suggested timings **should always be** given to help pupils, parents and carers to manage the time spent on independent learning.

Completion of independent learning should be monitored by Teachers and recorded on **Bromcom**. Pupils, parents and carers are able to monitor that homework has been completed and submitted to the teacher on time through their **My child at school** account.

Positives will be awarded on **Bromcom** to celebrate and recognise excellent pieces of work and attitude to learning. Sanctions will be awarded in line with the school's behaviour policy for non-completion of independent learning, failure to meet deadlines or poor attitude to learning. A C1 will be issued and a detention may be set by the Teacher to allow the pupil time to catch up on work not completed.

## Roles & Responsibilities

### Pupils:

- Listen to instructions for independent learning that are given in class
- Check **Microsoft TEAMS notifications** daily for tasks to be completed (even if absent from the lesson)
- Organise time for independent learning to be completed and use the facilities available in school if required
- Ensure that all deadlines are met
- Complete all independent learning activities to the best of their ability
- Seek help from staff members for clarity, help or support prior to the deadline
- Ensure that feedback on independent learning is listened to and acted upon in accordance with Teacher instructions

### Parents and Carers:

- Help support your child by reinforcing the value of independent learning
- Provide a suitable, quiet place for your child to complete their independent learning or direct your child to the facilities available in school
- Check **the My child at school app** regularly to support your child in organisation and completion of their work.

### Teachers:

- Ensure that all activities set are linked to the learning taking place in the classroom
- Set activities that are well designed to support the learning in the classroom
- Set activities on **Microsoft Teams** with clear instructions, suggested timings, and attach supporting resources if necessary
- Set activities that are appropriate for the ability of the pupils in accordance with the Teachers' Standards

- Give timely feedback on independent learning activities – this should be done in line with the Feedback and Marking policy and may take the form of verbal, self or peer assessment.
- Keep a record of submissions of Independent learning and reward and sanction as per the school's behaviour policy

**Heads of Department:**

- Ensure that independent learning is well-planned as part of the Schemes of Learning and communicate plans with Teachers
- Monitor the setting, frequency and completion of tasks.
- Monitor and evaluate the quality of independent learning tasks set
- Monitor the rewarding and sanctioning of independent learning and ensure that support and/or interventions are implemented as necessary
- Encourage collaboration of planning within and between departments

**Senior Leadership Team:**

- Communicate this policy with pupils, parents, carers and staff
- Support Heads of Department in all aspects of setting and monitoring of independent learning
- Monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of this policy and the impact on learning

## **Assessment, Feedback & Marking**

### **Introduction**

This policy will set out the expectations for assessment, feedback and marking at St Benedict's to ensure that all learners and teachers are aware of their responsibilities.

The purpose of assessment is to:

- Provide an accurate measurement of student progress so that underachievement is identified and addressed.
- Provide teachers with valuable information about students' strengths and skills and knowledge gaps so that teaching and the curriculum is adapted.
- Enable students to understand what they need to do to improve.
- Through teacher feedback, enable students to make good progress.

At St Benedict's, we believe that effective feedback is essential to effective learning. It is an interaction between teachers and pupils that gives pupils the answer to the two following questions:

*What am I doing well in this subject?*

*What do I need to do to improve my work in this subject?*

The aim of assessment, feedback and marking at St Benedict's is to ensure that our pupils know the answers to these questions in each subject and are given the opportunities within lessons to implement the feedback received in order to progress their learning.

## Responsibilities

Different subjects at St Benedict's have different requirements for learning, skills and outcomes. It is therefore expected that each subject area will have their own Assessment, Feedback and Marking Policy which must be **at least** in line with this whole school policy and adhered to by all teachers within subject areas.

- It is the responsibility of all classroom teachers to adhere to this whole school policy **and** any additional subject specific policies in order to provide high quality feedback and marking.
- It is the responsibility of subject leaders to monitor and evaluate feedback and marking in their subject areas.
- It is the responsibility of the leadership team to ensure that subject leaders monitor and evaluate the feedback and marking in subject areas and to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of feedback and marking across the school.
- It is the responsibility of the pupil to ensure feedback given to them by teachers is used to progress their learning.

## Types of Assessment

Assessment can take many forms including verbal and practical. The aim of this policy is to clearly state the aims and expectations of written assessment which at St Benedict's will consist of:

- Yearly whole school assessment under exam conditions for all year groups.
- Regular **learning checkpoint assessments that are** integrated into schemes of learning as defined by individual subject areas.
- Significant pieces of work directed by the class teacher as defined in the section below.

Yearly whole school assessments will be marked both summatively and formatively. Data on student achievement will be collated centrally in order to report back to parents, students, SLT and governors regarding student progress.

For all assessments, it is essential that every student is provided with clear feedback that identifies areas of strength and areas for development. In addition, all students must be given sufficient time and opportunity to respond to feedback and make improvements in order to make good progress. The effectiveness of feedback in its ability to be able to move students forward in their learning will be evaluated through Learning Walks and Pupil Work Reviews.

## Quality of Feedback & Marking

Feedback and marking must be used by teachers to ensure that pupils know what they are doing well in their subject and what they need to do to improve in their subject.

- Teachers will mark in red pen.
- Pupils will mark and respond to feedback in green pen.
- In order to keep in line with the school’s commitment to monitor teacher workload, it is not the expectation that all pieces of work are marked or that feedback takes the form of written comments. Teachers should select **one** significant piece of work to mark and provide feedback on at least **twice per half term for core subjects** and **once per half term for non-core subjects**. Where assessments, controlled assessments and/or exams occur, these should be considered as a significant piece of work.
- Feedback and marking may be done verbally, through the use of whole-class feedback, marking codes, success criteria, peer-assessment and self-assessment.
- For all subjects, Directed Improvement and Reflection Time (DIRT) must be given in lessons to allow for feedback to be given and improvement of work by the pupils to take place.
- It is the expectation that spelling, punctuation and grammar mistakes should be highlighted to the pupils and pupils should be given sufficient time to correct any errors. The school’s policy for correcting literacy errors is as follows:

Code	Meaning
SP	Spelling error
//	New paragraph
~~~	Grammar issue
P	Punctuation
^	Missing word

- Feedback and marking should celebrate the successes and achievements of the pupil and positives on **Bromcom** should be recorded to show excellent work and/or effort.
- Teachers and pupils should have high expectations in regards to learning and the presentation of their work. Any deviations from this should be dealt with in line with the school’s behaviour for learning policy. Negatives and sanctions as a result of a deviation from this expectation should be recorded on **Bromcom**.

## Frequency of Marking

Feedback and marking should take place regularly throughout the learning process. It is the expectation that pupils should receive feedback on a significant piece of work at least **twice per half term for core subjects** and **once per half term for non-core subjects**.

### **Monitoring & Evaluation of Marking**

Subject leaders are responsible for the monitoring and evaluation of feedback and marking in their subject area. Monitoring and evaluation should be done through termly work reviews with the use of the Work Review evaluation form.

### **Teacher Workload**

It is the aim of this policy to streamline the feedback and marking expectations of staff. It is expected that teachers do not spend a disproportionate amount of time marking pupil work to the learning that will take place as a result of it. Teacher workload will be monitored and evaluated as part of the Work Review completed by subject leaders, the evaluation undertaken by the leadership team and on the review of this policy document.

## **Appendices**

### **Appendix 1: Learning Walk Proforma**

Overview of department outcomes:

P8:	HPA:	SEN:
9-5:	MPA:	PP:
9-4:	LPA:	M/F:

**Learning Walk**

Member(s) of staff observed:	
Carried out by:	
Year group/Classes:	
Date:	

**Focus of Learning Walk**

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•</li> <li>•</li> </ul>
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**Learning**

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pupils in the class are learning what the curriculum intends for them to learn</li> <li>• The pace is suitable to ensure maximum progress for all pupils</li> <li>• All groups in the class are engaged and motivated to learn</li> <li>• Planning explicitly demonstrates material/strategies to stretch more able pupils and support pupils with special educational needs (SEN)/English as an additional language (EAL)</li> <li>• Different groups of pupils, such as disadvantaged pupils, are working at age-related expectations</li> <li>• Pupil behaviour is managed in line with the school's policy</li> <li>• There are clear routines and high expectations for learning and behaviour.</li> </ul> <p>Additional comments:</p>
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**Teaching**

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teachers have expert knowledge of the subjects that they teach</li> <li>• Teachers enable pupils to understand key concepts, presenting information clearly and promoting appropriate discussion</li> <li>• Teachers check pupils' understanding effectively, identifying and correcting misunderstandings</li> <li>• Teachers use strategies to embed key concepts in pupils' long-term memory and apply them fluently</li> <li>• Teaching is sequenced so that new knowledge and skills build on what has come before</li> <li>• Teachers use assessment to check pupils' understanding in order to inform teaching</li> </ul> <p>Additional comments:</p>
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Overview of department outcomes:

P8:

HPA:

SEN:

9-5:

MPA:

PP:

9-4:

LPA:

M/F:

**Questions with pupils**

Pupils spoken to (e.g. 3 boys, 2 girls, 1 PP):

- Pupils are positive about this subject
- Pupils are motivated to learn
- Pupils know what they are learning about, not just what they are doing
- Pupils are aware of their strengths/weaknesses in this subject
- Pupils feel they are progressing in this subject and understand why or they understand what they need to do address their barriers to learning

Additional comments:

**Additional focus of the Learning Walk (if required)**

**Summary of good practice to share with teacher(s)**

**Focus Areas**



### Appendix 3: Assessment, Curriculum & Teaching (ACT) Review

Overview of department outcomes:		
P8:	HPA:	SEN:
9-5:	MPA:	PP:
9-4:	LPA:	MF:

Assessment, Curriculum & Teaching (ACT) Review	
Year group/Classes:	
Date:	
Assessment Title:	

**To be completed by Subject Leader in conjunction with their departments.**

Part a) Quality & Design of Assessment	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Did assessment tasks provide learners with fair and valid opportunities to meet the standards and expectations?</li> <li>How did the assessment align with the objectives of the scheme of learning?</li> <li>Are assessments well-matched to the ability of pupils striking the right balance of accessibility and challenge for all pupils?</li> <li>Could the assessment be changed or improved in order to better assess the knowledge and skills of learners?</li> </ul>	
Part b) Student Performance	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>In what areas did students perform well?</li> <li>What areas gave students most difficulty?</li> <li>What knowledge or skills gaps do students need to close in order to improve performance?</li> <li>What does the data suggest about the performance of students in different teaching groups?</li> <li>What does the data suggest about the performance of key groups and of students with different levels of ability?</li> </ul>	

**Part c) Adapting teaching & learning and the Curriculum**

- How will teaching be adapted to address areas of identified gaps?
- What practical strategies can be used to improve students' performance?
- Should schemes of learning or longer term overviews be modified or changed in the light of student performance in the assessment?
- Is there a CPD or training need for teachers in order to enable them to better support the progress of learners?

**Part d) Impact of Actions Implement to Improve Student Progress**

- What has been the success of the changes to teaching & learning and the curriculum?
- What can students do now that they couldn't do before?
- Are any further actions needed to improve student progress?

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