

# **ST CATHERINE'S CATHOLIC HIGH SCHOOL**



## **CURRICULUM POLICY**

## **The Curriculum - A Statement of Entitlement**

The whole curriculum and way of life at St Catherine's is designed to enable students to grow in every way, as balanced, informed individuals, to maturity. Catholicity is nurtured not solely as part of religious studies but through our daily interactions in every curriculum area.

The curriculum is underpinned by our mission statement which is the instrument by which it is put into practice. The curriculum consists of everything planned, implemented and encouraged by the school to promote the development of the students' journey in Faith and to prepare them for the opportunities, experiences and responsibilities of life.

The school provides education for students between the ages of 11 and 18 years, but realises that for continuity and progression to be achieved it must be involved in the education of the students in the primary phase.

### Ethos

The student is entitled to a school :

- Where a secure, caring and supportive Christian atmosphere fosters exciting learning opportunities within a moral and spiritual framework based on the teaching of the Catholic Church.
- That encourages and supports equal and challenging opportunities for all and a positive and ordered environment where the individuals involved not only develop self-esteem and independence, but learn to respect and co-operate with others.
- That is committed to the highest possible achievement in all areas.
- Where the overt code of behaviour encourages individuals to take responsibility for their own actions, exercise self-discipline and to always consider the needs of others.
- Where advice, guidance and counselling are important elements of the pastoral care system throughout their school life.
- That recognises and preserves the rights of all individuals, thus fostering co-operation, empathy and respect.

### Content

The curriculum provides areas of experience, which develop skills, knowledge, understanding and attitudes. These include :

- Social skills, learning skills, analytical and decision making skills as well as those related to particular areas of learning.

### **1. How do we define the 'Curriculum'?**

Students at St Catherine's, as at most schools, learn much more about themselves, and about others, than is taught in the formal timetabled curriculum. Indeed, some students will look back on their time in the school and feel that they have learnt as much outside the classroom as in it; for instance in Mass, on Work Experience; on a retreat or residential visit; in Drama or Music productions; as part of a school sports team; in voluntary work.

Students' sense of responsibility and self-confidence, and their respect and concern for each other are fostered and encouraged by the quality of relationships around the school between students themselves, between teachers and students and with non-teaching staff. These 'learning outcomes' are sometimes difficult to assess objectively against stated aims : nonetheless they form an integral part of the curriculum, formal and 'hidden', in its widest sense.

There are structures and processes which seek to promote the school's aims outside the formal curriculum. These include :

- The pastoral framework of year-teams and tutorial system.
- The recording of achievement and reviewing process.
- A wide range of extra-curricular activities such as Masses, retreats, drama, music, sport, etc.
- Links with the world beyond St Catherine's through such things as work experience and foreign visits.
- Assemblies.
- Involvement with parents and other members of the local community.
- Working with external agencies such as Catholic Care and the Education Welfare Officer to provide support for those students to whom it is appropriate.
- Encouraging collective responsibility and a share in decision-making through the School Council.
- Encouraging participation in voluntary work.

In terms of the Curriculum Policy itself, however, the focus is on the timetabled curriculum, the formal delivery of the aims of the school in terms of what is taught, and the structures which underpin that process.

## **2. Who decides the Curriculum at St Catherine's?**

The Governing Body has responsibility for ensuring that the school delivers an appropriate curriculum, which, for students between the ages of 11 and 16 (i.e. Key Stages 3 and 4) must statutorily meet the demands of the National Curriculum (including Religious Education).

Through the Curriculum sub-committee, The Governing Body plays an active role in the monitoring and evaluation of the curriculum.

The Head teacher has a duty to ensure that the curriculum is delivered effectively and efficiently. The Headteacher, Senior Management, and Heads of Department at the school take prime responsibility for ensuring that what is taught is appropriate to the needs of students, and is taught by staff with relevant expertise and training, using materials and methods which can fulfil the curriculum aims and objectives. In practice, all members of staff can contribute to this process through discussion and collaborative working. Other important influences on the nature of the curriculum at St Catherine's include :

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- Students - for example through reviewing their work with tutors.
- Parents - for example through consultation evenings, the annual parents meeting, etc.
- QCA which through the examining bodies, determine external assessment methods and

subject content.

- HMI and Ofsted which can offer guidance as to curriculum delivery and content.
- The Local Authority.

### **3. What criteria are used to decide the subjects in the Curriculum?**

The National Curriculum does not represent the whole of the curriculum which should be available to each student. St Catherine's aims to offer an entitlement to all students by which their curriculum should be :

**BROAD** - developing knowledge, concepts, skills, and attitudes in a range of areas of learning experience - aesthetic/creative (for example, through Music, Media Arts; Art and Drama); human and social (for example, through Geography, History and Business Studies); linguistic and literary (for example, through English Literature and Language and Modern Foreign Languages); mathematical; moral (for example, through PSHCE); scientific; spiritual (for example, through Religious Studies); technological (for example through Technology and ICT); vocational and work related (for example through vocational GCSEs like Health and Social Care and BTECs in Travel and Tourism, Performing Arts and Sport and College Courses such as Construction and Hairdressing).

**COHERENT** - embracing the different areas of learning and experience, so that these do not appear as disparate subjects, but are linked to develop a holistic approach to students' personal and social growth.

**BALANCED** - ensuring that each area of learning and experience will be given appropriate attention in relation to the others and to the curriculum as a whole.

**RELEVANT** - taking into account prior attainment and future needs, both in terms of progress within school and in the world beyond school.

**MATCHED TO STUDENTS' ABILITIES AND APTITUDES** - aiming to ensure that teaching and learning styles, strategies and resources are appropriate to the needs of all St Catherine's students who have a wide range of ability and expectations.

### **4. What attitudes and skills should the Curriculum foster and encourage?**

All subjects ('areas of learning experience') in the National Curriculum and other subjects taught at St Catherine's have clear aims and objectives in terms of their syllabuses or specifications. Underpinning them all, however, should be a common core of skills and attitudes which we are endeavouring to promote throughout all aspects of the school's life.

These include :

- The willingness to value and respect other people's points of view, and to tolerate them even if they are not shared;

- The nurturing of attitudes which are open to new challenges and experiences whilst being prepared to question received wisdom;
- The willingness to develop responsibility for one's own learning as well as one's conduct.
- The commitment to achieving the full potential of every individual.
- The commitment to lifelong learning beyond school, and the flexibility to cope with future social, economic and technological changes.
- The development of 'core skills' in literacy, numeracy, ICT, political, economic, work related and environmental awareness to enable students to play an active role as full citizens in the future.

## **5. Specialist School Status.**

St Catherine's became a Specialist School in Technology in September 2005. The curriculum at St Catherine's will reflect this status. Firstly, Technology will be used to enrich and enhance subjects and student achievement across the whole curriculum. There will also be increased opportunities for students to study specific Technology subjects throughout the school. For example, from September 2007 Technology will be developing the wider enterprise curriculum.

## **6. How do we monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the Curriculum?**

Having just had a major review of the school curriculum (14-19) the monitoring and evaluation element is key. It is however a continual process in all years and should always involve the whole staff.

Thus Senior Management encourages all Departments to discuss and analyse the effectiveness of their curriculum review. Each Head of Department produces a detailed analysis of their external examination results and these form the basis of the first review meeting with Senior Management which takes place in the first half of the autumn term.

These meetings help Senior Management with their annual curriculum review which will include data analysis such as :

- External examination results (e.g. KS3, GCSE, AS, A2 results, etc.).
- Take-up of subjects in the options process at 14+ and 16+.
- Career and further/higher education pathways at 16+ and 18+.
- (Other data which can be considered to assist monitoring and evaluation includes attendance/ unauthorised absence statistics, the exclusion rates; etc.)

The process of monitoring and evaluation of the curriculum takes place every year through Governors, Senior Management, Heads of Department and hence within departments affecting the whole staff. Consultation also involves the students, their parents and carers and where appropriate the wider community.