

Teaching and Learning Policy

MISSION STATEMENT

Christ is our teacher.

At St Bernard's we believe that all persons are created by God, unique and equal. We strive to create a caring Christian community in which we provide education based on Gospel values where all people reach their full potential. We aim to develop positive relationships with every individual and family, the parishes and the wider community.

"I have come that they may have life and have it to the full"

John 10:10

Reviewed by:	L McCarthy (Vice Principal), July 2025
Reviewed by:	A Riding (Principal), July 2025
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Signed:	Sue Kelly, Chair of Governors

St. Bernard's Catholic High School's Vision for Teaching and Learning

Teaching and Learning are the core purpose of St. Bernard's Catholic High School, our main purpose and responsibility. We believe that all students throughout the curriculum, whatever their ability, should receive teaching and learning of the highest quality so that they can achieve their full potential and be skilled for life. Therefore, we need to ensure students' experiences are consistently good or outstanding and that good or outstanding progress is made through learning that is personalised to students' individual needs.

Our vision for learning is one that has excellence and mastery at its core. Undoubtedly, teaching and learning should enthuse students, instilling in them a thirst for learning; it should develop the knowledge, skills and attitudes needed for young people to become experts across the curriculum and provide them with the tools required to be successful in their futures.

The mastery model of learning makes the basic assumptions that given time and quality instruction, all pupils can and will eventually master the core intended learning. Mastery learning relies on carefully planned learning journeys and expeditions with clear long and short-term goals which support individual students to achieve deep learning.

St. Bernard's does not prescribe a particular teaching and learning 'house style'. Teachers are encouraged to try new methodologies and take calculated risks, offering rich and varied activities. However, we do believe that, over time, teaching and learning should:

- maximise progress through effective: planning; questioning; differentiation; extension; challenge; academic rigour; modelling and scaffolding; marking, feedback and assessment; and a culture of high expectations so that the needs of all students are met.
- Be enjoyable, engaging and worthwhile.
- Be purposeful.
- Develop higher order thinking skills, such as analysis and evaluation.
- Close gaps between our non-disadvantaged and disadvantaged children.

Over time, teaching and learning also needs to promote:

- high aspirations and a positive view of learning;
- independent thinking (Green Zone Opportunities are core);
- collaboration;
- iterative processes that enable students to recall and retain information
- Dedicated Improvement and Reflection Time (DIRT)
- deep learning;
- creativity;
- literacy and numeracy skills;
- oracy skills
- social and emotional development;
- growth mindsets;

ST BERNARD'S CATHOLIC HIGH SCHOOL

- a sense of identity;
- mutual respect, tolerance and diversity.

In addition to the above points, we also believe that for learners to make good or outstanding progress over time:

- teachers and students should have good, positive relationships;
- teachers will strive to install a belief system in students that they can achieve to the best of their ability;
- learning environments must be orderly, purposeful places where students feel safe;
- teaching and learning should be viewed as a process of co-operative team work, involving parents and others in the community.

For learners to make good or outstanding progress, marking, feedback and assessment of students' learning should be used to:

- identify areas of strength;
- identify areas of improvement and next steps;
- give students regular opportunities to act on the feedback given to them by their teacher or peers in order to make improvements.

Teaching and learning at St. Bernard's Catholic High School will aim to ensure that the students achieve above national standards and expectations of progress. Monitoring and evaluation of the provision within school will be through the Quality Assurance programme and the achievement and standards of students. Specific teaching and learning priorities and targets will be identified and evaluated annually and included in the School's Improvement Plan, the Department Improvement Plan and Individual Performance Management. It is the governors' role to monitor and review the policy and its practice through receiving reports from the Principal and/or other members of staff.

To enable us to achieve our vision for teaching and learning, all staff at St. Bernard's Catholic High School will be involved in a continuing process of improvement. The school is committed to fostering a positive ethos of professional learning and Continuing Professional Development (CPD) opportunities at individual, team and whole school level, as well as through wider networks, are available for staff. Such development will primarily focus on closing learning gaps, supporting school priorities and releasing the potential of all children across all sub-groups.

Continued Professional Development (CPD)

Moving towards a more personalised learning experience for students requires the adoption of a similar philosophy for the needs of staff.

Rather than seeing CPD as an entitlement, it is the personal responsibility of all staff, necessitating a shift from the view that it is all about "attending courses" towards a view of a continuous, sustained and active process which involves teachers joint practice development through a range of skills and expertise that already exists in school.

Aims

1. To link CPD to both the School Improvement Plan, Department Improvement Plans and self-evaluation accessing best practice in teaching and learning.
2. To establish an effective link between CPD and Performance Management.
3. To encourage staff to ensure their CPD opportunities improve teaching and thus impact on student learning, raised confidence, self-esteem, motivation and job satisfaction.
4. To encourage voluntary in-house CPD.
5. To provide a wide range of development opportunities to suit different needs.
6. To provide equality of opportunity for professional development through planned and monitored provision to retain good staff and provide them with the skills and abilities to cope with career development.
7. To support opportunities for individual ICT development.
8. To monitor the dissemination process to enable the sharing of good practice.

Objectives

1. Facilitation of Whole School CPD sessions during the academic year in line with targets outlined in the School Improvement Plan.
2. To encourage staff to provide evidence of the impact of CPD in the classroom.
3. To facilitate additional whole school CPD as required by DfE directive.
4. To facilitate individual Professional Development opportunities according to need as identified during the Performance Management Cycle.
5. To facilitate voluntary in-house CPD as needs arise considering feedback from staff, governors, students and parents.
6. To provide an ECT induction programme in line with school/Diocesan/LA and national policy.
7. To provide appropriate development opportunities for both teaching and support staff.

Principles and Entitlements

1. CPD provision will allow staff to develop skills and competences progressively, with reference to recognised competency frameworks such as the DfE Teachers Standards Framework, NCSL's Development Framework and competency descriptions for Teaching Assistants, HLTAs etc.
2. The CPD coordinator holds a senior responsibility within the school.
3. St Bernard's support accreditation of the professional development of staff where appropriate.
4. We will disseminate successful CPD that supports and improves teaching and learning.

5. St Bernard's will participate in initiatives and projects shown to have positive impact on staff development and student learning provided they are good value for money and can be accommodated within the constraints of the school.

Management of CPD

1. St Bernard's has a CPD coordinator who is a member of the Leadership team.
2. The CPD coordinator attends relevant training sessions.
3. The CPD coordinator is responsible for identifying individual staff and whole school CPD needs. He/She also has a well-defined description of the role.
4. The CPD coordinator is responsible annually for discussing with the Head teacher and hence the governing body CPD priorities and their budgetary implications.
5. CPD issues are addressed at governing body meetings as part of the Head teacher's Report. The CPD coordinator attends these meetings as appropriate.
6. Arrangements for accessing CPD are known to all staff. These arrangements are updated annually.
7. Annual performance management meetings include CPD discussions.
8. All requests for CPD, whether individual or departmental must be made directly to the CPD coordinator.

Planning

The following criteria are used to inform the decision making process regarding school arrangements for CPD:

1. They meet identified individual, school or national development priorities.
2. They are based on best practice in teaching and learning.
3. They help raise the standard of student achievement and attainment.
4. Those with the necessary experience, expertise and skills provide them.
5. They are based on current research and inspection evidence.
6. They make effective use of resources particularly ICT.
7. They provide value for money.

Staff are expected to complete an evaluation of any CPD activities undertaken. Impact of CPD is discussed with line managers at regular meetings and forms part of the Performance Management discussion in line with the Teacher Standards.

Supporting a range of CPD activities

The school will support a wide portfolio of CPD approaches in an effort to match preferred learning styles of staff and to maximise the impact on teaching and learning within the school.

These CPD approaches will include:

- attendance at a course or conference;
- in-school training using the expertise available within the school, eg. team teaching, skills in classroom observation, sharing existing expertise;
- school visit to observe good and successful practice;
- opportunities to participate in award bearing work, eg NCSL projects, NPQH;
- research opportunities, eg. classroom based action research (Disciplined Enquiry);
- practical experience, eg. national test or exam marking experience;
- coaching and mentoring – receiving or acting in these roles, acting as or receiving the support of a critical friend, team building activity;
- creating an improved learning environment within the school;

Recording and disseminating

The CPD Coordinator will also be responsible for ensuring that any follow up is needed to the training eg feedback to the provider and be responsible for any such actions.

Assessing the Impact of CPD

The section of the Principal's report to governors relating to staff development will contain an assessment of the impact of CPD for the previous academic year. Areas for consideration will be:

- improved teaching and learning;
- any observed increase in student understanding and enthusiasm;
- increased staff confidence highlighted during lesson observations by Curriculum Leaders/leadership team during the monitoring cycle.
- promotions within school or outside resulting from improved CV content.