



Teaching, Learning and Assessment Policy

Mission Statement

We are a Catholic College dedicated to the education and development of the whole person and supporting all students to realise their full potential. As an outstanding learning organisation SJR will have a strong sense of purpose and a commitment to shared values within a Christian community. We will establish a unique, safe and challenging environment where every individual is valued, talents are recognised and nurtured, achievements are celebrated and dedication is rewarded. To achieve this as a community we will:

- Welcome all students who are happy to be educated within a Christian environment
- Value the uniqueness and dignity of each individual
- Deliver the highest standards of teaching and learning
- All show a commitment to our work, to the Christian values of the College and to the safety of all in our community
- Provide equality of opportunity, with mutual respect and positive encouragement
- Build and further develop local, national and international partnerships

Core values in daily life at St John Rigby College are expressed as:

- Genuine concern for others
- Support for and challenge of one another
- High standards and expectations
- Consistency and perseverance
- Recognition of talents, progress and achievements.

College Vision

To be an outstanding, inclusive Catholic sixth form college; valuing the individual, celebrating learning and raising aspirations.

Strategic Objectives

1. To embed a learning culture which meets the needs of all students and, in doing so, improves the standards of student achievement, raises aspirations and promotes excellence across the full range of the College curriculum. In addition to providing a safe environment, we will focus on three key areas of outcomes for learners:
 - 1.1 *Establishing consistently high outcomes across all courses*
 - 1.2 *Raising student achievement rates and challenging all courses to exceed Sixth Form College national benchmarks*
 - 1.3 *Establishing a consistently high 'progress score' for all courses.*
2. To increase student recruitment and widen student participation, in partnership with other providers, through the offer of a comprehensive range of high quality courses that meet the needs of our students and support developments and provision within partner high schools.
3. To work collaboratively with groups within the College's local and extended community.

4. To further develop the estate to provide an outstanding, safe learning environment for the whole College community.
5. To sustain a culture where all staff are committed to SJR's core values, where continuous professional development is encouraged and organisational efficiency and effectiveness are achieved.
6. To maintain the College's financial stability in order to implement the College Development Plan.

Policy Statement

Effective teaching, learning and assessment is central to the vision and mission of St John Rigby College. It is our *raison d'être*. As identified in the most recent Ofsted inspection of the College in February 2017 in which the quality of teaching, learning and assessment was judged to be outstanding, inspectors found that, *'Teachers know their students well and are committed to ensuring that they reach their full potential. Teachers' enthusiasm and passion for teaching and learning are infectious, motivating and challenge students to try their very best'*.

This policy is a core component of the continued drive to raise educational standards at St John Rigby College and to bring the outcomes for learners on all courses to that of the best. The policy aims to:

- provide an overarching framework for all teaching, learning, assessment and feedback activities at the College, within which there is flexibility and scope for creativity
- ensure a high quality teaching and learning experience for students of all abilities
- raise attainment by increasing levels of student motivation, participation and independence
- ensure regular and effective monitoring and evaluation of teaching, learning, assessment and feedback
- develop the whole person including transferable skills to enable our students to progress to their favoured career and become lifelong learners.

The delivery of the Teaching and Learning policy is framed by:

- A Teaching, Learning and Assessment Framework (EXCEL)
- 12 Teaching for Learning Key Principles
- A Behaviour for Learning 6-step Framework for Students (ASPIRE)
- Assessment, Marking and Feedback Guidance
- The Teaching, Learning and Assessment Planner – this is updated and given to all Teachers, Learning Mentors and Progress Tutors at the start of each academic year and which contains strategies, tools and guidance on:
 - Metacognition
 - Effective Feedback
 - Directed Independent Learning
 - Lesson Planning
 - Classroom Protocols
 - Strategies for students with SEND
 - Strategies for students with low prior attainment
 - Strategies for students with high prior attainment
 - The effective use of MS Teams and MS SharePoint

Teaching, Learning and Assessment Framework (EXCEL)

Teachers, along with the support of Learning Support Mentors and Progress tutors, will apply the principles of the EXCEL framework in their work with students to ensure that all students are:

- **Engaged** fully in their learning
- Clear about the college's **eXpectations**
- **Challenged** and Supported in their learning
- Using **Effective Approaches** in their learning
- Able to demonstrate **Learning Over Time**



Engagement
Teachers should design learning that engages, inspires and enthuses students; students should always understand the relevance of their learning and skill development beyond the classroom and into their futures.
Teachers should apply the 12 key 'Teaching for Learning Principles' based on Neuroscience in all lesson preparation and delivery.
When planning the curriculum, sequencing should be carefully considered to take into account prior learning, build knowledge and further skills. All teachers should design and deliver schemes of work and assessment plans which are carefully sequenced.
The sequencing of the curriculum should be made clear to students so that they understand how topics interrelate and so they can build further on their mastery of skills and knowledge.
Teachers should consider the development of transferable skills within the delivery of the curriculum, making sure that students are fully aware of their own skill development and enabling students to be effective lifelong learners.
Lessons should raise aspiration for each individual student regardless of prior attainment or educational history to enable all to achieve the highest possible grade.
Lessons should be taught with clarity, enthusiasm, variety and appropriate levels of pace.
eXpectations
Expectations, both whole College and those which are classroom specific, should be made clear and be consistently applied and reinforced throughout the year.
Teachers should always be good role models in attendance, punctuality, preparedness and organisation.
ASPIRE learning behaviours should be integrated into each curriculum area and these should be made clear to all students. The ASPIRE learning behaviours should be modelled and applied regularly in all classrooms and in directing students to independent study tasks.
Registers should be completed within the first 10 minutes of lessons to promote the importance of attendance and punctuality and basic classroom protocols should be checked for adherence prior to lesson delivery taking place.
Challenge and support learning
There is no ceiling to achievement – all students should be challenged and supported to maximise their full potential. The needs of individual students should be considered in all planning, resourcing and delivery.
All teachers should make effective use of data on students – including specific educational needs, disadvantaged data, G scores and prior attainment.

Appropriate levels of scaffolding should be used to support students' learning.
Flexibility should be demonstrated within lessons to respond to the needs of individual students.
Teachers must check for understanding of knowledge and demonstration of skill development throughout all lessons.
Effective Approaches
Approaches should be reviewed and only continued if they are effective.
A variety of assessment techniques should be used within all lessons to gauge student understanding. This will include the use of questioning techniques to probe and develop students' understanding.
Teachers must develop their use of EdTech to ensure accessibility, interactivity and opportunity of resource for all students.
Retrieval practice should be embedded into lessons including distributed practice.
The cognitive load of students should be carefully considered in every lesson and approaches taken to reduce the load.
Modelling should be used to challenge and support learning. This can include modelling each stage step by step, modelling how to complete activities or questions, modelling alternatives and further examples.
Achievement should be recognised and celebrated. Underachievement must be challenged and addressed by teachers, not simply processed. College reward systems must be used to celebrate achievement (ASPIRE and praise logs)
Learning Over Time
Effective formative and summative assessment must be planned carefully to assess the learning of all students. Assessment plans must be in place for all subjects and should follow the College Assessment Calendar.
Frequent opportunities should be taken within lessons to provide immediate verbal feedback.
Lessons should build on prior learning and ensure continuity and progression of both knowledge acquisition and skill development.
Feedback should enable students to make progress – to do this, students need to take ownership of their response to feedback and teachers must ensure they enable ways for students to do this successfully.
Teachers need to provide opportunities to model responses to feedback, giving students time to understand, reflect and respond.
Teachers are required to keep up to date records which track learning over time. Teachers should also ensure that students are tracking over time and being responsive to their areas for development.
Via ASPIRE target setting following each key assessment check, students should be carefully directed to take regular and effective opportunity for self-reflection on their own progress over time and implement appropriate APSIRE strategies for marginal gains.

Teaching for Learning – Neuroscience 12 Key Principles

<p>1 High Challenge, Low Stress <i>Teach to the Top</i></p> <p>Have the same expectations for all students. Everyone is aiming for the same high level – it is just some find it harder to reach. Plan everything with the highest attainers in mind but provide appropriate support and time for those who need it. Celebrate mistakes so that students feel emotionally safe and secure.</p>	<p>2 Big Picture <i>Plan Long</i></p> <p>Know the big picture and share it with students. Plan lesson sequences before you worry about each lesson. Lessons are messy; you need to be responsive. Learning is a long-term process, not a short term one. A lesson is then just the next part of a learning sequence that you can adjust as you go along.</p>
<p>3 Varied Practice <i>Mix It Up</i></p> <p>Varying conditions of practice rather than keeping them constant and predictable can enhance recall at a later date. Mix up where students sit, periodically change the learning environment, incorporate variation in the way students think about material and interleave the teaching of separate but similar topics where you can.</p>	<p>4 New Material in Small Chunks <i>Chunk It</i></p> <p>New information is stored by relating it to, or linking it up with, what is already known. However, working memory is small, only handling a few bits of information at once. To avoid its overload, present new material in small steps, using visuals, analogies and concrete examples and proceed only when the first steps are mastered.</p>
<p>5 Know Your Stuff <i>Subject material, spec, the mark points</i></p> <p>Expert teachers know their subjects, continually study them, know how questions will be set and what the answers should be. They can explain clearly, precisely and simply, representing ideas in multiple ways, this requires time and effort to keep up to date.</p>	<p>6 Ask Questions <i>Pose, pause, pounce, bounce, stretch</i></p> <p>Ask a large number of questions and check the responses of all students. Questions help students practice new information and connect new material to their prior learning. Questions allow the teacher to determine how well the material is learned.</p>
<p>7 Provide Models <i>Simple to complex; concrete to abstract</i></p> <p>Students need cognitive support to help them learn complex and abstract concepts. Simple models, worked examples, teacher modelling and thinking aloud while demonstrating how to solve a problem are all examples of effective cognitive support.</p>	<p>8 Deep Processing <i>Learning happens when we think hard</i></p> <p>Memory works best when we process material deeply, connecting it with our pre-existing knowledge (interpretation) and to other things we are trying to learn (elaboration). The more effort we expend, the better we remember.</p>
<p>9 Effective Feedback <i>Close the Gap</i></p> <p>If students do not use feedback to move their learning forward, it's a waste of time. Comments for improvement should be focused and helpful and provide a recipe for future action. Feedback should be more effort for the student than it is for the teacher.</p>	<p>10 Independent Learning <i>Weekly directed independent study</i></p> <p>Students need additional time to rephrase, elaborate and summarise new material in order to store it in their long-term memory, independent practice produces 'overlearning' – a necessary process for new material to be recalled automatically.</p>
<p>11 Retrieval Practice <i>Input less, output more</i></p> <p>Recalling information from memory makes it more recallable in the future. The more effort involved, the more it is embedded into long term memory. Begin a lesson with a short review of previous learning. Daily review can lead to fluent recall, freeing up working memory for problem solving and creativity.</p>	<p>12 Distributed Practice <i>Space It</i></p> <p>Information that is practiced repeatedly over spaced intervals is learned much better and for longer than information that is repeated without intervals (massed practice). Increasing the spacing between study sessions enhances learning and leads to better long-term retention.</p>

Behaviour for Learning Framework (ASPIRE)

This is a 6-step approach to learning designed to help students become more efficient and effective learners. On the surface, each step seems obvious, but all too often students can take short cuts and miss important opportunities to benefit from the interplay of each step. Each step builds on the previous one and distributes effective learning throughout the year.

Teachers, along with support from Learning Mentors and Progress Tutors will use the common language contained within the 6 steps with their students to help them to develop their learning behaviour, enabling them to be successful in their studies.

This common language framed by the 6 steps in the College's Behaviour for Learning Framework – ASPIRE – is first introduced to students during induction in tutorial and in each subject lesson. Through the implementation of the framework, the expectations of positive learning behaviours are explained to students. Teachers are provided with ASPIRE strategies and tools which they can share with and model for students to help them achieve each of the 6-steps of the framework – all of which provide a recipe for successful study.

Regular student reviews in both tutorial and subjects are framed around ASPIRE to help students to develop an understanding of how their approach to each step with the framework of ASPIRE is impacting on their progress and eventually their overall success at college.



Assessment, Marking and Feedback

St John Rigby College recognises the importance of clear, accurate and regular assessment where all marking and feedback supports the education and personal development of students.

In the most recent Ofsted inspection of the College in February 2017, inspectors noted that ‘teachers assess students’ work regularly. They provide concise and informative feedback, in line with the College’s policy, to help students improve their work. Teachers have a very strong focus on the requirements of examinations and assessments and prepare students well through regular testing, formal assessments and homework.’

In order to continue to provide outstanding teaching, learning and assessment to our students, this policy aims to provide a minimum expectation for assessment across all courses and informs the departmental assessment and marking policies:

- **Regularity of Assessment** - Teachers are required to appropriately assess learning, the method of this assessment is at the discretion of the teacher. This may include observation, mini whiteboards, verbal responses, written tests, online testing, extended writing etc. This assessment will support the teacher in addressing misconceptions, building knowledge and the pace of lessons.
- **Substantial assessment** - More substantial pieces of work should be assessed and moderated against Awarding Body criteria and against minimum acceptable grades, in order to inform progress reviews. Assessment should be carried out and returned as soon as practically possible, ideally within one week, but for extended pieces of written work this should be no more than two weeks after the student submission deadline. For coursework and/or BTEC assessment, this may vary depending on the assessment plan and the nature of the assessment. Teachers should always ensure that appropriate levels of standardisation has taken place ahead of agreeing final grades and giving feedback to students.
- **Assessment Checks** - All teachers are required to formally assess students in class under ‘test conditions’. These should take place in accordance with the College Assessment Calendar. The College Assessment Calendar indicates when whole College formal assessment points, progress review dates and internal mock examinations take place. The results of each assessment check point are recorded centrally and results of each are sent home. The Assessment Calendar will allow progress tutors, teaching staff, curriculum leaders, senior leaders and parents to gain an understanding of the progress each individual student is making over the duration of their course and enable effective interventions to take place. Teachers must follow the guidance given out centrally ahead of each Assessment Check taking place.
- **Mark books** - Teaching staff are required to maintain an accurate, current record of assessment outcomes for the students in their group/s. These marks should be kept in a mark book or the Teaching Learning and Assessment Planner provided at the start of the year and/or on an agreed electronic mark book and must be made available for checking by the Head of Department/Course Leader/Divisional Leader/Vice Principal at any time. The College calendar identifies monthly mark-book checks.
- **Class Trackers** - At the start of the academic year, teachers should download a ‘Class Tracker’ for each of their classes. The Class Trackers aim to identify students who may be ‘at risk’ of underachieving or not completing their course for a variety of reasons (G score, re-sitting GCSE mathematics or English, coming to College from a school that is ‘out of area’, initial assessment information, IMD etc.) The Class Trackers should also be used in pinpointing where high grade achievement should be expected and in enabling a focus to remain on the targets agreed in the Exam Report to Principal meetings at the start of the academic year. All Class Trackers should be accessible to the Head of Department/Course Leader and reviewed during monthly mark-book checks.

- **Non-examined Assessments** – The setting and marking of NEA and coursework should follow Awarding Body guidelines including the requirements for internal verification and moderation. Records of coursework and non-examined assessment outcomes should follow the requirements set out by the awarding body and need to be located for ease of access within each teaching department. Teachers delivering BTEC courses must use a unit tracker document that is accessible to the Head of Department / Course Leader and updated regularly. All BTEC trackers should be available on the department’s SharePoint page and be kept up to date at all times. All non-examined assessment must be completed for final submission in enough time ahead of the applicable examination board final deadline. Please see the Examination Policy.
- **Monitoring** - Each Head of Department/Course Leader will monitor teachers’ marking and written feedback through regular monitoring procedures such as work and file scrutiny, lesson observations, internal verification records, checking of student files, feedback from whole College reviews and student focus groups. Feedback will be given to teachers and support and monitoring will ensure any issues raised are acted upon appropriately and swiftly to reduce any possible impact to the progress of students.

Teaching, Learning and Assessment Lead Practitioners

In recognition of the importance of maintaining the highest standard of teaching, learning and assessment and in supporting the successful implementation of the College teaching, learning and assessment frameworks, the College is committed to having a dedicated team of Lead Practitioners, led by a Senior Lead Practitioner. An outline of the purpose and role of a Lead Practitioner is outlined below. All teachers and departments are able to access the support they offer:

- To lead on and model strategies from the Teaching, Learning and Assessment Framework (EXCEL) and to develop and implement staff development opportunities and strategies for effective teaching, learning and assessment.
- To ensure that the Behaviour for Learning Framework (ASPIRE) is embedded in all tutorial and subject lessons and to regularly update staff on strategies for implementation.
- To provide effective coaching, mentoring and support to teaching staff across the curriculum to promote excellent teaching, learning and assessment.
- To conduct developmental lesson observations (non-graded lessons, supporting videoed lesson observations, peer observations) and coach staff on improvements to their current practice.
- To work with curriculum managers to identify priorities and implement actions designed to enhance the quality of learning across the College.
- To develop and promote teaching, learning and assessment resources in the College.
- To discuss and share strategies for learning, teaching and assessment with colleagues.
- To plan and offer bespoke TLA INSET for whole staff and curriculum teams.

Related Policies

- Equality and Diversity Action Plan
- Equality and Diversity Policy
- Examinations Procedures:
 - Verification / Moderation of Assessment
 - Suspected Malpractice in Examinations and Assessments
 - Appeals Procedure
 - Access Arrangements
- Lesson Observation Policy
- Preventing Extremism and Radicalisation Policy
- Remote Learning Policy

- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Staff Code of Conduct
- Student Charter
- Student Support and Disciplinary Policy
- Support to Study Policy