

ST BENEDICT'S CATHOLIC HIGH SCHOOL
incorporating
WEST CUMBRIA CATHOLIC SIXTH FORM CENTRE



CURRICULUM POLICY STATEMENT

The values and virtues of the Roman Catholic Church are at the heart of everything we do at St Benedict's Catholic High School. We promote care and respect for all and expect high standards in all aspects of school life.

Our aim is to meet the needs of our young people, preparing them for adult and working life in the 21st century and enabling them to be the best they can be.

We are committed to preparing students to succeed in the 21st Century by providing a secure learning environment, a rigorous academic and vocational curriculum, high expectations and best practice in teaching and learning enhanced by wide-ranging extra-curricular opportunities and excellent pastoral care.

We have the following aims:

- To strive for excellence and high aspiration in all aspects of teaching and learning for all students.
- To ensure all students realise their full potential in all aspects of their development.
- To prepare students to be independent, resilient and life-long learners.
- To provide a caring and safe environment in which the individual's personality and abilities are valued and fostered.
- To provide an environment in which creativity, enterprise and initiative are encouraged.
- To promote sporting, artistic and social activities to develop students' interests and talents.
- To ensure that students leave this school fully prepared for the next stage in their education or employment, confident in their skills and prepared for useful, active citizenship.
- To develop local, regional, national and international partnerships and constantly look for opportunities to extend learning.
- Have students' interests at its heart, putting them above those of the school.
- Have a curriculum that is fit for purpose, offering differentiation and personalisation.
- First achieve and then exceed national standards in achievement, attainment and progression.
- Be committed to excellence and continuous improvement.
- Provide a broad, balanced and personalised curriculum which will engage, inspire and challenge all our students.
- Our students will leave St Benedict's with a sense of faith, captured in their knowledge, courage, personal virtues and self-worth.

The Formal Curriculum

An appropriate curriculum for the school will be determined, organised and implemented, to meet the needs, experience, interests, aptitudes and stage of development of the students whilst having regard for the resources available to the school. It will at least meet the statutory requirements of the National Curriculum alongside the values and virtues of the Roman Catholic Faith. At St Benedict's we view the curriculum as covering every aspect of the school's work and, as such, incorporates both academic and pastoral elements.

As students move through Key Stage 3, Key Stage 4 and Key Stage 5, they will be able to exercise greater choice in terms of the subjects they study. The school's philosophy for KS3 and KS4 students is one that encourages a large common core and stresses a broad balanced curriculum for all, within National Curriculum guidelines.

At the beginning of their school life, all students will follow the same core curriculum. However students will be grouped according to ability in some subjects. Students will be encouraged to share responsibility for their own learning; to develop study skills through self-organisation and regular homework; to make use of Information Communication Technology; to take advantage of any additional academic, pastoral and personal support available to them; and to participate in the extra-curricular activities available to them.

Key Stage 3 (Years 7-9)

In Year 7 all students study: English, mathematics, science, French, history, geography, religion, computing, design technology (resistant materials, food and textiles), art, music, and PE/games. A small number of students follow an adjusted curriculum more closely aligned to the key stage 2 curriculum to meet their particular needs following consultation with parents/carers. These students are reintegrated into the full curriculum as soon as it is appropriate.

In Year 8 students study: English, mathematics, science, French, history, geography, religion, computing, design technology (resistant materials, food and textiles), art, music and PE/games.

In Year 9 students are given the opportunity to study German, Spanish or to continue to study French alongside the subjects listed above.

Throughout Key Stage 3 students are introduced to elements of the Key Stage 4 curriculum. Gaining a firm grounding in the core subjects is important and it is our aim to ensure that students are well equipped to begin their formal studies for qualifications.

Key Stage 4 (Years 10 & 11)

As students enter Key Stage 4 an element of choice is given to them to allow them to follow a pathway that is appropriate for them and their future aspirations whilst not being so specialised that doors might be closed to them in the future. All students study a broad range of subjects and the vast majority of students then take GCSE or equivalent qualifications at the end of a two year course. There are opportunities for students to study vocational courses alongside their GCSE courses as appropriate.

All students study a compulsory core curriculum, which includes English, mathematics, religious education, PE/games and the equivalent of at least two GCSEs in science subjects. Those that choose to can study the three separate sciences of physics, chemistry and biology if it is appropriate for their needs and skills.

The option subjects available are: geography, history, computer science, art and design, design technology, French, German, Spanish and physical education. We also offer a range

of vocational courses, equivalent to GCSEs, in Business Studies, Food and cookery, Health and Social Care, Engineering and Performing Arts.

All students have the opportunity to attain the Ebacc suite of subjects as part of their studies if they so choose. Students are recommended to follow one of three pathways that the school offers based upon their abilities and progress throughout Key Stage 3.

These pathways ensure that students continue to study a broad and balanced curriculum with a high value academic basis. Alongside the core subjects, almost all students will also study at least one of geography or history. In addition students can also choose to study French, German or Spanish alongside separate sciences or computer science. The most able are recommended to choose a language as part of their options.

Whilst almost all students study three option subjects in addition to the core subjects, some will study less depending on the needs of each individual. For these students we deliver an additional English and mathematics support programme, for students with an identified need for support in these areas, leading to accredited entry level qualifications.

We offer a wide choice of options and students work with staff, including form tutors, subject teachers, their Director of Learning/ Head of Year, Learning Mentor and external advisors and local employer representatives through the “World of Work” day to identify courses which will support their career aspirations and offer them the best opportunities for success as individuals. Careers advice and guidance forms part of the personal development programme for students from Years 7 – 11 and includes assemblies, events and visiting speakers. Options advice evenings and parents’ evenings also provide support. Additionally, Year 10 students have the chance to undertake a week of work experience during the summer term.

Key Stage 5

At Key Stage 5 St Benedict’s offers a broad range of level 3 qualifications including traditional A levels, Applied A levels and vocational courses to satisfy each students’ needs, ranging from traditional subjects to new, exciting opportunities available for the first time in Key Stage 5. At the end of year 12 students may take AS examinations in some subjects where this is appropriate.

Students typically study four subjects in Years 12 & 13. This may reduce to three subjects in year 13. For those students that study three subjects, the extended project (EPQ) qualification is also undertaken. In addition, students attend a structured General RE programme. The courses and qualifications offered give students the skills and experiences to prepare them for the next stage of their educational and vocational life after they leave St Benedict’s.

For those students that meet the entry requirements for St Benedict’s sixth form, but have not achieved a grade C/4 in either English or mathematics at GCSE, appropriate teaching and support will enable them to retake the relevant qualification.

Evaluation of the Curriculum

One means of evaluating the whole curriculum provided is to compare what the students perceive to be their experience with the principles set out in this document. The effectiveness of the formal curriculum will be re-evaluated annually by the Headteacher and staff before modifying the new curriculum in the context of the governors' review of curriculum policy.

We will undertake a Curriculum Review on an annual basis that will take into account Government legislation and the views of students, parents, Governors and staff.

Please contact the General Office should you wish to make an appointment to discuss any aspect of the curriculum further.

Issued on behalf of the Governing Body by:-

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'J. McQuinn', written in a cursive style.

Chair of Governors

Policy Reviewed: October 2020

Date to be Reviewed: July 2022