



The Ursuline Academy

Ilford

Teaching and Learning

Policy

2025

The Ursuline Academy Ilford

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Mission Statement

The Ursuline Academy Ilford is a Catholic community of faith, love, kindness and service. Guided by Gospel values and the Holy Spirit, we strive to create an inclusive environment where everyone in our diverse community can reach their full potential in all their endeavours.

Our young women are inspired by the witness of St Angela and the vibrant school community, whose motto 'SERVIAM' - I will serve, empowers us all to play our full part in society.

As an Ursuline school, teaching and learning is at the very core of our mission and purpose. This policy sets out the principles and standards of how teaching and learning takes place at our school and is organised into 3 main areas:

1. Planning and implementation of teaching
2. Application of cognitive science and latest research to develop teaching and learning
3. Homework
4. Marking, assessment and feedback

The overall aims of this policy are as follows:

- Every student receives teaching and learning that allows them to realise their full potential.
- Students are inspired to fully engage in their learning and strive to do their best.
- Students flourish and this is reflected in external examination results and student destinations.
- Students develop important life skills and become independent and resilient learners.
- Students develop the skills and qualities that will allow them to play a full and active role in adult society.
- Students develop Ursuline values and learn to Love to Lead and to Serve.

SECTION 1: PLANNING AND IMPLEMENTATION OF TEACHING

1. Rationale and Aims

This section is concerned with the planning of teaching, both on a curriculum, scheme of work and individual lesson basis. It also covers the nature of lessons and learning activities that take place in school. There are a number of key principles and standards that we expect all to adhere to and our procedures and processes aim to provide a flexible framework within which teachers can operate effectively. We believe that a coherent, cross-school approach based on cognitive science and the latest research improves both the experience of our learners and outcomes. However, we value the professionalism of teaching staff and recognise them as experts in their field who are best placed to interpret what exactly the principles, standards and approaches will look like in their subject classrooms. It is also important to recognise the impact on teacher workload and we are committed to reducing unnecessary tasks that do not enhance student experience.

The main aims of this section are:

- The curriculum and schemes of work for each subject have a clear intent in terms of the knowledge and skills that students will develop at each stage as outlined in their curriculum intent statements.
- The implementation of the curriculum (through teaching and assessment) enables students to build on their knowledge and develop skills.
- The impact of the teaching and learning that takes places can be seen in improving student outcomes.

2. Curriculum

- We recognise that the curriculum encompasses far more than just the subjects that are taught and includes all that takes place at school. This policy deals specifically with the 'formal' taught aspects of our curriculum.
- As a Catholic school we value the varied gifts, talents and interests that our students possess. We are therefore committed to offering the broadest curriculum possible to enable all our students to flourish.
- Subject teams, led by the Head of Department, are responsible for ensuring that a comprehensive scheme of work is in place and followed consistently across the department for all key stages taught. A copy of this is available to all staff on Teams and reviewed and referred to regularly with the teaching team.
- In designing or refining the curriculum, the department must carefully consider these main areas of focus: Sequencing, Curricular Links, Knowledge, Skills and Values.
- The curriculum and schemes of work are sequenced effectively so that students can build on their knowledge and skills in a logical and progressive way.
- At key stage 3, where available, the National Curriculum should be the starting point for planning with the planned curriculum and scheme of work being an ambitious extension of this.
- At key stage 4 and 5, the curriculum content is mainly led by the relevant exam specification and is planned in a way to allow the greatest understanding and progress.
- The RE curriculum covers all students in the school from Year 7 to 13 and is in accordance with the Religious Education Curriculum Directory (Catholic Bishops Conference 2012).

3. Lessons

Lessons will differ between subjects, age groups and teachers and reflects the differing demands and natures of the subjects as well as the individual styles and approaches of our teachers. This variety and professional freedom allow the creativity and innovation that leads to high quality and engaging lessons. However, certain principles will apply regardless of the approach or range of activities used and these principles will be based upon proven pedagogical approaches such as those of Rosenshine and research by the Education Endowment Foundation.

Teachers Set High Expectations Which Inspire, Motivate and Challenge Students

They will demonstrate and model the positive attitudes, values and behaviours we expect and set a positive environment that stretches and challenges students.

Teachers Promote Good Progress and Outcomes by Students

Teachers take responsibility for their students' outcomes and builds on existing capabilities and prior knowledge. Students guided to reflect on their own progress and take responsibility for their learning.

Teachers Demonstrate Good Subject and Curriculum Knowledge

Show thorough and up to date subject knowledge including common misunderstandings and how to address these and fosters enthusiasm for the subject. Promotes through their teaching high standards of numeracy and literacy, including all aspects of oracy – cognitive, linguistic, physical and social and emotional (see Appendix C).

Teachers Plan and Teach Well-Structured Lessons

Lessons are purposeful and ensure that the time is used effectively to improve students' knowledge and skills. Teachers are to incorporate proven techniques such as Rosenshine's principles (see Appendix A), reflect on the effectiveness of lessons and adapt where necessary – the use of IRIS Connect is encouraged for this purpose.

Teachers Adapt Teaching to Respond to The Strengths and Needs of All Students

Teacher takes responsibility for all students in the class and ensures that they are able to make appropriate progress in building knowledge and skill. This includes students who are very able and those who experience barriers to learning or have SEND. All teachers follow the separate SEND policy and the recommendations by the EEF (see Appendix B). Teachers are expected to utilise adaptive teaching methods to ensure that all learners are both suitably challenged and supported.

Adaptive teaching is reactive and responsive to individual student's needs at any particular moment in time and at any point in the learning journey. All students will access the planned learning and curriculum content; some will understand it more deeply than others. Teachers will have the same learning intentions for the vast majority of students, with no lowering of expectations for those students who might find these more challenging. In order for all students to be able to achieve these intentions, it will be necessary to 'adapt teaching' for some, through the use of strategies such as:

- A range of meta cognition strategies (knowledge organisers, word banks, scaffolding-writing frames/exemplars, mind maps, recall, peer explanations etc).
- Breaking down content into smaller chunks or steps.
- Modelling and sequencing (thinking out loud, manipulatives, worked out models etc.)
- Consistent visual models/resources

- Removing unnecessary expositions i.e. keeping your spoken language at an amount and level that will enable maximum access.
- Reframing questions (Asking a question that requires the same high level of thinking, but using a simpler construction, by using an active rather than a passive voice, or by focusing on one aspect at time e.g: If I were to add 9 to 4 what would I do?/ What are the different strategies that I can use to calculate 9 add 4?).
- Intervening appropriately, i.e. in the classroom/lesson wherever possible, to minimise the need for out-of class interventions (though these will still be appropriate and necessary for some students).

Teachers Make Accurate and Productive Use of Assessment

Teachers understand class data and use this to inform teaching. This includes formative and summative assessment and how this impacts subsequent lessons. Students receive sufficient feedback to allow them to understand how to continue to improve.

Teachers Manage Behaviour Effectively to Ensure a Good and Safe Learning Environment

Teachers have high expectations of student behaviour and maintain an orderly and safe environment for learning to take place. Well planned lessons contribute to this and teachers must also follow the rules and procedures in the Behaviour for Learning Policy.

4. Monitoring

School leadership will monitor the planning and delivery of learning to ensure the standards are consistently maintained across the school. Information from monitoring will also be used to inform future training needs and school improvement priorities. The monitoring will involve:

Drop-ins

Drop-ins are purposeful walk-throughs of classrooms with a pre-defined focus. Unlike a lesson observation or learning walk, which provide a view of a single classroom, a drop-in creates a school-wide picture made up of many small snapshots.

It is a strategy for providing broad feedback about the effectiveness of school processes, pupil learning and classroom practice. Drop-ins are based on spending a brief period of time (about 10 minutes) in a number of classrooms.

Purpose

The purpose of the any drop-in is to:

- To monitor or audit practice throughout the school - providing a 'snapshot'.
- To promote consistency.
- Train leaders and moderate teaching and learning judgements.

Process

How Drop-Ins should be carried out:

- The SLT will decide on a focus prior to a drop-in cycle e.g. looking at establishing a calm climate, pupil engagement, adherence to uniform policy.
- The purpose / focus will be shared with the whole staff prior to each drop-in cycle via the staff bulletin.
- The walkers will visit lessons individually or in pairs – this will be decided by the SLT prior to the drop-in.
- Each teacher will only be visited once per drop-in cycle.
- The drop-ins will be timetabled beforehand but not shared with staff as this may compromise the 'snapshot'.

From time to time, Governors may wish to visit classrooms to become familiar with the School or to observe specific aspects of the curriculum. Such visits will be by prior arrangement and will not be professional observations. Governors and other visitors will not evaluate the work of the teacher.

Learning Walks

Learning walks take place in order to collect evidence about teaching and learning, evidence of progress and areas for school development. They are intended to be developmental and constructive rather than judgemental and are a whole-school improvement activity.

Purpose

The purpose of the any learning walk is to:

- Train leaders and moderate teaching and learning judgements.
- Support leaders in reaching informed, and up to date, judgements in relation to pupil progress and teaching and learning.
- Allow teachers an opportunity to be coached and supported in the development of their teaching practice.
- Inform the Senior and Middle Leaders of immediate and long-term training needs, so that staff training is appropriate and purposeful.

Frequency/Notice

- Learning walks cycles will take place once each term, so that improvements can be judged.
- Staff will be given at least *one week notice* of a scheduled learning walk via email and the staff bulletin.
- The focus of the learning walk will be emailed to all staff and be placed in the staff bulletin.
- There will be no formal notice given of learning walks, other than as stated above.

Process

How Learning Walks should be carried out:

- Prior to learning walks beginning, the SLT will agree a clear focus for the learning walks.
All those taking part in the learning walk should be invited to meet beforehand to ensure that the focus of the learning walk is clear for all observers.
- A timetable should be made of which classes will be visited.
- Feedback from learning walks will be recorded on the pro-forma. This feedback is designed to promote conversation, help teaching staff to develop and to help observers to feedback to individuals.
- At the close of every learning walk, those observing should agree how feedback will be shared and give those observed an opportunity to discuss those observations, training needs and further action required.
- A summary of each round of learning walks will be prepared for further discussion at SLT and also with the Education Committee.

Student Voice

The school uses a range of surveys and interview focus groups to gain student feedback on their experience of lessons and learning. The results of these are reviewed carefully by school leaders and implications communicated to staff through meetings and staff training.

Lesson Observations

These are formal observations that are known about in advance and usually last the full lesson. The observer (usually the head of department or subject leader) will complete a lesson observation pro-forma (see Appendix D) and provide detailed feedback to the teacher being observed as soon as possible following the observation. Lessons are not graded and the outcome of the observation will focus on strengths observed and areas for further development. Teaching staff may be formally observed as part of the appraisal process and also as part of a subject review.

Subject Review (Deep Dives)

Each academic year a number of subject areas will undergo a review. This involves interviews with teaching staff about the curriculum and work, interviews of students, lesson observations and work scrutiny. The lesson observations are all conducted as outlined above and an overall report on the review findings and any recommendations is compiled and shared with Governors and the Head of Department.

Performance Management / Appraisal / Line Management

As part of teacher appraisal and performance management, teaching and learning will feature heavily in target setting and evidence that targets have been met. Line management meetings also provide a regular opportunity to monitor and discuss the quality of provision. It is the responsibility of the appraisee to build up a portfolio of evidence over time to support the performance management process. This 'portfolio' should be saved in Standards Tracker so that both appraisee and appraiser have access to it.

SECTION 2: HOMEWORK

1. Rationale and Aims

This section is concerned with the independent learning that takes place outside of the classroom (homework). As a school, we expect students to complete homework as it has an important role to play in supporting the work that takes place in school as well as helping students to develop important life skills such as resilience, independence and good organisation.

Our main aims for this section of the policy are that:

- Homework is of a consistently high quality in all areas and contributes to the overall curriculum intent of developing student knowledge, skills and qualities.
- Students have a clear understanding of what is expected of them and complete homework to a high standard.
- Students' efforts with homework are appropriately recognised through timely feedback.
- Teachers focus on quality rather than quantity of homework and that it is strategically planned to enhance the overall learning experience.
- The setting and completion of homework is as transparent as possible to all stakeholders

2. Homework

The exact nature of homework will differ between subjects and age groups and reflect the professional freedom of teachers as referred to throughout this policy. Homework will be meaningful and enable students to improve knowledge and skills.

The following are some of the common ways it will do this:

- Review and Practice of material learnt in class.
- Advanced learning of key material to enable a focus on higher order skills in lesson.
- Enrichment / extension to allow students to go beyond what has been learnt in class or apply their knowledge to a different situation.
- Developing learning to learn qualities for example through structured research activities.
- Completing longer tasks such as project work where appropriate guidance and scaffolding is provided.
- Exam practice and preparation activities.
- Homework tasks should always have a clear purpose and not be overly time consuming.
- Whilst building independence is an important aim of homework, students must be given appropriate guidance and scaffolding to ensure that progress is made e.g. project work would likely be split into weekly tasks with separate guidance and checking for each.
- Typical homework tasks include:
 - Directed reading of specific material – structured notes / simple comprehension type questions.
 - Research – with specific outcomes e.g., sheet with headings to fill out.
 - Tasks that further develop skills / allow for practice e.g. practice calculations.
 - Completion of questions based on work conducted in class / practice.
 - Exam questions or similar / essays to aid revision and develop skills.
 - Revision for assessments.
 - Short quizzes / multi choice / short answer to check understanding / check reading taken place.
 - Online revision and development activities such as set tasks on SAM learning.
 - Access and use of flipped learning resources e.g. videos / reading to prepare for future in class learning.
 - Creative / thinking tasks that develop skills or encourage students to consider values etc.
- Following the outline guidance of the purpose and nature of homework above, each department has developed their own outline of what homework will 'look like' in their subject area.

3. Setting of Homework

- The class teacher is responsible for ensuring homework is set for the classes they teach. The frequency that homework is set will differ by age group and subject area, however the normal expectation is once per week.
- All homework tasks must be uploaded to Satchel One, the online platform that school uses, with clear instructions of the task and any supporting material that is required. The method of submission must also be made clear to students (online or in person).
- Where homework is completed in exercise books, this should be clear via HW in the margin.
- Where possible, students should be given a week to complete a piece of homework to enable them to manage their time and take part in extra-curricular activities or other commitments outside of school.

4. Feedback

It is important that homework is acknowledged, and appropriate feedback is given. See next section for appropriate forms of feedback. Departments have agreed the forms of feedback that best suit their subject and the approximate frequency with which they will be used.

5. Time Spent on Homework

As already stated, the focus of homework is on quality rather than quantity. It is also accepted that the precise amount of homework will fluctuate depending on the precise nature of the task and subject. Below is an approximate guide of the amount of time that should be spent on homework per week:

Year 7 – 8

Approximately 30 mins per week per subject. Maths practice is approximately 80 mins per week. In addition, students should read for 20 minutes each day.

Year 9 – 11

Between 45 – 60 mins per week per subject. Maths practice is approximately 120 mins. Students are also expected to read for 20 minutes per day.

Year 12 – 13

Between 4 – 5 hours per week per subject.

6. Monitoring

The quality and consistency of the homework tasks set will be monitored by middle leaders and senior leaders directly through Satchel One.

The impact of homework will be monitored through:

- Work scrutiny via drop-ins/SatchelOne
- Student voice interviews / surveys
- Parental feedback

SECTION 3: MARKING AND ASSESSMENT

1. Rationale and Aims

This section is concerned with how work is marked and assessed by teachers. This is a crucial area in informing teaching as well as enabling students to make rapid improvement and informing parents of progress. In addition to effective assessment for summative and formative purposes, target setting must also be robust to motivate students and provide a realistic measure of achievement.

The main aims are:

- Students understand their performance and what steps they need to take to improve.
- Teachers have good knowledge of group and individual performance and can adapt teaching appropriately.
- Students feel their efforts are noticed by teachers and take pride in their work.

2. Assessments

- All departments will use a range of assessment methods to measure progress towards students' MEGs and identify targets for improvement. This will include formal assessments (based on examination-style questions) and marking of classwork and homework.
- Formal assessments will take place under controlled conditions and will be marked using examination mark schemes and/or agreed upon criteria within the department.

3. Marking of Work

- Providing individual written feedback on student work will be appropriate and necessary in some situations (particularly summative assessment) but incurs a high cost in teacher workload with, in some instances, minimal gains for students. Teachers are encouraged to use a range of feedback methods to enhance student engagement and understanding as well as managing their workload.

Examples include:

- Discussion of an activity in class e.g., going through the answers / common mistakes / what did we learn etc.
- Automatically marked tests or similar online homework tasks.
- Teacher checking that work has been completed by students and acknowledging verbally, online or through ticking / stamping of work.
- Providing a mark scheme / model answer.
- Peer / self-assessment of work.
- Verbal feedback from teacher.
- Using a brief code in the margin.
- A grade / mark that students must interpret in some way.
- Traditional, written individual feedback online or in person.
- Providing a model answer or similar
- Providing a group comment or class feedback.

- Departments have their own plans for how often individual written feedback will be provided and the precise form this will take.
- Written feedback should clearly highlight strengths and areas of improvement e.g. 'What Went Well (WWW) and Even Better If (EBI)'.
• Students should be able to articulate recent feedback they have had and state what they need to do to improve.
- There are no set colours of pens that should be used for marking or stamps or annotations when verbal feedback has been provided. It is expected that students would be able to reflect on such feedback when questioned.
- All staff should keep records of the progress of individual students. These records should show the results of a range of homework, classwork and assessment tasks and should form the basis for reporting attainment and progress to parents, Heads of Department and SLT. The presentation of this information can be in any form convenient to the teacher and/or department.

4. Monitoring

The main responsibility for monitoring the ongoing assessment and marking rests with the Head of Department who should regularly check in with their team and monitor what is going on.

In addition, the following methods will provide monitoring for Marking and Assessment:

- Work scrutiny
- Student interviews / surveys
- Subject Review (Deep Dive)
- Direct checking of SatchelOne (Homework)

THE PRINCIPLES OF INSTRUCTION

TAKEN FROM THE INTERNATIONAL ACADEMY OF EDUCATION

This poster is from the work of Barak Rosenshine who based these ten principles of instruction and suggested classroom practices on:

- research on how the brain acquires and uses new information
- research on the classroom practices of those teachers whose students show the highest gains
- findings from studies that taught learning strategies to students.



01 DAILY REVIEW

Daily review is an important component of instruction. It helps strengthen the connections of the material learned. Automatic recall frees working memory for problem solving and creativity.

02 NEW MATERIAL IN SMALL STEPS

Our working memory is small, only handling a few bits of information at once. Avoid its overload — present new material in small steps and proceed only when first steps are mastered.

03 ASK QUESTIONS

The most successful teachers spend more than half the class time lecturing, demonstrating and asking questions. Questions allow the teacher to determine how well the material is learned.

04 PROVIDE MODELS

Students need cognitive support to help them learn how to solve problems. Modelling, worked examples and teacher thinking out loud help clarify the specific steps involved.

05 GUIDE STUDENT PRACTICE

Students need additional time to rephrase, elaborate and summarise new material in order to store it in their long-term memory. More successful teachers built in more time for this.

06 CHECK STUDENT UNDERSTANDING

Less successful teachers merely ask "Are there any questions?" No questions are taken to mean no problems. False. By contrast, more successful teachers check on all students.

07 OBTAIN HIGH SUCCESS RATE

A success rate of around 80% has been found to be optimal, showing students are learning and also being challenged. Better teachers taught in small steps followed by practice.

08 SCAFFOLDS FOR DIFFICULT TASKS

Scaffolds are temporary supports to assist learning. They can include modelling, teacher thinking aloud, cue cards and checklists. Scaffolds are part of cognitive apprenticeship.

09 INDEPENDENT PRACTICE

Independent practice produces 'overlearning' — a necessary process for new material to be recalled automatically. This ensures no overloading of students' working memory.

10 WEEKLY & MONTHLY REVIEW

The effort involved in recalling recently-learned material embeds it in long-term memory. And the more this happens, the easier it is to connect new material to such prior knowledge.

**SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS
IN MAINSTREAM SCHOOLS**
Summary of recommendations

<p>1</p> <p>Create a positive and supportive environment for all pupils, without exception</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> An inclusive school removes barriers to learning and participation, provides an education that is appropriate to pupils' needs, and promotes high standards and the fulfilment of potential for all pupils. Schools should: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> promote positive relationships, active engagement, and wellbeing for all pupils; ensure all pupils can access the best possible teaching; and adopt a positive and proactive approach to behaviour, as described in the EEF's Improving Behaviour in Schools guidance report.
<p>2</p> <p>Build an ongoing, holistic understanding of your pupils and their needs</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Schools should aim to understand individual pupil's learning needs using the graduated approach of the 'access, plan, do, review' approach. Assessment should be regular and purposeful rather than a one-off event, and should seek input from parents and carers as well as the pupil themselves and specialist professionals. Teachers need to feel empowered and trusted to use the information they collect to make a decision about the next steps for teaching that child.
<p>3</p> <p>Ensure all pupils have access to high quality teaching</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To a great extent, good teaching for pupils with SEND is good teaching for all. Searching for a 'magic bullet' can distract teachers from the powerful strategies they often already possess. The research suggests a group of teaching strategies that teachers should consider emphasising for pupils with SEND. Teachers should develop a repertoire of these strategies they can use flexibly in response to the needs of all pupils. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> flexible grouping; cognitive and metacognitive strategies; explicit instruction; using technology to support pupils with SEND; and scaffolding.
<p>4</p> <p>Complement high quality teaching with carefully selected small-group and one-to-one interventions</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Small-group and one-to-one interventions can be a powerful tool but must be used carefully. Ineffective use of interventions can create a barrier to the inclusion of pupils with SEND. High quality teaching should reduce the need for extra support, but it is likely that some pupils will require high quality, structured, targeted interventions to make progress. The intensity of intervention from universal to targeted to specialist should increase with need. Interventions should be carefully targeted through identification and assessment of need. Interventions should be applied using the principles of effective implementation described in the EEF's guidance report <i>Putting Evidence to Work: A School's Guide to Implementation</i>.
<p>5</p> <p>Work effectively with teaching assistants</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Effective deployment of teaching assistants (TAs) is critical. School leaders should pay careful attention to the roles of TAs and ensure they have a positive impact on pupils with SEND. TAs should supplement, not replace, teaching from the classroom teacher. The EEF's guidance report <i>Making Best Use of Teaching Assistants</i> provides detailed recommendations.



Lesson Observation



Teacher:		Observer:	
Date:		Class:	
Focus:		SEND:	
Lesson Aspects	Lesson Commentary		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Application of Rosenshine; • Assessment and Feedback; • Stretch and Challenge; • Adaptive teaching; • Support; • Behaviour routines; • Attitudes to Learning; • Literacy and Numeracy. 			
Strengths of Lesson			
Areas for Development			