



The Ursuline Academy

Ilford

Teaching and Learning

Policy

2021

The Ursuline Academy Ilford

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Mission Statement

We are a Catholic community of faith, love and service rooted in the spirit of St Angela. Through Christ and the Gospel and in our diverse community we strive to provide an environment for young women to flourish, spiritually, academically and socially. Together we are The Ursuline Academy Ilford.

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. Homework
3. 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. Whilst there are some key principles and standards that we expect all to adhere to, our procedures and processes do not aim to be overly prescriptive for a number of reasons. Primarily, 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 and standards will look like in their subject classrooms. An overly prescriptive approach can also stifle creativity and innovation which would be counter to our overall aims. 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.
- The implementation of the curriculum (through teaching and assessment) enables students to build on their knowledge and develop skills.
- The impact of the teaching that takes places can be seen in excellent 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 areas, 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 held by the Head of Department and reviewed and referred to regularly with the teaching team.
- In designing or refining the curriculum, the department must carefully consider the three main areas of focus: Knowledge, Skills and Values.
- The curriculum should have very clear end points for the main stages / milestones, so that it is clear what students are working towards.
- 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 'at least' the standard 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. Nevertheless, the following principles will apply regardless of the approach or range of activities used.

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 high standards of literacy and numeracy through teaching where appropriate.

Teachers Plan and Teach Well-Structured Lessons

Lessons are purposeful and ensure that the time is used effectively to improve students' knowledge and skills. Teacher reflects on the effectiveness of lessons and makes adaptations where needed.

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.

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 continue to 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:

Learning Walks

These involve school leaders walking around the school and dropping into lessons unannounced for a short period of time (5-15 minutes) and will normally take place twice a week. The member of staff will usually have a particular area of teaching and learning to focus on but will also make general observations on the overall quality of learning. The outcome is briefly recorded in note form and are discussed by SLT. There is no standard feedback for teachers as a result of these visits, however, any issues that are identified will be raised with staff. Likewise, good practice may be shared more widely.

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 last from 20 minutes to the full lesson. The observer will complete a school observation form (attached) 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 are formally observed once a year as part of the appraisal process and may be observed as part of a subject review or for other training or quality assurance purposes.

You can find the Lesson Observation form at Appendix A (page. 11).

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. Teaching staff targets will always include a pupil progress target and a department /teaching development target. Line management meetings also provide a regular opportunity to monitor and discuss the quality of provision.

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 for the sake of it.
 - 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 assessment.
 - 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 3 – 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
- 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. Target Setting

- Students in years 7 and 8 do not receive target grades and work is not given a grade. Instead, the feedback regarding completed work should be based on what students need to do to improve.
- All students in years 9-13 are given their ALPS minimum expected grade (MEG) and aspirational grade. Each student's MEG is calculated using their Key Stage 2 base data (for GCSE) or their average GCSE score (for A-level/Level 3 qualifications) using the ALPS methodology.
- If a department feels that a MEG is too low, they are permitted to increase it to a more suitable level. However, no teacher or department can reduce a MEG.

3. 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.

4. 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.

5. 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 Satchel (Homework)

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Lesson Observation



Teacher:		Observer:	
Date:		Class:	
Focus:		G&T / SEN:	
Lesson Aspects	Lesson Commentary		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planning and Resourcing; • Assessment and Feedback; • Stretch and Challenge; • Support for Weaker Students; • Expectations; • Attitudes to Learning; • Literacy and Numeracy. 			
Strengths of Lesson			
Areas for Development			