

English Martyrs' Catholic School



Teaching and Learning, Employee Growth & Development and Curriculum Policy

*English Martyrs', as a community centred in Christ, strives to develop the talents of each person.
"May they all be one."*

Approved/reviewed by Governors:	
Date of next review	June 2026

Aims

This policy aims to:

- Explain how we will create an environment at our school of high expectations where students learn best and love to do so. Having an active role in the learning journey.
- Summarise expectations to make sure all staff have clarity and understanding about what excellent teaching and learning looks like across the school and in their own subject specialism.
- Ensure all members of school community recognise the importance of excellent Teaching and Learning and a robust curriculum is our most powerful tool to achieve excellent inclusion and equality across the school.
- Ensure all staff have the skills and knowledge to identify gaps in students' learning and to address this through their teaching.

Our guiding principals

We are proud of our strong academic tradition, our rich, broad and varied curriculum – in and out of the classroom – and our students’ outstanding achievements.

English Martyrs’ Catholic School believes that each person will succeed through experiencing:

- a community based on gospel values, where each person has opportunities to explore their faith
- a stimulating learning environment where talents are fostered and students can achieve personal best standards
- an appropriate and challenging curriculum
- an environment where a person’s needs, worth and qualities are appreciated
- a community which values links with home, school, parish and wider community
- professional, motivated and supportive staff who have high expectations of students to understand society and equip them with the skills to face the challenges they will meet.

Our ambition for Teaching and Learning is that EM students will progress because our teachers will be empowered to deliver great teaching which results in consistently great learning. This will be achieved by continuing to build a culture which recognises that both teacher and student are learners who must continually reflect and refine their practices to develop.

Responsibilities

Teaching and learning in our school is a shared responsibility, and everyone in our school community has an important role to play.

Teachers at our school will:

- Follow the expectations for teaching and professional conduct as set out in the [Teachers' standards - GOV.UK](#)
- Follow the expectations as set out in this policy
- Update parents/carers on students’ progress through termly reports on progress and yearly parent/carer consultation evenings.

Support staff at our school will:

- Know students well and differentiate support to meet their individual learning needs
- Support teaching and learning with flexibility and resourcefulness
- Meet the expectations set out in this policy

Subject Leaders at our school will:

- Help to create well-sequenced, broad and balanced curriculum that builds knowledge and skills
- Sequence lessons in a way that allows students to make good progress
- Drive improvement in their subject, working with teachers to identify any challenges
- Timetable their subject to allocate time for students to achieve breadth and depth, fully understand the topic and demonstrate excellence

- Moderate progress across their subject/phase by, for example, systematically reviewing progress against a range of evidence and reviewing performance data
- Create and share clear intentions for their subject
- Encourage teachers to share ideas, resources and good practice
- Use their budget effectively to resource their subject, providing teachers with necessary resources for learning

Senior leaders at our school will:

- Have a clear and ambitious vision for providing high-quality, inclusive education to all
- Celebrate achievement and have high expectations for everyone
- Plan and evaluate strategies to secure high-quality teaching and learning across the school
- Manage resources to support high-quality teaching and learning
- Provide support and guidance to staff through coaching and mentoring, when needed.
- Design and monitor the impact of continuing professional development (CPD) opportunities to improve staff's practice and subject knowledge
- Promote team work at all levels
- Address underachievement and intervene promptly

Students at our school will:

- Take responsibility for their own learning journey and support the learning of others, as seen laid out in the **ELEMENTS OF A EM GREAT LEARNER**.
- Meeting expectations for good behaviour for learning at all times
- Contribute positively to the school and wider community

Parents and carers of students at our school will:

- Value learning and encourage their child as a learner
- Make sure their child is ready and able to learn every day
- Support good attendance
- Participate in discussions about their child's progress and attainment
- Communicate with the school to share information promptly
- Encourage their child to take responsibility for their own learning
- Support and give importance to home learning

Governors at our school will:

- Monitor that resources and funding are allocated effectively to support the school's approach to teaching and learning
- Monitor the impact of teaching and learning strategies on students' progress
- Monitor the effectiveness of this policy and hold the headteacher to account for its implementation

Planning

Planning is a process not a product. It has one purpose; to enable high quality delivery which enables all students to learn.

All teachers need to be clear and precise about the knowledge/skills they want students to learn in every lesson.

Planning is about hard thinking, not form filling. Teachers should spend time thinking about what they want students to learn first before they give consideration to what you want them to do.

The questions teachers need to ask when planning a lesson are:

1. Where are the students starting from?
2. Where do you want them to get to?
3. How will you know when they are there?
4. How can you best help them get there?

Learning Objectives

It is important that teacher, students and support staff are all clear about the key learning that will take place in a lesson.

Teachers should make learning objectives explicit to students, all students should be able to explain what the key learning of the lesson is and the expectation is students have this written in their books.

Long term planning

Our department Leads thoroughly plan how to ensure students learn the knowledge and skills necessary for their future success. Curriculum maps are developed which are reviewed regularly and which organise how, what, why and when students will be taught and assessed. Paying attention to the careful, skilled development of a curriculum is essential business for every school and we are confident that we have produced a curriculum which will excite and engage our students. The basis for all curriculum planning is intent, implementation and impact: what do we want our students to achieve, how will we ensure this happens and how will we check progress? By following these principles, we have been able to design a curriculum which meets the needs and aspirations of each of our students.

Schemes of work must be in place to support teacher's individual lesson planning and should be saved in subject's shared drive so that it is accessible to all staff in the department. SOW should be identified on the Department's Curriculum Map and curriculum maps published on school website

When planning a lesson, teachers should be clear where this fits into their subject's overall curriculum.

Planning to meet the needs of all students

Knowledge of the students; their prior attainment and specific needs, is a key part of planning.

Every class must have a seating plan that accounts for their profile

Teachers are expected to know the profile of the students they teach by looking at student data, including Arbor marksheets, student SEND passports and the SEND Spotlight sent out by the SENCO. If further information is required, they can speak to Head of Year, form tutor, SENCO / inclusion team and pastoral teams.

High quality teaching is the first wave of intervention for meeting the needs of SEND students.

Scaffolding should be planned into lessons to ensure a quality first approach which meets the needs of all students and groups and maximises the use of any additional adults in the room. (see SEND policy)

Teaching

“Every teacher needs to improve, not because they are not good enough, but because they can be even better.” (Professor Dylan Wiliam)

Teachers must be explicit about the key knowledge, skills and vocabulary that all students must use. Students must know the knowledge and key skills you want them to learn and the language they are expected to understand and use. We are all teachers of literacy. The quality of both students’ and teachers’ language, through instructions and questioning, are significant determinants of progress.

High quality teaching strategies

Allow all students to access learning and succeed with even the most challenging content if scaffolded appropriately

What a “typical lesson” will look like will vary from subject to subject and individual teachers may utilise a variety of strategies based upon their professional judgement and knowledge.

However, it is expected that every lesson has a starter / retrieval activity to engage students as soon as they enter the classroom and the **English Martyrs’ Teaching and Learning Way** strategies are used effectively in lessons.

English Martyrs' Teaching and Learning Way:

Explanation & Modelling

Live modelling / Visualiser— To walk students through the learning process, showing students how to do things, highlighting key procedures and the thinking that underpins them.

Scaffolding— Set ambitious goals using a range of scaffolding processes that guide students through the process. Scaffolding must come down, its only temporary.

Questioning & Feedback

Cold Calling—Allowing you to choose who answers, keeping the whole class involved and giving you better information from which to plan your next response.

Probing Questions / 'Why' Questions—Well-chosen questions to support students to make links between ideas and supporting long-term memory.

Show me boards— Students write down on their boards and simultaneously show the teacher. Giving an instant hit of feedback.

Practice & Retrieval

Retrieval Time – Planned into starter activities, to secure students fluency in storing and retrieving information from their long-term memory, practicing how to answers questions fully.

Guided Practice — Teachers guide students through the early stages of practice, making sure students are getting the details right. You may need to re-teach material or move students on to independent practice if they have gained fluency.

Oracy & Reading

Explicit teaching of Tier 2 (high frequency / command words) and **Tier 3** (subject specific words). Students' understanding of these words is a foundation of their ability to respond accurately to questions in assessments and examinations.

Think, Pair, Share— The time to discuss allows students to think more deeply about the question and formulate more thoughtful and accurate responses, fosters a more inclusive and engaging learning environment.

Class discussion — using Add, Build, Challenge or summarise gives students a framework to their responses.

3 key Reading Strategies

Modelling for Fluency— I read you follow along, whilst I model to you how I vary the volume, phrasing and pace to reflect emphasis, tone or emotion. This could be an opportunity to cold call students to take over reading.

3-second rule— You stumble and I help. You echo back to me.

Echo reading— I read a word or paragraph, and you echo it. A whole class might choral read a short paragraph in unison to ensure all pupils are given the opportunity to practise reading key words aloud in context.

Active Reading

Model to students using a visualiser how you read and map out your thinking/note take or skim and scan for key information.

Activating prior knowledge—students think about what they already know about a topic from reading or other experiences, such as visits to museums, and try to make meaningful links. This helps students to infer and elaborate, fill in missing information and to build a fuller 'mental model' of the text.

Prediction—students predict what might happen as a text is read. This causes them to pay close attention to the text, which means they can closely monitor their own comprehension.

Clarifying— students identify areas of uncertainty, which may be individual words or phrases, and seek information to clarify meaning.

Summarising—students summarise the meaning of sections of the text to consolidate and elaborate upon their understanding. This causes students to focus on the key content, which in turn supports comprehension monitoring. This can be supported using graphic organisers that illustrate concepts and the relationships between them.

Classroom Climate

Meet and Greet - Welcoming students in, checking uniform on entry and dismissal.

PACE— Keeping a learning momentum throughout the lesson.

Clarity of Teacher Instruction (Brightening Lines) — calling attention to shifts in activities during a lesson, giving clear time constraints, resulting in much more efficient use of lesson time and greater student engagement.

Circulating—Moving around the classroom, checking for understanding, picking up on misconceptions and completing LIVE marking.

We believe at English Martyrs' that well-constructed lessons using the EM Teaching and Learning Way will lead to great learning.

The qualities we expect to be fostered in our students are seen in the Elements of a Great Learner.

ELEMENTS OF A EM GREAT LEARNER



Students CHALLENGE themselves through their learning.	Students take greater responsibility for their learning. Self-Regulated Learners	Students use literacy and language fluently and precisely to communicate effectively. Confident communicators	Students are ENGAGED in essential learning activities to build, extend, apply and remember their knowledge, skills and understanding.
Students are able to think deeply about their learning. They are able to plan, monitor, evaluate and make changes to their approach.	Students can tell you what they are learning about and how this fits in with previous and future learning.	Students are able to communicate confidently and precisely using subject-specific vocabulary.	Students demonstrate an enthusiasm for the lesson. Relationships with the teacher are highly productive.
Students strive for personal excellence and showing this through their effort and determination.	Students understand what is required to succeed and will ask for meaningful feedback.	Students can verbalise what they are doing in terms of meeting a learning outcome, the strategies that they are following, and whether or not they are working	Students are engaged in learning as soon as they enter the room. They remain actively involved in their learning and engaged in it.
Students can apply and use confidently the knowledge and skills gained from the lesson.	Students have knowledge of different strategies that are available to them to complete a task / revision. To overcome barriers to learning.	Students ask questions about their learning. They are inquisitive. They are curious	Students are stimulated by the activities and enjoy exploring possibilities.
Students can stretch and challenge themselves with additional activities, including reading around the subject to deepen their knowledge.	Students respond to teacher feedback by reflecting on their strengths and areas of improvement, and plan how to overcome current difficulties.	Students can confidently respond to others by challenging, adding or building on ideas.	Students see the relevance in their learning and application for real life scenarios and
They can make connections and links with the world beyond the classroom walls	Students are not afraid to make mistakes or take risks to deepen their understanding.	Students participate in structured discussion, using their peers to talk through ideas and structure responses.	Students are able to learn independently, without teacher input. Students take responsibility for their learning and applying feedback.

Marking and Feedback

(see Marking and Feedback Policy for more details)

Marking and assessment have two purposes.

1. It allows students to get feedback which they act on to make progress over time.
2. It informs a teacher's future planning and teaching

Effective marking should be meaningful, manageable and motivating for the recipient whilst simultaneously being manageable and sustainable for the teacher.

Marking must be primarily formative, may be selective, and be clear about what students must act upon to improve their work, Students respond to teacher feedback by reflecting on their strengths and areas of improvement, and plan how to overcome current difficulties.

The Learning Environment

For there to be excellent learning behaviour there needs to be the right classroom conditions, where all students feel safe, supported and valued. To ensure all students are confident in knowing what is expected of them in terms of work and behaviour, all teachers are expected to have:

High expectations – teachers should always have high expectations for learning and behaviour for all their students

- Teach to the top, with necessary scaffolds to support those who need it
- Promoting active engagement not just compliance
- Establish a growth mindset culture, mistakes are celebrated, use language of “not there yet”
- Focus praise on effort, value the “struggle of learning”

Teachers build positive relationships with all students through positive behaviour management

- Welcome all students into your class by greeting them at the door
- Use positive framing to remind students of expectations and learning routines
- Use meaningful praise and rewards as much as possible
- Have consistent classroom rules and expectations which are fair and reasonable, so that all students know exactly what is expected of them when they enter your classroom.
- Provide students with the opportunity to change their behaviour, before they are removed from lesson, continuing with poor behaviour and accepting the resulting sanction is a “choice they have made”
- Always challenge students when rules and expectations are broken and follow the EM Behaviour policy.

Home Learning

Homework is key to reinforcing and extending student learning. It supports academic achievement, fosters independent study, and prepares students for exams and coursework. Homework helps

develop study habits, consolidates classroom skills, and strengthens the home-school partnership by involving parents in their child's learning.

For students in years 7-9, homework in English, Maths, Science, and French is set weekly through online platforms, Educake & Sparx Maths. Year 9 students also have homework in Religious Education and their option subjects. In addition, Year 7 and 8 complete a series of projects each year, with specific deadlines communicated through the school calendar. These projects require approximately 9 hours of work over 3 weeks, with resources available on OneDrive.

In years 10-11, students should spend at least 45 minutes per subject each week. Sixth Form students are expected to dedicate around 7 hours per subject weekly, plus 2 hours for their Extended Project Qualification (EPQ). Homework can include research, revision, project work, and other activities aimed at reinforcing classroom learning and developing personal skills.

Year group Reviews

We will monitor our students learning and learning experience through the Elements of a Great Learner.

The aim of the reviews are to make sure that all our students make the best possible progress from their starting points. Identify training needs across the school to drive the CPD programme and to celebrate strengths.

Year Group Review dates can be found in the school calendar. Each year group will be reviewed once a year over two days, this will consist of learning walks, book scrutinises and student voice.

Findings are recorded on MS forms by the SLT, HOD, HOY and anybody who wishes to be involved, please speak to H Black.

The outcomes of quality assurance are reviewed and collated for the curation of CPD to support need and informs the SIP.

Continuing Professional Development

Ongoing and continuous development is embedded into our Teaching and Learning Strategy with all teachers' part of the learning process.

Whole School CPD is delivered to meet statutory or cross faculty need we also run an online bespoke CPD package to meet need, which is based on high quality research.

The EM Teaching and Learning Way is clearly linked to the WALKTHRU's books, giving teachers visual guides, taking them through each technique in consistent step by step clarity.

EM are also members of Chartered College of Teaching where all teachers can access online training to support individual need. Being part of the St Thomas Aquinas Catholic Academy Trust, gains EM staff access to a large online CPD package found on their Teaching & Learning Hub.

Induction Programme

We offer an Induction Programme for new members of staff and an ECT Programme for our Early Career Teachers to ensure clarity of message and consistency of provision. The ECT Programme runs throughout the statutory training period and ensures that our ECTs are supported to grow in their career. In addition, the Professional Mentor, supported by Subject Mentors, meet regularly with their ECTs on a 1:1 basis.

Employee Growth Development

All staff will have a Employee Growth Development Coach who will support and engage staff by having developmental coaching conversations about personal growth.

Using the trust Career Stage Expectations for Teachers toolkit to support self-reflection on your strengths and future areas for development.

This will be the vehicle for staff to set their own 2-3 goals. The third goal maybe a team goal and could be based around one of our School Improvement priorities.

Staff on the Upper Pay Scale / leadership scale will have a separate meeting with the Headteacher / SLT link in the autumn first term to discuss expectations.

The Professional Growth process will run from November to end of June on 2025/26 and then usually from September to June.

There will be no judgemental observations unless within the capability process.

Mainstream staff will achieve a successful annual review if they are overall meeting the teacher standards; they have engaged in the professional growth process and are demonstrating many of the attributes for professional growth.

All Professional Growth Coaches will have a PGC Lead to ensure consistency of approach.

Career Stage Expectations

Descriptors will be categorised as:

Teacher	Accomplished	Expert
Teacher Band 1-3 (formerly TMS 1-3)	Teacher Band 4-6 (formerly TMS 4-6)	Teacher Band 7-9 (formerly UPS 1-3)

Teachers on Teacher Point 9 (formerly UPS3) will be required to demonstrate they contribute in a substantial and sustained manner to wider school development.

Curriculum Offer

A challenging Key Stage 3 curriculum enables coverage of the National Curriculum content within 2 years.

This is then followed by an extensive range of options at KS4 which reflects and meets the needs of our diverse school population. In Year 9, students undertake in-depth study, building firm foundations for GCSE study.

At GCSE all students take Religious Education, English, Mathematics, Science (Combined or Triple Award) and Physical Education. In Year 8 students will make their options choices and may choose from a range of courses outlined in the KS3 Options Booklet. From these courses students will pick 3 options to complement their core subjects to study at GCSE.

At A Level students' study four subjects in Year 12 and are entered for AS Level public examination at the end of year 12 as well as the end of year 13.

Key Stage 3

English	Art	Geography
Maths	Dance	History
Science	Drama	ICT
Religious Education	French	Music
PE	Food / Textiles / Product Design	

Key Stage 4

GCSE Core Subjects	GCSE	BTEC	Other Qualifications
English Language	Art	Dance	Employability
English Literature	Business	ICT	
Maths	Computer Science	Media	
Biology	Product Design		
Chemistry	Drama		
Physics	Food preparation 7 Nutrition		
Religious education	French		
	Geography		
	History		
	Music		
	PE		
	Textiles		

Key Stage 5

AS / A Level		BTEC	Foundations
Biology	History	Applied Science	Extended Project Qualification (EPQ)
Business	Mathematics	ICT	Core Religious Education
Chemistry	Music	Media	
Drama & Theatre Arts	Photography	Sport Studies	
English Literature	Physics	Film studies	
Fine Art	Politics		
Psychology	French		
Religious education	Geography		
Sociology			

Co-curricular Programme

This curriculum is enhanced by a vibrant, wide-ranging co-curricular programme which provides a broad curriculum offer and supports student wellbeing. This includes the following regular activities as well as an extensive range of trips and visits. Our extensive programme of co-curricular opportunities includes, for example:

Enrichment

Art Club

Aspire Clubs

Biology, Chemistry and Physics Olympiads

Brilliant Club

Chess Club

Creative Writing Club

Debating Society

Design Club

Henrietta Lacks Society

High Flyer Programme

Magic, Mentalism & Memory Club

Maths Challenges

Science Club

Study Club

Performing Arts

Brass Ensemble

Dance Club

Drama Club

Guitar Ensemble

Jazz Band

Junior Choir

Orchestra

Schola Cantorum

School Musical Rehearsal

Senior Choir

Steel Pans Group

Woodwind Ensemble

Sport & Outdoor Activities

Athletics (mixed)

Badminton (mixed)

Basketball (mixed)

Cricket (mixed)

Duke of Edinburgh Award: Bronze, Silver & Gold

Football (boys' and girls')

Indoor Cricket (mixed)

Netball (mixed)

Rounders (mixed)

Running Club (mixed)

Short Tennis (mixed)

Table Tennis (mixed)

Trampolining (mixed)

Volleyball (mixed)

Golf (mixed)

Several residential retreats take place during the year, run by the Chaplaincy Team. Charity activities are organised by all students through the course of the year. In addition, special International Days and Themed weeks, feature in the annual calendar of events.

Students are encouraged to take on leadership opportunities throughout the school, for example as members of the student chaplaincy, student council or senior school leadership team, as form Captains and as 6th Champions.