



*LOVE RESPECT ENDEAVOUR*

## **Curriculum, Teaching, Learning and Assessment Policy**

**Proverbs 18:15**

*An intelligent heart acquires knowledge, and the ear of the wise seeks  
Knowledge.  
dge.*

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Headteacher

Chair of Governors

  
P.A. Paterson

# Curriculum, Teaching, Learning and Assessment Policy

*‘Ensuring our students know more, remember more and understand better’*

## 1. Introduction

This policy is based on respected research\* to maximise the opportunities for pupils at St Egwin’s to know more, remember more and understand better. The methodologies employed have been evidenced as being particularly helpful for disadvantaged students and students with SEND, whilst at the same time preventing an excessive workload for staff.

\* Key sources used include:

*Making every lesson count* – Allison and Tharby

*Principles of Instruction: Research-Based Strategies That All Teachers Should Know* – Rosenshine

*Making good progress* - Daisy Christodoulou

*Boys don’t try* – Pinkett

*Mindset* - Dweck

Education Endowment Foundation research

## 2. Curriculum design and rationale

The St Egwin’s curriculum has been designed to provide:

- An ambition for all students that is stated for each subject we offer.
- A broad and balanced curriculum throughout each pupil’s time with us. We do not narrow our curriculum to try to boost SAT’s scores for example.
- Clearly stated end points for each module of learning in all subjects.
- Clearly identified small components of learning to achieve the end points in each module of learning in all subjects.
- Key vocabulary identified for each module of learning.

We prepare students for life in modern Britain through developing ‘Fundamental British Values’, high quality Personal, Social and Health Education, Relationships and Sex Education, numerous cultural experiences and good quality Careers Education. As a Church School, the foundation of our education is within our Christian ethos which is based on our three core values of Love, Respect and Endeavour.

We have a wide reaching and ambitious extra-curricular programme, both in and out of the school, with enrichment activities in the arts, sport, and many other areas in which all students are encouraged to participate. Leadership opportunities, in a wide range of curricular and extra-curricular areas, provide the chance for our pupils to develop character and interpersonal skills. It also enables them to develop a personal moral code and explore values and beliefs, whilst encouraging the development of a climate, which supports the proper exercise of responsibility.

Our curriculum is designed to provide high aspirations and challenge for ‘all’ pupils whilst providing a range of opportunities and employing strategies to help each pupil feel valued and supported. A really important and key part of our work we do with our pupils at St Egwin’s is to prepare them for their transition to High School and for life beyond.

### 3. Curriculum Design Methodology

Our methodology is to:

1. Plan the best way to sequence teaching so that students gain an excellent understanding of the key knowledge and most important concepts.
2. Divide learning into carefully sequenced modules.
3. Determine 'end points' for each module which encapsulate what students will know and will be able to do at the end of each module-
4. Detail the small components of learning necessary to achieve the end points within each module
5. Identify the key vocabulary students will need to understand and use within each module.
6. Design tasks to be utilised in lessons that reviews current or prior learning to help embed and secure key knowledge.
7. Use formative assessment in every lesson to gain a 'live' picture of how well students have learnt, remembered, and understood the key knowledge and identify gaps in learning that still need to be addressed.
8. Use summative assessment at the end of each module of learning to measure how well students have learnt, remembered, and understood the key knowledge and identify gaps in learning still to be addressed.

### 4. Time Plan for Curriculum Design

2023-24: Complete planning and implementation of all curriculum overviews and modules.

2024-25: Review all Year groups as an overview to check that the curriculum, learning, and resources are achieving our stated aims.

Each following year, subject leaders will focus on one specific year group and ensure a detailed and forensic analysis of the design, implementation, and assessments for the modules in this year group are conducted.

### 5. Teaching - features and rationale

We strongly believe that to become highly effective, teachers should eliminate strategies and/or activities that have little or no impact on student outcomes and instead focus on the activities that help students learn more, remember more and understand better.

Just because we have taught it, does not mean that the pupils have learnt it. There is a considerable amount of learning in a knowledge-based curriculum. With learning comes forgetting. Reliable research has identified that an average pupil may remember only 40%-50% of the knowledge taught an hour after the lesson and only a quarter one week later.

There is strong and well-established evidence from cognitive science that repeated practice makes students more fluent in their recall and permanently embeds knowledge in long term memory. Hence the phrase 'practice makes permanent'.

The core framework for lessons at St Egwin's is therefore broken down into 6 components as follows:

1. **Review:**

All lessons start with reviewing previous learning. This review focuses on recent learning but also draws, where relevant, on longer-term knowledge to help secure understanding. This strengthens long term memory and leads to fluent recall.

2. **Explain:**

Lessons are teacher led as opposed to activity or student led. Explanations consider the core message, audience, and misconceptions. Teachers ensure new information is presented in a manageable 'chunk' to avoid cognitive overload. In 'classroom' subjects, pupils will typically be asked to record key information provided at this point.

**3. Model:**

Modelling is used to demonstrate pupils how success is achieved. Where possible 'live' modelling, for example using a visualiser, is preferential rather than presenting pre-determined models.

Modelling based on 'I do, we do then you do' is the typical methodology. Modelling typically starts with simple examples before gradually building complexity.

**4. Questioning:**

Teachers ask questions to make pupils think hard about the knowledge they are learning. Teachers check students understanding and identify any misconceptions they have which can be addressed by the teacher. Any complex problems are broken down during questioning into a series of simpler stages to support confidence of the pupils.

Questioning is used with the teacher in charge using the cold call technique. This typically involves initially asking closed questions for the whole class to consider, then selecting an individual student and expecting them to follow up their answer with an explanation. Question sessions are short, sharp and concise to help all students with focussing and learning.

**5. Deliberate practice:**

This involves constant practice to optimise learning the knowledge taught and then applying the knowledge in scenarios of gradually increasing complexity. All teaching techniques devote most time to deliberate practice that ensures pupils embed core knowledge and concepts. Techniques used for deliberate practice include opportunities for frequent practice/oral rehearsal/drilling of key facts with a narrow focus to ensure that the facts are learnt and stored in long term memory before progressing onto applying the knowledge.

**6. Plenary test:**

Students complete a plenary at the end of each lesson to review the learning and assess what they have learnt. Completion of a plenary test holds students accountable for their learning during the lesson as well as providing teachers with key information that can be used to inform preparation for the next lesson.

## **6. Lessons share the following common traits:**

**1. A calm purposeful environment for learning**

- Every classroom provides students with a calm, purposeful and safe working environment. All classes have a seating plan which is designed to maximise learning and help all students particularly those with SEND and those who are disadvantaged.
- Our behaviour for learning policy is designed to always ensure thoughtful and considerate behaviour and strong focus and concentration. This ensures teachers can teach and students can learn.

**2. Focussed starts to lessons with students reviewing previous learning**

- Upon entry, students commence the starter task which is designed to review previous learning with carefully graduated questions so that all students can feel confident and make a positive start to the lesson.
- Starter tasks are usually designed for no more than 10 minutes.
- Following the starter task, the teacher goes through the correct answers before teaching the main content for the lesson.

**3. Sharp focussed plenaries designed to test how students have understood the key learning points and calm orderly ends to lessons**

- During the final 5-10 minutes of each lesson, the teacher leads a plenary activity that tests students' understanding of the key teaching points for the lesson.

**4. Reading is an integral aspect of most lessons.**

- Teachers use extended text or textbooks for students to read.
- We do not encourage students to read via digital media. As identified by Alex Quigley and others, this can encourage skim reading and impair pupils' facility to read deeply.

**5. Students complete a large quantity of high-quality written work.**

- Students follow the requirements of the St Egwin's handwriting policy.
- Students write in full sentences using accurate spelling, punctuation, and grammar in all subjects.
- Key facts, formulas and ideas are written clearly in their books.
- Writing clear notes, that can be used for review and revision, helps students commit key learning to long term memory.

**6. We teach students how to use ICT effectively and use it in lessons when it is the most effective learning strategy**

- We teach students how ICT can be misused including examples such as fake news, discriminatory comments, and language, and for grooming young people and others.
- Typically, ICT is not used for teaching new knowledge unless in an ICT lesson. For students to be successful they need clear, explicit explanation, modelling followed by practice, testing and feedback. Using computer-based learning to replace the teacher or using the teacher merely as a facilitator is not as effective in helping students know more, remember more, and understand better.

**7. We do not use methods or strategies that have little or no impact on student learning. Research shows that the following have very little or a negative impact on student progress:**

**1. Excessive or imprecise praise:**

- Carol Dweck in 'Mindset' and others have identified how excessive praise can lead to developing a fixed mindset, where students believe that natural ability is more important than endeavour.
- Excessive praise for what pupils are supposed to be doing leads to a lowering of standards and wrongly communicates that we have low expectations.

**2. Discovery learning and investigations:**

- The discovery learning method is ineffective when teaching students up to and often beyond graduate level.
- If we want pupils to learn we need to provide clear, explicit, and direct instruction.

**3. Use of word searches, anagrams and other tasks unsuited to supporting knowledge progress:**

- These do not help students with comprehension or learning the meaning of key vocabulary.
- They make learning more difficult for students who are dyslexic or have reading difficulties.

**4. Excessive use of handouts which are stuck into students' books:**

- Students learn more when they write key notes and diagrams into their books rather than sticking handouts and worksheets in.
- Valuable learning time can be lost to activities that involve students cutting out and sticking into their books.

**5. Differentiated outcomes and expecting less of students with lower attainment or those with SEND**

- Expecting the same outcomes from all students and putting in place scaffolding and support where needed is more effective.
- Expecting less of disadvantaged students e.g. letting them produce less written work increases their level of disadvantage rather than closing the gap.

**6. Addressing low confidence/aspirations:**

- Poor student motivation is due to repeated failure.
- The simple answer to addressing low confidence and aspirations is achievement.

## **7. Having students move about in the classroom does not lead to more effective learning**

- If we want students to learn we need them to think about what we are teaching, being physically active makes no difference and having students move around the room can disturb others and disrupt concentration.

## **8. Complexity in the task itself or unclear instructions**

- Tasks that are overly complicated and involve complicated instructions force students to use their limited working memory to figure out what they need to do rather than using this to apply their knowledge effectively.
- Teachers keep instructions clear and simple. They avoid complicated task design.

## **8. The importance of 'closing the gap'**

It is our ambition that disadvantaged students and students with SEND achieve as well as their more advantaged peers. We have listed below our two key strategies to help disadvantaged students and SEND students close the gap:

### **1. Teachers and support staff aim to get to know disadvantaged students and SEND students especially well to understand their barriers to learning, how to motivate them and their strengths.**

- Teachers seat disadvantaged students with others who will help them succeed.
- Teachers put suitable scaffolding and support in place to ensure disadvantaged students can be successful in their lessons.
- Teachers prioritise feedback for disadvantaged students.

### **2. Figuring out what the students do not know and teaching them this knowledge.**

- Teachers understand how disadvantaged students are progressing through constantly checking their work and asking questions to measure their understanding.
- Teachers use this information to help them plan lessons and use strategies in lessons that meet the needs of these students.
- We do not expect teachers to regularly mark student work and provide comments on how they can improve. We believe that providing immediate verbal feedback whilst pupils are working is more effective than marking; although teachers may add written comments whilst students are working in class if it is felt by the teacher that this will further support the pupil to secure knowledge.
- Teachers give whole class feedback on common errors and mistakes as well as re-teaching the information that pupils struggled with.
- Where required, teachers provide 1:1 verbal feedback to pupils to ensure they fully understand what they need to do to 'close the gap'. Teachers maximise the support they give to the students who are most disadvantaged.

## **9. Assessment Strategy**

We believe that effective assessment helps us to improve our curriculum, to improve the quality of teaching and helps us to support every pupil in knowing more, remembering more, and understanding better. Our strategy for assessment is based on two key aspects: formative and summative assessment:

### **Formative assessment which promotes learning and informs teaching.**

1. At the start of each lesson, pupils complete a review task which serves to check what pupils have remembered to scaffold the knowledge required for the lesson. By circulating during the task, the teacher can determine pupils' level of knowledge and understanding and then adapts their teaching accordingly.

2. The lesson starter is knowledge based and operates a 'low floor, high ceiling' approach where tasks get gradually more complex. There should be scaffolding to support whilst also providing extension challenges.
3. During, and then after the main teaching point of the lesson, the teacher checks pupil's knowledge, identifies misconceptions and addresses these. The teacher then adjusts their teaching of the lesson, provides help and support for groups of students and individuals who are struggling.
4. At the end of each lesson the teacher sets a plenary task. This task tests whether pupils know and understand the key learning points for the lesson. The teacher will use the knowledge they obtain about pupil learning from this plenary task to inform preparation for the following lesson.
5. Following formative assessment as detailed above, the teacher uses whole class feedback identifying exactly which content requires review. Teachers then use direct instruction and modelling during the feedback session to provide clarity for the pupils, so they understand what they previously had not.
6. Immediate feedback to pupils following any task allows them to analyse what they know and what they still need to master.

**Our summative assessment strategy is designed to be support embedding knowledge, track progress and to reduce teacher workload.**

1. Summative tests at the end of every module of learning are used to test knowledge learnt.
2. These tests focus predominantly on the knowledge from the most recent completed module but also use knowledge from previous modules to help embed longer term memory. The first summative test clearly focuses only on the knowledge for that module.
3. A percentage mark is given for all summative tests.
4. Assessments are designed in a way to reduce the amount of marking time for the teachers. This can include using multiple choice questions, short answer questions, on-line question systems, and using self/peer marking.
5. Pupil self-marking and analysis of half termly tests, guided by the teacher in class, allows pupils to identify areas they have mastered, and further learning required. The teacher will check a square root sample of these tests e.g., if there are 30 in the class, they will check 5 or 6 tests.
6. Tests and exams clearly indicate what pupils do and don't know, and what they can and can't do to inform future planning and help pupils to progress.
7. At the end of each completed summative assessment test, teachers enter any relevant completed module test scores onto a tracking document.
8. Mean average marks are used to compare attainment of subgroups. The averages for each subject and for the year group are also reported to allow students/parents/carers to make comparative judgements.

## APPENDICES – summary of key research

### *Making every lesson count – Allison and Tharby*

The six key traits for effective teaching (see below) each form a chapter in the book. The key message of the book is that ambitious teaching, challenging the idea of fixed intelligence is essential. Allow pupils to think they can get away with being 'average' is to the detriment of the pupil.

**Challenge** so that students have high expectations of what they can achieve.

**Explanation** so that students acquire new knowledge and skills.

**Modelling** so that students know how to apply the knowledge and skills.

**Practice**, which lies at the centre of all else, and allows students' memory to develop.

**Feedback** so that students think about and develop their knowledge and skills.

**Questioning** so that students think hard with breadth, depth and accuracy.

### *Principles of Instruction: Research-Based Strategies That All Teachers Should Know – Rosenshine*

Teachers are the experts of knowledge and pedagogy, and this must be used to help pupils make progress. The focus is on repeated knowledge checks, pupils experiencing success and a relentless focus on deliberate practice.

The 10 key foci for Rosenshine are:

1. Begin a lesson with a short review of previous learning
2. Present new material in small steps followed by student practice
3. Ask questions and check answers
4. Use models
5. Guide practice
6. Check for understanding
7. Obtain a high success rate
8. Provide scaffolds in difficult tasks
9. Stimulate and monitor independent practice
10. Conduct weekly and monthly reviews

### *Making good progress - Daisy Christodoulou*

The key focus of the book relates to the two main purposes of assessment:

Formative assessment should give us information about how students can make further progress, 'identifying consequences' so that teachers and students can adjust to learn even more.

Summative assessment should allow us to make meaningful comparisons between a student's and a larger cohort's performance against a set of standards. It's about sampling a knowledge domain without assessment itself becoming the primary focus.



### ***Boys don't try – Pinkett***

This book focuses on gender, but the issues are far wider. It essentially argues that the best strategy for teaching is to have a highly effective teaching and learning commitment for all. The authors argue that gender is a less important lens through which to view underachievement than are class perception, views of what constitutes mental health, curriculum and pedagogy.

The book focuses on avoiding 'what's not wanted': which is essentially that low expectations of any group undermine effective teaching, learning and progress.

### ***Mindset – Dweck***

Dweck argues that there are two forms of Mindset: Fixed and Growth Mindset.

Fixed Mindset is about wanting to seem clever and being afraid of failure. Those with a Fixed Mindset will therefore avoid challenge, give up easily and see criticism as a threat. Those with a Fixed Mindset believe that intelligence is determined and set.

Growth Mindset is the belief that there is always progress that can be made and that the 'power of yet' dominates thought e.g. *I have been unable to master that yet...* Those with a Growth Mindset are seeking to improve and welcome challenges and feedback on that path to improvement.

Sometimes people seem to get confused by Growth Mindset in the sense that it doesn't advocate that we can be world beaters at everything. It argues that through the willingness to learn and grow then progress is possible. *I haven't got there yet!*

The skill is for teachers to foster a climate and culture of Growth Mindset and challenge traits of a Fixed Mindset which are damaging to the pupil's chances of securing knowledge and demonstrating good progress.

### **Education Endowment Foundation research**

<https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/education-evidence/teaching-learning-toolkit>

The EEF is a widely respected group who investigate strategies to close attainment gaps. They provide an evidence-based approach to analysing data, so they are able to present to schools the cost of a strategy, the amount of available evidence for a strategy and the effect size (the difference made) of the strategy.

The top four identified strategies **metacognition, reading intervention, oracy** and **feedback** all provided:

- Low cost strategy.
- Lots of evidence researched.
- Has a significant impact on progress based on those who had the strategy against those that didn't.

The bottom four identified strategies **repeating a year, uniform, outdoor adventure learning and learning styles** varies in cost and evidence available, but none showed any impact. Repeating a year showed a negative impact!

