

Curriculum Policy



St Francis of Assisi
CATHOLIC ACADEMY TRUST

St Francis of Assisi Catholic Academy Trust

Signed off by: Trust Board

Date from: November 2025

Review Date: November 2026

Commitment to equality:

We are committed to providing a positive working environment which is free from prejudice and unlawful discrimination and any form of harassment, bullying or victimisation. We have developed a number of key policies to ensure that the principles of Catholic Social Teaching in relation to human dignity and dignity in work become embedded into every aspect of school life and these policies are reviewed regularly in this regard.

This Curriculum Policy has been approved and adopted by the St Francis of Assisi Catholic Academy Trust in November 2025 and will be reviewed by November 2026

Signed by Director of the Academy Trust Company:

Signed by Headteacher:

DEFINITIONS

In this Curriculum Policy, unless the context otherwise requires, the following expressions shall have the following meanings:

- i. 'Academy' means the academy named at the beginning of this Curriculum Policy and includes all sites upon which the Academy undertaking is, from time to time, being carried out.
- ii. 'Academy Trust Company' means the company responsible for the management of the Academy and, for all purposes, means the employer of staff at the Academy.
- iii. 'Board' means the Board of Directors of the Academy Trust Company.
- iv. 'Chair' means the Chair of the Board as appointed from time to time.
- v. 'Clerk' means the Clerk to the Board as appointed from time to time.
- vi. 'Diocesan Schools Commission' means the education service provided by the diocese in which the Academy is situated, which may also be known, or referred to, as the Diocesan Education Service.
- vii. 'Directors' means Directors appointed to the Board from time to time.
- viii. 'Headteacher' means the most senior teacher in the Academy who is responsible for its management and administration. Such teacher may also be referred to as the Head of School or Principal.
- ix. 'Vice-Chair' means the Vice-Chair of the Board as elected from time to time.

Our Intent

'We are inspired by the teachings of Christ and our Franciscan Values to create the best Catholic education now and for generations to come, creating a diverse, inclusive and rich curriculum that cherishes every child in our care as a unique thumbprint of God.'

It is the policy of St Francis of Assisi Catholic Academy Trust that all Pupils should have access to a curriculum that is rich, challenging, engaging, enjoyable, diverse, inclusive, and appropriate to their needs and abilities. A policy rooted in the example of Jesus and the tradition of the Church that cherishes every child as a unique thumbprint of God.

As a Catholic Trust it is our duty to empower pupils while cherishing them and supporting each one in realising their full potential as a unique thumbprint of God. We equip our communities with the skills, values, and faith so they can inform their life decisions and face the challenges of the world with integrity and compassion.

***'Let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds.'* - Matthew 5:16**

The ultimate responsibility for the curriculum lies with the Academy Schools. In our Trust, the Executive, Headteachers, and all staff work together to ensure that our schools operate at the highest standard to deliver the very best outcomes possible for every Pupil. Central to our policy is our **core purpose**:

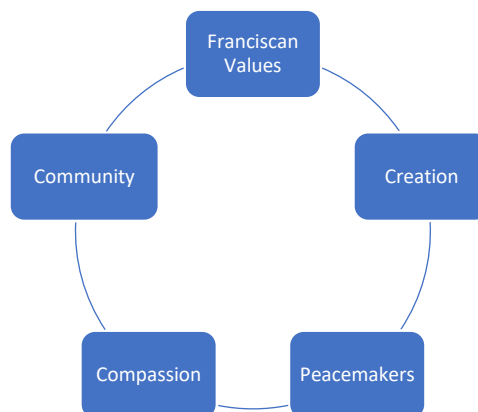
Mission - To realise the Bishop's vision and our own belief that as schools we will be stronger together.

Vision - To deliver the very best Catholic education now and for generations to come.

Strategy – To ensure schools flourish through an increasingly comprehensive support and challenge relationship with the trust

Teachings of St Francis

Every pupil in every school learns and understands the Franciscan values. They understand how to be peacemakers, to care for creation, to live and learn with compassion for each other as well as to live in community with one another. This isn't exclusive to RE but embedded within our curriculum. Each school creates unique opportunities to ensure that every pupil understands and can live by the Franciscan values in our Trust.



Core teaching principles

- Gospel values are at the heart of our curriculum approach.
- Our Catholic Schools curriculum intent is designed with the local context, and the community they serve in mind.
- Individual Trust school statements of curriculum intent outline the journey of how pupils progress through the curriculum over Key Stages from Early Years, through to Key Stage Five.
- Religious Education constitutes for 10% of curriculum time from Early Years to Key Stage 5.
- Additional time is given to English, Mathematics and Science to ensure that students have the essential skills needed for life and to access the full curriculum.
- Targeted scaffolding and additional challenge are built into the curriculum delivery to ensure all students make good progress in relation to their academic starting points.
- The delivery of our curriculum is adapted to support those who need a modified provision, to facilitate their learning needs. Namely through adapted instruction and presentation of learning, personalised learning pathways, additional support from staff, resources, and the use of assistive technologies where appropriate. In providing such tailored provision and resources for teaching and learning, we aim to ensure that every student can succeed in an inclusive and progressive curriculum, regardless of their individual starting points, challenges or attainment.
- An extensive extra-curricular menu to enrich children's school experience.

Implementation

All our pupils deserve the very best taught and wider curriculum experience. When each school plans their curriculum, Headteachers and leaders take active consideration of:

- curriculum development is always ongoing;
- our pupils come from all backgrounds and starting points;
- pupils possess a multitude of skills and talents;
- pupils have their own history and bring a unique viewpoint; and
- pupils learn at different rates and have differing educational needs. Some pupils require 'additional to and different from' to ensure an equitable curriculum.

Whilst the knowledge we teach is for all, we adapt and enhance our curriculum and the form in which it is delivered to ensure that it is fully inclusive and so that the needs of all pupils are met.

The purpose of our curriculum

Every child is entitled to flourish academically and be a voice of the future.

They should:

- value knowledge and possess a thirst for new knowledge.
- Ensure a love of lifelong learning.
- be able to challenge existing knowledge.
- feel empowered to speak with a confident voice.
- be wise and virtuous.
- live well with others and respect and celebrate differences.
- Be prepared for adulthood from the earliest point.
- have competence in literacy, oracy, the correct use of standard English and mathematics; and
- gain success across a wide spectrum of specialist learning courses at school, in further and higher education and throughout their careers into the future.
- Each school will consider all subject areas and wider themes including.
 - Catholic Social Teaching
 - British values
 - Wellbeing

- Keeping Healthy
- Online safety

Quality First Teaching

For all Trust schools this means high quality inclusive teaching together with continuous whole school processes for assessing, planning, implementing, tracking, monitoring and reviewing every pupils progress

- Staff have high expectations of themselves and all pupils.
- Teachers are expected to impart knowledge accurately and with enthusiasm.
- Teachers are expected to consider prior knowledge and experiences and to build upon this in a systematic way.
- Highly focused lesson design with sharp objectives.
- High demands of child engagement with their learning.
- High levels of interaction for all pupils.
- Appropriate use of teacher questioning, modelling and explaining.
- Emphasis on learning through dialogue.
- An expectation that children will develop resilience and accept responsibility for their own learning and work independently.
- Well planned and structured learning that is scaffolded and adapted for every learner.
- Regular use of encouragement and praise to motivate pupils.

Curriculum Content

Having listened to a range of different voices. Leaders are best placed to decide what young people need to know and learn. Knowledge that is benchmarked to match the aspiration of the National Curriculum as a minimum, but enhanced within each academy to reflect local context, include all pupils, faith and Catholic social teachings, celebrate diversity and to reflect knowledge chosen from different viewpoints.

Each school unlocks the broad knowledge and sparks curiosity for those areas that are beyond the taught curriculum; they achieve this through careful choice of curriculum content, suggesting independent learning opportunities and the wider enrichment programme on offer.

Our curriculum prepares SEND pupils for adulthood and ensuring pupils have a clear pathway to transition from our education setting to careers.

Primary schools prioritise the explicit teaching of phonics and reading. Regardless of phase, subject or setting, it is every teachers' responsibility to teach the context and meaning of key vocabulary deliberately and explicitly, to foster a continued love of reading and to teach literacy and oracy skills.

A subject curriculum spans the entirety of a pupil's time with us. Therefore, sequencing and spacing the curriculum correctly is vital if children and young people are to build links, effectively recall, retain and apply knowledge and skills. Teachers and curriculum leaders should regularly ask:

- Why are we teaching this knowledge?
- Why are we teaching it now?
- How does it fit with what pupils have learned before?
- What is the starting point and small next step of learning for a pupil with SEND, which will help them to move closer to this learning goal in line with their peers?
- What will learning this knowledge now enable pupils to learn in the future?
- How often should we revisit this knowledge to embed it?
- When and how should we do that?

Assessment

Assessment is a **continuous process which allows pupils to achieve their full potential. We believe that appropriate teaching, learning and assessment will help pupils achieve.**

Assessment is a fundamental part of the curriculum; therefore, it is very carefully planned. It impacts curriculum sequencing, future teaching and pupils' secure understanding and application of the knowledge and skills they have learned. Teachers and leaders should ensure:

- a range of high and low stakes assessment techniques are used to ensure pupils can recall the knowledge they have been taught and to tackle common misconceptions;
- a range of assessments are deliberately planned to improve pupils' skill and metacognition.
 - An adapted assessment framework is used for pupils accessing non subject specific study or out-of-year group curriculum study to ensure progress is made in line with high expectations.
 - Pupils are encouraged to take ownership of assessment and are given strategies to improve and increase levels of independence over time.
 - assessment allows pupils to demonstrate what they know and what they can do in different contexts, including extended writing or project work.
 - assessment allows pupils to show scholastic excellence within subjects and a greater depth of understanding and mastery.
 - the purpose of assessment is identified beforehand, leading to accurate diagnosis of gaps in achievement, attainment or learning technique which, in turn, informs curriculum re-assembly and future planning for targeted individuals, classes or cohorts; and
 - highly inclusive assessment celebrates the knowledge and skill that has been taught for its own sake; it is not simply beholden to the examination mark scheme.

Impact

We know that what we choose to teach our pupils during their time with us has real impact on their futures. Whilst not everything that adds value to our pupils can be measured easily, we:

- Prioritise the continuous development and improvement of our curriculum.
- Take time to watch the implementation of our curriculum in action.
- speak regularly with teachers and leaders.
- Look carefully at the way in which our groups of pupils perform, particularly those who may be disadvantaged.
- Work collaboratively with SENCOs to monitor any changes in our SEND community to adapt our curriculum, assessment and provision
- Listen carefully to pupil voice.
- Look closely at the destinations of our pupils at 16 and 18 to continue their education, training and employment.
- Ensure progress measures are achieved
- All pupils will make progress based on their prior learning

Achievement, Curriculum and teaching

- All pupils have the ability and opportunities to be the best they can be.
- Interventions will close or narrow the gaps and more pupils will be working at greater depth
- Pupils have the ability to make connections and apply skills within a range of contexts
- Pupils will make progress across a wide curriculum and their work is consistently of high quality.
- All pupil groups including those disadvantaged achieve the best possible outcomes

Attitudes, behaviour, personal development and wellbeing

- Pupils will have equal access to an enriched curriculum including a wide variety of extracurricular clubs and enrichment opportunities.
- Pupils will be responsible, respectful and active citizens who have a secure understanding of British values and their importance in our communities.
- Pupils wellbeing is supported
- Pupils are intrinsically motivated and expected to behave and understand why
- They have a highly positive attitude and commitment to learning.
- Adult and pupil relationship will support the whole child.

Leadership and Governance

- Teachers subject knowledge and pedagogical content knowledge consistently builds and develops.
- Subject leaders lead the subjects with a clear and cohesive understanding for long, medium- and short-term planning
- All leaders, staff, governors and pupils have high expectations of themselves and work towards an ambitious goal.

Inclusion

- A Curriculum that is inclusive to all learners.
- Adapted and scaffolded activities appropriate to needs.
- Setting high expectations for all pupils, including disadvantaged pupils, those with SEND, those who are known (or previously known) to children's social care, and those who may face other barriers to their learning and/or well-being
- Embedding a culture in which early and accurate assessment of pupils' needs is prioritised
- Using the information from the assessment of pupils' needs to implement a continuous cycle of planning, actions and review to reduce barriers to pupils' learning and/or wellbeing
- Involving specialists when necessary to support pupils' development
- Putting in place a pupil premium strategy that is well thought through is based on evidence of what works well to support the achievement of eligible pupils, and accounts for any challenges pupils face that may negatively affect their education and their readiness to engage with school
- Working closely and effectively with pupils, parents, professionals and staff, and ensuring that pupils' and parents' views and aspirations are included in decision-making about support for pupils

Adaptation for Pupils with SEND

In implementing our curriculum, schools within the Trust are committed to ensuring that pupils with Special Educational Needs and/or Disabilities (SEND) have equitable access to high-quality teaching and learning opportunities.

All schools follow the guidance outlined in **Hertfordshire's Ordinarily Available Provision (OAP) document**, which sets county-wide expectations for classroom practice, inclusive teaching and delivery of the school's curriculum. This framework supports teachers in reflecting upon their **environment, resources, and curriculum planning** to ensure that provision is responsive and adaptive to pupils' needs.

At the **universal** level of need, teachers make thoughtful adaptations to everyday classroom practice, ensuring that lessons, resources, and learning environments promote inclusion for all pupils. At the **targeted** level, more specific

strategies and additional interventions are implemented to address individual barriers to learning, enabling pupils to access the curriculum and make meaningful progress. For pupils accessing a **targeted plus** and **specialist level** of support, schools and teachers under the guidance of the SENCo provide a highly personalised curriculum and level of planning to support the individuals next step in learning linked to subject or non-subject specific study. This is always based upon the pupils' starting point.

Through adherence to the OAP framework, schools across the Trust maintain a consistent approach to inclusive practice, ensuring that every pupil — regardless of need — can flourish within our Catholic learning community and realise their potential as a unique thumbprint of God.