



St Mary's School

Gerrards Cross

TEACHING, ASSESSMENT AND FEEDBACK POLICY

Policy Owner	Assistant Head (Teaching and Learning)	Approval Date	May 2026
Approved By	SLT	Review Date	May 2028
Version		Status	Approved
Applies To	All staff and students	Review Cycle	Every two years
Related Policies	Homework Policy Pupil Progress and Reporting Policy Behaviour, Rewards and Sanctions Policy Highly Able Policy EAL Policy SEND Policy Curriculum Policy Academic Honesty and Responsible Use of Artificial Intelligence Policy Acceptable Use Policy Examinations Policy AI Policy	Policy Ref.	

Policy Statement

Our school is committed to equity, safety, and transparency, ensuring all policies protect and support our community. Every policy translates our core values into clear practices to maintain an inclusive environment where the welfare of students, staff, and families remains paramount. To achieve this, our guidelines actively promote equal opportunities, celebrate diversity, and prioritize physical, emotional, and digital safety. We provide straightforward, accessible guidance that relies on shared community accountability. Finally, we subject all policies to regular reviews to stay aligned with statutory updates, local needs, and current best practices.

Contents

1. Aims	3
WIDER REFERENCES	3
2. Principles of effective teaching and learning	3
<i>2.1 Set excellent expectations for learning and behaviour</i>	3
<i>2.2 Promote excellent progress and outcomes</i>	4
<i>2.3 Demonstrate excellent subject and curriculum knowledge</i>	4
<i>2.4 Plan and teach well-structured lessons</i>	4
<i>2.5 Adapt teaching to respond to the strengths and needs of all students</i>	5
<i>2.6 Make accurate and productive use of assessment</i>	5
3. Assessment	6
<i>3.1 Types of assessment</i>	6
<i>3.2 Expectations for summative and common assessments</i>	6
<i>3.3 Artificial intelligence, authenticity and assessment</i>	6
4. Feedback	7
<i>4.1 Principles of effective feedback</i>	7
<i>4.2 Forms of feedback</i>	8
<i>4.3 Marking</i>	8
<i>4.4 Student response to feedback and improvement time</i>	9
5. Student progress trackers	9
6. Recording, tracking and reporting	9
7. Inclusive teaching, assessment and feedback	10
8. Department Assessment and Feedback Statements	10
9. Quality assurance and professional development	11
<i>9.1 Work scrutiny and book looks</i>	11
<i>9.2 Other quality assurance activities</i>	11
<i>9.3 What quality assurance should look for</i>	12
<i>9.4 Feedback loop and professional development</i>	12

1. Aims

The purpose of this policy is to set out St Mary's School's expectations for high-quality teaching, assessment and feedback. The policy applies to all teaching staff and all subjects across the school, while recognising that different subjects, phases and key stages will use different forms of assessment and feedback according to the nature of the curriculum.

Teaching, assessment and feedback at St Mary's should enable students to acquire knowledge, deepen understanding, develop skills, think independently and make ambitious progress from their starting points.

This policy supports the school's academic strategy: to provide an aspirational learning journey that enables every student to achieve academic excellence beyond expectations. Teaching, assessment and feedback should help create a culture of high expectations and success, challenge and enable intellectual growth, and prepare students to be future ready.

WIDER REFERENCES

This policy operates within a wider national framework, which includes:

- The Education Act 2011
- The Equality Act 2010
- SEND Regulations 2014
- SEND Code of Practice 2015
- DfE Generative Artificial Intelligence in Education and Using AI in Education Settings support materials (2025)
- JCQ AI Use in Assessments: Your role in protecting the integrity of qualifications (2025)

2. Principles of effective teaching and learning

High-quality teaching at St Mary's is understood through its impact on students' learning. It is not defined by a single lesson style, preferred teaching method or fixed checklist of activities. Different subjects, phases, topics and groups of students will require different approaches. However, over time, and across a sequence of lessons, teaching should enable students to acquire secure knowledge, deepen understanding, develop disciplinary skills, think hard, participate actively and make ambitious progress from their starting points.

This section should be read alongside the school's Professional Development Observation Record. The observation record provides a shared language for professional reflection, lesson visits, coaching and quality assurance. It is not intended to imply that every feature will be seen in every lesson, or that all effective lessons will look the same. In shorter visits, observers may only see a partial picture. Judgements about teaching and learning should therefore draw on a range of evidence, including what students are doing, what they can explain, the quality of their work, their engagement with feedback, and their progress over time.

2.1 Set excellent expectations for learning and behaviour

Teachers should create an orderly, purposeful and confidence-enhancing climate for learning. They should set high expectations for behaviour, effort, participation, presentation, academic language and quality of work. These expectations should inspire, motivate and challenge students, while supporting them to develop the habits of effective learners.

This may include:

- establishing clear routines and expectations so that learning time is used well;

- promoting the school's TAKE CARE values and the qualities of an effective learner;
- using the Behaviour, Rewards and Sanctions Policy, including Epraise, consistently and proportionately to reward, motivate and address concerns;
- making excellence visible through models, exemplars, success criteria and subject-specific standards;
- encouraging students to aim high, take intellectual risks and develop resilience.
-

2.2 Promote excellent progress and outcomes

Teachers should use their knowledge of students' starting points, prior attainment, strengths and needs to plan learning that builds securely over time. Progress may be demonstrated in different ways across subjects and phases, but students should be supported to know what they are learning, how it connects to prior learning, what successful work looks like and what they need to do next.

This may include:

- building on prior knowledge and using assessment of prior learning to inform teaching;
- sequencing learning so that knowledge and skills are introduced, revisited, practised and applied;
- helping students understand the purpose of learning and how new knowledge connects to existing knowledge;
- designing tasks that require students to think hard, not simply complete work;
- using retrieval, review, practice and application to strengthen long-term learning;
- helping students understand their progress through feedback, reflection, target-setting and progress trackers.

2.3 Demonstrate excellent subject and curriculum knowledge

Teachers should have strong knowledge of the subject and curriculum they teach. They should use this knowledge to select appropriate content, anticipate misconceptions, explain ideas clearly, model expert thinking and help students understand the distinctive language, methods and standards of the subject.

This may include:

- using clear explanations, examples and non-examples to build understanding;
- modelling disciplinary thinking, processes and academic language;
- teaching the vocabulary, literacy, oracy, numeracy and digital competence needed for success in the subject;
- making links, where appropriate, to wider reading, scholarship, enrichment and real-world application;
- ensuring that teaching reflects relevant examination, qualification or curriculum requirements where applicable.

2.4 Plan and teach well-structured lessons

Teachers should plan purposeful lessons and sequences of lessons that support students to learn, practise and improve. Lessons should normally have a prompt and purposeful beginning, clear learning direction, appropriate use of time and a focused end point. This does not mean that every lesson must follow the same structure, but students should experience learning that is coherent, well-paced and purposeful.

This may include:

- using explicit instruction, modelling, scaffolding and worked examples where these support learning;

- securing students' attention and communicating clearly;
- using questioning, discussion and checks for understanding to reveal thinking, address misconceptions and deepen learning;
- providing opportunities for guided practice, independent practice, collaborative learning or creative application where appropriate;
- using homework purposefully to prepare, practise, review, revise, consolidate, extend or inspire learning, in line with the Homework Policy;
- using digital tools, including AI where appropriate, safely, ethically and in ways that support learning.

2.5 Adapt teaching to respond to the strengths and needs of all students

Teaching should be ambitious and inclusive. Teachers should adapt teaching to the ages, aptitudes, prior attainment and needs of students, including those with SEND, EAL and higher prior attainment. Adaptation should remove barriers to success while maintaining high expectations and access to intellectual challenge.

This may include:

- using knowledge of students, including relevant LEAPS, SEND, EAL and access arrangement information, to inform planning;
- moving around the classroom to check understanding, provide guidance and respond to need;
- using scaffolding, modelling, questioning, grouping, resources or task design to support access without unnecessarily lowering challenge;
- challenging higher attaining students through depth, precision, complexity, independence and application, not simply through additional work;
- making thoughtful use of classroom support where available;
- gradually reducing support where appropriate so that students develop independence and confidence.

2.6 Make accurate and productive use of assessment

Assessment should be used to understand learning and improve teaching. Teachers should gather evidence of what students know, understand and can do, and use this evidence to adapt teaching, address misconceptions, provide feedback and plan next steps. Assessment should support students to understand where they are now, where they are aiming and how to improve.

This may include:

- using formative and summative assessment appropriately;
- checking understanding during learning through questioning, discussion, mini-whiteboards, hinge questions, quizzes, review of work or other methods;
- using assessment information to reteach, model, regroup, intervene, extend or adjust future teaching;
- giving regular feedback in forms appropriate to the task, subject and phase;
- ensuring students have opportunities to respond to feedback and improve their work where this will support learning;
- supporting students to develop metacognitive habits by planning, monitoring and evaluating their own learning.

Teaching must be non-discriminatory and must not undermine fundamental British values, including democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs.

3. Assessment

Assessment is the process by which teachers and students gather evidence about learning. Assessment should be purposeful: it should inform teaching, support students' progress and provide reliable information for reporting and intervention.

Assessment tasks should also support academic honesty. Where work is completed outside direct supervision, teachers should make clear what help is permitted, including collaboration, parental/tutor support and from September 2026 the permitted AI Assessment Level where relevant. Students should understand that submitted work must represent their own knowledge, understanding and effort.

3.1 Types of assessment

Type	Purpose	Examples
Formative assessment	To check understanding during learning and adapt teaching in response.	Questioning, mini-whiteboards, exit tickets, low-stakes quizzes, live feedback, hinge questions, review of student work.
Diagnostic assessment	To identify specific misconceptions, gaps or barriers.	Question-level analysis, error diagnosis, targeted short tasks, vocabulary checks, review of prior learning.
Summative assessment	To evaluate attainment at a particular point and inform reporting, tracking or curriculum review.	End-of-unit assessments, formal tests, mock examinations, practical/performance assessments, coursework checkpoints.
Low-stakes retrieval assessment	To strengthen memory, build confidence and reveal gaps without creating unnecessary pressure.	Quick-start activities, short quizzes, vocabulary tests, cumulative review tasks.
Self and peer assessment	To develop students' understanding of success criteria and improve ownership of learning.	Modelled self-review, peer critique against criteria, improvement tasks, reflection after assessment.

3.2 Expectations for summative and common assessments

- Departments should identify key assessment points in schemes of work and ensure these are appropriate to the subject, key stage and assessment purpose.
- Where multiple classes complete the same assessment, departments should use common criteria, mark schemes and moderation or standardisation processes where appropriate.
- At GCSE and A Level, assessments should reflect the requirements, language and criteria of the relevant awarding body.
- Assessment outcomes should be used formatively: students should understand what they did well, what needs development and what they should do next.
- Heads of Department should ensure that assessment materials and mark schemes are stored securely and are available for future reference.

3.3 Artificial intelligence, authenticity and assessment

St Mary's recognises that AI can support learning when used safely, ethically and transparently.

However, assessment evidence must remain authentic and must allow teachers to judge what students know, understand and can do. This section should be read alongside the Academic Honesty and Responsible Use of Artificial Intelligence Policy, the Homework Policy, the Examinations Policy, the AI Policy and the Acceptable Use Policy.

When setting classwork, homework, extended projects or assessments, teachers should make clear whether AI is not permitted or whether a specific level of AI support is allowed. Where relevant, teachers should use the St Mary's AI Assessment Scale and explain expectations in language appropriate to the age and stage of the students.

Students must not submit work generated, rewritten or substantially shaped by AI unless this has been explicitly permitted for the task and declared as required. For formal examined work, coursework, NEA and examination-style assessments, JCQ and awarding body requirements must be followed.

Assessment design should, where appropriate, reduce opportunities for inauthentic work. This may include staged drafting, in-class checkpoints, oral questioning, retrieval tasks, comparison with previous work, review of version history, or asking students to explain their thinking and sources.

Permitted AI use should be treated as part of learning rather than a shortcut around learning. Students should be taught to evaluate AI outputs critically, check accuracy, avoid fabricated evidence or references, and ensure that final submitted work reflects their own understanding and voice.

Teachers must not use unapproved AI tools to generate feedback, assessment comments or pupil-facing evaluative judgements. Where an approved AI tool is used to support drafting, checking or editing, staff remain professionally accountable for the final content and must ensure that no identifiable, confidential or sensitive pupil information is entered into an AI tool unless the tool has been approved for that purpose.

4. Feedback

Feedback is information given to students and/or teachers about current performance in relation to learning goals. Its purpose is to close the gap between current performance and desired performance. Feedback is only effective when students understand it and have an opportunity to act on it.

Feedback at St Mary's should be meaningful, manageable and motivating. It should help students recognise their progress, understand how to improve and develop the resilience, independence and academic self-efficacy needed to take the next step in learning.

4.1 Principles of effective feedback

- Feedback should be timely, precise, diagnostic and linked to the learning intention or assessment criteria.
- Feedback should identify what has been done well and what needs to improve, but should also help students understand how to improve.
- Feedback should lead to action where appropriate: correction, improvement, redrafting, further practice, retrieval, consolidation or extension.
- Feedback should inform future teaching, including reteaching, modelling, grouping, intervention or curriculum adjustment.
- Feedback should develop students' capacity to judge the quality of their own work over time.
- Feedback should be proportionate and sustainable; there is no expectation that every piece of work or every page is marked by the teacher.

4.2 Forms of feedback

Form	What it may look like	Expectation
Live/verbal feedback	Teacher circulates, questions, prompts, corrects misconceptions, models improvements or gives immediate individual/group guidance.	This is often the most immediate and responsive form of feedback. Students may be asked to annotate, correct or improve work as a result.
Whole-class feedback	Teacher identifies common strengths, misconceptions and next steps after reviewing work or assessments.	This should lead to a review, reteaching, modelling or improvement activity.
Written feedback	Comments, targets, coded annotations, short questions, assessment sheets or feedback grids.	Written feedback should be used when it will improve learning; it should be legible, understandable and actionable.
Self-assessment	Students assess their work against modelled criteria and identify improvements.	This must be structured and taught; it should not become a superficial tick-box activity.
Peer/group feedback	Students critique work using clear criteria and teacher guidance.	This should be carefully modelled and monitored so that feedback is accurate and constructive.
Model-based feedback	Students compare their work with exemplars, non-examples or success criteria.	This is especially useful for making standards explicit and reducing ambiguity.
Assessment review	Students analyse performance after a test, task or examination.	This should identify strengths, gaps, misconceptions and next steps; it should link to progress trackers where appropriate.

Where teachers use AI tools to support planning, resource design or feedback processes, professional judgement remains essential. AI-generated suggestions must be checked for accuracy, appropriateness, bias and alignment with the curriculum before use with students. Staff must not enter confidential, personal or sensitive student information into unapproved AI tools.

4.3 Marking

Marking is one method of feedback. It should not be understood as synonymous with feedback. Written marking should be used where it is the most effective way to move learning forward.

- Teachers are expected to know the quality of students' work through a range of methods, including live feedback, assessment, questioning, work review and written marking.
- Some work may be left without written teacher marking where students have received other forms of feedback or where written marking would not add learning value.
- Routine acknowledgement marking that does not improve learning is not required.
- Departments may agree subject-specific marking codes or presentation expectations, but these should be simple, understood by students and used consistently where adopted.
- Teachers should address literacy, vocabulary, numeracy and presentation where these are relevant to learning in the subject.
- When detailed written feedback is given, time should normally be provided for students to respond, improve or practise.

4.4 Student response to feedback and improvement time

Teachers should plan opportunities for students to act on feedback where this will improve learning. This may happen within the lesson, in a subsequent lesson or, where appropriate, through homework or independent study.

- working from prompt sheets, feedback grids, graphic organisers, models or exemplar answers;
- self-correction, redrafting, extension, consolidation or additional practice;
- peer or self-assessment against clearly taught criteria;
- whole-class improvement activities after common misconceptions have been identified.

Over time, feedback should help students become more independent in judging and improving their own work. Teachers may begin with more adult-led feedback and gradually reduce support as students become more confident in planning, monitoring and evaluating their learning.

Where homework is used to practise, consolidate or extend learning, feedback should follow the principles of the Homework Policy: it should be timely, informative and proportionate, and should help teachers identify gaps, misconceptions and next steps rather than creating unnecessary written marking workload.

5. Student progress trackers

From September 2026, all departments will ensure that every student has a progress tracker in their exercise book, folder or equivalent subject record. Progress trackers should support students to take ownership of their learning journey by helping them see progress over time, recognise what success looks like, and identify the precise actions needed to improve. Each department's progress tracker should use consistent whole-school language while allowing subject-specific adaptation.

Departments may design trackers that fit the subject; however, every tracker should help students answer: Where am I now? Where am I aiming? How do I get there? The tracker should be linked to shared grade criteria, descriptors or mark schemes. The tracker should include:

- assessment title/date and relevant score, grade, level or performance judgement, where appropriate to the key stage and subject;
- target, projection or aspirational grade/level, where appropriate;
- specific strengths from the assessment or task;
- diagnosis of the main gap, misconception or barrier;
- space for student reflection, improvement action or response.

6. Recording, tracking and reporting

- Teachers should keep sufficient assessment records to understand students' progress, inform teaching and contribute accurately to reporting cycles.
- Departments should maintain agreed systems for recording key assessment information, especially common assessments, examinations and data used for reporting.
- Assessment information should be used to identify students who require support, intervention, extension or further challenge.

- Where concerns arise about progress, effort, attendance to learning, homework or assessment performance, teachers should communicate with the Head of Department, pastoral staff, LEAPS and/or parents as appropriate.
- Reporting to parents should be accurate, evidence-informed and aligned with the Pupil Progress and Reporting Policy. This policy explains how assessment and feedback generate evidence of learning; the Pupil Progress and Reporting Policy explains how that evidence is recorded, analysed, reported and acted upon through the school's formal progress and reporting systems. Assessment information should support effective communication with parents regarding attainment, progress, strengths and areas for development.

7. Inclusive teaching, assessment and feedback

St Mary's is ambitious for all students. High-quality teaching, assessment and feedback should support students of all abilities and needs, including students with SEND, EAL and higher prior attainment, removing barriers to success while maintaining high expectations and access to intellectual challenge.

- Teachers should know students' starting points, prior attainment, strengths and needs.
- Teachers should refer to relevant SEND and EAL information, including Provision Passports and access arrangement documentation where applicable.
- Planning should include appropriate adaptation, scaffolding, modelling and support without lowering expectations unnecessarily.
- Students should be taught the vocabulary, academic language and disciplinary conventions needed to succeed in each subject.
- Higher attaining students should be challenged through depth of thinking, precision, independence, complexity and application, not merely through more work.
- Feedback should be accessible and understandable, while still maintaining high expectations.
- Where assessments contribute to evidence for access arrangements, teachers should follow the guidance provided by LEAPS.
- Teachers should explicitly teach and model metacognitive habits, helping students to plan, monitor and evaluate their learning and their response to feedback.
- Teachers should use rich, inclusive questioning and structured dialogue to probe understanding, address misconceptions, stretch thinking and support students to articulate their reasoning.
- Students should know what excellence looks like: high-quality examples, models, success criteria and subject-specific standards should be shared, discussed and deconstructed with the class.
- Support should be gradually reduced where appropriate so that students develop independence, confidence and responsibility for improving their own work.

In EYFS, assessment and feedback arrangements will be age-appropriate and aligned with the EYFS statutory framework, using observation, interaction, discussion and practical learning to inform assessment and next steps.

8. Department Assessment and Feedback Statements

Each department should include a concise subject-specific Assessment and Feedback Statement in their handbook. This should be reviewed annually and should align with this whole-school policy. This Department statement should include:

- key assessment points and their purpose;
- how assessment criteria, mark schemes or descriptors are shared with students;
- how work is moderated or standardised where appropriate;

- the range of feedback methods used in the subject;
- how students respond to feedback and improve work;
- how assessment information is recorded and used;
- how progress trackers are used in that subject;
- how homework, independent study and AI expectations are communicated to students, including the permitted AI level for relevant tasks;
- how the department supports SEND, EAL and higher attaining students.

9. Quality assurance and professional development

Quality assurance is relevant to this policy because the school must know whether teaching, assessment and feedback are effective, consistent and manageable. Quality assurance should evaluate how effectively the school's academic strategy is enacted in normal classroom practice: high expectations, intellectual challenge, inclusive support, student independence and progress over time. Quality assurance should evaluate not only compliance with policy but also its impact on pupil learning, progress, attainment, engagement and independence.

9.1 Work scrutiny and book looks

Work scrutiny/book looks form part of the school's normal cycle of quality assurance. They should focus on the quality of learning over time rather than on compliance for its own sake. Evidence may include exercise books, folders, portfolios, practical work, digital work and progress trackers.

- Departmental work scrutinies should normally take place at least half-termly, using a sample from a designated year group or agreed focus area.
- Heads of Department should use work scrutiny to identify strengths, check consistency within the department and agree precise next steps where needed.
- Senior leaders may also review samples of work, either alongside departments or as part of wider whole-school quality assurance.
- Student voice or pupil focus groups may be used alongside work scrutiny to check whether students understand their learning, feedback, progress and next steps.
- During learning walks or lesson visits, books, folders or digital work may also be reviewed as part of the wider evidence of teaching, assessment and feedback.
- Findings should be summarised clearly, with strengths, areas for development and action points shared with relevant staff.

9.2 Other quality assurance activities

- learning walks, lesson visits and formal lesson observations where appropriate, using the Professional Development Observation Record as a shared language for reflection rather than as a checklist;
- student voice and focus groups;
- review of progress trackers, assessment records and reporting data;
- departmental moderation and standardisation of assessment;
- analysis of assessment data, reporting data and internal or external examination outcomes;
- SLT link meetings and departmental quality assurance reviews;
- review of homework, feedback and student response to feedback where relevant.
- review of how departments communicate academic honesty and AI expectations in classwork, homework and assessment tasks where relevant.

9.3 What quality assurance should look for

- students know what they are learning and what successful work looks like;
- work shows appropriate challenge, progression and curriculum coverage;
- assessment information is being used to inform teaching and intervention;
- feedback is meaningful, timely and acted upon where appropriate;
- students can explain their current position, target and next steps through progress trackers or equivalent mechanisms;
- students understand what support is permitted for independent work, including tutor, peer, parental and AI support where relevant;
- students with SEND, EAL and higher prior attainment are supported and challenged appropriately;
- departmental approaches are consistent enough to be fair, while allowing legitimate subject-specific variation.

9.4 Feedback loop and professional development

Findings from quality assurance should be summarised by Heads of Department and/or senior leaders and used to inform departmental action planning, staff development, coaching, Teaching and Learning Forums, INSET and whole-school priorities. Senior leaders and Heads of Department may use subsequent lesson visits, work scrutiny or meetings to check whether agreed recommendations have been implemented.

Quality assurance should not create unnecessary workload or require teachers to produce evidence solely for inspection; it should focus on the normal evidence of students' learning and progress.

Summary findings from quality assurance activities will be reported through the school's governance and leadership structures so that those responsible for governance can evaluate the effectiveness of teaching, assessment and feedback.