



Teaching Learning and Assessment Policy

The Light of Learning



This policy sets the Trust-wide expectations that support consistently strong teaching, responsive assessment and ambitious learning for every pupil.

Policy owner	Trust Standards Lead
Approval body	Trust Board
Approval date	October 2026
Review date	October 2029
Applies to	All Trust schools and staff

Policy purpose

This policy establishes a shared Trust approach to teaching, learning and assessment through the Light of Learning. It describes the principles that guide classroom practice, the expectations that apply across all schools and the responsibilities of leaders, teachers, support staff, governors and trustees. Schools will apply these expectations in ways that are appropriate to their phase, curriculum and pupils while maintaining the common entitlement set out here.

The policy aims to ensure that:

- every pupil receives ambitious, inclusive and well-sequenced teaching;
- assessment identifies what pupils know, understand and can do, and informs the next stage of teaching;
- teachers use evidence-informed approaches with professional judgement rather than a prescribed lesson format;
- staff development, monitoring and school improvement remain focused on the quality and impact of pupils' learning.
- Aligned and consistent approach to ensure integrity of the framework

Scope

The policy applies to teaching, learning and assessment in all phases, subjects and provisions across the Trust. It should be read alongside each school's curriculum, SEND, inclusion, behaviour, marking or feedback, early years and assessment procedures, where these are maintained separately.

Principles

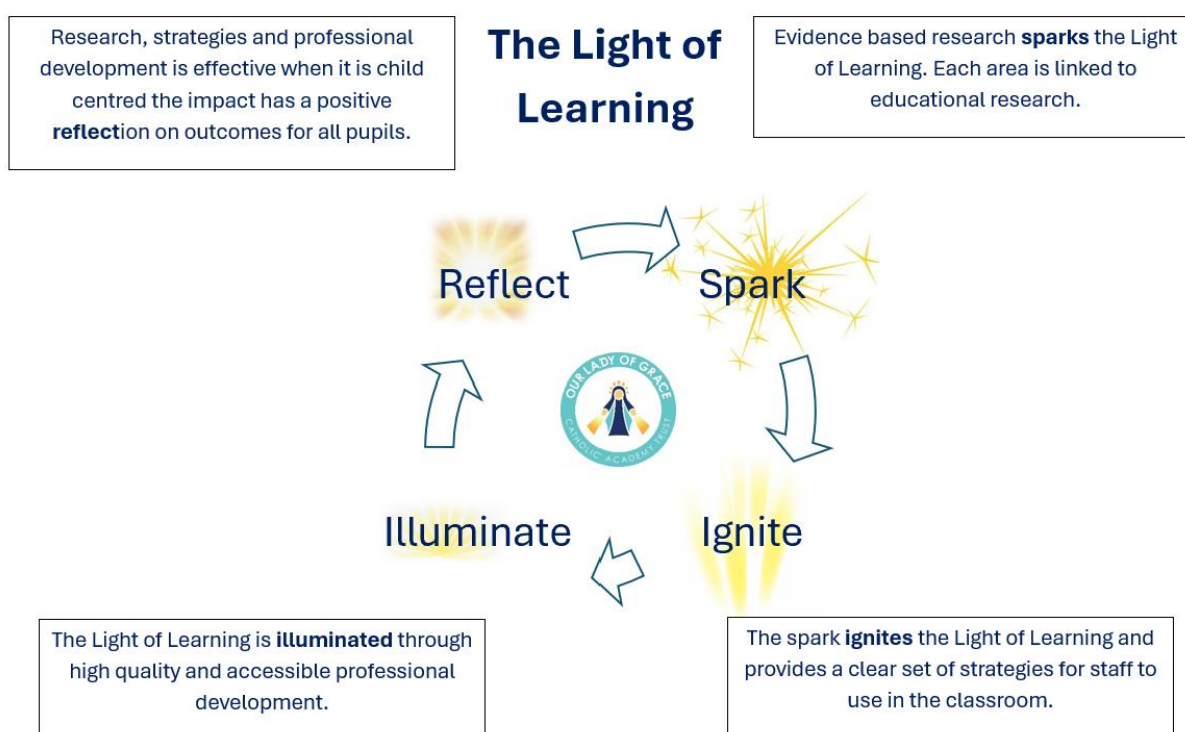
- Ambition for all pupils, including pupils with SEND, disadvantaged pupils and those who need further challenge.
- A coherent curriculum in which knowledge, vocabulary and skills build securely over time.
- Teaching that responds to assessment and makes learning accessible without lowering expectations.
- Active participation so that all pupils think, speak, practise and apply their learning.
- A calm, respectful environment in which mistakes are used constructively and pupils feel safe to contribute.
- Continuous professional learning informed by research, shared expertise and evidence of impact.

The Light of Learning

Our Lady of Grace sits at the Centre of teaching, learning and assessment across the Trust. Her light shines through the strategies, professional learning and evidence-informed practice that guide our work, enabling every member of staff and pupil to flourish.

The Light of Learning places the child at the core of professional thinking. Research and professional learning provide the spark; agreed classroom strategies ignite improvement; their impact is reflected in pupils' learning and outcomes; and effective practice is illuminated through collaboration and accessible professional development. The four stages show how evidence, classroom practice, professional learning and evaluation connect across the Trust.

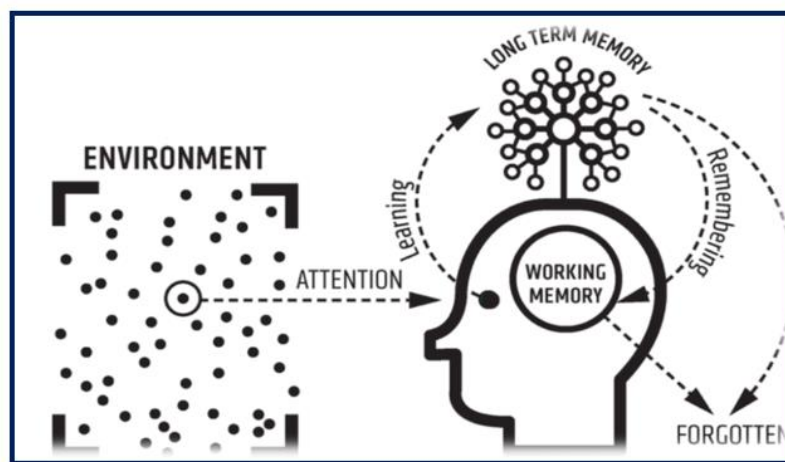
Staff reflect on evidence and pupils' needs, select and apply approaches deliberately, evaluate their impact and share what works. Each stage informs the next, creating a continuous cycle of improvement centred on pupils. Leaders support consistency without removing professional judgement or reducing teaching to a checklist.



The Learning Model

The Learning Model explains how pupils attend to information, process it in working memory and connect it with knowledge held in long-term memory. It provides the cognitive foundation for the Light of Learning classroom elements.

The Learning Model



Implications for teaching

- The environment contains more information than pupils can process. Clear routines, purposeful resources and focused explanations help direct attention to what matters.
- Working memory is limited. Small steps, modelling, carefully selected visuals, guided practice and checks for understanding help pupils process new learning without unnecessary overload.
- Learning becomes more durable when new knowledge connects with long-term memory. Retrieval, spaced review, feedback and application strengthen remembering and help teachers identify knowledge that is insecure or has been forgotten.
- Communication and language approaches are a crucial part of provision in the early years and across the school. Implementation is a key part of the Learning Model with a focus on Oracy development and Interactions.

Teaching, Learning and Assessment Framework

The elements below form a shared professional language. They are interconnected and should be selected according to the curriculum, the stage of learning and pupils' needs. They do not prescribe a fixed sequence for every lesson.



Core expectations for teaching

Teachers plan from the curriculum and from what pupils already know. In day-to-day teaching, staff should use the following expectations proportionately and purposefully.

Retrieval

Strengthen memory, deepen understanding, and improve long-term retention by actively recalling information rather than passively reviewing it.

Instruction

Deliver clear, structured teaching that explicitly conveys knowledge, concepts, or procedures, ensuring pupils understand content before independent practice.

Feedback

Guide pupils' learning by providing information on **what they are doing well, what needs improvement, and how to improve**, supporting skill development, understanding, and motivation.

Modelling

Demonstrate skills, processes, or thinking strategies explicitly so that pupils can observe, understand, and imitate effective performance, promoting skill acquisition and conceptual understanding.

Small steps

Break complex skills or content into **manageable, sequential steps** to ensure pupils master each component before progressing, reducing cognitive overload and improving learning outcomes.

Questioning

Promote critical thinking, check understanding, engage pupils, and deepen learning by using well-planned, purposeful questions rather than only relying on teacher explanations.

Misconceptions

Identify pupils' **misunderstandings and knowledge gaps** to provide targeted support, ensure accurate learning, and inform teaching.

Adaptation

High-quality teaching is the first response to pupils' different starting points and needs. Modify teaching approaches, materials, and activities to **meet the diverse needs of learners**, ensuring all pupils can access, engage with, and succeed in the curriculum.

Visuals

Enhance understanding, memory, and engagement by using **visual representations** such as diagrams, images, charts, and mind maps to support and clarify learning.

Application

Enable pupils to **transfer knowledge and skills** to new contexts, deepen understanding, and develop problem-solving and critical thinking abilities.

Assessment principles

Assessment is integral to teaching. Its purpose is to identify what pupils know, understand and can do; reveal gaps and misconceptions; support appropriate feedback; and inform future teaching and curriculum decisions. Assessment should be proportionate, valid for its intended purpose and manageable for staff and pupils.

Assessment takes three connected forms

Form	Main purpose	Examples
Diagnostic	Establish starting points, prerequisite knowledge and specific gaps.	Discussion, baseline activity, pre-assessment, reading or number checks.
Formative	Inform immediate teaching and help pupils improve during learning.	Questioning, observation, mini whiteboards, short tasks, retrieval, live feedback.
Summative	Evaluate attainment against taught curriculum content at an appropriate point.	End-of-unit tasks, standardised assessments, moderated writing, statutory assessment.

Assessment expectations

- Assessment must be aligned with the intended curriculum and should sample the knowledge and skills pupils have been taught.
- Teachers use a range of evidence and avoid drawing firm conclusions from a single task or score.
- Assessment information is used to adapt teaching, plan review, identify support or challenge and communicate progress.
- Schools use moderation and standardisation where professional judgement needs to be secure and consistent.
- Leaders ensure that data collection has a clear purpose and does not create unnecessary workload.

Curriculum planning and lesson preparation

Teachers plan from agreed curriculum intentions and sequences. Planning should identify the knowledge, vocabulary and skills pupils need; the likely starting points and misconceptions; suitable models and representations; opportunities for guided and independent practice; and how understanding will be checked.

Planning formats are determined by schools and teams. Leaders should avoid unnecessary duplication and should not require individual lesson plans unless there is a specific professional development or support need. Shared resources may support consistency, but teachers must adapt them in response to their pupils and the intended curriculum.

Learning behaviours and classroom culture

Strong learning depends on predictable routines, respectful relationships and high expectations. Adults should teach and reinforce the behaviours that enable pupils to listen, think, discuss, practise and work independently. Pupils should feel safe to attempt difficult work, explain uncertainty and learn from mistakes.

Staff should establish routines for transitions, resources, talk, independent work and seeking help. Expectations must be applied fairly and consistently, with reasonable adjustments where needed. Classroom talk should be purposeful and inclusive, with vocabulary and sentence structures modelled where these help pupils participate successfully.

Early Years

In the early years, the Light of Learning is enacted through purposeful play, direct teaching, high-quality interactions and carefully planned provision. Adults use observation and interaction to identify what children know and can do, extend language and thinking, model new learning and strengthen foundational knowledge. Assessment should be proportionate and should inform the environment, adult interaction and next steps without reducing time for learning.

Professional learning and collaboration

The Trust will support staff to understand and refine the Light of Learning through accessible professional development, coaching, collaborative planning, moderation, professional dialogue and the sharing of strong practice across schools. Professional learning should connect to identified pupil and staff needs, allow time for practice and follow-up, and be evaluated through changes in classroom practice and pupils' learning.

Roles and responsibilities

Role	Key responsibilities
Trust Board and local governance	Approve and review the policy; assure themselves that the Trust's vision is implemented; use appropriate evidence to provide support and challenge.
Executive leaders	Set strategic expectations; ensure capacity, professional development and quality assurance; evaluate Trust-wide strengths, risks and priorities.
Headteachers	Implement the policy in their school; secure an ambitious curriculum and inclusive practice; organise proportionate monitoring, support and professional learning.
Senior and subject leaders	Translate policy into subject- and phase-appropriate practice; support planning and assessment; monitor curriculum implementation and help staff improve.
Teachers	Know their pupils and curriculum; plan and teach in line with this policy; assess responsively; provide useful feedback; seek support and engage in professional learning.

Role	Key responsibilities
Teaching assistants and other classroom staff	Work with the teacher to support access, participation and independence; contribute relevant observations; follow agreed plans and adjustments.
Pupils	Attend, participate, practise, respond to feedback, ask for help and contribute to a respectful learning environment, with support appropriate to age and need.
Parents and carers	Support attendance, routines and learning; share relevant information; engage with communications about curriculum, progress and support.

Monitoring and evaluation

Monitoring will evaluate the quality and impact of implementation rather than seek compliance with a preferred lesson style. Evidence may include visits to lessons, pupil discussion, work and assessment review, planning conversations, curriculum review and outcomes over time. No single source should be used in isolation.

Leaders will:

- make the purpose and focus of monitoring clear;
- consider the curriculum context, pupils' needs and learning over time;
- identify strengths as well as precise areas for development;
- provide timely feedback, support and follow-up;
- use findings to shape professional development, resourcing and school improvement priorities;
- evaluate whether actions lead to improved practice and pupil learning.

The Trust Standards Lead will facilitate the sharing of effective practice and report relevant strengths, risks and priorities to trustees. School leaders remain responsible for acting promptly where provision does not meet the expectations of this policy.

Equality safeguarding and wellbeing

Implementation of this policy must advance equality of opportunity, prevent discrimination and support the participation of pupils with protected characteristics and additional needs. Teaching materials, examples and classroom interactions should reflect the dignity of every person and the Catholic character of the Trust.

All teaching and assessment activity must follow safeguarding, online safety, data protection, health and safety and accessibility requirements. Leaders should also consider staff and pupil workload and wellbeing when setting assessment, feedback and monitoring routines.

Policy review

The Trust Board will review this policy according to the date shown on the cover or sooner when changes to legislation, statutory guidance, Trust priorities or evaluation evidence make this necessary. Schools should review related procedures after any change to this policy.

Appendix one

Teaching, Learning and Assessment One Page Model with Research and suggested Teaching Strategies

Appendix two

Evidence base

The Light of Learning draws on established research and evidence reviews. The references below provide a starting point for professional learning; they do not replace subject expertise or evaluation of impact in context.

- Adesope, O. O., Trevisan, D. A. and Sundararajan, N. (2017) Rethinking the use of tests: A meta-analysis of practice testing.
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- Bjork, R. A. and Bjork, E. L. (2011) Making things hard on yourself, but in a good way: Creating desirable difficulties to enhance learning.
- Education Endowment Foundation (2021) Special Educational Needs in Mainstream Schools.
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- Education Endowment Foundation (2021) Metacognition and Self-Regulated Learning.
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- Rosenshine, B. (2012) Principles of Instruction.
- Sweller, J., Ayres, P. and Kalyuga, S. (2011) Cognitive Load Theory.
- Willingham, D. T. (2009) Why Don't Students Like School?
- Yang, C. and colleagues (2021) Testing and retrieval practice in classroom learning: A meta-analytic review.