



First Educators

Parents' and Carers' Teaching and Learning Newsletter Autumn 2023

Parents are described, in Catholic social teaching as 'the first educators' of their children. Their role is respected and supported by Catholic schools. This newsletter is aimed at informing parents and carers about curriculum developments in the school and at supporting them in their role as the first educators of their children.

Welcome to the third edition of the Bishop Vaughan teaching and learning newsletter. From these newsletters, you can learn more about your child's learning experiences at school, about curriculum developments, about extra-curricular opportunities and about ways in which you can support your child's learning.

Curriculum for Wales

The Curriculum for Wales, described in the first edition of this newsletter in Spring 2023, is now in place for both our Year 7 and Year 8 pupils. It has been carefully constructed by all teachers to support your child in skills progression, knowledge acquisition and to allow them to make links between their learning.

Though Bishop Vaughan's pupils typically join us from a very wide range of primary schools (usually around thirty six!), the school also works with its cluster primary schools so that, between us, we can undertake planning that further supports the development of skills and knowledge, and which allows pupils, staff and parents across the school to develop a shared understanding of what progress 'looks like' and how best to monitor that progress, so that we are able to provide effective support to individuals who may not be making the progress expected for their age.

Catholic Pupil Profile

At Bishop Vaughan, we work hard to nurture character development alongside academic development, believing that this is essential to ensuring that our pupils lead fulfilled and happy lives, with successful futures.

The Catholic pupil profile guides our work in this area, and it aims to develop eight pairs of character traits, or 'virtues.' Typically, we focus on one pair of virtues each half-term. The virtues are

shown in the following diagram:



This half-term, we have focused on being **attentive** and **discerning**: pupils have investigated what it means to be attentive to their experience and to their vocation; and discerning about the choices they make and the effects of those choices. We encourage the practice of attentive reflection and discerning decision making by practising the Examen at the end of each week in Advent and Lent.

How To Support Your Child

You can support your child's learning in numerous ways, and each of these newsletters provides some suggestions. As this is the start of the academic year, we provide some very broad, but enormously helpful, ones here!

- Encourage attendance of Learning Zone
- Encourage participation in extra-curricular clubs
- Encourage wider reading (books can be borrowed from the school library or purchased from the vending machines in the diners for the heavily-subsidised price of £2!)
- Talk with your child about the work they are doing in school; ask them to explain it to you!

As a reminder for parents and carers, or for those who are new to the education system in Wales. The following summary is provided:

The Curriculum for Wales aims to support your child in becoming:

- an ambitious, capable learner, ready to learn throughout their life
- an enterprising, creative contributor, ready to play a full part in life and work
- an ethical, informed citizen, ready to take part in Wales and the world, and a
- a healthy, confident individual, ready to lead a fulfilling life as a valued member of society.

These are called the ‘**four purposes**’ of the curriculum. In Years 7-9, your child’s learning will cover the following six **areas of learning and experience**:

Areas of learning and experience



In **Expressive Arts**, your child will explore art, dance, drama, film and digital media and music to develop their creative, artistic and performance skills.



In **Humanities** they’ll learn about the world, society and events in the past and present. They’ll explore the challenges and opportunities that face us, and what ethical action we can take to safeguard the world and its people in the future.



In **Mathematics and Numeracy**, your child will develop their understanding of numbers and use symbols in maths. They’ll explore shapes and measurement and learn about statistics and probability.



Health and Well-being is about looking after their physical and mental health including emotional well-being. They’ll learn about healthy eating and how to make good decisions, deal with influences and develop healthy relationships.



In **Languages, Literacy and Communication**, your child will learn about languages. They’ll understand and use Welsh, English and other languages. They’ll study and create literature, and communicate in spoken, written or visual ways. This could include poetry, drama and film.



In **Science and Technology** your child will learn about biology, chemistry, physics, computer science and design and technology. They’ll learn about design and engineering, living things, matter, forces and energy, and how computers work.

Assessment is linked to the new curriculum.

The new curriculum is currently only in place for our Year 7 and 8 pupils. Next year it will be fully implemented, and in place for all Year 7-9 pupils. After this, your child will start their GCSE courses in Year 10.

Information for Parents of GCSE and A-Level Pupils:

Advance Notice: On Thursday 8th February, we will once more be running the very popular Parent/ Carer Revision Support Workshops here at the school. There will be a number of sessions throughout the evening from 4-6.30pm, and the opportunity to find out more about how young people learn most effectively, how best to support your child and to pick up the free revision packs distributed at the workshops. These will contain revision resources for every subject, revision stationery and some treats for motivation along the way! We look forward to welcoming you to these workshops!

The Learning Zone

The Learning Zone provides free tuition and homework support after school each day from Monday to Thursday (3-4 pm) from the school library. The provision is delivered by subject teachers on each day. Pupils can come along to receive specialist subject tuition or general help to support the development of independent learning skills. There is also plenty of IT provision available, the access to computers allowing pupils to use resources such as Mathswatch.

The Learning Zone can support pupils on a one-to-one basis or provide opportunities for collaborative learning in small groups, as needed. There are also rewards for attending! Should parents or carers have any questions, please speak with the Learning Zone Co-ordinator, Mrs A Jones.

Extra-Curricular Opportunities

Please encourage your child to get involved in any of the very wide range of extra-curricular activities that we offer here in Bishop Vaughan! These are highly beneficial and also lots of fun. The extra-curricular prospectus can be viewed here:

<https://www.bishopvaughan.co.uk/clubs-and-activities>

First Educators Online

If you have not yet done so, we encourage you to check out the First Educators section of our website (<https://www.bishopvaughan.co.uk/first-educators>) to access a range of resources that may be helpful to you as parents and carers.