

# Curriculum Policy

The curriculum on offer in Lumen Christi consists of more than merely the delivery of a statutory range of subjects. It comprises all the learning experiences within the school and includes not only knowledge and skills but the attitudes, beliefs and values which underpin the relationships of the school community. As a caring community, we seek to promote the academic, personal, aesthetic, physical, social and spiritual development of each child. In essence, the curriculum constitutes everything which occurs within and impacts upon the school.

Above all, our curriculum is pupil-centred, striving for academic excellence in public examinations within a balanced and diverse programme, while at the same time recognising and rewarding non-academic achievement in accordance with the aims of the school.

The school thus offers the full NI Curriculum at Key Stage 3 in accordance with statutory requirements and the Entitlement Framework at Key Stage 4 and post-16.

At Key Stage 3, Lumen Christi College offers:

- English Language and Literature
- Mathematics
- Science, Technology and Design
- History, Geography, Home Economics
- Physical Education, Art and Design, Music, Drama
- Modern Languages: French, Irish, Spanish, Mandarin Chinese
- Religious Education
- Learning for Life and Work, including Citizenship, Employability and Personal and Social Education

It will deliver, through these subjects, cross-phase strands including Thinking Skills, Personal Capabilities, Assessment for Learning and Connected Learning. In addition, departments collaborate on cross-curricular project work.

At Key Stage 4, pupils may choose both individual sciences and a combination of languages because of the range of option choices available. All pupils will complete GCSE courses in at least 9 subjects. The college currently offers 25 GCSE courses, including nine applied courses, thus exceeding the statutory Entitlement Framework requirement for students. The 2015-16 course offer is:

English, English Literature, Drama, Mathematics, Further Mathematics, Business and Communication Studies, Child Development, Astronomy, Chemistry, Physics, Biology, Science (Double Award), French, Spanish, Irish, History, Geography, Art, Music, Design and Technology, Physical Education, Information Systems, Photography and Religious Education and Journalism.

The college offers Learning for Life and Work in Year 11 and 12 using a 'collapsed timetable' model for the delivery of Citizenship and Employability while PSE is delivered through discrete timetable provision.

The Sixth Form Curriculum offers, on-site, A-Level courses in Accounting, Applied Science, Art and Design, Biology, Business Studies, Chemistry, Design and

Technology, English Literature, French, Further Mathematics, Geography, History, Information Systems, Irish, Mathematics, Music, Physics, Religious Studies, Software Systems Design and Spanish. PE is also offered to AS level.

Most students complete at least 3 A-Levels on campus. Access to additional subjects is provided through collaborative arrangements with other post primary schools in the Derry City area via the Foyle Learning Community. Students may, with the approval of the principal, take two subjects on campus and one other at a host school within the FLC. The college thus already meets the requirements of the Entitlement Framework at post-16 offering access to thirty two subjects, a third of which are applied. Students are provided with careers guidance regarding the suitability of applied and general courses for university entrance.

Enrichment courses are also provided in Personal and Social Development, Careers Education, Religious Education and Preparation for University Life, while students are also offered after school opportunities in the Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme, Outreach work and Charities Work. All subjects from KS3 to A Level are offered subject to viability, staffing, pupil numbers, timetabling and financial considerations.

The college is a Science Specialist College aiming to develop the STEM agenda within the school and among local schools and business community. Close business links have been established with a variety of organisations including Seagate, Dupont, Sentinus, Derry City Council, Stranmillis College and NWRC. These links support the provision of conferences, workshops and 'real life' science experiences for Lumen Christi pupils.

Teaching strategies vary to include differentiated teaching and learning methods setting achievable goals and realistic targets to ensure that pupils may achieve their highest potential and develop a positive self-image. Each subject area has agreed departmental policies and schemes of work to ensure continuity in learning and avoidance of overlap and repetition. These are reviewed annually in line with the school's Departmental Quality Assurance policy so that continuous improvement may be effected in teaching and learning strategies. Pupils are encouraged to become actively involved in their own learning and to become independent learners through the concentration on formative assessment procedures providing positive feedback on homework and coursework. Assessment of work thus strives to respect the dignity and value of each individual, encouraging a growing independence so that each might express his/her own individual needs, identify targets which meet these needs and so make informed choices and decisions.

### **Inclusion**

The staff and pupils of Lumen Christi College will foster mutual understanding at all times in the practice of tolerance, respect for and understanding of other cultures, religious denominations and nationalities. The Pastoral Programme seeks to involve pupils in a sense of shared community. It is the policy of the college to promote good academic and social relationships with the feeder parishes, with other schools both in this country and abroad and with schools of other religious denominations.

The schemes of work in each subject are designed to ensure equal access to a broad and balanced curriculum for students of both sexes and girls' and boys' achievements in each subject are carefully audited to allow for changes in teaching strategies or subject content so that teachers may ensure equality of opportunity. The organisation

of pupils within subjects is by registration/class group, based on friendship groups and subject choices.

### **Spiritual And Moral Education**

The school believes that the highest standards of academic excellence for all its pupils derive from a caring environment imbued with the Christian Gospel in action in all its relationships.

As such, Religious Education is central to the school's curriculum and forms the basis of the comprehensive programme of study at all stages of the school curriculum.

Opportunities for shared prayer and worship are provided each morning at registration and in regular assemblies. Liturgical celebrations and para-liturgies are provided throughout the school year in accordance with the liturgical calendar. A Chaplaincy team of priests, parents, students and teachers provides both ongoing input into the pastoral and religious programmes in the school. Religious Education is a compulsory element of all pupils' curriculum. The school also prizes highly its aim of missionary outreach to the wider community and organises a range of events designed to promote the aims of specific charitable organisations, through a Charities Group, as well as offering direct help to other external groups through pupil involvement in enrichment and extra-curricular activities.

The ethos of the school encourages openness and honesty, promotes genuine dialogue between culture and faith and challenges prevailing secular values. The school aims and vision are integral to the delivery of such aspects of the curriculum and reflected in:

- the commitment and personal lives of the teachers and pupils
- the quality of the relationships that exist within the school
- the home-school links and opportunities afforded to parents to participate in the education of their children
- the pastoral care programme and the liturgical and sacramental celebrations, prayer life and acts of worship throughout the school year
- the Sex Education and Relationships programme
- the concern for each pupil as an individual and as a member of a living community of faith
- the quality of counselling and help on offer to all its members both in the internal counselling service and external services for students and staff alike
- ecumenism and openness to all faiths in an atmosphere of tolerance and understanding
- the Careers Programme
- the network of communications between parents and school
- early detection of underachievement leading to positive programmes of remediation
- extension and enhancement programmes for high ability pupils
- concern for the school environment
- the development of an awareness of self and sensitivity to others so that pupils acquire qualities of sound moral judgement and self-discipline
- a wide range of extra-curricular activities, sporting and leisure pursuits, clubs and societies, physical education
- links with other schools and outreach to wider community.

### **Enrichment Programme**

Lumen Christi aims to provide for its students' physical, social and personal development through the provision of a wide range of activities, both time-tabled and extra-curricular. The academic curriculum of the college is, therefore, enriched by a varied programme of sports and activities designed to allow pupils to pursue and develop individual interests as well as to inculcate a sense of community and team work.

Physical Education is a compulsory element of the curriculum in Key Stages 3 and 4 and an after-school Activities Programme is timetabled each week to allow the pupils to participate in: Aerobics and Fitness, Archery, Gaelic Football, Soccer, Badminton, Basketball, Cookery, Design & Technology Club, Netball, Swimming, Drama, Orchestra, Choir, Jazz Band, Folk Group, Guitar Club, Art, Photography, Golf, School Magazine, Knitting, Ceili Dancing, Language Clubs, Chess, Rugby, Table Tennis, Debating, Mathematics and Science Clubs and Computers and Homework Clubs. The range of activities will vary from term to term. The Extended Schools Programme also offers additional activities for parents and the wider community.

In Years 10 -14, all pupils are encouraged to participate in the Duke of Edinburgh Award scheme and activities are arranged in all four areas of the programme at Bronze (years 10-11) and Silver level (years 11-13). A Sixth Form Enrichment programme offers opportunities to prepare for university life, work experience, community outreach activities and first aid as well as interview and personal effectiveness training.

### **Pastoral Programme**

The pastoral care programme in Lumen Christi is a comprehensive one dedicated to the religious, social and personal development of the child. As such, it permeates every aspect of school life so that all members of the school community feel valued and sustained as they grow together through their experiences and relationships. Such relationships are at the core of the pastoral programme in the school. They are delivered through close contact between the child and his/her Form Tutor who meet every day in registration periods and in form periods each week. The programme seeks to identify and respond to the needs of each individual and to enable them to become fully committed to the development of a sense of community. At the same time, the school reaches out to the wider community and Lumen Christi seeks to inspire in its students a compassion and concern for the disadvantaged, the marginalised and those in need in society at large.

The pastoral programme in the college involves:

- the development of a wide network of relationships between home, school and parishes through a well developed chaplaincy team involving management, staff, parents, pupils and clergy;
- an Education For Love programme, helping children to understand their sexual and physical development within a background of Catholic teaching;
- a careers programme to allow our pupils access to the fullest information possible and enable them to make informed judgements on future subject choices and career opportunities;
- liturgical celebrations, involvement in charity and parish work, school retreats, shared prayer and worship;

- a clearly defined, pupil-centred disciplinary programme, devised in co-operation with parents and pupils, understood by all and focusing on proactive and preventative measures for the common good;
- a programme of pupil involvement in participation in Student Councils, tutorial help for younger pupils, transition support as class counsellors and the missionary and charity work of the school;
- a curricular programme for each year group developing personal and social skills and preparing pupils for life beyond the school.

Taught periods are provided for all pupils in which a structured programme of work covers issues such as study skills, self-esteem, conflict resolution, health education, personal hygiene, friendships, bullying, child protection, sex education and careers education.

### **Careers Education and Guidance**

The college has an extensive Careers Education, Information and Guidance programme involving taught lessons, internal and external guidance and enrichment and work-related activities, details of which may be found in the CEIAG Policy. The College is committed to the full implementation of the Foyle Learning Community's Strategic plan for CEIAG to ensure that students are well prepared for third-level education and the world of work.

Pupils begin work on their Progress File and Personal Careers Plan as early as Key Stage 3. At Sixth Form, while Careers Education and Personal Development are offered as separate courses for all students, many topics – such as Interview Skills - are dealt with in one-day courses or sessions using external experts and practitioners. Preparation for UCAS applications is provided in Year 13 and supplemented by a facility to withdraw individual students for one-to-one assistance in Year 14.

Tutors meet regularly to review the programme of work, discuss individual pupil progress and plan ahead for new initiatives. The CEIAG Policy, outlining whole-school provision, is available to parents and pupils on the school website.

### **Organisation of Pupils**

Each year group will contain registration sets of approximately 20-25 pupils, with the sexes mixed according to the ratio of entrants in that year. These are unstreamed groups and form the teaching sets for the core subjects: pupils are allocated to the set according to their subject choice in languages in Year 8. These sets correspond to the pupils' Form Class and the Form Tutor will normally be a subject teacher of this group. At Key Stage 4 and post-16, Form Groups are based on option choices. Sixth Form students are encouraged to take an active leadership role in organising and motivating pupils in organising after school clubs and in assisting other students as peer tutors or homework club mentors.

An elected Student Council represents the views and opinions of students to the Leadership Team.

## **Teaching and Learning**

Teaching methods vary according to purpose in specific lessons and subjects but include, in all subjects, whole-class, group, paired and individual work. The teacher seeks to encourage pupils to take responsibility for organising their own learning, while at the same time identifying areas of weakness which require remedial help and providing such help when necessary. Emphasis is placed on group work and group achievement, encouraging the brighter pupil to help others and to learn more effectively in the process. The quality of relationships in the classroom is thus regarded as vital in assisting the academic achievement of the pupils, and the teacher, by precept and example, will encourage an atmosphere of mutual respect among pupils and build a friendly but formal professional relationship with the children. The contribution of students to the pastoral dimension and ethos of the College is recognised and rewarded in the Annual Prizegivings.

All subjects contribute a policy document, departmental action plan and schemes of work for scrutiny by the school management. These, together with teachers' personal notes, ensure continuity in learning and avoidance of overlap and repetition.

## **Special Needs**

The college is committed to meeting the special needs of pupils who have specific learning difficulties or a physical handicap. A Special Needs Co-Ordinator and Special Needs Assistant supervise requirements for pupils with identified learning difficulties. Facilities for the withdrawal of pupils from class for specific learning needs are provided in Years 9-12, while Year 8 is seen as a period in which needs can be assessed and identified at whole-school levels. IEPs are distributed to teachers by the SENCO. Year 13 and 14 students are trained by the SENCO to assist pupils requiring remedial/tutorial help in a range of subject areas.

Pupils identified as having special educational needs are also facilitated at internal examinations by extra time. An "Access and Special Consideration Policy" provides for those pupils with learning difficulties wishing to take the college's Entrance Assessment.

## **Assessment**

Every new pupil at Lumen Christi is assessed on entry to the school according to linguistic and mathematical ability to provide a baseline from which to gauge targets set for progress in the subjects encountered in the curriculum at Key Stage 3. Cognitive Ability Tests in Year 10 are used to identify targets for achievement at GCSE level. In addition, each subject policy document identifies realistic but demanding targets to be achieved at Key Stage 4 and post-16. The class teacher re-examines pupils' progress in the light of the results attained in end of topic assessments. Target-setting based on common assessment tasks at Key Stage 3 & 4 help, through continuous pupil tracking procedures within all departments, to identify and provide for pupils deemed to be underachieving and allow for stretch and challenge activities for the gifted and talented. Target-setting arrangements for students at post-16 level are included as part of their e-Progress file.

The college regards the formative process of assessment as an essential part of teaching and learning and teachers contribute to the revision of schemes of work in light of the practice and results. Each teacher seeks to provide positive feedback to pupils and parents on individual students' progress, identifying his/her strengths and weaknesses and acting accordingly. Assessment thus takes on a diagnostic role and allows teachers to identify and provide strategies for remedial action and to communicate these to parents.

Summative assessment takes the form of written and practical examinations once a year at Key Stage 4 & Sixth Form and twice a year after internal examinations as well as reporting on unit tests through the SIMS Assessment Manager modules. KS3 Reports in June focus on the skills development of pupils in accordance with the requirements of the NI Curriculum and on Communication, Mathematics and Use of ICT. Subjects have identified additional tests throughout the school year in departmental handbooks. Each subject's scheme of work illustrates the nature of the assessment techniques used and the attainment targets to be achieved. Separate Assessment and Homework Policies provide more detailed statements in these areas.

### **Target Setting**

The college has a comprehensive target setting programme for both subject teachers and pupils. Each department identifies targets for achievement based on the overall school targets for attainment in public examinations set each year by the Leadership Team. These are reviewed in the course of the year by departmental meetings based on internal and external examination performance by pupils.

The Leadership Team review GCSE results in the light of KS3 and CAT test results to monitor and evaluate progress. The review takes account of the performance of boys and girls relative to the highest performing schools in Northern Ireland at both GCSE and A-Level. The results are used to set targets for the next year. The target for 2015-16 is 97% pupils achieving Grade C or higher in seven or more GCSEs, including English and Mathematics, and 83% pupils achieving 3 A-C grades at A-Level.

Students set their own targets based upon previous performance. Each student has an individual interview with every subject teacher and a follow-up meeting with their form tutor in which all the information is collated on a proforma to help highlight pupils' strengths and weaknesses and identify realistic targets to be achieved by the next meeting.

Pupil tracking procedures are in place for all students at Key Stage 3 and 4 to monitor progress and identify those students requiring additional support within each subject area. A mentoring programme affords the students opportunities to identify areas for additional work and set achievable targets for success.

At post-16, the College uses a system of target-setting and monitoring based on the ALPs system, allowing students, departments and the college to assess value-added attainment. An e-portfolio, baselining, target-setting and monitoring student progress, compiled by the student and discussed with form tutors, enables close mentoring provision for those students not attaining their target grades.

## **Parental Involvement**

As a listening college, Lumen Christi welcomes the participation of parents at every stage of their child's education. Several formal channels of communication exist to promote good relationships between parents and teachers.

Parents are kept informed of their child's progress through the student's planner and written reports each year. They are invited to attend an annual parents meeting to discuss the child's progress and the school extends an open invitation to meet with the Form Tutor, Head of Key Stage, Vice-Principal or Principal by arrangement to discuss any matters relating to the child's progress or welfare in the school.

Parents are encouraged to monitor homework, become actively involved in the choice of subjects for their son/daughter and play an active part in the children's learning. The college seeks to involve parents actively in extra-curricular activities and welcomes participation in and contribution to the enrichment programme.

The college furnishes all parents with an annual report from the Board of Governors and a monthly newsletter which provides continuous update on events in the college. Both documents may be accessed on the college website: [www.lumenchristicollege.co.uk](http://www.lumenchristicollege.co.uk), where school news is also updated weekly.

A biennial Audit of parental opinion on all aspects of the school is carried out by the Leadership Team under the auspices of the Board of Governors. A formal complaints procedure guaranteeing a response within five working days operates in the school.

An active Parents' Association enhances links between school and home and provides parents with a more direct involvement in their children's education. Parents are involved in after school clubs, Chaplaincy Team and the Duke of Edinburgh Award Programme. The school management welcomes their contribution to the effective organisation of the school administration, creating a happy, purposeful atmosphere in which pupils can learn effectively and enjoy school life.

## **Curriculum Review**

A Curriculum Committee meets throughout the year to review curriculum provision and reports to the Leadership Team and the Board of Governors who will then take decisions after reviewing its findings and recommendations. The Board reserves the right to alter the curriculum provision in any year as a result of staffing, timetabling, pupil uptake, viability or financial considerations.

*This policy document will be reviewed as required by the Board of Governors (Sub-Committee).*