



PLYMOUTH COLLEGE

CURRICULUM POLICY

Including Early Years Foundation Stage

Last reviewed:	July 2026
Next review date:	August 2027
Responsibility:	Deputy Head (Academic)

The Curriculum Policy is founded on the educational aims of Plymouth College. The taught curriculum is designed to reflect the ethos and values of the school.

Educational Aims:

To help all pupils at Plymouth College to:

- (i) develop into personable, understanding, self-confident, knowledgeable and articulate young adults.
- (ii) develop a love of learning, develop the skills of independent learning and appreciate the importance of lifelong learning.
- (iii) develop a thinking, inquisitive nature and appreciate the intrinsic value of learning.
- (iv) achieve good academic qualifications, be well prepared for the next stages of educational and career, and be able to take their place as full, active, well informed members of society
- (v) maximise their full potential in all areas, achieve and appreciate success.
- (vi) develop spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness.
- (vii) prepare for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of life in British society.

Principles:

We aim to meet the educational aims by constructing a curricular structure and extra-curricular programme based on the principles below:

- (i) We provide a broad and balanced, well planned academic curriculum which gives pupils experience of all of the elements of learning (knowledge, understanding of concepts, skills and attitudes) and the areas of learning experience (aesthetic/creative, human and social, linguistic and literary, mathematical, moral, physical, scientific, spiritual and technological).
- (ii) We respond to the broad expectations of the National Curriculum but are not bound by its every detail.

- (iii) We believe strongly that our curriculum should suit the needs of the individual. We design and adapt curriculum structures to meet individual needs; we provide additional support in many areas and wherever possible we provide opportunities to help pupils achieve their aspirations.
- (iv) We greatly value the extra-curricular and activities programme, we offer a broad range of activities and encourage all pupils to participate fully. We feel that this plays an essential part in developing self-confidence, teamwork and leadership qualities.
- (v) We aim to provide a learning environment where pupils are happy, they respect and care for one another and at the same time are offered and respond to challenge.

Practice:

EARLY YEARS DEPARTMENT

adhering to the Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage

PRE-SCHOOL AND RECEPTION CLASSES

The Early Years Department is led by qualified teachers and practitioners, with the support of classroom assistants. They are also taught by specialist teachers in PE, swimming and music. The Preschool class is open to children of 3 and 4 years of age and it offers a transition between Nursery and School. Pre-School pupils can attend for any combination of full and half days, increasing the amount of time as they become ready for the challenges of school life. Reception children attend full time and are gently introduced to a school day with assemblies and set play times.

Emphasis is placed on developing each individual through the experience of a wide variety of different stimuli. A focus is on early language and extending vocabulary, with more examples on how to embed and develop vocabulary skills across all 7 areas, because this improves child development in a broad curriculum. The children are encouraged to play and explore, participate in active learning as well as create and think critically. These areas are accessed through topic based learning. The aim is to create a fun and stimulating environment in which children are encouraged to become independent learners through play, exploration, teacher-led and child initiated activities.

We adhere to the seven areas of learning stated in the Early Years Foundation Stage curriculum:

The three prime areas being:

- Personal, social and emotional development
- Physical development
- Communication and Language

And the four specific areas being:

- Literacy
- Mathematics
- Understanding the World
- Expressive Arts and Design

(a) Education for Pupils of Compulsory School Age.

At KS1 are taught for 55 lessons of 25 minutes a week (just under 23 hours a week) and KS2 pupils are taught for the full 60 lessons of 25 minutes a week; many periods are doubled to make a 50-minute lesson. (25 hrs). The areas of the curriculum are covered as below:

KS1

Academic skills are developed through carefully planned schemes of work that are not constrained by the National Curriculum and offer teaching beyond and outside its boundaries depending on the ability and individual needs of your child. Pupils will also have been inspired by playing their part in productions to build their confidence. These include: the Early Years Nativity, First Steps Concerts and a Spring Show.

We strive to provide a broad and balanced curriculum to ensure children reach their full potential in all areas of development. Although the children are taught mainly by their class teacher, they also have regular contact with the PE, Swimming and Music specialists.

Area	Main Subjects in which this area is covered
Linguistic	All pupils study English daily. Phonics skills continue to be developed and a standardised Phonics scheme has been implemented. Development of talking, listening, reading and writing is encouraged in all core areas of learning.
Mathematical	All pupils study Mathematics daily. Computation, problem solving, mental agility and thematic work with an emphasis on practical application.
Scientific	All pupils study Science. This includes Physical Science, Environmental Science and Health Education.
Technological	Computing is an area of the curriculum where children have opportunities to develop a range of skills, linked to different areas of the curriculum.
Human and Social	All pupils study Geography, History and RE as part of the Prep Humanities curriculum. This is mainly thematic.
Physical	All pupils have lessons in PE, Swimming and Games.
Aesthetic and Creative	Music, Dance, Drama and Art are all part of the KS1 curriculum, often encompassed alongside the current theme for the term.

KS2

Years 3 and 4

These are important transitional years where the children are encouraged to become more independent and responsible. Most of the school day is based with their class teacher where most subjects are taught. A great emphasis is placed on the traditional skills of reading, writing and numeracy. Environmental studies, which include Science, History and Geography are topic based and include environmental studies. There are strong cross-curricular links between these subjects and Art. The children visit other teachers for:

Year 3 PE, Swimming, Games, Art, Computing and Music

Year 4 PE, Swimming, Games, Music, French, Art, DT and Computing.

Years 5 and 6

Each class in Years 5 and 6 has a form teacher who oversees the pastoral care of the pupils. Pupils follow their own timetables and lessons are taught by a mixture of UKS2 specialists and specialist subject teachers to provide a full and enriching curriculum. The children are taught in their form groups for all academic subjects and, in certain subjects, travel around the school to different subject areas.

All Prep pupils have a dedicated PSHE lesson a week and this is then built upon in smaller tutor sessions.

Area	Main Subjects in which this area is covered.
Linguistic	All pupils study English. Including: spoken language, reading, writing and spelling (and Drama in years 5 and 6). In year 3, pupils study French In year 4 pupils study French In year 5 pupils study French In year 6 pupils study French and Spanish.
Mathematical	All pupils study Mathematics.
Scientific	All pupils study Science
Technological	All pupils study Computer Science in years 3-6. All years 4-6 pupils study DT.
Human and Social	All pupils study Geography, History and RE as part of a Humanities carousel curriculum.
Physical	All pupils have lessons in PE, Swimming and Games.
Aesthetic and Creative	Pupils in years 3 and 4 study Music and Art. Pupils in years 5-6 study Drama, Music and Art

At KS3 and KS4 pupils are taught for the full 30 lessons of 50 minutes a week (25 hrs). A few individual pupils may have a personalised programme with a few private study periods. At such times these pupils are supervised in the school library, or in the Study Centre with Learning Support teachers. The areas of the curriculum are covered as below:

KS3

Area	Main Subjects in which this area is covered.
Linguistic	All pupils study English. In year 7 and 8, pupils study French and Spanish. They receive exposure to Latin through their study of Classical Civilisation. In year 9, pupils continue to opt for one of French or Spanish. Pupils are strongly encouraged to continue with at least one Modern Foreign Language in year 9.
Mathematical	All pupils study Mathematics.
Scientific	All pupils study Biology, Chemistry and Physics. In Year 9 all pupils study Ocean Science.
Technological	All pupils study Computer Science in years 7 and 8. Pupils may opt for Computer Science in year 9, which is offered where demand is sufficient. All year 7 and 8 pupils study DT Resistant materials, DT graphics. Pupils may opt for DT in year 9.
Human and Social	All pupils study Geography, History and RE in years 7 and 8. Pupils must continue with at least one of these subjects in year 9.
Physical	All pupils have lessons in Games.
Aesthetic and Creative	Literature is studied as a part of English. All year 7 and 8 pupils study Drama, Music and Art and pupils may opt for Drama and/or Art and/or Music in year 9.

KS4

Area	Main Subjects in which this area is covered.
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Linguistic	The majority of pupils study English and English Literature to GCSE or IGCSE. A small number of pupils may sit English Language or English as a Second Language only depending on prior ability. Pupils may study a Modern Foreign Language (French, German or Spanish) as part of the core curriculum. Latin is available as a GCSE option, either on or off timetable depending on demand..
Mathematical	All pupils study Mathematics to GCSE or IGCSE
Scientific	All pupils study Biology, Chemistry and Physics: these subjects are taken either as three separate GCSE qualifications or they are examined as a Combined Science Double Award GCSE. Pupils may opt to study Marine Science GCSE.
Technological	All pupils may opt to study for GCSE qualifications in: Product Design or ICT.
Human and Social	All pupils may opt to study for GCSE qualifications in Business, Geography, History and RE. Pupils are strongly advised to follow at least one such subject.
Physical	All pupils have games lessons. Pupils may opt to study GCSE PE.
Aesthetic and Creative	All pupils may opt to study Music, Art or Drama to GCSE. Literature is studied as a part of English.

(b) Subject Matter

The subject matter covered at KS3 is based upon the national curriculum but the school is not bound by its precise requirements. This reflects the nature of our school community and is appreciative of the broad range of backgrounds and experiences of our young people.

The subject matter as KS4 and KS5 is based on the requirements of the GCSE, GCE and BTEC examinations. This is documented in programmes of study and schemes of work documentation.

A student's individual programme will be tailored by placing them in appropriate classes and classes to ensure that the material covered is appropriate to age and ability. More information on how certain groups are arranged is detailed in the setting policy.

Provision for any pupils with a statement is dealt with in part (e) below.

(c) Speaking and Listening, Literacy and Numeracy

Pupils will acquire and develop their skills of speaking, listening and literacy in every subject and in lessons in English in particular. Numeracy skills are developed in Mathematics; other areas such as the sciences, Geography, Business Studies and Psychology will make a particular contribution but applications of number, perhaps in simple form, will be encountered across the curriculum.

(d) Language of Instruction

The language of instruction is English. Modern Foreign Languages will often be taught with great use of the target language.

(e) EHCP Statements

Plymouth College occasionally admits a pupil with an EHCP statement of educational need. Such pupils are only admitted where it is felt that, with appropriate support, they will benefit from the general education provided. The Head of Learning Support, in consultation with the local authority and others, will construct an individual education plan for any such pupil. The main aims of this plan are to ensure that the specific needs of the pupil and the requirements of the statement are met, and the subject matter covered is appropriate to the age and aptitude of the pupil. The provision made and the progress of each student is reviewed annually with the local authority.

(f) Personal, Social, Health and Economic Education (PSHEE) Policy

Plymouth College provides a diverse and enriching education that promotes self-discipline, motivation and excellence. High standards of moral and social behaviour are expected and this is underpinned by a belief in the importance of respecting ourselves and one another; of appreciating individual differences and in encouraging and supporting each other.

Pupil Personal Development

We use our tutoring system to develop pupils' individual understanding of themselves and their ability to be part of a well-rounded school community and wider society. In each session the pupils work through a range of theme-based activities within their age group. Form tutors, staff with specialist knowledge and external speakers are responsible for leading PSHEE sessions. The School Nurse is a vital member of the PSHEE team and all external speakers are appropriately vetted.

Assemblies and Tutor Time

Assemblies in all age groups deal with moral and political issues, inspirational people and events, charity organisations and current affairs, so encouraging personal enquiry and development and positive contribution. Tutor time is also given to discussing these issues.

Academic Curriculum and Extra-Curricular Activities

Aspects of the curriculum in most subjects have relevance to moral, political and social issues. Some academic disciplines will engage more directly in this area, for example History, Geography, RE, Economics and Biology. Many extra-curricular opportunities and activities add to the provision of PSHEE.

The PSHEE timetable is drawn together by the Deputy Head (Pastoral) with the assistance of the school nurses and specialist teachers. Training for tutors and specialist teachers is provided as appropriate during the INSET programmes.

Further details are given in the PSHEE Policy.

(g) Promoting fundamental British values

Fundamental British values are defined by the DfE as:

- (a) Democracy: Respect for democracy and support for participation in the democratic process
- (b) The rule of law: Respect for the basis on which the law is made and applies in England
- (c) Individual liberty: Support and respect for the liberties of all within the law
- (d) Mutual respect and tolerance: Support for equality of opportunity for all and respect and tolerance of different faiths and religious and other beliefs

Plymouth College seeks to produce happy, knowledgeable, confident and caring young adults who strive to reach their full potential. We seek to prepare pupils for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of later life and wish to see them become independent and self-sufficient citizens who will succeed and contribute responsibly as members of the global community.

All staff and students at Plymouth College are expected to behave with integrity, tolerance and compassion in their dealings with one another. We provide opportunities for all pupils not only to explore their own cultures but also to understand how these align with British values and how we can work together as a community for the greater good. Every member of the community has a part to play in enshrining the core values and beliefs so as to build a strong, united and democratic school. Where unfairness or bullying is found to exist it will be routed out, and democracy and the rights of individuals will take centre stage.

Examples of opportunities and activities to promote British Values at Plymouth College include:

- (a) Speakers include local MPs, journalists, lawyers, war veterans and prison workers: all of whom provide alternative views on British Values and encourage pupils to take an open and interested approach to the world around them.
- (b) In lessons all students are encouraged to debate and discuss ideas, sharing and defending their beliefs in a way that is collaborative and supportive.

(c) Teachers model positive behaviour and democratic values in their interactions with colleagues and students.

(d) Assemblies are frequently used as vehicles through which tutors and tutor groups present to the wider community, examples of key moments, people or ideas from British history.

(e) Lessons are exploited when appropriate to provide forums in which students can learn more about and question the notions of liberty, justice, democracy, law, governance, faith and belief systems. As a multicultural school we take care to ensure that all students feel safe, secure and able to celebrate their own and each others' backgrounds, beliefs and cultural practices.

Further details are given in the Promoting Fundamental British Values Policy

(h) Careers Education and Guidance

The aims of our Careers programme is:

(i) To provide careers education and guidance for every pupil in the school at appropriate times and in a suitable manner, so that they:

- investigate a broad range of careers and opportunities
- understand and develop their own capabilities, recognizing their strengths and limitations and develop outcomes for their learning
- record and implement their career action-plans including updating information and modifying ideas and aspirations.

(ii) To run and maintain a Careers Library containing, as far as possible, resources no more than three years old and to make as much information as possible available via the College intranet and Online resources.

(iii) To utilise the expertise of outside agencies such as UCAS, Unifrog and Armed Forces Careers Officers.

(iv) To facilitate work experience and to support placements during holidays for all pupils.

(v) To support all preparations for post-18.

Many of these issues are addressed on the collapsed timetable afternoons with the PSHE programme. For more details, please see the School's Careers Policy.

(i) Pupils above compulsory school age: The Sixth Form Curriculum

To enter the sixth form pupils must achieve a sufficient standard at GCSE (or equivalent for international students). This standard is defined in the sixth form entry policy. The policy is applied flexibly in the case of students who have narrowly failed to meet the entry requirements or who have come from different education systems. We will accept entry to the Sixth Form on a bespoke individual basis where necessary.

Two programmes are available in the Sixth Form: (i) A level, (ii) BTEC Extended Diploma in Sport (Outdoor Adventure) - which is now being replaced as detailed below but still taught in the Upper Sixth. All students follow games, and attend PSHE sessions which cover a wide range of areas including PSHE, careers education and the UCAS system.

A Level

We follow the linear system of A levels, with the large majority of pupils taking three subjects on a 2-year course. Some pupils may take four subjects at the discretion of the Assistant Head (Academic).

The A-Level subjects offered are: Art (Fine Art, Photography or Graphic Design), Biology, Business, Chemistry, Classical Civilisation, Drama, Design Technology (3D Design), Economics, English Literature, French, German (off timetable), Geography, History, Latin, Mathematics, Further Mathematics, Media, Music, PE, Physics, Psychology, RE. The running of all of these subjects is dependent on numbers, and therefore, not all subjects will run every year.

In addition to the A level subjects in the Sixth Form, pupils have the opportunity of taking academic extension qualifications including the Extended Project Qualification (EPQ), AS qualifications in various subjects, notably Further Maths. They also take part in the enrichment programme which includes options such as: Politics, Debate Club, Duke of Edinburgh's Award, Sports Leaders Award and CCF.

BTEC

We offer BTEC Diploma and Extended Diploma in Sport, offered as either a two or three A level equivalent, and positioned in the Sixth Form pools.. We also offer the BTEC Diploma in Applied Science, which is offered as an alternative to one A level and is positioned in the A level curriculum blocks.

(j) Opportunity for All Pupils to Learn and make progress:

The central aim of Plymouth College is to provide all of our pupils with educational experiences and opportunities which will enable them to discover and fulfil their own potential. All programmes of work will have opportunities for enrichment and extension activities.

Option systems

The option systems in years 10 and 11 and the sixth form blocks are not fixed but designed each year to accommodate pupils' choices as far as possible. Pupils' preferred choices are collected by February each year. The option system is then designed to maximise pupil choice whilst bearing in mind scheduling feasibility. Pupils are then offered a final choice from the designed structure. Lower Sixth students are not required to finalise their A-Level choices until the GCSE results are published, although options may then be restricted due to class size.

The Individual

A number of structures are planned into the curriculum to assist pupils with particular need. Examples of this include extra lessons for Maths and English in Years 8 and 9, which may be continued into Year 10 and 11, the design of the option systems and the support lessons in the Upper Sixth. The curriculum is also applied flexibly to students who have needs that go beyond this. For example, high performance athletes may work to an individualised timetable. International students may also start with a individually tailored programme; some students may achieve success at A level following a 3 year programme with courses chosen across years and a number of special arrangements are made to suit students with learning problems. Where possible, extra subjects may be offered on a tutorial basis.

A study support programme is provided by the Head of Learning Support and SENCO and colleagues assist pupils with their study skills and exam preparation during their private study periods in the library.

Pupils with Special Educational Needs

The Learning Differences and Disabilities department supports pupils with particular learning needs. Pupils are identified by studying the skills profile on baseline tests such as MidYIS and may be referred by teachers or parents. An initial assessment of the needs of each individual is carried out by the LDD (SEND) department; referrals are made to an educational psychologist where needed. An Individual Education Plan is constructed for each pupil on the main register and these are readily available to all teaching staff on SIMS and teachers note the key requirements in markbooks.

These pupils are supported by a variety of strategies. Some pupils attend regular one to one or small group sessions with a teacher from the SEND department and some pupils are aided on a drop in basis.

Further details are given in the Learning Support policy and department handbook

Pupils for whom English is an Additional Language.

Pupils for whom English is an Additional Language are accepted to the school if, on assessment, their level of understanding in English is sufficient for them to learn here. Such students are supported by the EAL department, their academic programme and level of support will depend upon their ability in English.

Typically, in Years 10 and 11 such pupils will study English as a Second Language in place of GCSE English and also study EAL in the Languages block although this is dependent on the individual pupils' needs. They will work towards an IGCSE in either EAL or ESL. On occasion, we also consider General IELTS as being more appropriate for these pupils.

In the Sixth Form, international students generally follow a course in EAL, although this will not be required by all students. The EAL course continues into the upper sixth and leads to the academic IELTS exam.

The EAL department also provides individual support to a number of students according to need and advises all teachers how their teaching can best help EAL students.

Further details are given in the EAL policy and department handbook

The most able pupils

It is critical to recognise the existence of all round exceptional ability, but we also recognise that some pupils are gifted in specific subjects and that some pupils are talented in sport or the creative arts. There is flexible provision for pupils requiring enrichment and support in order to achieve their full potential and raise their aspirations and attainment by developing their:

- Ability to learn
- Range of knowledge
- Core skills such as problem solving
- Creativity
- Intellectual curiosity
- Specific talents

A variety of processes will enable Gifted and Talented pupils to be identified.

Gifted pupils are defined as having a particular academic ability in one or more subjects in the statutory school curriculum other than art, music, drama and PE. Talented pupils will have aptitude in arts or sports. 'All rounders' will have a range of academic ability and talents. All pupils who have the potential to achieve, but are not demonstrating regularly high achievement need to be included.

A variety of methods will be employed to provide identification data, which will include:

- Quantitative data including MidYis, Yellis and ALIS, public examinations and music, art, sporting and scholarship assessments.
- Qualitative information, including teacher assessment and nomination, nomination by parents and referral by outside agencies via the Gifted & Talented Nomination Form.

Curriculum:

Differentiation is built into our curriculum planning. There is a commitment to developing extension and enrichment activities both within lessons and through societies, trips and events. Differentiated homework is made available when appropriate, including open ended tasks or suggestions for extension work.

Pastoral:

Gifted and Talented pupils need to be encouraged to integrate as fully as possible into the life of the School. Support structures are necessary which recognise their need to work with others of the same ability at times.

Further details are given in the Gifted and Talented Policy

(k) Preparation for Adult Life in British Society

A number of opportunities are present to help pupils prepare for adult life in British Society, some occur during the scheduled timetable and some outside of this: Examples of such activities include:

The CCF
Duke of Edinburgh award scheme
Junior Sports Leader Award
Community service volunteers
Young Enterprise
The School Council
The Prefect Body
Drake Society

(I) Review procedure

Senior Deputy Head reviews procedure with the Deputy Head (Curriculum and Innovation) and Head of Prep and makes amendments every two years.