



**PLYMSTOCK SCHOOL**

## **Curriculum Policy**

Policy lead: **Deputy Headteacher (Curriculum Design)**

Review cycle: **Annual**

Implementation date: **Autumn 2021**

Date for review: **Summer Term 2022**

### **Our curriculum vision**

At Plymstock School our core purpose is to empower young people, through education, to have the knowledge and skills they need to succeed in life and make a positive contribution to society.

We believe that key to achieving this, is giving every single pupil a broad, balanced and highly academic curriculum, that has knowledge at its heart. The central place of knowledge acquisition within our curriculum is explicit and we provide rich and varied contexts for pupils to acquire, develop and apply this broad knowledge.

Powerful knowledge takes a pupil beyond their own experience. It is knowledge that many will not have access to at home, amongst their friends or in the communities in which they live. We are all the inheritors of the great ideas, writings and discoveries of the past and the young people of Plymouth have a right to learn this knowledge.

We are an inclusive school, yet we are uncompromising in our belief that every pupil should study our full curriculum. We know that some pupils will need more help in order to flourish and we work tirelessly to make sure they get the right support to succeed.

By learning our curriculum, we know that our pupils will be provided with the knowledge and skills they need to succeed in life and make that positive contribution to society.

### **The 'Four Pillars' of our curriculum**

#### **1. Powerful disciplinary knowledge**

We focus our curriculum on the acquisition and mastery of powerful disciplinary knowledge, building on that which is learnt in primary school. We believe that all young people should have access to the kinds of knowledge which may not be encountered in their personal lives i.e., knowledge that takes pupils beyond their daily lived experience. Access to powerful knowledge is central in achieving social mobility as it enables pupils to think beyond their individual context in the pursuit of truth. Our subject leaders and teachers select knowledge

for their curriculum based on this overarching principle and look to foster a deep conceptual understanding of key ideas which enable lifelong learning.

## **2. Teachers as subject experts**

The making of a curriculum is more than just the selection and sequencing of powerful knowledge. Curricula are made and re-made in the dynamic classroom setting, and a curriculum vision is only effective in achieving its goals when in the hands of expert teachers. Teachers at Plymstock School are subject experts and using the Plymstock Principles of Curriculum Delivery, they base their pedagogical decisions on cognitive science, educational research, and a nuanced understanding of the discipline which they teach. Subject teams pre-empt, and respond in real-time, to the range of needs encountered in the classroom, placing the pupil at the heart of their decision-making. Teachers are afforded regular opportunities to engage with their subject teams (both in-school and across the Trust) and attend subject-specific training so that they can maintain and build on their expertise and engage with their wider subject-network communities.

## **3. High Challenge**

Challenge is central to every curriculum decision made at Plymstock School. Subject leaders and their teams select content for the curriculum that will challenge pupils and equip them with the knowledge and understanding that will enable them to flourish when they leave school. As such, the National Curriculum is recognised as a minimum entitlement for all pupils and regular opportunity is made for our curriculum to go beyond the National Curriculum so that our pupils are ready for the next steps, be that further education, higher education or the world of work.

## **4. The whole person**

At Plymstock School we want to develop well-rounded young people with a highly developed social conscience, ready to lead in their communities and beyond. Our curriculum will challenge pupils to uphold our core values of Compassion, Collaboration and Creativity, and develop their cultural capital, character and confidence. Our subject curricula, along with our wider enrichment opportunities and Life Education curriculum, will ensure that pupils leave Plymstock School as respectful, self-motivating and productive individuals who are able to actively engage in the world and importantly, make a difference.

## **Key Stage 3 curriculum overview**

Our curriculum in Key Stage 3 (Years 7 to 9) recognises the National Curriculum as a minimum entitlement. Irrespective of starting point, we aim for all pupils to study every National Curriculum subject including English Language and Literature, Mathematics, Science, History, Geography, Religious Studies/Ethics, Philosophy and Culture, Computing and ICT, Art, Design and Technology, French, Music and PE. In addition to the National Curriculum, pupils study Drama, Dance and Life Education (which includes PSHEE, RSE, Citizenship and Careers). A wide range of extra-curricular opportunities are available to all pupils.

**Year 7 Curriculum for 2021-22:** [Download Here](#)

**Year 8 Curriculum for 2021-22:** [Download Here](#)

**Year 9 Curriculum for 2021-22:** [Download Here](#)

## Key stage 4 curriculum overview

The breadth of our curriculum continues into Key Stage 4 (Years 10 and 11) and enables pupils to work towards the equivalent of nine qualifications. Balance is ensured through a compulsory core curriculum of English Language and Literature, Mathematics, Science, Geography or History, Physical Education, Religious Studies (EPiC), Life Education (Personal, Social, Health, Economic and Careers Education) and Relationship and Sex Education. Pupils are additionally strongly encouraged to study a Modern Foreign Language, which remains an important part of our curriculum. There are further option choices from a wide range of additional subject areas, spanning the Arts, Technology, Sport and the Humanities.

**Year 10 and 11 Curriculum for 2021-22:** [Download Here](#)

**Key Stage 4 Curriculum Options for 2021-22:** [Download Here](#)

**Key Stage 4 Curriculum Options Form Booklet:** [Download Here](#)

**Key Stage 4 Curriculum Options Form:** [Download Here](#)

## Key stage 5 curriculum overview

Our Key Stage 5 (Years 12 and 13) curriculum offers a wide range of Level 3 qualifications. All these qualifications require a two-year study period, so pupils need to choose wisely and be fully committed. We recommend that the majority of pupils study three A level/Level 3 qualifications, but further subjects can be taken if appropriate for the individual. Core Mathematics and/or the Extended Project Qualification (EPQ) can be studied alongside three A Levels/Level 3 qualifications.

### **A Level Qualifications**

*A Levels are two-year qualifications which are assessed at the end of the course. The assessment is mainly through examinations taken at the end of the course, in the summer of Year 13.*

### **Level 3 BTECs and OCR Technical Qualifications**

*The Level 3 BTECs and OCR Technicals are rigorous Level 3 qualifications. The assessment criteria are extremely strict with emphasis being placed on pupils working independently and adhering to challenging deadlines. Assessment for these qualifications include formal exam and coursework-based assessment. BTECs and OCR Technicals are Level 3 qualifications that are recognised by both employers and universities and are highly regarded.*

GCSE re-sit courses in English and Mathematics are compulsory for those Key Stage 5 pupils who do not yet have a Level 2 qualification in those subjects.

**Key Stage 5 Curriculum Options for 2021-22:** [Download Here](#)

## Reading

We see reading as the gateway to the curriculum. An enriched vocabulary enables a better understanding of concepts and ideas, and facilitates access to, and the remembering of, substantive knowledge within and beyond subject areas. All subject areas teach key 'Tier 3' vocabulary and high frequency 'Tier 2' words through their curriculum. Pupils in Key Stage 3 spend 30 minutes each day following a structured reading programme. We also offer a tailored literacy catch-up curriculum to enable pupils who enter the school with low levels

of literacy to make rapid progress so that they can access our challenging curriculum. We strongly encourage reading for pleasure and large numbers of pupils engage in reading challenges/awards and our annual World Book Day. Our school also has an active reading blog called 'Literacy for Life', where pupils frequently review the books they have read.

## **Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Education (SMSC)**

The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of our students and, within this, the promotion of fundamental British values, are at the heart of what we do at Plymstock School. Within our curriculum we plan for many opportunities to help our pupils develop into well-rounded citizens, ready to play an active part in 21st Century Britain.

**How we promote SMSC at Plymstock School:** [Download Here](#)

## **Wider curriculum opportunities**

Our wider curriculum provides numerous opportunities for personal development outside of the classroom through a diverse range of clubs and activities inc. visits to the theatre, concerts, sporting events, and opportunities to engage with local employers and higher education providers. Year 7 pupils take part in an overnight camp and team-building activities as part of their induction to the school. There is an annual residential trip for the pupils of service families. All Year 8 and 9 pupils take part in 'challenge week' where they can opt for a variety of activities that further enhance their personal development. Activities on offer range from residential trips inc. France, Cornwall, The Isles of Scilly and a PGL camp. Pupils additionally can take part in off-site activities such as fishing, water sports, horse care and riding, surfing and skiing, as well as school-based activities that inc. art workshops, theatre workshops and citizenship studies. The whole school also take part in an annual sponsored walk.

We actively encourage participation in the Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme and large numbers of pupils readily take up this opportunity. Our outstanding sports provision encourages inclusivity across all year groups. There are many different sporting clubs available. We also hold a yearly 'Festival of Sport' that enables all pupils, whatever their sporting interests, to take part in a wide variety of sports, in addition to competitive athletics.

We provide high quality, impartial careers guidance that helps our pupils to make informed choices about which courses suit their academic needs and aspirations. Our pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, employment, self-employment or training. The school employs a full-time careers advisor, who provides impartial advice to all pupils. Careers education is very strong and forms an important part of the Life Education Programme. We actively promote employer engagement with our pupils as part of the Enterprise Network. We are one of the few schools that continues to promote work experience and every pupil completes a one-week placement at the end of Year 10 along with further opportunities in Year 12. Annually we hold an exceptional careers fair, known as our 'Futures Event', which involves nearly 50 companies, training providers and further/higher education establishments.