



Candidate Pack

Welcome to Plympton Academy. We hope this pack will give you an understanding of our values, vision and ethos.

WELCOME

At Plympton Academy, we are proud of the school improvement journey we have been on and that we continue to have the success of our students at the heart of what we do. We seek to develop resilient learners who love challenge and take pride in their achievements, both academically and using their talents outside of the classroom, upholding our vision of Inspiring Success.

We understand that every child needs a strong academic foundation in order to achieve their full potential. At our Academy we combine an innovative curriculum with a strong pastoral structure, which ensures that students receive all the support and guidance they need to succeed.

We recognise that buildings alone do not improve outcomes, however, over the last few years we have invested significantly so that our students have first class facilities to learn in. This includes a new £9m teaching block, a new 3G all weather pitch, a new MUGA, and a £2m Performing Arts space that rivals many professional company spaces. We wish to inspire our students through their learning in order for them to pursue their dreams.

Our focus is on quality first teaching and recruiting outstanding practitioners, who are passionate about their subject and education. Quality teachers are the people who inspire our students to great things.

We are a rapidly growing, oversubscribed, hard-working Academy, with a positive, business-like and purposeful atmosphere where students can develop and broaden their horizons.

Plympton Academy also offers:

- Disruption free environment
- An ethos of mutual respect and love of learning
- A truly collaborative staff body
- First class professional development
- Focus on reducing workload and improving well being.

I look forward to receiving your application and welcoming you to the Academy.

Kind Regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Lisa Boorman', with a large, stylized loop at the end.

Lisa Boorman
Principal

ABOUT THE ACADEMY

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Plympton Academy is a single Academy trust in Plympton, Plymouth, England. **Plympton**, in south-west Devon, is a populous, north-eastern suburb of the city of Plymouth. It was an ancient stannary town: an important trading centre in the past for locally mined tin, and a former seaport.

Plympton still has its own town centre (called the Ridgeway), and is itself an amalgamation of several villages, including St Mary's, St Maurice, Colebrook, Woodford, Newnham, Langage and Chaddlewood

The Academy is a growing 11-19 school with an intake from right across Plymouth and with a sixth form for up to 300 students.

OUR CORE PRINCIPLES AND VISION

At Plympton Academy we believe in inspiring a culture of success for all. Our ethos centres around developing a love of learning and a resilience and determination to tackle all the challenges that our students will meet. In this way our students become successful and fulfilled lifelong learners.

Our students are involved in every aspect of Academy life beyond the classroom; extra-curricular clubs and trips are always available, but our students also take an active role in shaping the future of the Academy through a wide range of student leadership activities.

Teaching and learning:

Students love the challenge of learning and are resilient to failure

Leadership:

Leaders inspire a culture of success for all

Community:

We are the cornerstone of a thriving community that is stronger through collaboration

Learning environment:

A learning setting that stimulates, fosters innovation and promotes opportunities

The Person:

Individuals are equipped to achieve their dreams and take pride in their success

THE ACADEMY DAY

The student day is as follows:

08.40 – 09.35 Period 1

09.35 – 10.30 Period 2

10.30 – 10.50 Break

10.50 - 11.10 Tutor Time Reading

11.10 – 12.05 Period 3

12.05 – 13.00 Period 4

13.00 – 13.40 Lunch

13.40 – 14.35 Period 5

14.35 – 15.00 Tutor/Assembly

Tutor Time Reading at Plympton Academy

“The more that you read, the more things you will know. The more that you learn, the more places you’ll go.”

The immortal words of Dr. Seuss capture our desire to place reading at the heart of our curriculum at Plympton Academy. Every day, students spend twenty minutes reading alongside their tutor between 10.50 am and 11.10 am. Our challenging, engaging and inspiring reading list, ranging from classicists such as Austen, Dickens and Du Maurier to contemporary classics from Blackman, Thomas and Pullman, build a confident cultural awareness in all our students. Listening to fluent and engaging reading every day not only builds reading ability for all students, but also ensures that our students have access to the best works of literature from around the world. This exposes them to a world beyond the walls of the school- a chance to listen to the greatest stories of all time. Staff at Plympton Academy relish the chance to read each day and explore these worlds with students. Staff surveys have revealed that this is the favourite part of the day for so many of our team.





The 6th Form @PA champions all of our students to **Discover their Future** through a foundation of aspiration and academic achievement within a supportive community-focused environment. We pride ourselves in the quality of the next step guidance provided to students, and this is reflected in 76% of students applying to university for their Post 18 options, with a high proportion being first generation university students. With 25% of students attending Russell Group universities, our students receive first class careers guidance and academic rigour which opens doors to world class destinations.

Our specialised and purpose built facilities ensure that students benefit from an environment which enhances their learning experiences. Such is exhibited by our Performing Arts and Sport Facilities which are some of the best within the city. Subsequently, students thrive under the support of their teachers with some pursuing careers in the arts and sports, with successful applicants to institutions such as Italia Conti.

Our Sixth Form boasts 24 Level 3 subjects across both A Level and BTEC options. We have recently extended our provision to include a vocational cohort, working in partnership with industry experts across the city. Consequently, we take pride recognising that we provide secure and relevant pathways to all learners.

Our Sixth Form students benefit from a wider programme of study which is purposefully designed to encourage community focus and enrich their educational experiences. Students enjoy participating in activities such as You're Hired, Duke of Edinburgh, the EPQ, Community Groups, Charity Groups and the mentoring of younger students. We treat our Sixth Form students as leaders which ensures they develop with confidence.

With our Sixth Form offering a rounded educational experience, our pupils speak highly of their time with us.

'The help and support provided by Plympton Academy had been constant throughout my school experience. This was evident from guidance with university, academic help in lessons, and pastoral support. This assistance was always easily accessible through tutors, subject teachers and Heads of Years, and ensured any of my worries or doubts were answered.'
Rachel Wren - Currently studying Law at Bristol



TEACHING AND LEARNING

Our approach to teaching and learning is evidence-based, drawing on strong research and developed in collaboration with the best performing schools nationally. Our vision is that, in every lesson, all students are: thinking hard; working hard; and making good progress.

To achieve this, we have a clearly defined pedagogy based on our Principles of Teaching and Stages of Lessons (see below) supported by disruption-free teaching. This is founded primarily on Rosenshine's *Principles of Instruction*, Doug Lemov's *Teach Like a Champion* and approaches to knowledge retention and retrieval advocated by The learning Scientists.

Our approach to feedback is pragmatic - we expect our teachers to only provide feedback that works, is efficient and directly leads to progress. Most of our feedback is whole-class, verbal or live marking.

We prioritise professional development - we have weekly department and whole staff CPD; we talk, discuss and debate how we teach; and we embrace honest self-reflection.

We do not grade lessons or have formal observations; instead, we have an incremental coaching approach where all teachers contribute to, and benefit from, each other's' expertise.



PRINCIPLES OF TEACHING

Principles of 'better practice'	So that...
1. High expectations of learning behaviour	
a) Teachers demonstrate effective classroom management b) Teachers consistently apply the behaviour policy c) Teachers ensure that there is a high ratio of student participation d) Teachers reinforce effort and provide recognition e) Teachers ask questions that promote student participation	a) Minimal valuable lesson time is wasted dealing with low-level disruption b) Students can think hard about their learning free from distraction c) All students are engaged in thinking about key learning d) Students understand the connection between effort and achievement e) A high number of students are asked and answer questions
2. Quality of Instruction	
a) Teachers give highly effective explanations b) Teachers provide clearly defined outcomes c) Teachers present new knowledge in small steps d) Teachers model excellence and how to achieve it e) Teachers ask a high quantity of process and factual questions	a) Students quickly grasp key ideas b) Students have complete clarity around what they are learning and what success looks like c) Each step can be mastered before students move on d) Students know what excellence looks like as well as how to achieve it e) Students are given opportunities to practise new material
3. Subject mastery	
a) Teachers demonstrate expertise in exam specifications b) Teachers plan for and address misconceptions c) Teachers sequence and interleave content d) Teachers promote and uphold the highest standards of literacy and oracy e) Teachers ask questions which are specific and accurate	a) Students are successful in examinations b) Students overcome common misconceptions c) Students revisit material in a way which promotes long term memory d) Students communicate in a format that is clear, complete and accurate e) Students can provide high quality answers
4. Making it stick	
a) Teachers regularly use low stakes testing b) Teachers guide students as they begin to practise new material c) Teachers give students opportunities to independently practise d) Teachers use visuals and other resources to support explanations e) Teachers ask questions which make links with prior learning	a) Students can embed learning into their long term memory b) Students can develop fluency and accuracy in new areas of learning c) Skills and knowledge become automatic for students d) Students can successfully understand and remember key aspects of learning e) Students are encouraged to draw on prior knowledge
5. Adaptive teaching	
a) Teachers provide scaffolds for demanding tasks b) Teachers pitch high every lesson c) Teachers adapt teaching as needs emerge d) Teachers have a developed understanding of students with diverse needs e) Teachers ask questions which are appropriately pitched and directed	a) Students are able to succeed in challenging tasks b) Students are challenged to exceed expectation c) All students make exceptional progress d) All students with SEND/EAL/a range of learning needs make exceptional progress e) Students are challenged to answer appropriate questions
6. Effective feedback	
a) Teachers give students high quality feedback b) Teachers accurately gather information on student learning c) Teachers provide students with opportunities to act upon feedback d) Teachers plan and ask questions that provide a picture of student learning	a) Student actions are focused or redirected to achieve a goal b) Teachers know which topics to re-teach that were not grasped first time c) Students can swiftly develop further knowledge and skills d) Teachers can identify gaps in student learning

STAGES OF LESSONS

Starter for 10 (Entry Routine)	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teacher welcomes students into the learning space, actively checking uniform Students place bags and coats away, as instructed Students have equipment and Knowledge Organisers to hand, with Conduct Cards striked if this is not the case 	<p>So that...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students enter the learning space in a calm and focused manner Students are in the correct uniform ready to start the lesson Students start the lesson in silence and are settled ready for learning
Starter for 10 (Low Stakes Quiz)	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students sit, in accordance with the seating plan, in silence and begin the Starter Teacher gives students a knowledge-based short answer test Tests interleave questions to assess subject content from previous topics and current teaching material Answers are displayed and students correct in green pen 	<p>So that...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students can embed learning into their long term memory Students revisit material in a way which promotes long term memory
Teacher Instruction (Input)	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teacher explicitly shares clearly defined outcomes for the lesson Teacher uses highly effective explanations to teach key concepts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students have complete clarity around what they are learning and what success looks like Students quickly grasp key ideas
Deliberate Practice (Do)	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teacher designs purposeful tasks which are closely aligned to achieving specific outcomes Tasks are focused on improving a specific skill or embedding key ideas Tasks stretch students just outside their comfort zone Students practice with sustained concentration 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students can develop fluency and accuracy in key skills Students can clearly articulate improvements they are making Students can apply their learning in a variety of contexts Students have to think hard about what they are learning Students develop persistence
Learning Check (Review)	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teacher uses formative assessment strategies to assess progress against the clearly defined outcomes Teacher gives timely feedback which is specific, accurate and clear 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teachers know which topics to re-teach that were not grasped first time Student actions are reinforced or redirected to achieve a goal Students can swiftly unlock further learning
Final Review	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teacher assesses progress of all students against clearly defined outcomes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teachers know which topics to re-teach that were not grasped first time Teachers know which students grasped key concepts and which need reteaching
Exit Routine	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students pack away when asked and stand (behind their chairs when in a classroom) in silence Once the bell has gone (where relevant) teacher dismisses students in an orderly manner, directing students to use the one-way system if in place 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students leave the lesson in a calm and orderly manner

CHARACTER AND CULTURE

We are proud of the additional experiences that we offer students at Plympton Academy through the Personal Development weeks, the Preparation for Life programme, charity fundraising, our extra-curricular offer and student rewards.

Our Personal Development weeks are a highlight of the Academy calendar, traditionally taking place in November, February and July. During the first week all students are off timetable, taking part in a variety of pathways including Year 7 focusing on the Arts (both creative and performance) and Year 9 on Human Rights. The second week is for students in Years 7-9 and involves a variety of PSHE workshops with visitors from CoppaFeel, Oddballs Foundation, the RNLI and many others. Our final week is in July, with students in Years 10 and 12 taking part in Work Experience whilst students in Years 7-9 participate in a range of activities, including residentials, off-site adventurous activities, or on-site activities focusing on art, performance, sport etc. All members of staff take part in these weeks, whether it is leading or supporting the running of an activity, and new ideas are always welcome. There is a real buzz across the Academy during these weeks.

Our Preparation for Life programme is delivered during the afternoon tutorial sessions by tutors as part of a spiral curriculum. Starting in Year 7 focusing on friendships, healthy relationships and healthy lifestyles, students build up their knowledge of the Relationships and Healthy Lifestyles curriculum as they progress through to the older years. All sessions are pre-planned for tutors, with annual CPD to support the delivery of the sessions. Year group assemblies also form part of this programme, and all students from Year 9 take part in the iDEA (Inspiring Digital Enterprise Award) scheme.

We offer over sixty different extra-curricular activities each week, including a wide variety of creative, performance-based clubs, more subject-based ones, such as Horrible Histories, and national award schemes such as the Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme. The termly timetable is posted on the Academy website, with paper copies sent home to students in Key Stage 3. Students who attend a club for a 10 week period are presented with a certificate. All staff are encouraged to run an activity within their subject area or area of interest.

Residential activities and educational visits are encouraged across the Academy. We run an annual Year 7 residential in October as part of the transition process along with a biannual ski trip to Austria. Other recent visits have included trips to the Imperial War Museum in London, theatre and dance workshops, sporting fixtures, the Eden Project, Tate Gallery St Ives and the Plymouth Synagogue.

Each year the Academy community is given the opportunity to propose a charity to be 'Plympton Academy's Charity of the Year', with nominations put to a vote which all students and staff can take part in. The charity is then supported through a range of fundraising events organised across the Academy. Our current charity of the year is St Luke's Hospice, whilst previous ones include Crohns and Colitis UK and Young Minds. Fundraising events range from non-uniform days and cake sales, to staff lip sync battles and 'I'm a teacher get me out of here'. These run alongside our regular fundraising for Children in Need and Comic / Sport Relief and our participation in Holocaust Memorial Day, Mental Health Week, Internet Safety Week, Diversity Week, Black History Month and LGBTQ+ History Month.

We recognise and reward student achievement in three ways. Using ClassCharts, we reward students for their positive behaviour in and outside of the classroom. Students can be given reward points by any member of staff (for example classroom teacher, tutor, pastoral mentor) and students earn certificates for reaching the milestones of 100, 250, 500 and 750 points each academic year. Reward points can be 'spent' in the rewards store on a wide range of items. Our Da Vinci award scheme recognises excellence, whether this is academic, creative, performance or sporting, with students who are nominated by members of staff being presented with a badge, certificate and their name on the Da Vinci Honours board. Our final way of rewarding is through 'Hot Chocolate Friday' where students are nominated in recognition of their accomplishment to spend Friday tutorial with the Principal drinking hot chocolate.



BEHAVIOUR AND WELFARE

The Academy takes a warm strict approach to behaviour: we have exacting, high standards but believe that these are best enforced through a calm, kind and compassionate approach. The Academy's behaviour principles are shaped by our research and interrogation of world-leading programmes as well as best local, national and international practice. We have not simply adopted one approach to use here at the Academy: our systems and processes are designed with our students in mind, confident that we know our students best and know what they need.

A significant drive around behaviour at the Academy has been around reducing staff workload. Detentions and a number of other functions of the behaviour system are centralised, creating as much capacity as possible for staff to get on with the job of teaching. This principle runs in parallel with the culture of behaviour being everyone's business - while systems and processes are centralised wherever possible, the expectation remains that teachers "own" behaviour in their spaces and around the Academy.

We sweat the small stuff here. All staff understand the importance of acting collegiately around our expectations, whether that be in the classroom, around the site or in the community as this helps better support each other when addressing behavioural concerns. It is for this reason, that behaviour at the Academy is strong.

The most recent Ofsted report (March 2020) highlighted the following:

- Pupils are tolerant and get along well with each other
- Pupils say they feel safe
- Pupils behave well in school
- Pupils learn in a purposeful environment
- Newcomers to the school feel welcomed and soon settle.

Welfare at the Academy is a high priority for all staff. Students are supported by excellent pastoral structures where all teaching staff act as a tutor or associate tutor to a year group. Students see these staff every day, twice a day (once mid morning and again at the end of the day). We very much see tutors as the "first port of call" for any pastoral issues and knowing our students is something we pride ourselves on.

All tutors are supported by a non-teaching Pastoral Mentor and a teaching Head of Year. These staff are dedicated, highly-skilled professionals who ensure that student welfare is at the heart of what we do. We very much believe that pastoral care exists not only for its own sake, but as the significant factor in ensuring we are able to inspire (and realise) success for all our young people.



CURRICULUM

The curriculum at Plympton Academy encompasses planning, assessment, feedback, ethos, and attitudes and provides students with a rich and flourishing learning experience, to foster a love of learning and skills to increase life opportunities. Our aim is to provide an extensive board and balanced curriculum which meets the needs of our learners and enriches their future pathways.

The curriculum has two principal aims:

- To provide opportunities for all students to learn and achieve to their highest potential, and to become successful lifelong learners
- To promote students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and prepare them to become responsible citizens

Our academic year is organized into four Semesters of ten weeks each. During each semester student's complete units of work, in line with the programs of study culminating in standardized formal assessments in week 7 or 8 in each subject. This information is used to inform planning and provides an opportunity for students to act on feedback, demonstrate further progress and identify the strengths and weaknesses in their learning. Feedback is a live and active part of classroom-based teaching and students are provided with on-going praise, support, and guidance on how to enhance their performance. At the end of each Semester students and parents receive a Progress Tracker which indicates their Learning Behaviours and attainment level for each subject.

Our learning journey begins in Year 7 where the fundamental principles and key concepts are delivered to students alongside study skills. During Year 7 and Year 8 students are exposed to our full complement of arts, languages, humanities and technical subjects in addition to the core subjects. Students have the opportunity to choose from a broad range of GCSE and BTEC qualifications so that their programme of study is suited to their individual needs, interests, skills and aspirations with guidance. Both these qualifications have equal rigour and currency but are composed of a different assessment structure. During the option process students study 10 subjects which consists of the compulsory subjects English Language, English Literature, Mathematics, Combined Science, Religious Studies, and Physical Education and Personal, Social, Health and Economic education as an non-examinable subjects.

If you would like any further information please do not hesitate to contact Callum Warren, HR Manager on warrenc@plympton.academy. Tours of the school for prospective candidates can be arranged and we would encourage you to visit the Academy to gain a first hand insight into our approach to Teaching and Learning.