



Candidate Pack

**Welcome to Plympton Academy.
This pack is designed to provide you with an
understanding of our values, vision and ethos.**

WELCOME

Here at Plympton Academy we are privileged to work in a stunning up to date environment, completed 2020, with excellent resources. With a £2m purpose built performing arts faculty that boasts an industry standard dance studio, theater, music rooms and more, we support our students to build life-long habits of resilience and a love of challenge.

We focus on inspiring a culture of success for all, supporting the development of the student as a whole, enabling all students to have ambition and follow their pathway of choice. We offer a broad and balanced curriculum geared towards ensuring their students will achieve their academic potential regardless of their starting points, and be confident leaders throughout their lives.

As our vice principal you will have the strategic overview of behaviour, attitudes, attendance, admissions and SEND (including all key groups).

As principal of Plympton Academy, I am incredibly proud of the staff, student and wider learning community that forms the makeup of the Academy. We have an excellent team of staff who are dedicated, passionate and extremely talented and we are looking for an inspirational and progressive Vice Principal to join us.

We are an 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 Thinking Schools Academy Trust.

Kind Regards,



Lisa Boorman
Principal



Plympton Academy is part of the Thinking Schools Academy Trust, which is all about “transforming life chances” for our children and young people. Our Trust is a successful and expanding family of like-minded schools committed to providing outstanding education and teaching our students to “think about their thinking”. We create lifelong learners. Our students are taught how to continue asking, listening and learning long after their school years. Currently, there are 18 schools in the Trust located in four hubs across Kent, Medway, Portsmouth and Plymouth. Our Trust’s success is due to our excellent understanding of thinking, learning and pedagogical research and talented and highly dedicated staff, leaders and governors.

We, like our Trust, believe that the best way to transform life chances is to actively shape the minds, attitudes and habits of young people through a framework of cognitive education that enables them to become the master of their own destiny.

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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 centers 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 – 09.40 Period 1

09.40 – 10.40 Period 2

10.40 – 11.00 Break

11.00 – 12.00 Period 3

12.00 – 13.00 Period 4

13.00 – 13.40 Lunch

13.40 – 14.40 Period 5

14.40 – 15.00 Tutor/Assembly



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 rigor 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	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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

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 is focussed on providing a challenging, rewarding and diverse experience which inspires a culture of success for all.

Students will:

- Develop life-long habits of resilience and a love of challenge
- Be confident and equipped to make the most of life's rich opportunities
- Acquire the knowledge, language and skills to solve problems, make decisions, think critically and communicate ideas effectively.

Our academic year is organized into six half terms and three larger teams.. During each term student's complete units of work, in line with the programs of study culminating in standardized formal assessments. 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 term 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 Tracey Overton on overtont@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.