



Plymouth CAST Curriculum Policy

February 2025

Document Control

Changes History

Version	Date	Amended by	Recipients	Purpose
4.0	July 2023	Kevin Butlin Director of Education	All Plymouth CAST staff	Revised Policy incorporating Plymouth CAST Design Principles
5.0	July 2024	Kevin Butlin Director of Education	All Plymouth CAST staff	Annual Policy Review
6.0	November 2024	Kevin Butlin Director of Education	All Plymouth CAST staff	Policy Review
7.0	February 2025	Kevin Butlin, Director of Education	All Plymouth CAST staff	Wording update: (All schools must...) <i>Follow the Religious Education Directory (RED) in the Years R - Year 4 inclusive and consult with the Diocesan Education Service regarding Year 5 and Year 6.</i>

Approvals

This policy requires the following approvals:

Board	Chair	CEO	Date Approved	Version	Date for Review
			July 2023	4.0	
*			July 2024	5.0	
*			December 2024	6.0	July 2026
*			February 2025	7.0	July 2026

National/Local Policy

☐ This policy must be localised by schools

☒ This policy must not be changed, it is a National Policy (only change logo, contact details and yellow highlighted sections)

Plymouth CAST Curriculum Policy

The Mission of the Catholic Church

“The Catholic Church and its individual members will undertake appropriate steps to maintain a safe environment for all and to practise fully and positively Christ's Ministry towards children, young people and adults at risk and to respond sensitively and compassionately to their needs in order to help keep them safe from harm. This is demonstrated by the provision of carefully planned activities for children, young people and adults, caring for those hurt by abuse and ministering to and robustly managing those who have caused harm.” [Source: National Catholic Safeguarding Commission - Policy Statement February 2016]

Purpose

This Plymouth CAST policy applies to the Trust as a whole and to all the schools and service units in the Trust. Plymouth CAST, including all the schools and services within the Trust, their Trustees, governors and staff, must abide by this Curriculum Policy.

The school curriculum comprises all learning and other experiences that each school plans for its pupils. The development and implementation of the school curriculum is the responsibility of the school; the school curriculum must serve the interests of all its students, and must comply with this Trust policy and with appropriate DfE legislation and guidance.

It is the responsibility of the Headteacher of each school, with support from the local governing board, to ensure that their school and its staff adhere to this Curriculum Policy. In implementing the policy the local governing board, Headteacher and Trust staff must take account of any advice given to them by the Director of Education, the School Improvement Officer and/or the Board of Directors.

This policy is subject to the Scheme of Delegated Authority approved for the school or service. If there is any ambiguity or conflict then the Scheme of Delegated Authority and any specific Scheme or alteration or restriction to the Scheme approved by the Board of Trustees takes precedence. If there is any question or doubt about the interpretation or implementation of this Policy, the Director of Education or the School Improvement Officer should be consulted.

1. Introduction

This policy provides an agreed framework around which schools must create their own school curriculum plans. Schools should seek opportunities to agree common practice that brings benefit to individual schools, and the Trust as a whole.

1.2 Terminology

- The Trust means Plymouth Catholic Schools Trust (Plymouth CAST).
- School means a school or academy within the Trust.
- Headteacher means the headteacher or principal of the academy.
- School Improvement Officer (SIO) means the person who has line management responsibility for the headteacher.
- Local CAST board (LCB) means the committee of local governors. The Local CAST Boards provide support and challenge for the headteacher, in line with the Scheme of Delegated Authority.

1.3 Application

It is the responsibility of the Local CAST Board and Headteacher of each school to ensure that this Curriculum Policy is adhered to by the school and the staff employed by it.

If there is any question about the interpretation or implementation of this policy, the School Improvement Officer or Director of Education should be consulted.

2. Trust School Curriculum Policies:

A school's curriculum is the substance of what is taught with a specific plan of what pupils need to know in total and in each subject.

The school curriculum comprises all learning and other experiences that each school plans for its pupils. When creating the school curriculum, headteachers, Local CAST Boards and staff should identify what pupils and students must and should learn and experience before they leave the school. With this agreed, stakeholders should plan and deliver a wide range of opportunities which ensure pupils and students achieve their potential and are ready for the next stage of their education or lives.

The curriculum should be ambitious for all pupils, including those who have a Special Educational Need/Disability, and those who are disadvantaged,

Religious Education is the "core of the core curriculum" in a Catholic school (Pope St John Paul II).

Placing RE at the core of the curriculum helps our schools to fulfil their mission to educate the whole person in discerning the meaning of their existence, since "Religious Education is concerned not only with intellectual knowledge but also includes emotional and affective learning.

It is in the mystery of the Word made flesh that the mystery of what it is to be human truly becomes clear. Without religious education, pupils would be deprived of an essential element of their formation and personal development, which helps them attain a vital harmony between faith and culture." (Religious Education curriculum Directory p4).

Furthermore, religiously literate children and young people are able to engage in a fully informed critique of all knowledge, "leading, for example, to an understanding of the relationship between science and religion or history, and between theology, sport and the human body."

All schools in Plymouth CAST must adopt and maintain a curriculum that is in accordance with this Policy, the Religious Education Curriculum Directory, appropriate DfE legislation and guidance, exam body syllabi and guidance, and serves the interests of all its students.

As required under Section 1 of the 2010 Academies Act, each school must offer a curriculum which is balanced and broadly based and which:

- promotes the spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical development of pupils at the school and of society; and
- prepares pupils at the school for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of later life.

The National Curriculum forms one part of the school curriculum. Whilst, as academies, Trust schools are not formally required to follow the National Curriculum, our schools must take account of the National Curriculum in planning their own school curriculum. Leaders must construct a curriculum that is ambitious and designed to give all pupils, particularly disadvantaged pupils and pupils with SEND, the knowledge and cultural capital they need to succeed in life. It will be comparable in breadth and ambition to the national Curriculum.

The curriculum for each school will contribute strongly to an effective education in which pupils achieve highly, by ensuring that:

- reading is prioritised to allow pupils to access the full curriculum offer.
- a rigorous and sequential approach to the reading curriculum develops pupils' fluency, confidence and enjoyment in reading.
- a DfE approved systematic synthetic phonics programme is followed
- it is rooted in the solid consensus of the school's leaders about the knowledge and skills that pupils need in order to take advantage of opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of later life. In this way, it can powerfully address social disadvantage.
- it is clear what end points the curriculum is building towards and what pupils need to know and be able to do to reach those end points.
- the school's curriculum is planned and sequenced so that new knowledge and skills build on what has been taught before and towards its clearly defined end points.
- The school's curriculum is designed and delivered in a way that allows pupils to transfer key knowledge to long-term memory
- the curriculum reflects the school's local context, including by addressing typical gaps in pupils' knowledge and skills.
- Curriculum planning accounts for delays and gaps in learning that arise as a result of the pandemic or other local, regional or national issues.
- the curriculum remains as broad as possible for as long as possible, including when delivered remotely. Pupils are able to study a strong academic core of subjects, such as those offered by the EBacc
- there is high academic/vocational/technical ambition for all pupils, including for those who are disadvantaged and those with SEND
- the school does not offer disadvantaged pupils or pupils with SEND a reduced curriculum
- the curriculum equips pupils with the knowledge and cultural capital that they need to succeed in life, the essential knowledge that pupils need to be educated citizens, introducing them to the best that has been thought and said and helping to engender an appreciation of human creativity and achievement
- The curriculum is successfully adapted, designed, or developed to be ambitious and meet the needs of pupils with SEND, developing their knowledge, skills and abilities to apply what they know and can do with increasing fluency and independence
- The aim is for all pupils to achieve *mastery* of the knowledge that is identified for them to learn. The curriculum must include taught opportunities for all children to develop fluency, reasoning and problem solving across all subjects and areas of learning.

All Trust schools must:

- follow the *Plymouth CAST Principles of Curriculum Design*
- allocate at least 10% of the taught curriculum time to the teaching of Religious Education as set out in the *Religious Education Curriculum Directory (2023)* and by the Diocese of Plymouth Education Service
- ensure that there is a commitment to the development of an understanding of and witness to Catholic virtues and values across the curriculum and wider life of the school
- Follow the Religious Education Directory (RED) in the Years R - Year 4 inclusive and consult with the Diocesan Education Service regarding Year 5 and Year 6.
- ensure that all students in secondary schools follow the appropriate and approved Catholic RE GCSE syllabus as required by the Diocese of Plymouth Education Service
- make provision for a daily act of collective worship
- make provision for personal, social, health and economic education (PSHE), drawing on good practice.
- teach relationships, health and sex education, taking full account of DfE guidance on sex and relationship education and the expectations of the Diocese.
- ensure that the relationships, sex and health education curriculum, and the wider curriculum, specifically address sexual harassment, online abuse and sexual violence as relevant to age and stage of development.
- ensure that the school curriculum addresses safeguarding risks, including online risks, and develops an understanding of *consent*, *respect* and *responsibility* in both the online and offline worlds. The aim is for all pupils to *master* the knowledge/concepts of *consent*, *respect* and *responsibility*, so that they can fully recall the concepts, reason with them, and apply them in increasingly unique situations to enable them to protect themselves and others.
- ensure that the concepts of *Consent*, *Respect* and *Responsibility* will be explored and contextualised in all curriculum areas.
- develop a school enrichment entitlement statement setting out the additional experiences that all pupils will have before they leave the school: e.g. *visited a cathedral, climbed a tower, undertaken a residential activity, played a musical instrument, sung in a choir, spoken to an audience, walked on a beach, led an act of worship, sailed a boat, picniced in a royal park etc*

The following information must be clearly set out in the school's agreed curriculum, and published on the school website:

- the content of the curriculum the school follows in each academic year for every subject, including for mandatory subjects such as Religious Education, even if it's taught as part of another subject or subjects or is called something else
- its approach to the curriculum should also include how it is complying with its duties in the Equality Act 2010 and the Special Educational Needs and Disability Regulations 2014 about making the curriculum accessible for those with disabilities or special educational needs
- how over time you will increase the extent to which disabled pupils participate in the school's curriculum, as part of your school's accessibility plan.
- the school's remote education provision
- the systematic synthetic phonics programme followed by the school
- how parents or other members of the public can find out more about the curriculum your school is following
- how the school meets the 16 to 19 study programme requirements (if it has a sixth form or offer education at 16 to 19)
- a list of the courses available to pupils at key stage 4, including GCSEs
- the 16 to 19 qualifications you offer

- information about their careers programme, the delivery of careers guidance to year 8 to 13 pupils and any requirement set out in the school's funding agreement to deliver careers guidance, including:
 - the school's Careers Leader's name, email address and telephone number
 - a summary of the careers programme, including details of how pupils, parents, teachers and employers may access information about the careers programme
 - how the school or college measures and assesses the impact of the careers programme on pupils
 - the date of the school or college's next review of the information published
 - A statement setting out the circumstances in which providers of technical education and apprenticeships will be given access to year 8 to 13 pupils
 - The official start and finish time of the school day
 - The total compulsory hours per week for all children

Secondary School Curriculum:

Our secondary schools are expected to maintain a broad, rich curriculum. If a school has shortened Key Stage 3, the school must ensure that pupils still have the opportunity to a broad range of subjects, commensurate with the national curriculum, in Years 7 to 9.

There must be a strong academic core at the heart of the Key Stage 4 curriculum. This will be reflected in the school's aim to have the EBacc at the heart of its curriculum, in line with the DfE ambition, and an increasing percentage of pupils studying EBacc GCSE courses

Careers Information, Education, Advice and Guidance

Our secondary schools must provide a high quality Careers Education Information and Guidance curriculum that prepares all students for future success in education, employment or training, provides unbiased information about potential next steps, and provides good quality, meaningful opportunities for encounters with the world of work.

Our Secondary schools must ensure that their CEIG curriculum meets the Gatsby Benchmarks.

The CEIG curriculum must provide high quality opportunities for a range of education and training providers to access all year 8 to 13 pupils to inform them about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships. There must be a minimum of 6 encounters for all students. All six encounters must happen for a reasonable period of time during the standard school day As a minimum schools must offer:

- Two encounters for pupils during the 'first key phase' (year 8 or 9) that are mandatory for all pupils to attend, to take place any time during year 8 or between 1 September and 28 February during year 9.
- Two encounters for pupils during the 'second key phase' (year 10 or 11) that are mandatory for all pupils to attend, to take place any time during year 10 or between 1 September and 28 February during year 11.
- Two encounters for pupils during the 'third key phase' (year 12 or 13) that are mandatory for the school to put on but optional for pupils to attend, to take place any time during year 12 or between 1 September and 28 February during year 13.

In reviewing the quality of a school's CEIAG curriculum, school leaders and Trust officers should assess how well it benefits pupils in choosing and deciding on their next steps. This will include looking at:

- the quality of the unbiased careers advice and guidance provided to pupils
- the school's implementation of the provider access arrangements to enable a range of education and training providers to speak to pupils in Years 8 to 13
- how the school provides good quality, meaningful opportunities for pupils to encounter the world of work
- the school's use of the Gatsby Benchmarks to support review and improvement of provision
- the school's published information about its CIEAG provision (as required by the School Information Regulations) and the school's statement on its provider access arrangements (as required by section 42B of the Education Act 1997)

Monitoring, evaluation and review

It is expected that all school leaders can articulate how the school's curriculum is ambitious and designed to give all pupils, particularly disadvantaged pupils and including pupils with SEND, the knowledge and cultural capital they need to succeed in life. They should be able to articulate and demonstrate how the curriculum is coherently planned and sequenced towards cumulatively sufficient knowledge and skills for future learning and employment.

The School Improvement Team will review aspects of the school curriculum on each visit, and make an overall judgement on the school curriculum at least once per term.

School leaders and members of the trust school improvement team will use the *Plymouth CAST Principles of Curriculum Design* to support the review and development of the school curriculum.

Research has shown that the most important factors for school leaders and Trust officers to consider when reviewing the school curriculum are the following:

- A well-constructed, well-taught curriculum will lead to pupils learning more and so achieving good results. Therefore, such a curriculum contributes to evidence of impact. There need be no conflict between teaching a broad, rich curriculum and achieving success in examinations and tests.
- Disadvantaged pupils and pupils with SEND acquire the knowledge and cultural capital they need to succeed in life.
- Pupils are making progress in that they know more, remember more and are able to do more. They are learning what is intended in the curriculum.
- All learning builds towards an end point. Pupils are being prepared for their next stage of education, training or employment at each stage of their learning.
- Pupils in sixth form are ready for the next stage and are going on to appropriate, high-quality destinations.
- If pupils are not able to read to an age-appropriate level and fluency, they will be incapable of accessing the rest of the curriculum, and they will rapidly fall behind their peers.

Plymouth CAST Curriculum Design Principles

Our Vision

The Church insists on the highest standards of academic achievement in its schools, so that our young people leave us as 'agents of change' – educated and caring people who have the

qualifications, knowledge and skills they need to flourish as human beings and make the world a better place.

Inspired by our Teacher, Jesus Christ, and his good news to the poor, we have a commitment especially to those who are disadvantaged. We are determined that a child's start in life need not determine their future. We are committed to the well-being of the earth, our common home, inspired by the example of Pope Francis: to live wisely, think deeply and love generously.

In all our schools we will develop a culture of high expectation and aspiration, based on our fundamental belief in the dignity of all human beings. We want all our pupils to flourish in safe, happy and enriching environments, taught and supported by adults who are skilled, motivated and committed to our shared vision and values.

We will work together as one Trust, one family of schools, a community inspired by a vision for excellence. We commit ourselves to deepen our mission and raise standards in order to provide an excellent Catholic education for every child in our care.

When this vision becomes a reality, our children will leave us with:

- A sense of their dignity and worth as a person loved by God
- A sense that creation is God-given and good, and we have a duty of care towards our common home
- The best academic qualifications they were capable of achieving to allow them to flourish in adult life
- A sense of service to the world, especially to the disadvantaged
- A sense that they are gifted and called to a vocation of service in life
- Happy memories of their time in school, especially of how adults made them feel – a sense of belonging

Our Mission

"Our mission is to be a community of outstanding schools in which our pupils flourish in safe, happy and stimulating environments and leave us with the knowledge and skills, personal qualities and aspirations, to make the world a better place, inspired by the Gospel."

When we come to celebrate achievement in the school, we recognise first and foremost those who have witnessed to Gospel values, as well as recognising excellence in other areas:

- **Humility:** seeing life as a gift
- **Compassion:** Empathy
- **Kindness:** Gentleness
- **Justice:** Working for a fairer world
- **Forgiveness:** Reconciliation
- **Integrity:** Do what you say
- **Peace:** Committed to peace-making
- **Courage:** standing up for truth

When an adult looks back on her/his time as a pupil at a Plymouth CAST school she/he should be able to say:

My Curriculum

helped me to know Jesus		gave me knowledge and understanding of the world of yesterday, today and tomorrow		motivated me to continue to learn	
was rooted in the real world		enabled me to manage my own feelings		was ambitious and enabled me to believe in myself	
enabled me to protect myself and others		enabled me to stay healthy	helped me to succeed	gave me the knowledge and understanding to manage my own life	
taught me about Catholic Life and the church		gave me a voice	enabled me to manage my own learning	introduced me to the local, regional, national and international world	
helped me to protect our world	helped me to be an effective family member	My Learning		enabled me to contribute effectively to society	raised my expectations of myself and others
gave me confidence	was an entitlement to experiences			introduced me to the world of work	helped me to manage my feelings
helped me to know and love myself	introduced me to the arts, sport, literature and science	taught me to love	prepared me for examinations and assessments		
protected my childhood	allowed me to look back years later and reflect that my education was an invaluable gift	gave me resilience	helped me to live my best life		

Plymouth CAST Principles of Curriculum Design

1. Intent		3. Impact Pupils	
a) has reading at the centre b) has Oracy at the centre c) Is ambitious and designed to give all pupils, particularly disadvantaged pupils and those with SEND, the knowledge and cultural capital they need to succeed in the next stage of education, training, employment and life d) Is based on school leaders' identification of the key knowledge, understanding and experiences that pupils will encounter, learn and remember before they leave the school. e) extends beyond the academic, vocational or technical and ensures that all pupils have access to a wide, rich set of experiences f) provides a wide range of opportunities to nurture, develop and stretch pupils' talents and interests g) is planned and sequenced so that the end points that it is building towards are clear and that pupils develop the knowledge and skills, building on what has been taught before, to be able to reach those endpoints. h) consistently promotes the extensive personal development of the pupils i) Develops an understanding of and witness to Catholic virtues and Gospel values across the curriculum and wider life of the school j) Has the Catholic RE Directory 2023 at its core. k) Includes daily collective worship l) Prioritises prayer m) Ensures that all pupils in secondary schools follow the RED 2023 and an approved Catholic GCSE syllabus n) The scope of the curriculum exceeds that of the national curriculum o) Meets the requirements of the Statutory EYFS Framework p) Specifically teaches Fundamental British Values, and enables pupils to master the associated knowledge q) Specifically teaches about the protected characteristics as identified in the Equalities Act, and enables the pupils to master the knowledge r) Meets the statutory and diocesan requirements for Relationships, Sex and Health Education s) Has a local, regional, national and global dimension t) Has Laudato Si embedded within it u) Embraces the past, present and future v) Develops a deep understanding of the concepts of Consent, Responsibility and Respect w) Teaches pupils to protect themselves and others x) Enables all children to master the identified key knowledge y) Provides opportunities for a range of education and training providers to access all year 8 to 13 pupils to inform them about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships and meets the Gatsby Benchmarks z) provides good quality, meaningful opportunities for pupils to encounter the world of work.		Pupils: a) are able to read to an age-appropriate level and fluency b) learn to talk effectively c) thinking is stimulated and extended and learning advanced through talk d) are well motivated and demonstrate a positive attitude to learning e) are confident, resilient and independent f) acquire the knowledge and cultural capital they need to succeed in life, education, employment or training. g) make progress, in that they know more, remember more and are able to do more. They are learning what is intended in the curriculum h) produce work of high quality i) achieve well in national tests and examinations, where relevant j) know how to eat healthily, maintain an active lifestyle and keep physically and mentally healthy. They have an age-appropriate understanding of healthy relationships and of the protected characteristics. k) are being prepared for their next stage of education, training or employment, including, at 6th Form, high-quality destinations l) are well prepared for life in modern Britain, and are developing their understanding of the fundamental British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs m) understand, appreciate and respect difference in the world and its people, celebrate the things we share in common across cultural, religious, ethnic and socio-economic communities n) are able to engage with views, beliefs and opinions that are different from their own in considered ways. They show respect for the different protected characteristics and do not tolerate any form of discrimination o) know how to discuss and debate issues and ideas in a considered way p) understand how to be responsible, respectful, active citizens who contribute positively to society q) know how to protect themselves and others r) have a deep understanding of the concepts of <i>consent, responsibility and respect</i>. s) There is strong take-up by pupils of the opportunities provided by the school. The most disadvantaged pupils consistently benefit from this excellent work t) have experienced all of the activities on the school's enrichment entitlement statement u) All secondary pupils receive unbiased information about potential next steps and high-quality careers guidance v) All secondary pupils are able to make informed, effective choices about their futures	
2. Implementation		4. Impact Staff	
a) all pupils study the full curriculum; it is not narrowed; a broad range of subjects (exemplified by the national curriculum) is taught in key stage 2 throughout each and all of Years 3 to 6 b) all pupils study the full curriculum; it is not narrowed; a broad range of subjects (exemplified by the national curriculum) throughout Years 7 to 9; the aim is to have the EBacc at the heart of its curriculum, and good progress has been made towards this ambition. c) curriculum plans are effectively adapted to meet the needs of pupils with SEND d) there is a daily act of collective worship e) at least 10% of direct teaching time is committed to RE f) the teaching of RE is inline with the Catholic RE Directory 2023. g) In secondary schools, the RE curriculum is based on the RED 2023 and in KS4 on an approved Catholic GCSE syllabus h) Read Write Inc is used to develop pupils' early reading skills from the beginning of EYFS i) Includes a discrete reading curriculum throughout the school		Staff: a) create an environment in which pupils feel safe, and in which bullying, discrimination, sexual harassment, sexual abuse and sexual violence are not accepted and are dealt with quickly, consistently and effectively whenever they occur b) create a dialogic classroom in which the power of talk is harnessed c) demonstrate full integrity to the school's curriculum d) have expert knowledge of the subjects that they teach and are supported, where necessary, to address gaps in their knowledge so that pupils are not disadvantaged by ineffective teaching e) master the Plymouth CAST Principles of Teaching and Learning f) are confident to teach the subjects/specified curriculum/syllabus g) experience the school's curriculum as a resource that supports their teaching and wellbeing h) present information clearly, promote appropriate discussion, check pupils' understanding systematically, and identify misunderstandings and adapt teaching as necessary to correct these	

- j) there is a coherent and carefully planned canon of literature from EYFS to Y11
- k) in primary schools, maths knowledge and understanding is taught through *Power Maths*
- l) pedagogy is based on the Plymouth CAST Principles of Teaching and Learning, supported by a programme of *Developmental Drop in* sessions for all teachers
- m) a robust programme of professional development enables all staff to develop strong subject knowledge of the subjects/phases they teach
- n) subject leaders are members of subject associations

- i) deliver the subject curriculum in a way that allows pupils to transfer key knowledge to long-term memory.
- j) ensure that teaching is sequenced so that new knowledge and skills build on what has been taught before and pupils can work towards clearly defined end points
- k) use assessment to check pupils' understanding to inform teaching, and to help pupils embed key concepts, use knowledge fluently and develop their understanding, and not simply memorise disconnected facts
- l) consider the most important knowledge or concepts that pupils need to know and focus on these, and prioritise feedback, retrieval practice and assessment
- m) ensure that remote education, if needed, enables all pupils to access lessons and learn, and monitor pupils' engagement and communicate with parents and colleagues effectively if there are concerns
- n) are members of subject associations or similar

[CAST Curriculum Policy July 2024](#)

[Religious Education Curriculum Directory \(3-19\)](#)

[Statutory framework for the early years foundation stage](#)

[Careers guidance and access for education and training providers - GOV.UK](#)

[Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education \(RSE\) and Health Education - GOV.UK](#)

[How to be a fantastic SEND teacher full infographic-1.jpg \(6458x5000\) \(hubspot.net\)](#)

[CAST Principles of Teaching V4](#)

[The national curriculum in England - Framework document](#)

[Good Career Guidance | Education | Gatsby](#)

[The Equality Act 2010 and schools](#)