



Millom School Curriculum Rationale

2026-2027

Date: September 2026

Review: September 2027

Millom School Vision and Values

All children and young people at Millom School will have access to appropriate high-quality education in a community that enables them to achieve the skills, knowledge and qualities to become responsible and successful citizens.

We will achieve our vision by providing learning that shows that:

- Millom School is a place for the whole community, with a local, national & international dimension
- Millom School is a place for personal growth, friendship, a place that encourages tolerance, understanding, respect for others, and the area in which you live.
- Millom School is a place for preparing you for the rest of your life.
- Millom School is a place to develop your talents and skills, along with the independence and self-discipline needed to be happy and successful.
- Millom School is a place for the present, today, as well as the future.

We aim to:

- Improve educational outcomes for all learners
- Improve the performance of every subject department
- Train and develop our staff to be the best they can be
- Develop the school site, buildings and classroom equipment (within budgetary constraints)
- Maintain and develop a positive, outward facing and inclusive school
- Ensure school leavers know right from wrong, have respect for themselves & others and are well skilled (particularly in literacy, numeracy, and ICT) and employable

At Millom School we believe:

1. A strong community of student and adult learners is based on mutual respect, empathy and personal integrity.
2. Students should be empowered, develop curiosity and foster their creativity to make a difference to society.
3. Happy, confident and secure students will learn more and will achieve greater things.
4. That to improve all of us need to work hard, play hard and push our boundaries.
5. Students who pursue their interests and talents will be happier, will have a sense of purpose and will develop a love of learning for life.
6. That to be successful in life all of us need to develop leadership and teamwork skills.

At Millom School we have 4 core values that are embedded within our curriculum areas:

- Empathy – listen, care and share
- Equity – fair paths for every journey
- Empowerment – believe in yourself and others too
- Excellence – do it right, even when no one's watching

Our Key Stage 3, 4 and 5 curricula are exceptionally varied for a small school as we firmly believe in providing a range of opportunities for our young people, allowing them to explore their creativity, become independent lifelong learners and leave school having developed key skills for employability, as well as having opportunities to show development against our 4 core values.

Our curricula meet the needs of our local area and are enriched with STEM activities preparing the young people of Millom and surrounding areas for work in design, manufacturing, engineering and project management. We place an emphasis on creative subjects including art, music and drama and have invested in offering opportunities to study those at Key Stage 4 and in some cases Key Stage 5.

We also highly value enrichment activities and have a unique programme in place to support our students accessing enrichment via our normal timetabled day. Our curriculum model also prepares students for success in a variety of progression pathways, including apprenticeships, further and higher education and technical routes.

There are several factors that have shaped our curriculum model and these include:

- the needs of the pupils
- transition from Year 6 into Year 7
- progression to Key Stage 4 and 5 and beyond
- the desire to widen students' opportunities to engage with enrichment activities beyond the normal curricula, especially post-Covid, where such engagement was limited
- staffing, facilities and resources
- input from the Governing Body
- input from the wider community
- input from supporting agencies and school partners, including employers
- guidance from the Local Authority
- Government policy.

We have recognised the importance of pupil choice at Key Stage 4 and Key Stage 5, and as such, we have developed a large range of vocational and academic courses to ensure that our students continue on an appropriate progression plan. This includes offering the new Alternative Academic Qualifications (AAQs) to students in the 6th Form.

The curriculum structure from year 7 right through to year 13 supports the school's vision and core values, in particular, preparing skills for life, developing talents and pursuing interests, demonstrating employability skills and developing teamwork and leadership. This is captured by the school's 4 core values of empathy, equity, empowerment and excellence and by the Millom Learner attributes and the Learning Journey, which were developed by the leadership team in consultation with staff and the Student Leadership Council. The Learning Journey is a roadmap showing opportunities for learners to develop the Millom Learner as well as employability skills and knowledge of careers options and progression pathways, cultural capital, their understanding of spiritual, moral and social issues and their understanding of fundamental British Values.

The seven Millom Learner attributes are:

Determined

Communicator

Investigator

Positive

Understanding

Independent

Collaborator

The Breadth of Our Curriculum

Pupils in Key Stages 3 and 4 have 30 lessons per week of 50 minutes duration. Pupils in Key Stage 5 have between 17 and 24 lessons per week of 50 minutes duration with extra timetabled study periods for each subject, including one or two lessons per week of tutor time (personal development). The majority of students in Year 12 also take the Extended Project Qualification (EPQ) for a further two lessons per week.

In Years 7, 8 and 9 students study the following subjects:

English

Mathematics

Science

Information Technology, including Computer Science

Technology

Art

Drama

Geography

History

French

Music

Physical Education (including games)

Personal Development (Including PSHE and RE)

The table below shows the number of lessons allocated to each subject in Key Stage 3:

Subject	Year 7	Year 8	Year 9
English	5	5	5
Mathematics	5	5	5
Science	3	3	3
Geography	2	2	2
History	2	2	2
French	2	2	2
IT/Computing	1	1	1
Music	1	1	1
Art	1	1	1
Drama	1	1	1
Technology	2	2	2
Physical Education	2	2	2
Personal Development	1	1	1
Enrichment	2	2	2

In Year 9 students choose their options for Key Stage 4 (Years 10-11). Currently all students are required to take the following subjects:

GCSE English Language and GCSE English Literature
 GCSE Mathematics
 Combined Science – 2 GCSEs (or Triple Science, which is three GCSEs)
 Games (not examined)
 Personal Development (not examined; includes PSHE and RE)

Students also have a choice of up to 3 option subjects from the following:

GCSEs in Triple Science (Biology, Chemistry, Physics)
 GCSE Art or Photography
 GCSE Drama
 Sport (BTEC)
 Media (BTEC)
 Music (BTEC)
 GCSE Design and Technology
 Hospitality and Catering (Level 1/2 Award)
 Health and Social Care (BTEC)
 GCSE French

GCSE History
GCSE Geography
GCSE Computer Science
Information Technology (Tech Award)
Asdan Certificate of Personal Effectiveness (for targeted students only)

Students are encouraged to take a range of 'facilitating subjects' to maximise their progression choices at Post-16. We ask students to choose a range of science and humanities GCSEs, however, we currently do not require students to study a language at GCSE. The option of GCSE French is available should pupils wish to choose this. The importance of studying a language at GCSE is emphasised as part of the Year 9 options process.

The table below shows the number of lessons allocated to each subject in Key Stage 4:

Subject	Year 10	Year 11
English	4	5
Maths	5	4
Science	5	5
Options	12	12
Games	1	1
Personal Development	1	1
Enrichment / Intervention	2	2

At KS5, students are able to opt for the following subjects:

Academic qualifications

A-Level English Literature
A-Level Mathematics
A-Level Biology
A-Level Chemistry
A-Level Physics
A-Level History
A-Level Geography
A-level Media
A-Level Fine Art / Art Photography
A-Level Design and Technology: Product Design
Extended Project Qualification (EPQ)

Vocational qualifications

Certificate / Extended Certificate in Business (Cambridge Technical)
Certificate / Extended Certificate in Information Technology (Cambridge Technical)
Extended Certificate in Health and Social Care (AAQ)
Extended Certificate / Diploma in Sport (BTEC)

Students have a wide range of courses to choose from in Key Stage 4 and 5 to allow them to pursue the subjects they are interested in or have a particular talent for, but this also allows them to explore the more academic and creative subjects, developing a host of skills for future progression or employment, including further study at college or university, technical routes and apprenticeships. Parents are well informed of options choices, as we publish this information in 'Options Booklets' on our website. Parents are also invited to attend our virtual Year 9 Options Evening and into school to attend our 6th Form Information Evening. This is where parents and pupils can talk to teaching staff about the courses we offer. Pupils are well supported through this process and every pupil in Years 9 and 11 have at least one progression interview with a senior member of school staff, which is linked to careers and pathways post-16 and post-18.

Generally students opt for three qualifications in Year 12 and carry those subjects into Year 13. However, in exceptional circumstances students have the option of studying four subjects if they choose to. Students can choose qualifications from the academic group, the vocational group or a mixture of both. Students who do not gain a grade 4 in GCSE English or Mathematics at Key Stage 4 are required to re-sit during Key Stage 5. It is possible for students to re-sit GCSEs in English or Mathematics alongside three full qualifications. If students are required to re-sit then we recommend they choose from the vocational group.

All Year 12 and 13 students also have one or two lessons of tutor time per week, where they study life skills and aspects of personal development, including progression planning. The vast majority of students in Year 12 take the EPQ. Students in Year 12 complete a week's work experience at the end of the year and participate in enrichment activities. Students in Year 13 may participate in enrichment activities for the first term only.

The Balance of Our Curriculum

Our current curriculum model shows strong continuity between Key Stages. Students study specific subject content and develop key skills for those subjects from Year 7. From the onset, students are aware of progression pathways and understand that they may continue studying those subjects through to Year 13 should they choose to do so. This encourages and motivates them to develop interest and expertise in those subject areas from early on in their academic career. Teachers assess pupils' progress in Key Stage 3 using criteria that have been developed from the GCSE and vocational

programmes at Key Stage 4 and 5 to ensure that pupils are developing skills that will set them in good stead should they study that subject further.

Our students participate in PE and Games throughout Key Stage 3 and 4 as we recognise the importance of developing a healthy lifestyle and allowing students time to develop a stronger 'work-life balance'. Students study art, music and drama at Key Stage 3 to allow them to investigate and explore their creativity, which they may choose to follow further at Key Stage 4 and 5. We have included personal development within our curriculum model for each Key Stage to promote the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of all students, including British Values.

We believe in students having choice and the ability to personalise their education. Consequently, we have a range of GCSEs, A-Level and vocational qualifications for students to choose from to allow every student to maximise their full potential no matter their specific strengths. This allows students to balance the skills needed to be successful in examinations and non-examination assessments. The intended outcomes of this are linked to successful progression – we want our students to leave us with the qualifications, expertise and skills needed for their next steps.

Students with Special Educational Needs also have the option of choosing the ASDAN Certificate of Personal Effectiveness (CoPE) programme in Year 10, which is done by negotiation with the Special Educational Needs Coordinator as part of the Year 9 options process. This programme allows the pupils to develop life and study skills and helps balance the rigour of their academic courses.

Our Enrichment Curriculum

In 2022 Millom School decided to implement a unique programme of enrichment to widen the opportunities presented to students in a post-Covid environment. We recognised that the restrictions placed on young people had an understandable yet adverse impact on engagement, motivation and in some cases mental health. We also wanted to remove the barriers that some disadvantaged young people can face that prevents engagement with such activities. We took the decision to re-structure our timetable and allocate the last two periods of Wednesday to 'enrichment'. All students in school from Year 7-13 (with the exception of Year 11 students) can select from a wide range of activities planned and offered by teachers, other school staff and by external agencies or partners. Students take 6 activities across the school year; all activities are offered in 6-week blocks. Whilst we request a voluntary contribution of £15 per student per year, the school heavily subsidise enrichment activities in recognition of the importance we place on students developing unique skills and having a broad experience. Year 11 students participate in a programme of intervention for the core subjects of English, maths and science.

The Delivery of Our Curriculum

Our teachers deliver the curriculum at each Key Stage in a variety of ways to maximise the engagement of learners. This may involve hands on activities, practical work where

appropriate, group work, use of IT, presentations and written tasks. The progress of pupils at each Key Stage is tracked against prior attainment – Key Stage 2 results for pupils in Key Stage 3 and 4 (or CAT results for the current Year 11, due to cancellation of SATs in 2021) and attainment at Key Stage 4 for those pupils in Key Stage 5. Pupils in Key Stages 4 and 5 are informed of their targets and assessments are tracked against target. Pupils are given specific advice and guidance to meet or exceed targets. Pupils in Key Stage 3 are tracked against ‘expected progress’, which is subject-specific although numerical targets are not shared at this stage. Form tutors and Directors of Learning and Standards track the pupils’ overall performance including attitude to learning, behaviour, attendance, enrichment and contribution to the school community.

The Head of Mathematics has developed ‘Maths Across the Curriculum’, a document outlining key mathematical principles and strategies for teaching maths to improve consistency across the different subject areas. We also have a literacy policy to ensure that marking for literacy is rigorous and consistent across the departments and across the Key Stages helping pupils to accelerate their literacy skills.

Heads of Department and subject leads have input into the decisions made regarding qualification and exam board choices. Each Head of Department has a specific justification for the ways in which the teachers plan, deliver and assess their subjects at each Key Stage showing continuity between these stages for smooth transition. Each subject has developed a rationale document outlining:

- The importance of the subject so pupils understand why they are studying it and how it links to real life
- The key concepts and big ideas underpinning the subject
- The topics studied in each year
- The key capacities and skills pupils will develop, which is linked to the Millom Learner
- How pupils are learning and being assessed
- How the learning of all pupils is being supported, including stretch
- How pupils can progress in terms of opportunities at Key Stages 4 and 5 and beyond
- How the subject supports the school’s careers strategy and the careers the subject links to
- How pupils can enrich their knowledge and understanding in that subject

Each subject has also developed a roadmap outlining the pupil’s learning journey in that subject. This document maps out opportunities for pupils to develop:

- Millom Learner attributes and values
- Employability skills
- Understanding of progression pathways and careers
- Cultural capital
- Understanding of spiritual, moral and social issues
- Understanding of fundamental British Values
- Subject specific literacy and numeracy

This information can be found on the school website.

Our range of qualifications at Key Stages 4 and 5 and high-quality teaching and learning have allowed us to improve pupil outcomes, meaning that the pupils are leaving school better qualified for further study or employment. This can be attributed to several factors including: expert delivery by teaching staff (including decisions made on qualification types, exam boards assessment methods and optional units that match staff expertise), improved pupil choice, the ability to select a mixture of academic and vocational qualifications, careers advice and guidance that supports the curricula at each Key Stage and the continuity of the curriculum model from Key Stage 3 to 5.

Millom School have an excellent track record in supporting learner progression and the percentage of pupils in sustained education or employment with training has been over 98% for the last 3 years, representing only 1 or 2 students per year identified as NEET (not in education, employment or training). This is a figure above the national average for maintained schools.

The extra-curricular programme at Millom School is sustained and varied, allowing out students to explore many opportunities to learn both within and outside the classroom and to develop key employability skills for future progression. This includes:

- The Duke of Edinburgh programme
- The Careers Strategy e.g. Year 11 Mock Interviews, Year 10/12 Work Experience, Unifrog careers platform
- Educational trips and visits e.g. geography field work, theatre trips
- Residential trips and visits e.g. trip to Iceland, trip to London, The Year 7 Conway residential, the annual ski trip
- End of term reward trips
- After school enrichment clubs and activities
- STEM club, roadshows and competitions
- The Hardknott Forest Project, which includes learning about sustainability (removal of tree species, tree planting, bridge building using sustainable sources)
- Sporting opportunities e.g. cross-country, team sports, competing at local, county and national level
- Performing arts opportunities e.g. drama production, music concerts
- Leadership opportunities e.g. Student Council
- Charity events e.g. Comic Relief, Sports Relief, Children in Need
- A varied programme of external speakers in Key Stage assemblies
- Enrichment programme, including a variety of 6-week activities e.g. canoeing, rugby, STEM, conservation, dance.

Further information

For more information about our subjects please refer to the subject pages, the Year 9 options information or the Sixth Form area, which are all on our school website.

For specific queries about curriculum please contact the Assistant Headteacher for curriculum – Mrs C Vance via genenquiries@millom.cumbria.sch.uk

For requests to withdraw from Religious Education, please refer to the RE tab on the curriculum page of the school website.