

# CASTLE ACADEMY

## Curriculum Policy



December 2020

## CURRICULUM POLICY

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## Curriculum Statement

At Castle Academy staff work to ensure that the curriculum is rich, exciting, challenging and engaging. We believe that pupils learn best through first hand experiences and give them plenty of opportunities to learn in an adventurous way. The idea that knowledge and skills can be developed and improved through teaching is central to our curriculum design. Children are encouraged to embrace and learn from their mistakes as well as viewing them as part of the wider process of improvement developing effort and determination.

Our ethos for teaching at Castle is underpinned by the belief that learning is something that does not just happen in the classroom. We believe that pupils should use the knowledge and skills learnt at Castle to prepare them for lifelong learning far beyond the school gates.

Every child has their own unique learning journey due to such factors as prior knowledge acquired and their enjoyment and interests in particular subjects. At Castle Academy we ensure that our curriculum offer is tailored to the needs of every individual child. The staff provide an arena for active learning. This will encourage each child to drive their own journey. We promote creative and critical thinking, thereby developing a learning community which focuses on 'how' and not just 'what' we are learning.

We promote learning powers under the families of reflectiveness, collaboration, resourcefulness and resilience to support the pupils in developing positive and effective learning habits. These powers are encouraged, celebrated and rewarded throughout the year. They are our guiding principles, infiltrating every experience at Castle as well as helping the pupils to develop the skills and traits they need to thrive in the modern world.



Pupils learn through a connected curriculum and we ensure there are explicit links between concepts and subjects to enable pupils to make efficient and long term links in their learning. Topics taught are relevant and engaging for all pupils. All new topics begin with a hook in the form of a 'stunning start' and end with a 'fabulous finish.' This is supported by a 'wow moment' in the form of a theme day, visit or experience which embeds the knowledge and skills learnt.

Our school grounds offer a wide range of opportunities to take the learning outside and we encourage this wherever and whenever possible, whether this be within our cosy hobbit holes, adventure playground or the tranquil and serene setting of our memory garden. We also arrange opportunities for the whole school to participate in enrichment days in which the whole school participate in practical, creative and exciting lessons based around a variety of topical themes.

At Castle Academy we believe in the philosophy of deep learning and identify this through shallow, deep and profound levels of learning and this is integral during the planning and delivery of the curriculum. Shallow learning is focused on the memorisation and replication of information. Deep learning is focused on the creation of knowledge that leads to pupils being able to demonstrate further skills through the demonstration of understanding. Profound learning is when pupils are confident learners because they have the prior knowledge they need to try new and challenging problems.

## **Rationale**

Our school curriculum is underpinned by the values that we uphold within our mission statement 'Castle Never Stops Learning'.

We value the way in which all children are unique, and our curriculum promotes respect for the views of each individual pupil, as well as for people of all cultures. We value the spiritual and moral development of each person, as well as their intellectual and physical growth.

We value the importance of each person in our community. Castle Academy organises its curriculum so that we promote trust and understanding between all members of our local, wider and international community.

We value the rights enjoyed by each person in our society. We respect each pupil in our school for who they are, and we treat them with fairness and honesty. We aim to enable each person to be successful, and we provide equal opportunities for all the pupils in our school.

We value our environment, and we aim, through our curriculum, to teach respect for our world, and how we should care for it for future generations, as well as our own.

By promoting these values, Castle Academy's curriculum achieves its objective of educating pupils in the knowledge, skills and understanding that they need in order to lead fulfilling lives within the 21<sup>st</sup> century global society.

## **Aims & Principles**

Castle Academy is committed to providing all pupils with the best education and experiences possible, to ensure all pupils achieve their full potential and become life long learners. We aim to achieve this by:

- Fulfilling all the requirements of the National Curriculum
- Teaching pupils to use language, number and technology effectively
- Teaching pupils to use a wide and challenging vocabulary in every subject (Tier 3 vocabulary)
- Celebrating our cultural diversity.
- Provide WOW moments and Fabulous Finishes to extend our curriculum through visits and visitors.

- Liaising with the local secondary school to ease transition and provide cross phase opportunities.
- Nurturing the talents of all and celebrate success.
- Enabling pupils to be positive citizens in the world.
- Teaching pupils to have an awareness of their own spiritual development, and to understand right from wrong.
- Enabling all pupils to learn and develop their skills to the best of their ability by providing challenge, differentiation and scaffolding/intervention techniques.
- Promoting a positive attitude towards learning, so that pupils enjoy coming to school.
- Helping pupils to develop lively and enquiring minds, provide an ability to question and argue rationally and an ability to apply themselves to tasks and physical skills.
- Teaching pupils about their developing world, including how the environment and society have changed over time.
- Helping pupils understand the world in which they live.
- Helping pupils understand the importance of truth and fairness, so that they grow up committed to equal opportunities for all.
- Enabling pupils to have respect for themselves, have a high self-esteem, and to be able to live and work co-operatively with others.

## **Provision**

### **EYFS**

The curriculum that we teach in our Early Years classes meets the requirements set out in the revised National Curriculum at Foundation Stage. Our curriculum planning focuses on the Early Learning Goals and on developing pupil's skills and experiences, as set out in this document.

Castle Academy fully supports the principle that young children learn through play, and by engaging in well-planned structured activities. Teaching in the Reception classes builds on the experiences of the pupil in their pre-school learning.

During the pupil's first term, the teacher makes a baseline assessment to record the skills of each child. Pupil profiles are updated throughout the year to have a working record of the pupil's learning journey. These assessments form an important part of the future curriculum planning for each pupil.

We are well aware that all pupils need the support of parents and teachers to make good progress in school. We strive to build positive links with the parents of each pupil by keeping them informed about the way in which their child is being taught and how well their child is progressing.

### **KS 1**

All pupils are taught the core subjects of English and Mathematics and wherever possible this is integrated into the themed topic along with the foundation subjects. Religious Education is an important area of the curriculum and is taught as a separate lesson. All pupils have Physical Education lessons each week.

In addition to this, there is a daily phonics session taught in accordance with the Read, Write Inc scheme.

### **KS2**

As KS1, all KS2 pupils are taught the core subjects of English and Mathematics and wherever possible this is integrated into the themed topic along with the foundation subjects.

In Years 4, 5 and 6, the pupils have the opportunity to go swimming at The Mounts to enable them to achieve the 25m government requirement.

Reading is taught separately through 'Book Talk' and is focused on developing pupils' deeper thinking of texts and comprehension skills.

### **Homework**

At Castle Academy, homework is an extension of the learning which takes place in the curriculum for all year groups. A separate homework policy is in place (please refer to this for more details). Some of the homework is taught through our online learning games such as 'Sumdog', 'TT Rockstars' and 'Bug Club'.

### **Sex & Relationships Education**

This is taught during PSHE lessons that is appropriate to the level of understanding of our pupils. We use Jigsaw which is an effective scheme of work

covering the PSHE requirements from the National Curriculum. There are six Jigsaw Puzzles (half-termly units) designed so the whole school can study the same learning themes at the same time, each year group at its own level. The puzzles are sequential and developmental throughout each academic year.

In Year 5 and 6, the School Nurse attends to discuss puberty. Prior to the lessons, a letter is sent home detailing the content which is to be taught. A consultation evening is sometimes offered to enable parents to have some insight in to the content and the small clips their children will be watching during these lessons. This enables parents to be prepared for any questions their child may ask and provide opportunities for discussions prior to the sessions. Parents may request that their child is excused from Sex Education.

### **Enrichment & Themed Days**

At Castle Academy, we are committed to the broadest educational offering for all our pupils. This means looking beyond the National Curriculum. Teachers plan WOW moments linked to their topics throughout the year to engage and excite all pupils. These could include trips, visits or visitors.

Themed days/weeks throughout the year are also incorporated into curriculum. These may be designed to fit with national initiatives (e.g. World Maths Day), to match with events in the UK (e.g. a national election) and also to highlight our curriculum subjects (e.g. Art Day).

In addition to this, pupils take part in an Enterprise Week in the Autumn term. Each class is given a budget which they use to prepare items to sell at our Enterprise Fayre. They are required to cost their product, to show their profit etc.

Fab Friday is unique to Castle Academy whereby the Teaching Assistants are empowered to bring in their skills from home or an area or interest and teach the children these skills supported by the class teachers.

### **Extra-Curricular Activities**

A wide range of age appropriate clubs are offered at lunchtimes and after school for Key Stage 1 and 2 pupils.

We provide an 'extended day' by 'Kids Stop' for working parents and carers from



8.00am until 6pm, and aim to keep the costs for this provision neutral. Breakfast care allows parents to drop their children off early where our pupils are given a healthy and nourishing breakfast. After school, pupils are cared for in an environment that allows them to socialise, engage in playing with appropriate games and toys, as well as read and relax. There is a planned programme of activities for this time slot each day and are also given a light tea.

### **Continuous Professional Development for teachers and support staff**

Castle Academy believes that all staff should be involved in a continuing process of improvement. The school is committed to fostering a positive ethos of continuous learning through the development programmes within our teaching and learning Hub and our existing relationship with OLEVI.

### **Roles and Responsibilities**

We expect all members of our school community to be committed to raising standards and diminishing the difference in the attainment gaps for our pupils, through the 'assess, plan, do, review' (using the assessment data and own judgements to identify strengths and weaknesses, to plan for all groups of children opportunities that support and challenge their learning, to teach and monitor these learning experiences and review the impact of these).

### **Senior Leadership Team (SLT)**

It is the overall responsibility of the Senior Leadership Team to ensure:

- All statutory elements of the curriculum have aims and objectives which reflect aims of the academy and indicate how the needs of individual pupils will be met.
- This will include how the subject will be taught and assessed.
- The amount of time provided for teaching the curriculum is adequate.
- Where appropriate, the individual needs of some pupils are met by permanent or temporary disapplication from the national curriculum.
- The procedures for assessment meet all legal requirements and pupils and

their parents receive information to show how much progress the pupils are making and what is required to help them improve.

- The governing body is fully involved in the decision making processes that relate to the breadth and balance of the curriculum.
- The governing body is advised on statutory targets in order to make informed decisions.

### **Curriculum Lead/Phase Leaders**

- Will have an oversight of curriculum structure and delivery within each Key Stage/Phase.
- Will ensure detailed and up-to-date schemes of work are in place for the delivery of the curriculum within key stages.
- Will ensure schemes of Work are monitored and reviewed on a regular basis.
- Discuss levels of attainment and rates of progress with Phase team leaders on a regular basis taking action where necessary to improve these.
- Ensure long term planning is in place for all subjects.
- Ensure schemes of work encourage progression at least in line with national standards.
- Ensure there is consistency in terms of curriculum delivery.
- Ensure there is consistency of approach towards assessment.
- Share all relevant information/data with the SLT/MLT.
- Share best practice with other colleagues in terms of curriculum design and delivery.

### **Subject Leader**

The role of the subject leader is to:

- Provide a strategic lead and direction for the subject;
- Support and offer advice to colleagues on issues related to the subject;
- Monitor pupil progress in that subject area;
- Provide efficient resource management for the subject.

It is also the role of each subject leader to keep up to date with developments in their subject, at both national and local level. They review the way the subject is taught in the school and plan for improvement. This development planning links

to whole-school objectives. Each subject leader reviews the curriculum plans for their subject, ensures that there is full coverage of the National Curriculum and that progression is planned into schemes of work.

Once all of this is completed, recommendations are reported to the curriculum lead.

## **Teaching and Support Staff**

All teachers and support staff under the direction of the class teacher will:

- Ensure that the academy curriculum is implemented in accordance with this policy.
- Have access to, and be able to interpret, data on each pupil to inform the design of the curriculum in order that it best meets the needs of each cohort of pupils.
- Share and exchange information about best practice amongst colleagues in different schools and through internal and external moderation, resulting in a dynamic and relevant curriculum.
- Participate in high quality professional development, working with other professionals to develop their skills in understanding the learning needs of their pupils and how best to address those needs and engage them.
- Work in partnership with other agencies to provide an appropriate range of curriculum opportunities.

## **Governing Body / Trust Members**

- The Leadership team is held to account in terms of the provision of a suitable curriculum that supports the needs of pupils and develops their academic knowledge and personal character as its prime motive.
- Ensure the curriculum enables good progress to be made at both individual level whole school level in all subject areas.
- The leadership team keep the Governing Body fully informed of all curriculum developments.

## **Monitoring and Evaluation**

The Curriculum leader will continuously monitor the effectiveness of the curriculum and report all findings to the Head teacher who will include developments in their report to the Academy Trust and Board of Governors.

The Curriculum leader will monitor the curriculum through planning, classroom observation, liaising with the subject leaders and Senior Leadership Team.

Subject leaders will monitor the way their subject is taught throughout the school. They will examine long-term/medium-term planning, and ensure that appropriate teaching strategies are used. Subject leaders have responsibility for monitoring standards and ensuring that teachers have the skills and resources they need to deliver the curriculum effectively.

## **Review**

The Governing Board will review this policy statement biannually and update, modify or amend it as it considers necessary to ensure the policy meets the needs of Castle Academy.