

Castle Academy

Teaching and Learning Policy

At Castle Academy, children feel secure and happy in an environment in which they feel valued. Their progress is at the core of everything we do.

This applies to staff, parents and everyone else involved in the life of a school. The contribution of all stakeholders to the learning and teaching that goes on in school should never be underestimated. We aim to share with parents the high expectations of our pupils and ensure that each child reaches his or her full potential.

All adults are responsible for implementing the 'Teaching and Learning' policy. Teachers are responsible for the management of their own classroom, the care of the pupils in their class, the work of supporting adults working within their class and the delivery of the curriculum and standards.

At Castle Academy, we believe children learn best when.....

- They feel emotionally, socially and intellectually secure.
- Their individual needs are met.
- They are valued.
- Their achievements are recognised.
- They are active participants in their learning.
- They are learning from and through direct experience.
- They are encouraged to become independent learners.
- They are encouraged to work collaboratively.
- They are encouraged to solve problems and ask questions.
- They can be flexible.
- Their learning environment is stimulating.
- They have access to quality resources and equipment.
- There is support and interest from home.
- They recognise their role within the wider community.
- They are healthy, well fed and well rested.

The Castle Curriculum

We are committed to delivering a creative curriculum through an exciting linked learning approach. Subjects remain discrete where skills need focused development and are applied where opportunities enhance the learning. We plan thoroughly starting from the national curriculum skills and knowledge and Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) curriculum ensuring there is progression throughout the school. The learning is brought alive with visitors, trips and exciting activities. Our long term map outlines the themes for each year group. Medium term plans are intended to be informative for all stakeholders and show how subjects link to the skill areas and also what the Learning Intentions are for that term. A newsletter detailing this is published termly, in paper form and our school website.

The Castle Academy 'Non-Negotiables'

In order to teach effectively, staff agreed some key 'non-negotiables' which must always be apparent in our teaching.

Non-negotiable 1: Learning Objectives

Teachers should:

- Begin by sharing a learning objective (known as an 'I can'), which should be clear and understand by all pupils.
- Ensure that Learning objectives describe skills or learning and not the activity.
- Explain how the aims of the lesson relate to previous and future learning.
- Refer to the learning objective throughout the lesson to review progress.
- Refer the learning objective when marking children's work and giving verbal feedback.

Non-negotiable 2: Shared success criteria

Teachers should:

- Ensure success criteria relate to the learning objective (I can statement).
- Be flexible and present success criteria in a way which suits the particular learners and the particular lesson. E.g it can be 'a set of step by step instructions' or a list of 'ingredients' .
- Where possible, generate success criteria with the children
- Display success criteria on the board for children, and ensure that children know and understand the success criteria for each lesson.
- Differentiate success criteria so that all learners make progress and can judge their own progress.

Non-negotiable 3: Pitch & Difference

Teachers should:

- Have a clear knowledge of the attainment and achievement data for the pupils in class.
- Ensure the pupils make clear progress throughout the session, ensuring that tasks are based on previous learning.
- Be aware of children's experiences and build on what they know.
- Group pupils appropriately, providing opportunities for whole class, group and individual teaching and learning; the approach being determined by the learner's needs and the desired outcomes, adjusting and altering the emphasis or level of difficulty of tasks to ensure progress and success for every pupil.
- Provide enough time for pupils to acquire and practice new skills, providing reinforcement activities for some pupils and extension activities for others.
- Be aware of the children who are on the provision map, entitled to Pupil Premium or who have specific needs.
- Ensure children with IEP's have individual targets where necessary.

- Ensure that at some stage all children receive direct support from teaching assistants during lesson time to allow them to reach their full potential.

Non-negotiable 4: Pace

Teachers should:

- Ensure that teacher input is delivered with good pace appropriate to the age of the child.
- Provide a range of teaching styles to vary input and engage all children.
- Use a range of resources and strategies to ensure each stage of the lesson is delivered in a lively and engaging way.

Non-negotiable 5: Assessment for Learning (see also 'Assessment Policy')

Teachers should:

- Create opportunities for the children to show what they have learnt.
- Provide opportunities for pupils to reflect and assess their own learning, and time to address teachers feedback.
- Recognise the importance of reflection and identifying 'next steps'.
- Reshape lessons immediately if children are not learning.
- Provide meaningful and timely plenaries incorporating effective and open questioning and driving learning forward.
- Encourage use of checklists, marking ladders and VCOP (vocabulary, connectives, openers and punctuation) etc for pupil's to check their own learning and that of their peers to meet the steps to success.
- Empower children to take responsibility for their own learning.

Non-negotiable 6: Marking and Feedback (see also Marking policy)

Meaningful marking is essential to draw high standards of learning from the children.

Teachers should:

- Use the marking code and ensure work is always marked against the learning intention on the day that it is completed
- Where possible, mark alongside children.
- Ensure there is one piece of developmental marking per child in literacy and numeracy per week.
- Review learning, marking and feedback on a regular basis (the day, the week, the month after)
- Be explicit about what is expected of the children in terms of presentation, detail, pace etc., and encourage pupil's to be proud of their work.
- Have clear high expectations of work and communicate these to the pupil's.

Non-negotiable7: Clear Lesson Structure

Teachers should:

- Planning will demonstrate a clear lesson structure with each aspect carefully planned for a considered purpose/to meet a particular objective and to enhance pupil's enjoyment.
- Lessons will be well-organised and transitions between lesson phases will be carefully planned to ensure the continuity of learning is maintained.
- Plan thoroughly and communicate clearly with everyone in the classroom, explaining and demonstrating clearly what tasks are to be undertaken.
- Plan resources and support to drive the learning that is intended and the needs of the particular groups.
- Be flexible and confident changing the content of their plans if it is apparent that the work is incorrectly pitched or not having an impact.
- Ensure that learning takes place through planned opportunities for pupil's to question, and engage in high level talk and discussion.
- Provide opportunities for children to work together, to develop confidence and personal responsibility.
- Mini-plenaries will feature in all KS1 and KS2 lessons and will serve to consolidate and extend the learning.

The castle learning environment and resources

We offer a broad curriculum to provide our children with the knowledge, skills, concepts and attitudes necessary for life in a rapidly changing world. We place importance on creating stimulating and interactive learning environments. The classroom environments are such that all children's physical needs are met e.g. left handed children are seated at the left hand side of the table and any adjustments are made e.g hearing/visually impaired children sit where they can be close to/see the teacher. Classrooms are bright/visually stimulating. There is a range of 2d and 3d displays representing all curriculum areas over the year and that displays are interactive. There is also a working wall for English and Maths display. There are labels indicating areas within the classroom and aids to support current learning are displayed and used by learners. The classrooms and shared areas are used flexibly so there are places where children can work alone, in pairs or small groups. We use our school grounds to meet the needs of our exciting curriculum and as part of our stimulating learning environment. Classrooms, the library, computer suite and shared areas are well organised, resources are looked after and learners can access a wide range of learning resources including ICT. We use a range of technologies to allow the pupil's to develop in a technologically advanced world.

Extra-curricular learning and teaching.

We value the importance of learning that takes place outside the hours of the curriculum. We aim to offer a wide variety of extra-curricular clubs that target the specific needs of the children at Castle Academy and help to further develop the 'whole child'. Extra-curricular clubs will; motivate children and make them feel that they can succeed in a range of contexts, encourage social skills and co operation and make children feel valued and part of a team. Some of these activities will be closely targeted towards our most vulnerable pupils, (including pupil premium) and used as part of planned interventions. The use of homework is intended to extend and reinforce the learning at school and provides a valued link with

home. KS2 children have termly 'project based' homework, designed to develop their independence, research and organisational skills. Reading diaries are also used to provide a link with parents.

Teaching staff

We have a thorough programme of professional development for all staff driven by our school development plan. We aim to impart good practice via the use of coaching sessions, peer mentoring and staff training. Teaching staff go through an annual cycle of performance management based on progress and attainment of pupil's, a whole school development target and a personal professional target. Support staff have an annual appraisal taking into account their aims and ambitions to develop targets. Staff at Castle Academy work as a team and are all involved in decision making processes. They also recognise the importance of being good role models for the children.

Staff are:

- Punctual and ready to greet their class at the start of the day
- Prompt in releasing their classes at the end of the day.
- Appropriately dressed, well prepared and organised.
- Aware of the language they use when talking to children.
- Positive in their outlook, no matter how they are feeling.
- Supportive of each other.
- Approachable and polite to parents and visitors.
- aware of anxieties and tensions which may exist between home and school.
- Supportive of all school policies
- Given the opportunity to share in the schools development.
- Are highly valued and contribute to school life.
- May run extra-curricular activities.

Children are:

- Children's views regularly sought on all aspects of school life.
- Their contributions are valued and many school developments stem from their ideas. Most opportunities for this occur informally although there are two time-tabled events where the approach is more formal. These are the annual pupil survey (Summer) and the review of the school rules (Spring).
- The children also contribute to the development of the school through the school council.
- Older children play an important part in directing and running playtime games and are expected to do so in a manner in keeping with the school ethos. This is an example of how the children promote the ethos of the school and support the broader learning of the younger children.
- Children have a recognised part in communicating the school ethos beyond the bounds of Castle Academy for example through productions, tournaments, contributing to local newspapers etc.

Parents are:

- Parents are encouraged to offer their views on the school.
- In addition to the termly parent meeting they know they can make an appointment to meet a member of staff at any time.
- They are informed, on a termly basis, of the main areas of work that their child will be covering in class and are given suggestions as to how they can best support this.
- They are encouraged to help out in school and to be involved in school outings when the opportunity arises.
- The annual parent development survey gives them the opportunity to express their views anonymously on all aspects of the school. Their views are then fed into the school development plan and issues stemming from their views are fed back to them.
- There is an active parent committee which helps organise events for the school community.

Governors are:

- The governing body is kept informed of school developments and meets regularly at the school to discuss how best to support pupils, staff and parents, and to drive the school forward.
- Many governors are now attached to classes or subject areas and visit the school regularly during the year to extend their knowledge of the curriculum and to enable them to support staff.
- Staff and governors meet socially at the beginning and end of the year.

Inclusion and Equal Opportunities (see also 'Inclusion Policy')

We ensure that our school reflects the diversity of our ethnic, social and cultural groups in positive ways and provides equal opportunities for all in our school. A range of support is available for any child who has difficulty in accessing learning, belongs to an identified vulnerable group or has special educational needs. We are committed to providing arrangements to meet the needs of all pupils. When appropriate, advice is sought from support agencies to help ensure that individuals have access to a broad and balanced curriculum. We aim to promote the concept of diversity and offer a flexible learning environment to meet a range of learning styles and needs. The school actively and positively supports and encourages policies which stress the importance of equality of opportunity irrespective of their gender, ethnic origin, religious background or special educational needs. We aim, through our work, to challenge prejudice and stereotyping and to promote cooperation and harmony between children. All pupils should have opportunities to succeed in a caring environment in which they feel valued.

Behaviour management

We see behaviour management as crucial in underpinning an environment conducive to learning. We have a consistent approach to behaviour management which staff, children and parents understand and mutually support each other. We have agreed class and whole school rules. We encourage the children to take responsibility for their own actions, choices and decisions in many areas of learning and this guides their consistently good behaviour choices. Most importantly children thrive on praise and positive reinforcement which builds

secure emotional intelligence. Several reward systems are in place, and children with behaviour issues have specific tailor made targets that can be adjusted as necessary and outside agencies are involved if necessary.

Assessment

Formative assessment is used to inform teachers daily planning and drive learning forward. Data is submitted to SLT formally 3 times a year. SLT thoroughly analyse this data to highlight under achievement in cohorts, vulnerable groups or in specific subjects. Challenging pupil targets are set to drive teaching and learning and ensure progress. Data is analysed to ensure Pupil Premium children make good, or better, progress.

Further reference. *This policy need to be seen in conjunction with the other policies listed below.*

- Assessment policy
- Marking policy
- Display policy
- Behaviour policy
- Inclusion policy
- Safeguarding policy
- Pupil Premium
- Very able and talented..