



## A3 Curriculum, Teaching and Learning Policy

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This policy is applicable to all pupils, including those in the EYFS (Nursery and Kindergarten).

This policy was reviewed in March 2019

### \* Curriculum, Teaching and Learning Update

The school introduced the Cornerstones Primary Curriculum in September 2017. Cornerstones provides for comprehensive coverage of both Core and Foundation Subjects, with English and Mathematics taught both separately and in the context of Topics covering all other subjects except RE, for which there is a separate scheme of work. PE is also taught separately. Cornerstones provides detailed plans and schemes of work that are aligned to the Government's new National Curriculum requirements, with programmes of Study clearly identified.

### CURRENT POLICY ON THE CURRICULUM, TEACHING AND LEARNING.

We aim to have a broad, balanced curriculum which prepares the children for life and gives them the knowledge, attitudes and abilities to continue their education at senior level and as part of life in British society. Castle House promotes Fundamental British Values. We understand that everything that we do in school, both inside and outside the classroom, including the pupils' relationships with their peers and staff, is part of the curriculum.

We provide full-time supervised education for all pupils of compulsory school age, which gives pupils experience in linguistic, mathematical, scientific, technological, human and social, physical and aesthetic and creative education. We expect pupils to acquire skills in speaking and listening, literacy and numeracy. We provide subject matter appropriate for the ages and aptitudes of the pupils, including those pupils with a statement, for whom we provide an education which fulfils its requirements. The curriculum is designed throughout to be both broad and flexible, allowing pupils to develop their interests and passions, ensuring that they achieve the highest level to which they are capable.

For this reason therefore we include in the programme for all children every aspect of the whole curriculum. Maths and English are obviously important as core subjects and need sufficient time to be done well. Science and Computing develop thinking, and History, RE, Art and Music are valued for their contribution to a liberal understanding. Geography, French, and PSHE provide windows to a wider world. The physical side of a child is developed in PE. All are fitted in and maintained in the child's curriculum at Castle House, because of the important contribution they make to the development of the whole child. Necessarily, therefore, the curriculum is crowded and the life of the child is busy but also, we believe, enriched.

Through our curriculum we provide the opportunity for all pupils to learn and make progress.

We create appropriate plans and schemes of work (currently rooted in Cornerstones Curriculum Guidance, which is aligned to new national Curriculum Programmes of Study) and which:

- are constructed in accordance with section 8 of the Education Act 1996, which gives full-time supervised education for pupils of compulsory school age and cover pupils experience in linguistic, mathematical, scientific, technological, human and social, physical and aesthetic

- and creative education;
- provide subject matter appropriate for the ages and aptitudes of pupils, including those with additional needs or an Education, Health and Care Plan;
- ensures that pupils acquire speaking, listening, literacy and numeracy skills;
- prepares pupils for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of adult life in British society.
- personal, social and health education which reflect the school's aims and values and ethos;
- where a pupil has an Education, Health and Care Plan, s/he receives an education and care that fulfils the requirements of that plan
- for pupils below compulsory school age, a programme of activities which is appropriate to their educational needs in relation to personal, social, emotional and physical development and communication and language skills;

The Equality Act 2010 retains the previous definition of disability: 'A physical or mental impairment which has substantial and long term adverse impact on a person's ability to carry out normal everyday activities'. This has some overlap with the definition of 'special educational needs' in the Education Act 1996 (which includes pupils with significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority of children of his/her age, or a disability which means that a pupil cannot make full use of the general educational facilities provided for pupils of their age) but we recognise that not all pupils are disabled by their SEND and vice versa. Therefore we will:

- ❑ not treat disabled pupils less favourably;
- ❑ take reasonable steps to avoid putting disabled pupils at a substantial disadvantage (the 'reasonable adjustment' duty) in matters of admission and education.

### **SPECIAL FEATURES OF THE CASTLE HOUSE CURRICULUM**

- ❑ We provide a programme of personal, social, health and citizenship education (PSHCE) which reflects the school's aims and ethos; and we have a PSHCE scheme of work for each year group to deliver this.
- ❑ Through the whole of our curriculum, we seek to prepare pupils for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of adult life.
- ❑ Physical education. We aim to have a physical activity most days of the week within the taught curriculum, with additional opportunities provided by the co-curricular programme.
- ❑ Swimming. All children have swimming lessons, with Kindergarten beginning lessons in the Summer Term.
- ❑ Computing is taught as a discreet subject as well as being used in other subjects.
- ❑ Each class has guided reading sessions. Additionally there are regular silent reading times. We believe it is vital that children are *taught* the habit of regular personal reading.
- ❑ A variety of teaching and learning approaches are used to deliver the curriculum
- ❑ All children have access to all the curriculum, with differentiation where appropriate.
- ❑ Music has an important place in the curriculum.
- ❑ French is taught throughout Key Stages 1 and 2.
- ❑ Pupils are adequately prepared for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of senior school and adult life.

### **PRINCIPLES OF TEACHING AND LEARNING**

Learning is the purpose of the whole school and is a shared commitment. At Castle House School we recognise that education involves children, parents, staff, governors, the community, ISA and as appropriate the local authority, and that for optimum benefit all should work closely together to support the process of learning. As such we are committed to our Mission Statement, aims and values which underpin our Curriculum and Teaching and Learning Policy:

#### Mission Statement

A Castle House Education strives to help children understand their own unique talents and motivate their passions through a creative, comprehensive and challenging curriculum. This is delivered in a nurturing and stimulating environment to enable children to start their journey to becoming inspired, compassionate and fulfilled citizens.

#### Our Aims

- To provide an innovative and extensive curriculum that fosters a love of learning and provides a sense of fulfilment and joy.
- To incorporate a wide range of experiential and hands on learning opportunities for children both inside and outside the classroom.
- To inspire children to be adventurous, passionate, brave and committed towards their learning and projects
- To help children develop a sense of identity and understanding of their own unique self
- To develop skills of compassion, communication and collaboration in order to become happy and active citizens
- To encourage warm, loving and Christian values centred in the core Castle House belief that 'Kindness Counts'
- To develop exceptionally strong and positive relationships with parents, extended family and the wider community in order to establish a strong family atmosphere, a 'home away from home'.

## **Ethos**

The ethos and atmosphere underpin the agreed aims of the school. In the course of their daily work the staff will contribute to the development of this ethos through:

- providing a calm and effective working environment, in which each child can produce his or her best work;
- providing a welcoming environment, in which courtesy, kindness and respect are fostered;
- providing positive role models;
- providing a fair and disciplined environment, in line with the school's behaviour policy;
- effective management of their professional time;
- developing links with all stakeholders and the wider community;
- valuing and celebrating pupils' success and achievements;
- reviewing personal and professional development in order to ensure a high level of professional expertise.

## **Roles and Responsibilities**

Learning and teaching is a shared responsibility and all members of the school community have an important part to play. All members of the school community should work towards the school's aims by:

- esteeming children as individuals and respecting their rights, values and beliefs;
- fostering and promoting good relationships and a sense of belonging to the school community;
- providing a well- ordered environment in which all are fully aware of behavioural expectations;
- offering equal opportunities in all aspects of school life and recognising the importance of different cultures;
- encouraging, praising and positively reinforcing good relationships, behaviours and work;
- working as a team, supporting and encouraging one another.

Teachers will:

- provide challenging and stimulating lessons, based on the Cornerstones Curriculum, which are designed to encourage all children to reach the highest standard of achievement;
- recognise and be aware of the needs of each individual child according to ability and aptitude;
- ensure that learning is progressive and continuous;
- be good role models, punctual, well prepared and organised;
- keep up-to-date with educational issues;
- provide clear information on school procedures and pupil progress;
- have a positive attitude to change and the development of their own expertise;
- establish links with the local community to prepare pupils for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of life;
- work collaboratively with all involved in our children's education to develop a shared philosophy and commonality of practice.

Parents are encouraged to support their child's learning by:

- ensuring that their child attends school regularly, punctually, well-rested and in good health;
- ensuring that their child arrives at school wearing the correct uniform and bringing necessary equipment;
- providing support for the discipline within the school and for the teacher's role;
- supporting the work of educational targets and becoming actively involved in the implementation of any support programme;
- participating in discussions concerning their child's progress and attainment;
- ensuring early contact with school to discuss matters which affect a child's happiness, progress and behaviour;
- support the school's homework policy and give due importance to any homework;
- ensuring that all contact addresses and telephone numbers are up to date and correct;
- allowing their child to become increasingly independent as they progress throughout the school;
- informing the school of reasons for their child's absence;
- actively supporting the Home-School Agreement.

Pupils are encouraged to support the school's aims by:

- attending school in good health, maintained by adequate diet, exercise and sleep;
- attending school regularly and punctually;
- being organised, bringing necessary equipment, taking letters home promptly, etc.;
- conducting themselves in an orderly manner in line with the expected behaviour policy;
- taking increased responsibility for their own learning.

The community is invited to support the school by:

- contributing to activities, such as assemblies, specialist outings, clubs, etc.;
- presenting themselves as positive role models to be emulated;
- organising activities and events throughout the year to extend and deepen pupils' knowledge and skills;
- supporting school events;

## **Planning**

At Castle House School we are committed to following the guidance provided through the recently introduced Cornerstones Curriculum which is aligned to new National Curriculum Programmes of Study. English and mathematics are taught discretely as well as being integrated in the cross curricular approach to learning supported by Cornerstones Topic Planning Programmes.

From KG to Y6 planning takes place half-termly, in line with the guidance provided by Cornerstones Curriculum documentation.

Termly/half-termly plans are submitted to the Headteacher, with time allocations as detailed in individual class time tables.

Religious Education, Physical Education, including Gymnastics and Swimming are taught discretely as is French.

At Castle House School we are committed to raising standards of basic skills. By basic skills, we mean the ability to read, write and speak in English and to use Mathematics at a proficient level to facilitate learning across the curriculum.

Subject leaders have a variety of roles. These include:

- taking the lead in policy development and, for subjects taught discretely, i.e. not included within Cornerstones Schemes of work, the production of schemes of work designed to ensure progression and continuity in their subject throughout the school;
- supporting colleagues in their development and implementation schemes of work, and in assessment and record-keeping activities;

- monitoring progress in their subjects and advising the Headteacher on action needed; taking responsibility for the purchase and organisation of central resources for their subjects;
- using release time to support colleagues;
- keeping up-to-date through reading and attending relevant courses.

Teachers ensure breadth and balance to the curriculum and endeavour to make use of all cross curricular opportunities to enhance learning.

## **Organisation**

The learning environment will be managed in such a way as to facilitate different styles of learning.

Opportunities will be made for:

- whole class teaching;
- group work, organised according to appropriate criteria (i.e. ability, mixed ability, friendship, etc.);
- one to one teaching;
- conferencing;
- collaborative learning in pairs or groups;
- independent learning.

All areas of the learning environment will be planned for, including, where appropriate, the outside areas, in order to ensure opportunities for a range of practical activities, which will develop appropriate knowledge, skills and understanding.

The classroom will be organised to facilitate learning and the development of independence. For example:

- resources in each area will be grouped according to curriculum subject;
- book corners will be comfortable and attractive;
- labels and posters should be used wherever possible/appropriate to reflect the language diversity in the school;
- areas for imaginative play will change regularly, in order to give opportunities for a range of play and role-play which will contribute to learning in a purposeful manner;
- pupils will be involved in the maintenance and care of all equipment and resources.

Classrooms provide a stimulating and purposeful learning environment, including thought provoking and stimulating displays.

Classroom support is available in the form of our Learning Support Specialists who are line managed by the SENCO and are guided by the SENCO and class teacher. Students are welcomed into school and certain standards of dress and conduct are expected.

Excellence is celebrated in display and performance. Each child is given an opportunity to have work displayed during the school year. Sustained effort, including drafting and reworking, is encouraged to enhance standards. School events such as performances and assemblies are seen as opportunities for all pupils to demonstrate their own best performance. Pupils are encouraged to believe that any exhibited work (performance or display) should represent their highest standards of personal achievement

## **Differentiation**

Every class at Castle House has a mixture of abilities. Teachers therefore differentiate their delivery of the curriculum within a class, by using reinforcement or extension activities, by differentiation of tasks or by outcome and by working with groups or individuals in the class. Where a pupil has an Education, Health and Care Plan, we provide education which fulfils its requirements.

Depending on numbers, some classes are combined for some subjects. Therefore, planning of the curriculum takes into consideration the need to differentiate according to the requirements of the pupils, both as individuals and as groups: the curriculum for a particular year group may have to be

adjusted at the planning stage depending on the previous learning experiences of the children. The curriculum cannot be regarded as an unmoveable object.

In summary:

So that we always have the highest possible expectations of individual learners and so they can demonstrate what they can do, understand and achieve, teachers will differentiate the curriculum according to individual needs by:

- pace;
- content;
- task;
- relevance;
- resources;
- extension;
- autonomy;
- outcome;
- teacher/adult support.

Pupils with special educational needs (including gifted and talented children) receive support provided by a Learning Support Specialist. This may be through withdrawal to the Learning Support Room or in the classroom. Additionally, advice is sought from relevant external support agencies when and where the need demands it. (See Special Educational Needs and Disability Policy)

Teachers set individual targets each term per child in English and Mathematics. This is in addition to the formative assessment targets the teachers communicate to the children on a weekly or daily basis where appropriate. These are shared with the child and parents to encourage partnerships in learning.

## **Homework**

Homework is considered to be a valuable element of the learning process. We believe that homework should be set:

- to involve parents in their children's learning;
- to help parents keep abreast of what their child can and cannot do;
- to take advantage of the home context to apply learning;
- to encourage children to talk about their work to their parents and explain what they are doing and how;
- to extend the time for learning, thus enabling children to practice and consolidate their skills and knowledge and strategies;
- to prepare children for secondary school experiences of homework;
- to view learning as a life-long process and not just restricted to school hours.

The school's agreed practice for homework is that:

- homework is set on a regular basis, for all years, and should be time limited according to age and ability;
- homework will generally follow on from work which has taken place in class, i.e. research/ presentations linked to the Cornerstones Topic currently being undertaken but may take many different forms, including reading, learning multiplication facts and spellings. It should not entail new ideas that require explanation from a teacher;
- homework may sometimes consist of preparation for work yet to be done;
- children should understand exactly what they are expected to do, how to do it, and how long it should take;
- homework should sometimes involve the participation of the parents;
- children who have made insufficient effort during class time may occasionally be asked to complete work at home.

## **Assessment, Recording and Reporting**

Regular assessments are made of pupils' work in order to establish the level of attainment and to inform future planning. Formative assessment is used to guide the progress of individual pupils. It involves identifying each child's progress in each area of the curriculum, determining what each child has learned and what therefore should be the next stage in his/her learning.

Formal summative assessment is carried out termly using Cornerstones Assessments from Y1 – Y6

Suitable tasks for ongoing formative assessment include:

- group discussions;
- short tests in which pupils write answers;
- specific assignments for individual pupils;
- discussions in which children are encouraged to appraise their own work and progress;
- pupil observations;

Feedback to pupils about their own progress is achieved through discussion and the marking of work. Effective marking:

- is developmental and is clear in identifying next steps, helping children understand how to improve
- all comments are positive and constructive;
- is often done while a task is being carried out through discussion between child and teacher;
- of written work is used sensitively and with discretion so that a child can assimilate a limited number of corrections at one time. This will vary according to the age, ability and task.

All results from assessments are analysed and used to inform future planning. Cross phase continuity is ensured by:

- pre-school liaison meetings;
- cross-phase liaison meetings;
- in-school liaison meetings between staff;
- liaison meetings between Year 6 teachers and those from prospective secondary schools;
- visits to secondary schools by Year 6 pupils;
- transfer of pupil records of progress and summative assessment results.

Reports/Records of progress kept for each child are:

- updated as a minimum termly by teachers;
- examined by class teachers prior to the start of each academic year as they prepare for a new class;
- retained throughout the child's time at the school and appropriate records passed on to other schools when pupils leave.

Reporting to parents is done three times a year through written reports and consultations. Results of individual pupils' assessments are made available to the parents concerned.

### **Monitoring and Evaluation**

Pupils' work will be monitored and moderated regularly in each of the core curriculum areas by the subject leaders and the Headteacher. A termly review of monitoring procedures is held with all members of the teaching staff in the form of Pupil Progress Meetings which includes discussions around our whole school approach to the curriculum, teaching, learning and the impact of the interventions that are used. Subject leaders will regularly monitor children's books. The Headteacher will observe each class-teacher in a specified curriculum area on a regular basis.

### **Teaching Strategies and Styles**

In order to ensure equality of access and effective matching of tasks to needs, teachers will employ a variety of teaching strategies in any one session. This will include:

- provision of an integrated curriculum;

- teacher observation;
- discussion and questioning (open and closed as appropriate);
- previewing and reviewing work;
- didactic teaching;
- interactive teaching;
- conferencing;
- listening;
- brainstorming;
- providing opportunities for reflection by pupils;
- demonstrating high expectations;
- providing opportunities for repetition/reinforcement;
- providing encouragement, positive reinforcement and praise;
- making judgements and responding to individual need;
- intervening, as appropriate, in the learning process in order to encourage development;
- providing all children with opportunities for success;
- using a range of communication strategies – verbal and non-verbal.

Activities should show a balance in terms of individual, group and whole class work. Specialist teaching is available from subject leaders when they can be released from class and also in the form of visitors.

The emphasis of our policy is on a good variety of experiences and we encourage children increasingly to take an active role in their own learning. Thus:

- investigative work is used;
- children are encouraged to communicate findings in a variety of ways;
- opportunities are provided for children to become involved in decision making and to take responsibility, along with staff, for their own learning.

At Castle House School we recognise the importance of key skills. Opportunities will be made available across the curriculum to develop:

- application of number;
- communication;
- computing skills
- problem solving;
- working with others;
- improving own learning and performance.

Thinking skills will also be developed across the curriculum. This will include:

- creative thinking;
- enquiry;
- information processing;
- reasoning;
- evaluation.

At Castle House School we recognise the importance of formative assessment and the important role it has to play in creating a learning culture. We believe that formative assessment furthers and deepens learning and consists of four basic elements, underpinned by confidence that every child can improve and an awareness of the importance of children's high self-esteem. The four elements are: sharing learning objectives; effective questioning; self and peer evaluation; effective feedback. Formative assessment carries with it the expectation that, when properly motivated and appropriately taught, all learners can reach a level of achievement which may currently appear beyond them. It provides a breadth of proven life-long learning skills based on an understanding of how we learn rather than what we ought to be learning. This includes:

- creating a positive learning environment;
- focusing all feedback on specific performance improvements which can be acted on;
- sharing an overview of content, process and benefits of the learning to come;
- engaging learners by posing problems and challenging thinking;

- providing opportunities for learners to meet the challenge in a variety of pairings and with multiple ways of representing their understanding;
- creating space for reflection and meaningful dialogue;
- reviewing what has been learned, how it was learned and how it will be used.

### **Learning Processes and Learning Styles**

Children enter school at different stages of development. Children learn in different ways and at different rates of progress. In the course of learning, children develop their skills through a variety of processes and learning styles. These include:

- investigation;
- experimentation;
- listening;
- observation;
- talking and discussion;
- asking questions;
- child-initiated play;
- practical exploration and role play;
- retrieving information;
- imagining;
- repetition;
- problem-solving;
- making choices and decision-making.

At Castle House School opportunities are organised to allow pupils access to these processes, and for them to develop their own strategies to gain knowledge and skills. We aim to provide opportunities to develop a wide range of learning styles. We recognise that each child has a unique way of learning and that learning preference is affected by previous experience, competence, confidence, beliefs and values. We shall ensure that learning is accessed by as many means as possible, e.g. VAK. Staff are aware of a range of theories and research linked to learning including encouraging a 'Growth Mindset'.

Planning will incorporate as many styles of working as possible. These styles include:

- individual learning;
- collaborative learning in small groups, or pairs;
- one to one learning with an adult, or more able pupil;
- whole class;
- independent learning.

Group work may include friendship, matched ability, mixed ability, etc., appropriate to the activity. Collaborative learning is encouraged, although some periods of the day may be set aside for silent work.

Teachers at Castle House School believe that pupils learn best when:

- they are happy, healthy and alert – receptive and positive
- they are interested and involved – learning is relevant and stimulating
- the purpose of a task is understood – they understand why they are doing it
- they feel secure – in terms of environment, relationships and learning
- they feel valued – teachers and other adults care about their development as learners
- they have opportunities to explore and take risks
- they are actively involved, making choices and taking responsibility in their learning
- they have an element of control and can work with independence
- they receive positive feedback and praise for achievements
- the learning environment is well-organised and resources are easily accessed
- tasks are differentiated, matched to the child
- learning is built on existing knowledge and experience – clearly defined small steps
- they have opportunities to talk about their work, reflecting, discussing and sharing ideas
- the teacher is knowledgeable, enthusiastic and motivated

- they have clearly defined targets which they can successfully achieve e.g. appropriate time scale

Effective learning is ensured through high expectations of attainment and progress supported by detailed planning, ongoing assessment, and the use of appropriate interventions, all of which are monitored and evaluated for impact and the outcomes acted upon.

External indicators include success in examinations and other entry requirements of the schools to which our pupils transfer at 11.

Successful teaching takes account of children's prior learning and must ensure continuity and progression.

Linked to the above, successful teaching is:

- confident – teachers have a clear understanding of subject knowledge and setting objectives
- high expectation – there is optimism about, and high expectation of success
- well planned – there is differentiation with methods and organisation strategies which match curricular objectives and needs of all pupils
- interactive – pupil's contributions are encouraged, expected, extended
- characterised by high quality oral work
- well-paced – there is a sense of urgency, driven by the need to make progress and succeed
- informed – by assessment outcomes

## **Resources**

Classroom and central resources are the responsibility of classroom teachers and subject leaders who ensure that:

- there is a range of appropriate, accessible and labelled resources available for which pupils can select materials suitable to the task in hand;
- all children know where classroom resources are kept and the rules about their access and use;
- children are encouraged to act independently in choosing, collecting and returning resources where appropriate;
- the library is a valued resource and used appropriately;
- children work together to establish an attractive, welcoming and well organised environment engendering respect, care and value for all resources.

Each classroom will be equipped with a basic set of resources and books appropriate to the age range. Specialist resources will be stored in the appropriate curriculum resource cupboard/area, and will be regularly audited by the subject leaders. Consumables will be replenished as necessary. Staff may contact subject leaders with suggestions for specialist materials which may need ordering.

Pupils will be taught how to use all resources correctly and safely, with care and respect and with regard for Health and Safety and waste. Care will be taken to ensure that resources reflect the cultural and linguistic diversity of our society, and that all pupils have equality of access.

At Castle House School the use of visits and visitors to enrich the curriculum is valued and these are used throughout the school to widen children's experiences and support learning across a range of subject areas.

Time is a resource that we value. To maximise its use:

- as children progress throughout the school they are encouraged to take greater control of their own learning, including their use of time;
- opportunities for learning are maximised by ensuring that tasks are made specific by focused objectives;
- teachers will encourage pupils to work within given time scales, and will facilitate the effective use of time through the provision of appropriate resources and planning extension activities;
- all children engage in useful activities upon entering the classroom and know what to do between the end of an activity and the end of a session.

Computing is a major resource, which is used across the whole curriculum.

Health and Safety issues are the responsibility of all who work in the school. Two members of staff are nominated as Health and Safety representatives and all problems should be reported to them. These are the Headteacher and Site Manager.

**PUPILS BELOW COMPULSORY SCHOOL AGE (EYFS)**

The nursery and Kindergarten have pupils below compulsory school age who are in the Early Years Foundation Stage. They are provided with a programme of activities which is appropriate to their educational needs in relation to personal, social, emotional and physical development and communication and language skills in line with EYFS guidance.