



The Castle School

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Teaching and Learning Policy

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Due for review: Spring Term 2026

This policy covers all aspects of Teaching and Learning (T&L) and is the implementation of the curriculum, for example, literacy, numeracy, metacognition, homework, assessment, marking and feedback. We have adopted this approach in order to streamline workload for teachers and to recognise that all these aspects are simply good teaching and learning. This brings clarity and simplicity for teachers and engages with cognitive science and education research.

This is underpinned by Teacher Standards.

Teaching and Learning Guiding Principles at The Castle School

There are 3 strands:

- Culture
- Planning
- Teaching
 - Presenting new material
 - Questioning and discussion
 - Practice
 - Assessment and feedback

The implementation of the curriculum is the focus of the curriculum. The knowledge of the subjects and the courses to be taught.

The curriculum is well designed and planned to deliver good secure knowledge to all groups of children. There are the curriculum map and schemes of learning (SoL) identifies the knowledge, and sequences this for teachers to deliver the curriculum .

Planning

Sequences of lessons are planned to introduce new knowledge in a manner that recognises the demands placed on the working memory of students and reduces cognitive overload. Teachers provide models and scaffolds for difficult tasks with clear explanations that enable children to understand what is being taught and to build upon their prior knowledge. Teachers reflect upon the 'Guiding Principles', taking account of what the needs are of each child and addressing these.

There is no lesson proforma, teachers plan the learning in the way that suits them and is creative and individual. However, teachers must plan the learning. A Powerpoint is a resource. Class profiles assist in the planning of lessons and ensure that all groups of children are successful in learning.

Our Guiding principles are the focus of Continued Professional Development (CPD).

CPD Principles

- We are a learning community and want to continuously improve.
- All staff are entitled to CPD that supports them in their role and enables them to do their job well.

- Needs are identified through the School Improvement Plan and the Performance management (PM) targets of individuals.
- CPD provision will be delivered through a number of ways including, but not limited to, subject specific curriculum time, whole school CPD (once per half term), pastoral meetings inset days, shadowing, coaching, peer observations, leadership programmes like the National Professional Qualification for Senior Leadership (NPQSL) etc, Cross Trust subject groups and School Leadership meetings (Heads of House, Head of Department, second in department and Heads of Faculty).

Assessment, marking and feedback (for more information see the assessment and reporting policy)

Children's work needs to be acknowledged and praised, and corrected. Guidance for next steps leads to improvement. The school expectation is that work is marked every 6 lessons. However, regard must be given to workload and teachers are encouraged to use smart marking techniques, for example, but not limited to, whole class feedback, green penning and peer marking. Teachers must ensure students correct misconceptions including spellings, and fill gaps in knowledge.

Teachers are encouraged to use a range of formative assessment techniques in the classroom to identify gaps and misconceptions and then reteach.

Summative assessment, which is designed to test whether knowledge has moved into long term memory, is timed so that it has maximum impact on the learning of students. Summative assessments are likely to be 75% through the topic in order that teachers can ensure that the knowledge is secure and reteach if necessary.

Student progress is reported home twice a year through reports and Interim Assessments. In KS4 this will include GCSE grades and Attitude to Learning grades. In KS3 this includes attainment grades which shows whether students have understood the key knowledge. KS3 reports will also include an ATL grade. Students in Years 7-10 will experience one series of mock exams per year. Students in Year 11 will have two series of mocks.

Homework

Homework encourages independence and should be meaningful, extend the learning, and practice or revise what has been taught in the lesson or sequence of lessons. Knowledge organisers followed by low stakes quizzing is frequently used. Reasonable deadlines must be set. It is not fair to set homework that has to be handed in the next day, families need to have a chance to plan support for their child.

Guidelines to timings, these are only guidelines and may vary.

Year 7: 20 minutes per subject up to one hour a night.

Years 8 & 9: 30 minutes per subject per week, up to 90 minutes per night.

Years 10 & 11: 50 minutes per subject per night up to 2 hours per night.

All homework is put on Class Charts and for this reason, we allow students to use their mobile phones in school.

Roles and responsibilities

- Heads of Faculty (HoFs) ensure that Curriculum maps and Schemes of Learning are rich and resourced and sequence the knowledge.
- HoFs have a responsibility to ensure that lessons reflect the Guiding Principles
- Teachers plan the learning for the children in their classes, ensuring that the needs of every child are met. This includes Education, Health & Care Plans (EHCPs), Special Education Needs (SEN) passports, Pupil Premium (PP) and Disadvantaged, etc.
- Teachers mark the work every 6 lessons using recommendations on smart marking.
- Teachers ensure that students respond to their feedback and marking and that corrections are done.
- Strategic leadership ensure that Curriculum Maps and SoLs are suitable and support teachers in their delivery of the curriculum.
- Strategic leadership monitors the quality of teaching, learning and assessment (QTLA) and supports HoFs in ensuring the Guiding Principles are common practice within each faculty.
- Governors hold the Strategic Leadership Team (SLT) to account for the QTLA through the Governing Body. Governors are informed by a) outcomes by subject, b) School Improvement Partner (SIP) reports, c) outcomes of from the quality assurance cycle (curriculum and pedagogy reviews).