



Castle School

Teaching & Learning Policy

Policy Preface

Northumberland Church of England Academy Trust is a Christian learning environment at the heart of its communities. We promote care and respect, and expect high standards in all aspects of our Trust life.

As a Church of England Academy Trust, we aim to build communities clearly based on the Christian values of love, forgiveness and reconciliation, integrity and the unique value of each individual. We aim to build self-esteem, model conflict resolution, protect the weak and are committed to justice and compassion. Mutual respect and trust are central within the Academy Trust.

This policy, and its associated procedures and protocols, is based on these key principles.

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Teaching and Learning Policy

1.0 Aims and objectives

Castle School aims to provide broad, balanced, diverse and differentiated learning experiences within an environment that is safe, creative and fun. We aim to facilitate a pupil's acquisition of knowledge, skills and qualities which will help them to develop intellectually, emotionally, socially, physically and morally, so that they may become independent and responsible members of the community

The curriculum provides a natural progression from Early Years to Key Stage 5 with programmes designed for and implemented at an appropriate level.

Whilst the overall aims of the curriculum will be the same for all children and young people attending Castle School, the styles of teaching and learning may be different according to the specific learning needs of the pupils. Throughout the curriculum, the central focus will be on what the pupils are learning, which will be different for different pupils, rather than simply what the pupils are doing.

We aim to do this by enabling our pupils to become:

- **Successful Learners** who are engaged in and enjoy their learning – making excellent progress and experiencing achievement.
- **Effective Communicators** who can express themselves, make choices and build positive relationships with other people and have increasing control and influence over their lives.
- **Confident Individuals** who having had a variety of successful experiences, are able to take a full part in activities within school and the community. Also to provide the appropriate level of challenge and risk taking in order to develop resilience and be able to cope when things go wrong.
- **Active Participants** in developing a healthy, safe lifestyle, developing good relationships and respecting differences between people, developing positive mental and physical health, happiness and a sense of well-being.
- **Well-prepared for their Adult Life** where they have increasing control and influence over their own lives and develop into young people who are as independent as possible.

1.1 Ethos

- Enabling learners of differing abilities and whose experiences are wide ranging to develop at their individual level and stage of development.
- Providing varied and appropriately differentiated learning experiences that match individual needs and abilities.
- Providing all learners with opportunities to acquire, develop, practise, apply and extend their skills in range of contexts across the curriculum.
- Having high expectations of our learners and ourselves.
- To give learners access to a curriculum that is meaningful and relevant for them.
- To foster learners' self-esteem, and help them to build positive relationships with other people.

- To develop learners' self-respect, and through respecting themselves, encourage them to understand the ideas, attitudes, feelings and values of others.
- To show respect for all religions and cultures and, in so doing, to promote positive attitudes towards other people.
- To enable learners to understand their community, and help them feel valued as part of it.
- To help learners grow into reliable, independent and positive citizens.
- To develop in learners a lifelong love of learning.

1.2 Communication

- Enabling learners to express preferences, communicate needs, make choices, make decisions and choose options that other people act on and respect.
- Encouraging learners to interact and communicate effectively with others in a range of social situations.
- Recognising the crucial role which parents play in their child's education and making every effort to encourage parental involvement in the educational process.
- Working closely with specialists and professional agencies to ensure that learner needs are met.

1.3 Learning

- Promoting a positive attitude towards learning, so that learners enjoy coming to school, and acquire a solid basis for lifelong learning.
- Incorporating a range of teaching and learning strategies, and quality resources suitable for an individual's age and stage of development.
- Preparing learners for an adult life in which they have the greatest possible degree of independence.
- Teaching learners to have an awareness of their own spiritual development, and to understand right from wrong.
- Helping learners understand the importance of truth and fairness, so that they grow up committed to equal opportunities for all.
- Enabling learners to have respect for themselves and high self-esteem, and to be able to live and work co-operatively with others.
- Ensuring that learners have access to a wide range of opportunities to enrich and broaden their experience
- Reviewing, monitoring and evaluating planning, teaching and learning strategies.
- Using a thorough process of continual assessment which informs future planning (Routes for Learning, iASEND, MAPP).
- Maintaining Learning Journey / Journals / portfolios, which celebrate success.
- Providing opportunities for external accreditation if appropriate.
- Providing relevant work experience placements and independent travel opportunities for learners in key stage 4.

1.4 Context

- Providing equality of opportunity for all learners regardless of gender
- Creating and maintaining an exciting and stimulating learning environment.
- Increasing learner awareness and understanding of their environment and the world, encouraging learners to explore, to question, to think and to challenge.
- Providing excellent staff and ensuring that they are employed effectively.
- Ensuring that the teaching and learning policy is implemented consistently by all staff.

1.5 Differentiation

- Learning activities are differentiated so that they are closely matched to individual needs, and make use of a variety of systems to promote inclusive education (Signs, P.E.C.S., symbols, ICT).
- Scaffold activities enable learners to experience success and builds their confidence to progress independently.
- Collaborative learning is encouraged through working in pairs, small and large groups.
- Independent learning is encouraged through differentiated tasks and collaborative talk to support individual work.
- Lessons are evaluated by teaching staff on completion.

2.0 Legal framework

This policy has due regard to statutory legislation including, but not limited to, the following:

- Equality Act 2010
- Equality Act 2010 (Disability) Regulations 2010

This policy also has due regard to statutory and non-statutory guidance including, but not limited to, the following:

DfE (2015) 'Special educational needs and disability code of practice: 0 to 25 years'

3.0 Equal opportunities

We aim to ensure that all pupils have access to all lessons, as appropriate. Some activities are age-restricted and others are such that pupils may require the aid of a personal assistant. If these barriers can be overcome, we offer equal opportunities for all.

We respect each other's religions, cultures, values and beliefs and teach these throughout the curriculum.

The school strives to be fully inclusive. All lessons are made accessible for all our pupils – this may be through the use of differentiated resources, through support from TAs, or through the use of sensory resources.

All pupils are fully included in all lessons – staff are highly trained to ensure that pupils are catered for whatever their special educational needs and disabilities.

We use a 'total communication' approach to ensure that all pupils can access the lessons – this includes the use of signing, symbols and objects of reference where needed.

All staff have high expectations of all pupils and aim to provide an environment where all pupils are fully included and can achieve their best.

4.0 Assessment

We recognise that the national curriculum age-related expectations are not appropriate for many pupils with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND). In which case, the school ensures the curriculum is broad, balanced and differentiated to suit all pupils' needs.

A copy of the school's curriculum is available upon request.

We organise the curriculum roughly by age and key stage so the children and young people experience the feeling of moving towards adulthood. We also organise our class groups into learning pathways as much as is possible recognising that all children learn in different ways. We recognise that children will move between pathways as they develop and get older and we will monitor this through regular pupil progress meetings and assessments. The priorities for children's learning will change as they move through school according to their development and in preparation for leaving school and this will be recognised in our curriculum.

All our teachers have good knowledge of the school's assessment system. Assessment is carried out throughout the year and targets are adjusted accordingly.

Teachers and teaching assistants (TAs) provide feedback for our learners. Any misconceptions are acted upon immediately and pupils' work is then reinforced through extra teaching.

5.0 Individual Learning Plans

Individual Learning plan (ILP) targets are set as part of the annual review process.

The ILP sets targets that are different from or additional to those that are needed for all pupils.

Targets are taken from the EHC plan and are monitored once per term.

Targets include the areas within the EHCP and include Communication and Interaction, Cognition and Learning, Social Emotional and Mental Health, Sensory and/or Physical

All ILP targets are SMART targets (specific, measurable, agreed upon, realistic and time-related) and are monitored regularly

6.0 Lesson planning

Medium-term plans are given to the phase leader at the start of each term and are available to parents upon request.

The leadership team and external advisors observe lessons delivered by all teachers on an ongoing basis.

TAs and support staff are strategically placed to support learning as directed by class teachers and the leadership team.

Lessons include a combination of whole-class, group and individual teaching.

Clear routines are used throughout the school and understood by all pupils and staff.

Expertly differentiated, personalised lessons are delivered in all classes.

Opportunities to improve literacy, numeracy and communication are provided throughout all lessons.

Resources may be created for specific pupils – this might include the use of symbols, switch access, computer programs and/or access technology.

All staff present themselves as a positive role model for our learners.

7.0 Behaviour management

The school has an ethos of positive behaviour management.

Classes devise their own rules and each class works towards their own reward system which helps and encourages pupils to focus on their learning.

The school is calm and quiet.

The school has devised its own Behaviour Support Plans for those who require extra help with their behaviour – these plans are shared with all staff to ensure a consistent approach.

8.0 Classrooms

All classrooms are clean, clutter free and have colourful displays – the displays are made by the pupils and are replaced regularly in line with the topic being taught. We recognise that displays enhance learning and we value the work displayed as best evidence of learning.

All classes make use of visual timetables and calendars appropriate to the needs of the class group – these are designed to aid pupils to make sense of their day.

We build the self-esteem and confidence of our learners through their time in the classrooms so that they feel equipped to address new challenges.

We maintain a high ratio of TAs to pupils to support the different learning needs of the pupils.

All TAs are effectively trained and highly skilled.

9.0 Health and safety

The health and safety of our pupils is paramount.

We regularly conduct health and safety audits to ensure that the school building and playground is as safe as possible.

All staff members will act in accordance with the school's Health and Safety Policy and associated procedures, including undertaking risk assessments where necessary.

10.0 Parents

Parents/carers are encouraged to be open and honest with us. We value our pupils' parents/carers and, if they have any concerns, they are asked to write in the home-school diary, phone, or make an appointment to speak to a teacher or member of the leadership team.

We hold parents/carers evenings and drop in sessions where parents/carers are invited to meet the teachers and teaching assistants once per term.

We post regular updates on our Twitter and Facebook page to allow parents/carers to see the lessons their children are involved in. Permission slips are obtained for this at the start of each academic year and parents may revoke permission at any time.

Parents/carers are invited to attend annual reviews, collaborative meetings and meetings with other professionals as appropriate. Appointments are set in advance to allow arrangements to be made.

If a parent/carer cannot make themselves available for any of the above but would still like to visit school, please contact the school office and we will do our best to accommodate you.

11.0 Attendance

Some of our children and young people have medical needs and attending school is a struggle for them. It is important that they attend as often as possible and the school will support them to do this as much as possible. The school nurses are available for advice.

We recognise that many of our pupils have complex needs and may not be able to attend school from time-to-time. Parents/carers are asked to ring and inform the school on the first day of absence and each day thereafter. Parents/carers will receive work for their child from the class teacher if the absence is prolonged.

Holidays should not be taken in term-time without the permission of the Principal. In exceptional circumstances, the Principal may grant permission and a homework holiday project may be set to ensure learning continues.