

Welcome to Early Years



At Castle School we can take children from two years old to join us in our Early Years Department which consists of two mixed age classes up to Year 2, Bees and Ladybirds. Children are grouped according to their learning styles to ensure the most effective progress for each individual.

We also work closely with Dragonfly class which follows an early years approach to learning and includes children on Year 1 and 2.

Aims of the Early Years Department



- To provide an induction programme that enables children to come to school happily.
- To build a relationship with both children and parents through pre-school and Home visits, information meetings and booklets, enabling children to settle well into Castle.
- To help the children develop their social skills when interacting with others.
- To build on children's existing skills in thinking and communication, enabling them to access the school curriculum.
- To develop the children's physical skills, so that they have increased control over their body movements.
- To enable the children to understand more about the world around them by exploring first hand features of both the natural and man-made world.

Early Years Curriculum



Children in the Early Years follow the Early Years areas of learning and are taught according to their preferred learning style.

Children with more complex needs focus on the prime areas of learning - Communication, Cognition, Physical and Social and Emotional learning and how they interact with their environment and others around them. These skills are practised through sensory play based learning and a variety of specialist interventions such as Intensive Interaction and TACPAC.

Early Years Curriculum

Some children focus on the Early Years 7 areas of learning, Communication, Physical, Personal and Social, Literacy, Mathematics, Understanding of the world and Expressive Arts.

We have organised the curriculum into six half termly topics over 3 years:

Term	Topics Year 1	Topics Year 2	Topics Year 3
Autumn 1	Familiar settings / our school	Ourselves / our school	Ourselves / our emotions
Autumn 2	Festivals	Festivals / weather	Festivals / seasons
Spring 1	Toys	Underwater	Food
Spring 2	Buildings	Hot / cold countries	People who help us
Summer 1	Minibeasts	Growing / life cycles	Sound, Light and senses
Summer 2	Transport	Animals	Dinosaurs

We believe that activities should always be relevant, imaginative, multi sensory, motivating, enjoyable and challenging. We have an outdoor area linked to Ladybird and Dragonfly classes and this enables us to plan independent learning opportunities across both classrooms and outdoor areas.

Early Years Assessment

During the first six weeks of their first year at Castle school, pupils are observed and assessed to gain an entry-level assessment. This combined with records and entry profiles built up from previous schools or nurseries and home visits, starts our assessment data for new students.



Students in Nursery and Reception year are assessed using the developmental milestones from 0 to 60 months or Routes for Learning Route Map which focuses on core skills. Evidence of individual achievements are collected in each child's 'Learning Journey' which is available for parents to see during parents evenings and open mornings.

Multidisciplinary Links

Links are made with the multidisciplinary team according to individual students needs.



During the autumn term, the multidisciplinary team more formally assesses the children's needs and achievements in their new school and support the class team with strategies and games to enhance learning. Throughout the year the multidisciplinary team is there to answer any questions on an individual basis and provide training for staff in areas such as medication, physiotherapy and communication systems.

Partnership with Parents

Parents are an important part of the Castle School. Home visits and visits to preschool are undertaken in July and parent's knowledge is greatly valued as an insight into their child's abilities and characteristics.

When school starts, parents are in contact on a daily basis through the home school diary or by phone if necessary.



Open Morning



They are also encouraged to help out during swimming sessions and join us for open morning, assemblies and special school lunches e.g. mother's day. A weekly newsletter is also sent home to inform parents of whole school news.