

Managing challenging behaviour at Castle School

At Castle we know that some of our pupils are going to have problems managing their own behaviour and we have a range of strategies to support them. These can include anything from enhanced communication systems, specialised rewards, emotional or psychological support. There are several key features to our behaviour support:

We interpret challenging behaviour as communication

We understand that some children find it hard to express their needs, and no matter how challenging their behaviour is, it is important to understand the message behind the behaviour, and help them to express their needs in a more appropriate way. This means that support for pupils includes the question, 'What skills should we teach to replace the challenging behaviour?' It also means that no child is difficult just for the sake of it.

Behaviour for learning

We aim to improve all types of behaviour. We take into consideration not just the 'traditional' views of inappropriate behaviour, but any behaviour that impacts upon a pupil's learning or wellbeing. We want to help pupils become more able to manage their emotions, to be calm enough to concentrate, organise their lives, thrive in their relationships, express themselves, and indeed improve any aspect of their lives.

A positive approach

We do not use punishment as a way of improving behaviour; there are several reasons for this, but the main one is there are more effective approaches which protect the dignity of the people involved. Whatever the starting point, we know there is nothing to be gained by blame or causing guilt, and everything to be gained by empowering children to be successful, and rewarding and celebrating when they are.

Partnership

We understand that helping children improve the way they approach their lives is going to be a team effort. We make it a priority to work with parents and carers as openly and as closely as possible. Often there is an element of trial and error in the work we do, and it is important for everyone to have the confidence to be able to say what is working and what needs changing. We also recognise that children can sometimes display very different behaviours at school than they do at home, often for reasons that are nothing to do with the support they get in either location.

We also work closely with a wide variety of other professionals - the more help we can get, the greater the chance of progress.

Changing behaviour can be difficult, but we can all learn.

In summary, we know that some of the behaviours some of our pupils present with can be very challenging, and cause themselves and/or others some distress. We try to provide support that is as sensitive as it is effective, but we also know that sometimes the answer will take time and effort to materialise.