



# Castle School Early Years

# Welcome

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Our Early Years provision is based across two sites.

Pre-formal Learners are in Bees Class which is on the main Castle site.

Semi Formal Learners are in Wrens class based on the Fields site Galfrid Road.







# Semi formal Learning in Wrens class, based at the Fields site

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- Wrens is a mixed Early Years and KS1 class.
  - Our initial focus in Wrens is to celebrate the unique learning characteristics of the individual child and establish the excitement and lure of learning, laying the foundations for further progression.
  - We aim to build supportive relationships and routines in a communicative immersive environment.
  - Pupils follow an adapted Early Years Foundation Stage Curriculum focusing on the 7 areas of learning. They have time to choose their own activities with adults playing alongside developing new skills with them.
  - Our bespoke outside area, is integral to our learning in all areas.
  - Our curriculum is play based. Children have opportunities to experience mark making, math's, investigations, reading, sand, water, construction, playdough, role play, creative and sensory exploration. These are enhanced through specialist therapy interventions and enrichment activities such as TAC PAC, Clever Fingers, and Sherbourne Movement.

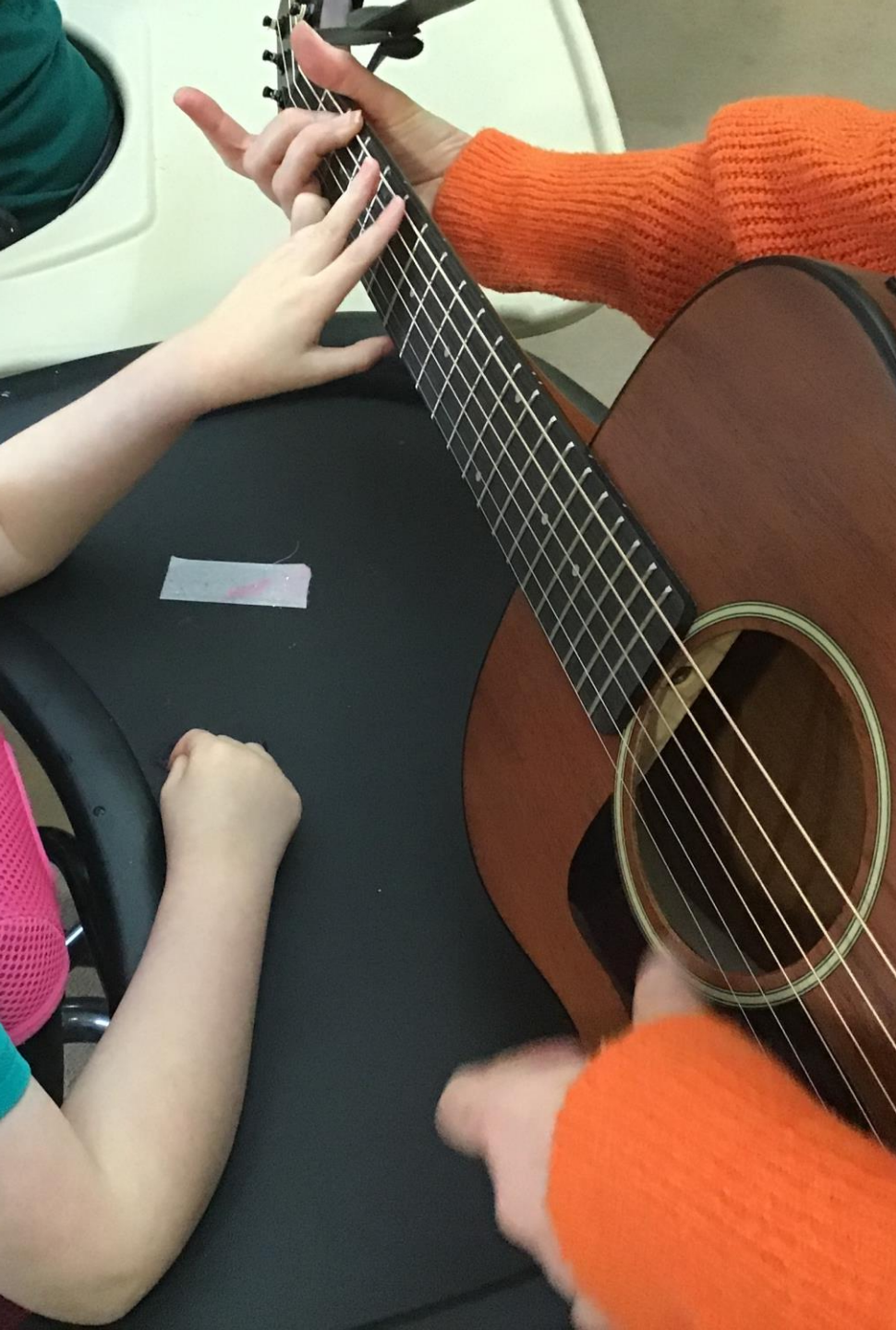


# Pre-formal learning in Bees class

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Our Pre formal learners follow The Explore Curriculum, which is a sensory curriculum based on the core areas, communication, cognition, physical and social. Pupils develop body awareness through physiotherapy sessions every morning and weekly swimming and rebound activities. The pupils also use their standing frames daily to work on weight-bearing and when in different positions, they carry out bespoke lessons which will help them to develop core skills. Pupils work on using their vision throughout all activities, to reinforce visual skills they might find difficult. Some also focus on contingency awareness and responding which helps them understand they can make things happen.





# Therapeutic approach

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We provide a therapeutic environment for learning. This means that children are helped to take the next steps in their development in a spirit of hope and excitement, in an environment characterised by a sense of safety, trust, collaboration, empowerment and a love of life.

The learning needs of our Early Years Learners are best met through a personalised learning approach that places relationships at the heart of activities and is based on the principles of communication, cognition, social and emotional development and physical development. Our Early Years learners need a bespoke timetable that enables health and care plans to be seamlessly incorporated into their daily timetable to run alongside their education plans. The focus of the curriculum is on the learner and his/her abilities and interests.



# Enhanced opportunities

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Our learning is for life and much of it takes place outside of the classroom in our outside areas and in our specialised rooms.

In the Early Years we practice our skills through play to prepare for the wider world.



# Communication and Reading

Communication and interaction is at the core of our curriculum. Our pupils use Augmentative communication aids, MAKATON, Pecs, Photos, eye pointing, objects of reference, signing, and behavioural methods to communicate their emotions, thoughts and feelings.

We work closely with our SALT team to ensure that communication is embedded in every aspect of our day and that every minute counts.

Opportunities for reading are everywhere in our classes. At the Early stages we use photos, books, sensory stories, matching, sequencing, Attention Autism (the famous bucket), and repetition to ensure the learning is embedded in short term memory. The pupils in Wrens love their mini bespoke library in the Nest and exploring texts further in the creative play room which reflects the termly topic.



As a therapeutic school we aim to develop the whole child as an active learner. Each child's journey will be unique and based on their individual needs.

Our curriculum follows a thematic approach with topics that are designed to expose students to a rich variety of stimuli and provide opportunities for lateral progress and over learning so that learning from EYFS can be developed and deepened in KS1.

	Half Term 1	Half Term 2	Half Term 3	Half Term 4	Half term 5	Half Term 6
Topic cycle 1 – Sept 2022	All about me	Winter and Weather	Food	Fairy tales and nursery rhymes, Spring	Minibeasts	Community buildings
Topic cycle 2 – Sept 2023	All about me + and Autumn	Winter and Weather	Fairy tales and nursery rhymes, Spring	People who help us	Transport	Animals



Our Bees pre formal class follows the Explore Curriculum in a three year cycle exploring 2 topics a year through their sensory curriculum. This provides pupils many rich and varied opportunities for lateral progress and overlearning.

<b>Year 1</b>	My senses, my body	My world and travel
<b>Year 2</b>	Underwater	Animals
<b>Year 3</b>	Nature, Weather	Space

# Partnership with parents

Parents are an important part of the EYFS classes.

We have a thorough transition process which places the child and their family at the heart. We ensure that we gain as much information from parents as possible to enable a smooth transition into school.

Within the first half term, children have an admission review to ensure they are settling in well and a further annual review later in the year to discuss their progress.

Class teams use Evidence for learning each day to share information with parents, and to hear from parents how the child is at home. We like celebrating together and also sharing ideas.

A parents evening is held twice a year to focus on these and any other questions that may arise.

A weekly newsletter is also sent home to inform parents of whole school news.

We have many fun opportunities for parents to be involved in eg Assemblies, picnics, Easter Egg hunts, performances.



# What our new parents think

“My child is happier than before, he is very excited to come to school. Previous nursery he was separated from other children. Now he sees he is part of it. When my child starts new places he has high level of anxiety and trying to find out all around him – this has really improved now he has settled into Castle and therefore been able to access learning.”

Couldn't have asked for a better transition – shocked how well and easy, even the taxi.

“His eye contact has increased. He is more willing to communicate with Mum at home. He has started playing more simple games eg hide and seek, he loves music and dancing.”

“Calmer when he comes home”

“Very excited to see the bus for school.”

“More relaxed”

“Happy to go to school”



# Next Steps

In our Early years we provide an ambitious curriculum to support our pupils in feeling secure and being confident communicators who are excited to come into school for adventures and fun.

An exciting and secure start to their education journey and ensuring they are well prepared to build on their skills in Key stage 1.

