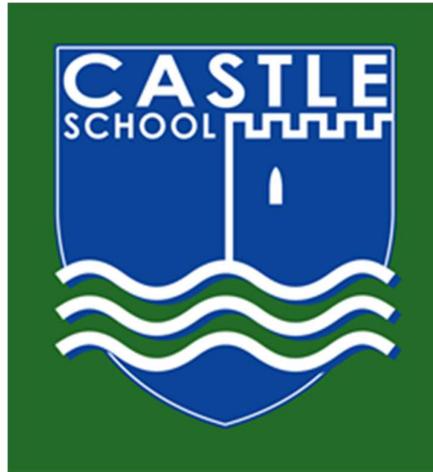


Castle School



Teaching and Learning Policy

Status: Approved	Drafted by Anne Haberfield :	Date Approved: 27 th September 22	Approved by: FGB
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Castle School Teaching and Learning Policy

Introduction: A Therapeutic Approach to Teaching and Learning

We are a **therapeutic school** because we believe a therapeutic approach is the best way of maximising the quality of teaching and learning in school. This document sets out our core beliefs, principles and practice of therapeutic teaching and learning and as such is a keystone policy document.

The Therapeutic School – Aim and Values

In the therapeutic school there is a shared acceptance that:

- Positive experiences create positive feelings, and positive feelings create positive learners
- Children should be met at whatever point they are at in whatever aspect of their development is most appropriate. They are helped to take the next steps in their development in a spirit of hope and excitement, and in an environment characterised by a sense of safety, trust, collaboration, empowerment and a love of life.
- All adults and children in the school are valued, and are to be supported on a journey of exploration and discovery to become ever more effective contributors to our community
- Our academic outcomes for each child are not just complemented but enhanced by therapeutic goals which include the development of emotional literacy and self-regulation, personal empowerment, and making the very best version of oneself
- The most effective teaching tool we have is our relationships with our learners and because we promote the holistic development of each learner, every interaction is an opportunity for teaching and learning, whether or not the interaction takes place within conventional lesson times. Every minute matters.
- Addressing the needs and the development of the whole child is the most effective form of mental health support we can offer

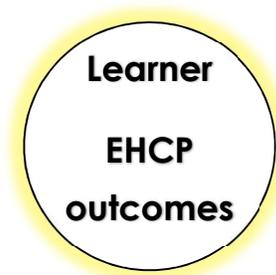
From Theory into Practice

In order to translate these aims into practice teachers:

- Accurately and sensitively assess the needs of the whole child
- Be creative and flexible in curriculum design and delivery
- Place a premium on pupil voice, in whatever form it takes
- Create a non-judgemental and consistent learning environment
- Understand that the quality of their relationship with all pupils is the most effective tool for teaching and learning
- Work with in-house and external therapists to increase the understanding around each pupil
- Ensure that parental voice is key

The Organisation of Teaching and Learning

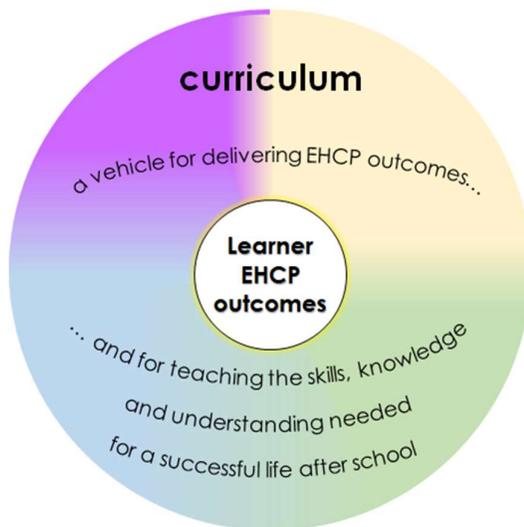
At the heart of everything we do are each pupil's individual outcomes, which are co-created with pupil, parents and other supporting professionals at the Education, Health and Care Plane (EHCP) Review.



Outcomes are framed into four categories:

- Cognition and Learning
- Social, Emotional and Mental Health
- Sensory and Physical
- Communication and Interaction

Each outcome is broken down into smaller steps. These become the pupils' **targets** and are met through the teaching of **the curriculum**.



The Curriculum

We have designed our curriculum as a vehicle for teaching to each pupil's outcomes and targets, and for developing the skills, knowledge and understanding needed for a successful life after school. Learning programmes are based on an adapted National Curriculum, detailed knowledge of preparation for adulthood agenda and an in-depth knowledge of each child. Learning is enhanced by building partnerships and community experiences so that as much learning as possible takes place in context.

Pathways

This focus on individual outcomes and targets, and using the curriculum to teach to these, is universal throughout the school. However, we recognise that we have a range of learning styles in our pupil population. The degree we use play, experiential or more formal learning, and different interventions to support learning will of course vary depending on the age and the nature of each learner's abilities. Therefore the curriculum is then divided in 3 **pathways** – pre-formal, semi-formal and formal.

The three Curriculum Pathways

Pre-formal pathway



Areas of Learning – For further detail please see the relevant page on our website.

We have identified six areas of learning which are used differently according to the strand followed. For example, a creative activity can be used to develop communication skills on a pre-formal strand, fine motor skills on a semi formal strand, and subject knowledge on a formal strand.

Our six areas are:

- English
- Maths
- Personal Social and Health Education
- Physical health and wellbeing
- Creativity
- Our world

Semi-formal pathway



Each of the areas has an identified half term of enhanced focus. This enables the co-ordination team to plan celebration events, staff training and support, update any policies and website information and undertake monitoring activities and development planning. Further details about each area can be found on our website. This information is updated annually.

Formal pathway



Pre-formal teachers choose from a range of specialist interventions and pedagogies, organised around the four EHCP areas. All areas are closely interlinked, and all sessions may be working towards any EHCP area.

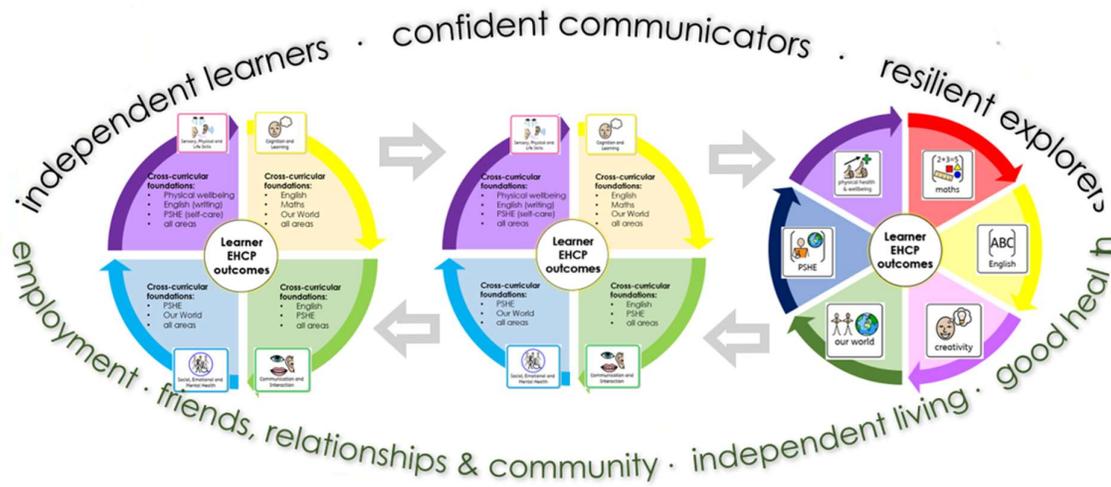
Semi-formal teachers choose from a range of specialist interventions and pedagogies, organised around the four EHCP areas. Additionally, they may deliver more formalised sessions in English, Maths and PE. All areas remain closely interlinked, and many sessions will be delivered to work on multiple EHCP areas

Students on the formal pathway have subject-specific sessions, organised into six areas.

There is interconnectivity within the pathways and learners do not always remain exclusively on one throughout their school life. Each pathway is:

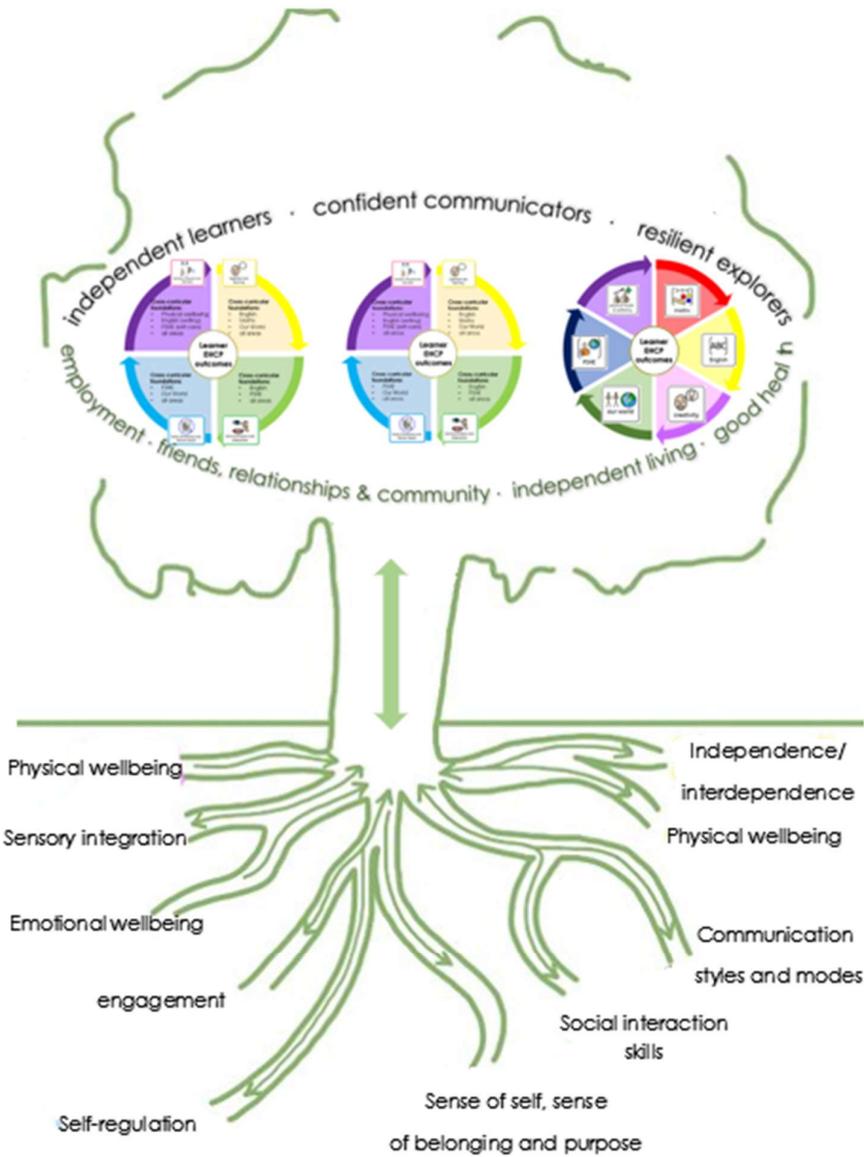
- Planned
- Sequenced
- Delivered
- Assessed
- Accredited

Whatever the pathway, our outcomes for each pupil remain the same.



Enhancing the Therapeutic Dimension of Teaching and Learning

In order for this model to work most effectively, teachers need to consider the foundations or roots of learning. There are many strands to these roots, and each have to be addressed in order for learning to take place and become ever more effective learners. And we need to recognise that learning helps to strengthen the roots. It is a two-way process.



Roots of learning

Training is given to help staff to expand their knowledge of these roots, and in-house therapists support by using a Therapeutic Framework – which breaks each of these roots down into finer grained steps – to help teachers with the planning and implementation of the curriculum.

How the Therapeutic Approach informs other Aspects of Teaching and Learning

Assessment – (For Further detail see Assessment Recording and Reporting policy)

We demonstrate progress through rigorous assessment which is a basis for all learning. Teachers use their knowledge of the **roots for learning**, to underpin their assessments so they know:

- How pupils learn
- Where pupils are
- What the next steps
- Identifying expected progress based on the individual learner
- Agreed progression frameworks which may vary for each learner
- Our agreed priorities for each learner

We use **Evidence for Learning**, a bespoke assessment programme, to:

- Produce a robust record of progress
- Structure learning conversations with staff and other professionals
- Involve families in improving their child learning
- Teach pupils to recognise and elaborate their successes
- Ensure pupils have a voice about their learning and their curriculum

Monitoring - (For further detail see Monitoring policy)

We recognise that it is the quality of teaching across the school that will have a significant impact on pupil performance and overall school effectiveness. As a result, we ensure that there is a robust quality assurance programme for measuring, supporting and developing the quality of teaching in the classroom. Therefore, the following activities take place across the year:

- Learning walks, lesson visits and drop in's
- Monitoring of medium term planning and associated evidence
- Deep dives
- Regular learning conversations
- Pupil progress meetings
- Peer to peer support
- Governor visits and reports via the Teaching and Learning Committee

Behaviour management – an integral part of teaching and learning (for further detail please see the Behaviour Policy)

in the therapeutic school, particular attention is paid to behaviour and its role in teaching and learning. Any behaviour which impedes learning is considered challenging regardless of whether or not it is disruptive. Challenging behaviour needs to be addressed but not as something that has to be solved

before learning can take place. Challenging is addressed as part of the teaching and learning process. Because all challenging behaviours are a communication of unmet need, we honour the content of the communication even as we are working on modifying the style of communication. Challenging behaviour, in other words, is a sign that we need to modify the content of the curriculum or the style or context of its delivery, so that a positive sense of progress can be maintained and any sense of deficit, disapproval or shame can be avoided.

Further Information

We are proud of our school and the support we give our pupils. We are excited to be developing a curriculum that we believe brings out the best of our pupils, and gives them positive feelings about their learning and about themselves. However, we are always keen to improve our provision and welcome any questions and feedback from parents or other visitors. Please do not hesitate to get in touch if you would like any further information.