



**Castle Rainbows  
Assessment:  
English**





## Castle Assessment Levels:

### Rainbows

To support the tracking of progress in Maths and English, we have developed our own Castle Assessment Levels.

We have called these Rainbow and Gemstone levels. This booklet will give you an overview of each Rainbow level, share the strategies we use to support learning in school and make some suggestions about how you can support your child with their learning at home.

There are additional booklets for English and Maths Gemstone levels.

Evidence for Learning helps us to gather evidence and links it to each of the criteria, so we can visually see progress. You can also share with us any evidence you have gathered at home via this platform.

Levels are also included in the Education Health and Care Plan paperwork.

If you would like more detailed information, please look at [www.castleschool.info/assessingpupilprogress](http://www.castleschool.info/assessingpupilprogress)

## **English at Castle School**

English at Castle School is centred around a text. Each class is provided with one or two texts per half term depending on the strand of learners within that class.

English at Castle School encompasses Reading, Writing, Phonics and Communication. We have a range of strategies and interventions that we use to support our learners through their learning journey.

We use the Twinkl Phonics programme to teach systematic synthetic phonics from Phase 1 through to Phase 6.



## Castle Assessment Levels:

### Rainbows

#### Castle Reading Rainbows Assessment

- I can respond to rhymes e.g., smiling, stilling or making eye contact.
- I can focus attention on visual stimuli such as objects of reference.
- I can show interest in looking and reaching towards visual stimuli e.g. tactile books.
- I can notice and engage with sounds and images in the environment.
- I can touch and handle books and digital reading devices, as part of sensory exploration.
- I can show enjoyment whilst being read to and looking at books or digital material, with familiar people.

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- I can show a response to rhythmic activities e.g. resonance board in storytelling.
  - I can track a visual stimulus.
  - I can handle books, printed and digital reading material with interest e.g. tactile books, symbols, pictures, photographs and electronic devices.
  - I can respond to sounds in the environment by glancing, pointing, gesturing or mimicking sounds such as cars, sirens and birds.

**Red**

**Orange**

#### Activities to support reading skills

- Narrating activities as you do them, "milk in the cup"
  - Read a book in a shared space with the child.
  - Make noises for different objects.
  - Sing nursery rhymes, emphasising the rhyming words.
  - Play rhyming games with sounds la, ta, da, ma, ga, ha.
  - Say a sentence, then complete the action.
- 
- Provide opportunities to share stories independently.
  - 1:1 and small group -provide a range of reading materials and type of books e.g. board books and pop-up books.
  - Use voices or sounds to represent objects / animals / actions.



## Castle Assessment Levels:

### Rainbows

#### Castle Reading Rainbows Assessment

- I can explore the sounds that I can make with interest by banging and tapping familiar objects and simple instruments.
  - I can use my body to respond to familiar rhythms in songs and rhymes by waving my arms, tapping my arms, bouncing or stamping.
  - I can notice pictures and symbols, and I am beginning to recognise what they stand for in their familiar experiences.
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- I can anticipate repeated refrains or key moments in a familiar story or rhymes.
  - I can hold a book the correct way around and show, whilst looking through a book, where it begins and ends.
  - I can respond to pictures and symbols, and I can recognise what they stand for in familiar experiences.
  - I can be interested in and anticipate books and rhymes and may have favourites.
  - I can begin to join in with actions and sounds in familiar songs and book sharing experiences.

### Orange

### Yellow

#### Activities to support reading skills

- Provide different musical instruments for children to listen to, name or explore.
  - Play pass the sound – Make a sound and take turns.
  - Create a sound story – Read a story to your child and use different instruments to create sounds from the story.
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- Point to objects in a picture and name them - play "I spy" whilst looking at images in a book.
  - Place favourite objects in a box, encourage child to say the name of the object with which they wish to play.
  - Provide a range of reading materials and show your child how to hold the book and how to turn the page.
  - Play rhyming games with your child.



## Castle Assessment Levels:

### Rainbows

#### Castle Reading Rainbows Assessment

- I can decode a single symbol.
- I can decode a sequence of at least two symbols.
- I can have some favourite stories, rhymes, songs, poems, or jingles.
- I can repeat and use actions, words or phrases from familiar stories.
- I can fill in the missing word or phrase in a known rhyme, story, or game, such as "Humpty Dumpty sat on... a wall."
- I can begin to recognise familiar logos from children's popular culture, commercial print or icons for apps.
- I can clap along with the beat and join in with words of familiar songs and nursery rhymes.
- I can handle books and touch screen technology carefully and the correct way up with growing competence.
- I can follow pages from left to right and turn individual pages in a familiar/ phonetically decodable book independently.

### Green

#### Activities to support reading skills

- Re-read interesting stories, what can you remember?
- Read books with repetitive phrases / rhyming words on each page.
- Use symbols / images to write sentence starters related to the story.
- Play eye-spy – Sound out the objects to help your child to recognise the word. E.g. I spy with my little eye a b-ir-d.
- Sounding out words and pushing sounds together when giving instructions. E.g. Let's go to the sh-o-p.
- Play finish the rhyme – Read aloud nursery rhymes to your child and pause at the final words for your child to complete.
- Sing nursery rhymes such as Twinkle twinkle little star, Hickory Dickory Dock, Old Macdonald, the ants go marching and Five Little Monkey's or Incy Wincy Spider.
- Provide a range of reading materials and show your child how to follow the pages from left to right.



## Castle Assessment Levels:

### Rainbows

#### Castle Reading Rainbows Assessment

- I can listen to and join in with stories and poems when reading one-to-one and in small groups, using my preferred communication.
- I can join in with repeated refrains and anticipate key events and phrases in rhymes and stories, using my preferred communication.
- I can begin to be aware that stories have a beginning, middle and an end using my preferred communication.
- I can begin to tell my own stories, using my preferred communication.
- I can talk about events and principal characters in stories using my preferred mode of communication.
- I can show interest in illustrations and words in print, digital and words in the environment.
- I can recognise familiar words and signs, such as my own name, advertising logos, and screen icons.
- I can understand that print carries meaning and, in English, is read from left to right and top to bottom.
- I can understand that information can be relayed through signs and symbols in various forms (e.g. printed materials, digital screens and in print).

**Blue**

#### Activities to support reading skills

- Use a story map to tell a story / outline key event
- Introduce quiet reading time and provide a selection of stories.
- Draw a picture to represent what happens in the story.
- Draw pictures of characters from the story.
- Create a storyboard.
- Share a range of silly songs / poetry - make up songs around a fire while toasting marshmallows.
- Make up stories about how an object came to be in a certain place.
- Point out logos and writing in the environment as you go for a walk.
- Make up songs to the tune of nursery rhymes –
- Write notes to read in the morning—begin with pictures, moving towards words.
- Demonstrate how to hold and care for a book - follow text with your finger as you read to demonstrate the direction in which you are reading.
- Talk about the beginning / middle / end of a story, what happened first? What happened at the end?



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#### Castle Reading Rainbows Assessment

- I can begin to navigate apps and websites on digital media, using drop-down menus to select websites and icons to select apps.
  - I can begin to develop phonological and phonemic awareness.
  - I can show awareness of rhyme and alliteration.
  - I can recognise rhythm in spoken words, songs, poems and rhymes.
  - I can clap or tap the syllables in words during sound play.
  - I can hear and identify the initial sounds in words.
- 
- I can enjoy an increasing range of print and digital books, both fiction and non-fiction.
  - I can use vocabulary and forms of speech that are increasingly influenced by my reading experiences, using my preferred mode of communication.
  - I can describe main story settings, events and principal characters, using my preferred mode of communication.
  - I can re-enact and reinvent known stories in my play.
  - I know that information can be retrieved from books, computers and digital devices.

**Blue**

**Indigo**

#### Activities to support reading skills

- Support your child to explore and use digital technology. Show them how to navigate children's apps or websites.
  - Encourage your child to say the sounds in a word before pushing the sounds together to read the word.
  - Learn some tongue twisters / create alliteration names for things e.g. lucky lemon.
  - Playing rhyming word games.
  - Play finish the rhyme with familiar rhymes.  
Encourage your child to join in with the repetitive phrases 'run, run, as fast as you can, you can't catch me, I'm the Gingerbread \_\_\_\_\_'.
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- Share and read different types of books to your child like fairy tales, poetry, fact books or fiction books.
  - Ask your child who, what, when and where questions during their reading. They can show you using the pictures, words or gesture to show their answer.
  - Engage in role play with your child when storytelling.
  - Ask a question, then demonstrate using computer or going to the library to find the answer.



## Castle Assessment Levels:

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#### Castle Reading Rainbows Assessment

- I can recall and discuss stories or information that has been read to me or that I have read myself.
- I can suggest how the story might end, using my preferred mode of communication.
- I can begin to recognise some written names of peers, siblings, or my Mum and Dad.
- I can continue a rhyming string and identify alliteration.
- I can consistently hear and say/sign the initial sounds in words.
- I can segment the sounds in simple words and blend them together, and I know which letters represent some of the sounds.
- I can start to link sounds to letters, naming and sounding the letters of the alphabet.
- I can begin to read some high frequency words.
- I can use my developing knowledge of letters and sounds to read simple phonetically decodable words and simple sentences.
- I can engage with texts at a deeper level and use my phonic knowledge to decode words and illustrations to interpret the text.
- I can include everyday literacy artefacts in play, such as labels, instructions, signs, envelopes, etc.

### Indigo

#### Activities to support reading skills

- Create and say simple alliterations for everyday objects in the house or for family members names. E.g. 'silly snakes, big Ben or clever cat.
- Play guess the rhyme – Say a rhyming string and pause for your child to complete it.
- Share a book, encourage child to show you the sounds they already, sound out each letter e.g. d og
- Write the letter, say the sound, ask your child to copy.
- Encourage your child to point to words they know in an unfamiliar book.
- Say a word, encourage your child to listen to / say the first sound in the word they can hear.
- Share different types of books with your child e.g. fact books and fairy tales.
- Sing the alphabet song.
- Play the alphabet game – Think of items for each letter of the alphabet for different topics and take it in turns.
- Show your child how to say the sounds and push them together to read the word.
- Encourage your child to read their tricky words in their phonics book.



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- I can begin to link sounds to some frequently used digraphs, such as sh, th, ee.
- I can say a sound for each letter in the alphabet and at least 10 digraphs.
- I can read words consistently with my phonic knowledge by segmenting and blending.
- I can read some high frequency words matched to my phonics level.
- I can read aloud simple sentences and books that are consistent with my phonic knowledge.
- I can independently select and engage with an increasing range of print and digital books, both fiction and non-fiction.
- I can begin to use and understand recently introduced vocabulary during discussions about stories, non-fiction, rhymes and poems and during role-play.
- I can demonstrate an understanding of what has been read to them by retelling stories and narratives using their own words and recently introduced vocabulary.
- I can anticipate or predict (where appropriate) key events in stories.
- I can begin to say how a character feels using my preferred mode of communication.
- I can order a story with pictures using first, then and last.

### Violet

#### Activities to support reading skills

- Go on a sound hunt with your child with a focus sound.
- Show your child objects that contain a focus sound.
- Practice orally segmenting and blending sounds in words. E.g. 'It's time for b-e-d.' 'I saw a 'sh-ee-p'.
- Play pass the sound – Think of a sound say it and ask your child to think of a different sound. Take turns until one of you cannot think of anymore sounds.
- Play beat the clock – Ask your teacher for your child's 'tricky words.' Show your child the tricky word and see how many they can read before the clock runs out.
- Write silly sentences e.g. the cat sat on the dog - discuss the story after reading.
- What was your favourite part? Why?
- Identify a word / sound you already know within a word e.g. sand in sandwich.
- Choose a common irregular word (lists provided by teacher) and use it regularly for a week, moving onto a different word the following week.



## Castle Assessment Levels:

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#### Castle Writing Rainbows Assessment

- I can make marks with a medium of my choosing.
  - I can experiment with marks.
  - I can experiment with colours.
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- I can begin to enjoy the sensory experience of making marks in food, damp sand, water, mud, paste or paint.
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- I can begin to understand the cause and effect of my actions in mark making.
- I can enjoy the sensory experience of making marks using a variety of tools (fingers, brushes, chalk, crayons and rollers).
- I can begin to use fine motor tools such as scissors, glue sticks, pens, pencils and pens.
- I can engage in a variety of activities that promote my fine motor skills such as scrunching paper, ripping paper, squishing dough, rolling playdough, pinching playdough and stacking objects.

**Red**

**Orange**

**Yellow**

#### Activities to support writing skills

- Provide opportunities to explore a range of messy play materials including corn flour, shaving foam, sand
  - Provide opportunities to use a range of writing tools e.g. pens, chalk, paint brushes.
  - Provide opportunities to play with and mix coloured paint and water.
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- Provide opportunities to explore a range of messy play materials including food such as carrots, shaving foam and sand.
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- Show your child how to make a mark with a particular tool (fingers, brushes, chalk, crayons or rollers) and allow your child to experiment making marks with the tool.
  - Engage your child in creative art activities that require colouring, cutting and gluing.
  - Dough disco – Get some playdough for your child and show them how to squeeze, pinch, roll, twist and squash the playdough. Have a playdough disco.
  - Experiment with paper.
  - Build towers with blocks or stacking objects.



## Castle Assessment Levels:

### Rainbows

#### Castle Writing Rainbows Assessment

- I can notice the value of the marks I make.
  - I can distinguish between the different marks I make.
  - I can consistently use fine motor tools such as scissors, glue sticks, pegs, pencils and pens.
  - I can sit at a table and hold a pencil comfortably (palm grip, using a writing/pencil aid).
  - I can enjoy drawing and writing on paper, on a screen and on different textures, such as in sand, dough and playdough, and through using touch-screen technology.
- 
- I can create short sentences by sequencing photos or symbols.
  - I can create a three-part sentence using Colourful Semantics.
  - I can make up stories or play scenarios by selecting pictures, photographs and symbols in response to experiences, such as outings.
  - I can sometimes give meaning to my drawings and paintings.

**Green**

**Blue**

#### Activities to support writing skills

- Draw attention to marks, signs and symbols and talk about what they represent.
  - Encourage mark making along to a song e.g. the wheels on the bus go round, wipers swish, ball bounces.
  - Engage your child in creative art activities that require colouring, cutting and gluing.
  - Show your child how to hold a pencil using a pencil grip if needed.
  - Practice mark making with the pencil held in the tripod grip.
  - Show your child how to make marks in different sensory and digital forms.
- 
- Provide simple photographs of everyday routines (begin with 3 the extend to 5) and encourage your child to sequence those photographs.
  - Have a focus picture. Give your child three to four choices. Ask your child 'Who is this?' 'What are they doing?' 'What is this?'
  - Practice different types of lines when mark making such as zig zags, wavy lines, straight lines or curls.



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#### Castle Writing Rainbows Assessment

- I can ascribe meanings to signs, symbols and words that I see in different places, including those I make myself.
  - I can include mark making and early writing in my play.
  - I can imitate adults' writing by making continuous lines of shapes and symbols (early writing) from left to right.
  - I can attempt to write my own name, or other names and words, using combinations of lines, circles, curves or letter-type shapes.
  - I can type letters on a keyboard, identifying the initial letter of my own name and other familiar words.
  - I can begin to make letter-type shapes to represent the initial sound of my name and other familiar words.
- 
- I can construct a 4-part sentences using Colourful Semantics.
  - I can begin to hold a pencil effectively, mostly in a tripod grip, with the support of pencil/writing aid if needed.
  - I can consistently write recognisable letters.
  - I can give meaning to the marks I make as I draw, write, paint and type, using a keyboard or a touchscreen.

**Blue**

**Indigo**

#### Activities to support writing skills

- Provide your child with different tools (brush, fingers, chalk, crayons, rollers, pens and pencils) and use them during play.
  - Draw attention to the placement of text in books / letters etc.
  - Write name in a highlighter and encourage child to trace it.
  - Model labelling work with name and encourage writing own name.
  - Use highlighter to write letters for your child to trace.
  - Show child how to type their name on a keyboard and give them plenty of opportunities to practice.
- 
- Have a focus picture. Give your child three to four choices. Ask your child 'Who is this?' 'What are they doing?' 'What is this?' 'Where are they?'
  - Show your child how to hold the pencil in a tripod grip with a pencil grip if needed. Support them to hold the pencil.
  - Show your child how to write specific lower-case letters that they may find tricky. Encourage them to form them.



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#### Castle Writing Rainbows Assessment

- I can begin to break the flow of speech into words, to hear and say the initial sound in words and segment the sounds in words to support my spelling.
  - I can use my phonics and link sounds to letters to write recognisable letters in a sequence such as in my own name, CV, VC or CVC words.
  - I can use my developing phonic knowledge to write things such as labels, captions and simple phrases.
- 
- I can hold a pencil effectively, using a tripod grip in almost all cases.
  - I can confidently use a range of small tools such as scissors, paintbrushes, glue sticks and writing tools.
  - I can write recognisable lowercase letters, most of which are correctly formed.
  - I can begin to form some capital letters.
  - I can confidently construct a 4-part sentence using Colourful Semantics.
  - I can begin to construct a 5-part sentence using Colourful Semantics.
  - I can spell simple words by identifying sounds in them and representing the sounds with a letter or letters.
  - I can use my phonics to write simple phrases that can be read by others (using Colourful Semantics if appropriate).

**Indigo**

**Violet**

#### Activities to support writing skills

- When saying instructions to your child, segment and blend the sounds within the command. For example, 'Get a c-u-p',
  - Practice sounding out words and writing the sounds 'c-a-t' cat – let's write it.'
  - Build words with magnetic letters 'dog, d-o-g'.
- 
- Show your child and encourage your child to hold the pencil in a tripod grip.
  - Show your child how to use scissors and a glue stick. Complete different creative activities together which require the use of scissors, paintbrushes, glue sticks and pencils.
  - Show your child how to form different lowercase letters, focus on one at a time until they use the correct form. Use a highlighter to enable your child to trace over the letter before writing their own, if they are finding it tricky.
  - Have a focus picture. Give your child three to four choices. Ask your child 'Who is this?' 'What are they doing?' 'What is this?' 'What does it look like?' and 'Where are they?'
  - Say the sound and write the letter.
  - Think of silly sentences together and sound out the words to spell them.



**Castle Assessment Levels:**

**Rainbows**

**English Interventions we use at Castle School**

**Squiggle While you Wiggle** – Uses neurological and physiological movements to create marks. The squiggle while you wiggle is beautiful in its simplicity.

**A Dough Disco** – A fun activity which combines the use of playdough with a series of hand and finger exercises designed to improve fine muscle control. The movements develop children's fine and gross motor dexterity, hand-eye coordination and self-esteem.

**Clever Fingers** - A fun and highly motivating activity based on a strategy devised for schools, by a paediatric Occupational Therapist to help pupils with poor fine motor skills.

**Colourful Semantics** – It is a Speech and Language Therapy intervention programme developed by the Speech and Language Therapist Alison Bryant. She uses colours to highlight the semantic (meaning) and roles within sentences.

**Twinkl Phonics**

**Lego Therapy**

**Identiplay**

**Role play**