



## Castle Gemstones Assessment:



## English - Reading





## Castle Assessment Levels:

### Gemstones

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.

Once pupils have completed the Twinkl Phonics programme, they move onto Reading Comprehension where they use different reading strands (vocabulary, retrieval, inference, prediction, sequence, summary, explain and questioning) to understand and purposefully interact with a range of texts whilst building their knowledge of the world.



## Castle Assessment Levels:

### Gemstones

#### Castle Reading Gemstones Assessment

- I can apply my phonic knowledge to decode words.
- I can respond to graphemes with the correct sound.
- I can read accurately by segmenting sounds in unfamiliar words.
- I can read accurately by blending sounds in unfamiliar words.
- I can read 'tricky' words.
- I can read out loud to a group.
- **Vocabulary:** I can communicate my understanding of a new word (e.g. draw, use, act, describe or the use of a symbol).
- **Retrieval:** I can use pictures from a text to say what has happened.
- **Prediction:** I can join in with predictable phrases.
- I can use pictures to make a prediction.
- **Inference:** I can use pictures to make a basic inference about a character's feelings.
- **Questioning:** I can answer a simple question using, who, what and where.
- I can identify a question word.

## Ruby

#### Activities to support reading skills

- Listen to your child read their phonetically decodable book at home. Point to the sounds at the beginning of the books to see if your child can remember them. Make a note of any sounds they found tricky.
- **Word play** – When introducing a new word with your child – explain the meaning in simple words and practically show them its meaning. Use the new word as often as possible in different contexts.
- **Word Art** – Draw pictures or create artwork that shows the meaning of a word.
- Play **Pictionary** with your child: Draw a picture of a word your child has just learnt and ask your child what the word is.
- Create a **simple story board** – 3 part or 5 parts with your child with pictures from the story to discuss what has happened.
- **Emotion picture sorting** - Sort the emotion images/cards into categories (e.g., happy, sad, angry) ask them to explain their choices using the emotion cards.
- **Hot seating** – Your child could role play as their favourite character and orally, discuss what they look like and what they did in the story.



## Castle Assessment Levels:

### Gemstones

#### Castle Reading Gemstones Assessment

- **Summary and sequence:** I can order key events from a text using pictures.
- **Summary and sequence:** I can retell stories, fairytales, and traditional tales.
- **Explain:** I can say whether I like a text.
- I can say who my favourite character is in a text and explain why.
- I can link what I have read to my own experiences.
- I can use adjectives to describe characters in stories.
- I can identify a setting in a story.

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- I can read words containing -s, -es, -ing, -ed, -er and -est endings.
  - I can read words in their contracted form (e.g. I'm).
  - I can read aloud books that are within my phonic knowledge.
  - I can re-read to build up my fluency and confidence.
  - I can read aloud to a partner or in a group.
  - I can recite familiar rhymes and poems.
  - **Vocabulary:** I can discuss word meanings.
  - I can choose words that best describe a setting.
  - **Retrieval:** I can answer questions about what has happened in a text (using Colourful Semantics if appropriate)

**Ruby**

**Sapphire**

#### Activities to support reading skills

- **Create a storyboard** – Order key events from the story onto a storyboard. They could either verbally retell the story or could be challenged to write a caption/sentence for each picture.
  - **Create a book review with your child** – They could draw a picture of their favourite part, draw their favourite character, draw pictures of the settings.
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- **Play word detective** – One of you says the meaning of the word, the other ones draw a picture or it or vice versa.
  - **Story detective** – Provide question cards about the story (e.g., “What did the character find?” or “Where did they go?”). Your child will act as a detective, using pictures or simple text excerpts to find the answers.
  - **Story sorting** – Write down or say simple facts or events about the story. Your child can say whether they are true or false.



## Castle Assessment Levels:

### Gemstones

#### Castle Reading Gemstones Assessment

- **Prediction:** I can predict what might happen in a text based on my knowledge of genre.
- I can use pictures and identify words within a text to make a prediction.
- I can communicate my prediction orally, using pictures or through Colourful Semantics.
- **Inference:** I can communicate my inference verbally, through pictures or through Colourful Semantics.
- I can make an inference from a text with supporting pictures.
- **Questioning:** I can answer a simple question using who, what, where, when and why.
- I can identify a range of question words.
- **Summary and sequence:** I can retell a story using my preferred method (e.g. role play).
- I can order events from a text using text and supporting pictures.
- I can understand and identify the features of a three-part story (beginning, middle and end).
- **Explain:** I can explain why I like a text.
- I can explain why I like different characters in a text.
- I can participate in discussions about a text, taking turns and listening to what others say.

## Sapphire

#### Activities to support reading skills

- **What Happens Next?** After reading part of the story or a chapter, pause and ask your child to predict the next part of the story. Use sentence starters like, "I think this will happen because..."
- **Prediction map** – Your child could draw a picture to show their prediction of what happens next.
- **Feeling detective** - After reading a short passage, show your child how to highlight clues (actions or words) that suggest how a character feels. Use color-coded highlighters for emotions (e.g., yellow for happy, blue for sad).
- Ask your child simple questions who, what, when, were and why as you share the story together. They could point to key characters, verbally give an answer based on a choice or explain their answer.
- **Freeze frames** – Use role play to act out freeze frames of key events from the story.
- Give your child choices to explain why they like the story and different characters. Did you like X character or Y?



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#### Castle Reading Gemstones Assessment

- I can repeatedly read a text to develop my fluency.
- I can engage in echo reading to develop my fluency.
- I can engage in choral reading to develop my fluency.
- I can read words containing common suffixes.
- I can read words quickly and accurately, without overt sounding.
- I can read aloud books matched to my improving phonic knowledge, sounding out unfamiliar words automatically.
- I can read punctuation in a text.
- I can self-correct when reading aloud.
- I can read with expression.
- **Vocabulary:** I can identify words I don't understand and seek clarification.
- I can discuss my favourite words and phrases.
- I can apply new words in a sentence to show my understanding.
- **Retrieval:** I can explain what has happened in a text I have read.
- I can begin to 'skim and scan' to retrieve key details in a text.

### Pearl

#### Activities to support reading skills

- Listen to your child read their reading book at home. Show them how to read character speech (changing your voice into the characters voice) and how to notice different punctuation (full stop, question mark and exclamation marks).
- **Play vocabulary bingo** - You could write down unfamiliar words from the story in a grid. Play bingo and explain the meaning of the word as you say each word.
- **Create a word web:** Your child can write down the newly learnt words from the story. They write down related words around it that they already know. You can use technology to find out synonyms to the words.
- **Skim and scan hunt** – Your child should have their reading book in front of them. Ask them retrieval questions and they must skim the page to quickly find the answer.



## Castle Assessment Levels:

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#### Castle Reading Gemstones Assessment

- **Prediction:** I can make predictions verbally and provide an explanation for them.
- I can make a prediction based on my life experience.
- **Inference:** I can make inferences from a given text.
- **Questioning:** I can use question starters for who, what, when, where and why to ask simple questions.
- I can ask simple questions as a text is being read.
- **Summary and sequence:** I can order the key points within a chapter, story or a text.
- I can identify the features of a five-part story (opening, build up, problem, resolution and ending).
- I can name the features of non-fiction texts (contents page, heading, subheadings, diagrams, photographs, labels/captions and a glossary).
- **Explain:** I can retell a range of texts (stories, traditional tales, or non-fiction texts).
- I can explain which section of the text was the most interesting or exciting.
- I can understand that non-fiction books are structured in different ways to stories.

### Pearl

#### Activities to support reading skills

- Draw or discuss alternative endings to the story - What would they like to happen next or at the end of the story?
- **Who am I? Inference game** - Provide quotes or actions from different characters. Your child can guess which character the quote/action belongs to and justify their answer.
- Brainstorm some who, what, when, where and why questions to ask throughout the story. When reading with your child ask, 'What questions could we ask at this point in the story?'
- Create a timeline of events from the story where you can sequence the pictures and write summarising sentences.
- Ask your child about what they found to be the most interesting part of the story. See if they can explain why. 'I thought X was the most interesting because...'
- Take your child to the local libraries to discover a wider range of books. Show them the children's fiction and non-fiction section. Look at non-fiction books and show them the different parts of the book (contents page, page numbers, index page and a glossary).



## Castle Assessment Levels:

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#### Castle Reading Gemstones Assessment

- I can use a combination of fluency strategies, when I read.
- I can read expressively with confidence and at a good pace.
- I can listen to, discuss and express views about a range of texts across different genres.
- I can discuss the features of a poem.
- I can begin to perform a poem I am familiar with.
- **Vocabulary:** I can discuss a new word and link it to words I already know.
- I can find the meanings of new words using the context of sentences with picture support.
- **Retrieval:** I can confidently 'skim and scan' to retrieve key details in a text and record these independently.
- **Prediction:** I can use my prior knowledge and what I have read so far to make a logical prediction.
- I can confidently explain my prediction verbally and communicate it with clarity.
- **Inference:** I can answer questions using inference.
- I can make an inference about a character's thoughts from their actions. I can begin to use words within a text to explain my inference.

### Silver

#### Activities to support reading skills

- Listen to your child read their reading book at home. Show them how to read character speech (changing your voice into the characters voice), how to read as a narrator, or how to read a range of punctuation. Show your child how to change your voice when reading the different parts to keep it interesting for the listener.
- **Story flowchart** – Create a flow chart of events from the story. Highlight decision points where characters have made a choice.
- **Fact find challenge** – Provide your child with a checklist of details to find from a book you are reading together.
- **Have a prediction debate** - Take turns stating your predictions for a part in the story. 'I think X will happen because ...' One of you states the prediction, whilst the other will challenge them say whether it is likely or not given the previous events in the story.
- **Character feelings timeline** - Track a character's emotions throughout a story, writing or drawing what they infer and highlighting the text evidence that supports it.



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### Gemstones

#### Castle Reading Gemstones Assessment

- **Summary and sequence:** I can discuss how events are linked, and the information is sequenced in a text.
  - **Questioning:** I can change my questions as I progress through a text – who, what, when, where, how and why.
  - I can begin to ask inferential questions to gain a deeper meaning of a text.
  - **Explain:** I can explain and discuss my understanding of texts, both those that I listen to and those that I have read myself.
  - I can distinguish between important and less important information in a text.
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- I can read aloud to a group with the correct pace, tone, volume and expression.
  - I can read words that I have not seen before.
  - I can read a range of texts from different genres including non-fiction texts.
  - **Vocabulary:** I can find out the meaning of new words.
  - I can use my growing vocabulary to suggest synonyms for words.
  - I can substitute a word within a sentence to show I understand its meaning.

### Silver

### Gold

#### Activities to support reading skills

- **Story flowchart** – Create a flow chart of events from the story with your child. Highlight decision points where characters have made a choice.
  - Brainstorm some who, what, when, where and why questions to ask throughout the story. When reading with your child ask, ‘What questions could we ask at this point in the story?’
  - Brainstorm inferential questions – Why did they choose that? What made them do that?
  - **Information sorting** – Write down some important and non-important information from the text and help your child to sort the information. See if they can do it independently.
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- **Synonym swap** – Provide your child with a sentence that has a common word e.g. good. Show your child using technology how to find the synonyms associated with the word. Show them how you would substitute the synonym and discuss how the meaning changes slightly as you substitute words.
  - **Play the word substitution game** – Provide your child with a simple sentence and then substitute one word in the sentence. Ask them to think of a different word to use and discuss how that changes the sentences meaning.



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- **Retrieval:** I can begin to retrieve speech from a text.
- I can begin to retrieve quotations from a text.
- **Prediction:** I can predict what might happen next from the details stated in a text.
- I can use details from a text to make multiple predictions.
- **Inference:** I can infer a character's motive based on their actions.
- I can use my background knowledge to justify my inference.
- **Questioning:** I can ask questions to improve my understanding of a text.
- I can begin to generate a variety of questions (literal and inferential) to gain a deeper understanding of a text.
- **Summary and sequence:** I can give a brief verbal summary of a text I am familiar with.
- **Explain:** I can clarify the meaning of a text I have read.
- I can explain what I am reading to an adult or peer.
- I can identify subject specific vocabulary within a text.

## Gold

#### Activities to support reading skills

- **Character spotlight** – Focus on one character and identify three key quotes to describe them.
- **Character speech bubbles** – Write key lines of speech for each character.
- **Multiple possibilities** – After reading a text, ask your child to predict what might happen next. See if they can think of multiple predictions to describe what could occur.
- **Prediction map** – Create a prediction map with your child about what could happen next in the story.
- **Did they do it? Debate** - Read a scenario and debate why a character made a certain decision, using clues from the text to support their argument.
- **Create action to motive cards** – Give action cards to pupils based on the text you are reading and ask what pupils to match them with the possible motives.
- Ask questions before reading a text (who, what when where) during a text (who, what, when, where, why and how) and after a text to clarify the plot of characters.
- Practice briefly summarising the text with your child.
- **Play character Top Trump** – Draw pictures of characters from the text and write descriptive phrases together.



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- I can prepare a poem for performance.
- I can prepare a play for performance.
- **Vocabulary:** I can confidently link new words to words I already know.
- I can use my growing vocabulary to suggest synonyms and antonyms for words.
- **Retrieval:** I can confidently 'skim and scan' across larger sections of texts.
- I can find and copy words to describe the mood, feelings or character actions within a text.
- **Prediction:** I can use details from the text to form predictions and then justify them.
- **Inference:** I can select one piece of evidence from a text to justify my inference.
- **Questioning:** I can ask questions about themes (love, friendship, revenge, learn a lesson and good versus evil) from a text.
- **Summary and sequence:** I can summarise the main ideas in a text of more than one paragraph.
- **Explain:** I can discuss the themes of some books.
- I can discuss how different stories and texts are structured.

### Emerald

#### Activities to support reading skills

- **Play the word chain game:** Start with a word and build on the chain with related words you know before adding new synonyms and antonyms.
- **Synonym-Antonym matching** – Match synonyms and antonyms.
- **Category sorting** – Skim and scan the text to retrieve key details from who, what, when, where, why and how questions.
- Ask your child true or false statements across paragraphs within the text.
- **Play prediction-validation** – One of you makes a prediction and then together you continue to validate the text before swapping over.
- **Write a character journal** - Write a journal entry as a character, explaining their actions and motives using one piece of evidence from the text.
- Ask questions about themes in the text, see if your child can create their own questions.
- **Fact or opinion sorting** -Write statements from the text and see if your child can sort it between a fact or an opinion.



## Castle Assessment Levels:

### Gemstones

## Activities to support reading skills

### Castle Reading Gemstones Assessment

- I can confidently read unusual and unfamiliar words.
- I can make comparisons within and across texts.
- **Vocabulary:** I can explain the meaning of new words.
- I can discuss and evaluate how the author uses language (including figurative language) to impact the reader.
- I can begin to use etymology (history of the word) to understand it.
- I can begin to use morphology (structure of a word) to understand it.
- **Retrieval:** I can locate and retrieve direct speech and quotations from longer texts.
- I can retrieve and combine information from different sections of a text.
- **Prediction:** I can imaginatively predict what might happen from the details stated and implied in a text.
- I can ensure my predictions are supported by evidence from a text.
- **Inference:** I can infer information about multiple characters/concepts from a text and draw links between them.

## Jet

- **Word building blocks** – Give students root words, prefixes and suffixes. Challenge pupils to build new words. After forming words, they can use morphology to explain its meaning. E.g. Rewrite - re (again) + write.
- **Word Family tree** – Create a family tree tracing the origins of the word through time. They could present the family tree to their family.
- **Quizmaster** – Retrieve information from the text and summarise it in key points. They then create their own quiz based on the information they have retrieved.
- **Create a prediction storyboard** - Students create a storyboard of their predictions based on the stated and implied details from the text. They can draw or use images to represent what they think will happen.
- **Mood tracker** - Create a chart that links the setting (e.g., “a dark forest”) to the character’s emotions and actions.
- **Mood inference** - Read a descriptive passage aloud and provide objects or visuals (e.g., a stormy sea picture or a candle). Explain how the setting shapes the character’s feelings and choices.



## Castle Assessment Levels:

### Gemstones

#### Castle Reading Gemstones Assessment

- I can consider the author's use of setting to change the mood of a text.
- **Questioning:** I can actively generate a variety of literal and inferential questions to understand a text and adjust these questions after considering evidence from a text.
- **Sequence and summary:** I can recommend books to others and justify my recommendation through a sustained review.
- I can summarise the main ideas drawn from more than one paragraph and identify key details that support the main ideas.
- I can find and copy words to describe the mood within a text.
- I can begin to make connections across a text and include this information in my summary.
- **Explain:** I can explain and discuss what I have read through delivering a formal presentation.
- I can identify the structure of a text and explain how it links to its purpose.
- I can read and discuss books written for different purposes.

### Jet

#### Activities to support reading skills

- Ask literal questions about who, what, when, where, why, how throughout the text to clarify their understanding of characters actions, settings, the plot and story themes.
- Encourage and show your child how to write a book review to evaluate a book considering their favourite events, characters or anything they didn't expect to happen.
- Practice summarising the key ideas from one paragraph (before moving onto to multiple paragraphs) within a sentence whilst underlining key information from the text to show your summary is correct.
- **Quote evidence hunt:** Give your child an extract of text and search for quotes that support specific ideas about a character, theme or a setting. For example, you have the idea that Miss Honey is kind and match it to the quote 'Miss Honey smiled warmly and said, 'You're very special Matilda.'



## Castle Assessment Levels:

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#### Castle Reading Gemstones Assessment

- I can use quotes directly from the text to support my ideas in my writing.
  - I can provide a reasoned argument to support my views.
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- I can comment on the structure of a range of poems (e.g. free verse, narrative or shape).
  - I can take part in and lead extended drama activities.
  - I can re-read my own work over several paragraphs to sense-check it for meaning.
  - **Vocabulary:** I can research the etymology and morphology of words to understand them.
  - **Retrieval:** I can retrieve key quotations from the text and explain their significance to a theme, character or an idea.
  - **Prediction:** I can confirm and modify my predictions as I continue to read on.
  - **Inference:** I can select two pieces of evidence from a text to justify my inference.
  - I can infer the characters' feelings, thoughts and motives from their actions, and justify my inferences with evidence.

### Diamond

#### Activities to support reading skills

- **Text discussion:** Provide a variety of extracts with different purposes (a story, newspaper article, an instruction text, a letter or an email) for your child to read and explore. What do they notice about these texts?
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- **Word investigation** – Give your child a word to research the etymology (the history) morphology (what part it is made up from). For example, in the word construction – con (prefix means together), struct (base -build) ion (suffix – to act on).
  - **Quotation analysis** – Ask your child to retrieve two key quotes from the text and explain why they are important. Use sentence stems to encourage text analysis 'This quote shows x because'
  - **Prediction update** - After every reading session, students review their previous predictions and decide whether they need to **update** or **modify** them based on new information from the text.
  - **Mood tracker** - Create a chart that links the setting (e.g., "a dark forest") to the character's emotions and actions.



## Castle Assessment Levels:

### Gemstones

#### Castle Reading Gemstones Assessment

- **Questioning:** I can ask complex questions about story themes and motifs.
- **Summary and sequence:** I can discuss a wide range of fiction, poetry, plays, non-fiction and reference/textbooks confidently, contributing my own ideas.
- I can identify and discuss themes and conventions in stories.
- **Explain:** I can begin to recognise how the author's use of language affects the reader's understanding of character, setting and mood.
- I can explain how the language, structure and presentation add to the meaning of a text.
- I can understand and explain how texts fit into a historical context.

#### Diamond

#### Activities to support reading skills

- **Mood map:** Create a mood map identifying words and phrases that contribute to different moods. For example, dark clouds could be a gloomy mood, or cheerful voices could indicate a happy mood.
- **Language detective:** Give your child an extract to read with powerful adjectives and descriptive language. Highlight descriptive language features to identify how the language choices affect the meaning.
- **Text discussion:** Provide a variety of extracts with different purposes (a story, newspaper article, an instruction text, a letter or an email) for your child to read and explore. Are these texts presented the same? What do they tell us? What key ideas do they convey?
- **Historical context timeline:** Provide technology for your child to research the story, paying particular attention to the historical context (the time period it was written and social or cultural attitudes/ norms at that period). Record this information digitally or in a written format and think about how this has influenced the writing.