



# Assessment

A guide for parents



# Introduction

At Castle School assessment encompasses the wide range of practices through which we understand the unique abilities, progress, and achievements of our pupils. It gives insight into their developing knowledge, skills, and understanding, and enables us to guide learners—and inform parents, carers, and staff—about targets and progress. At its core, assessment drives effective planning, responsive teaching, and personalised learning, and enables us to celebrate each child's unique achievements.

This overview gives more detail to some of the approaches that we use.



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# Engagement Model

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The engagement model is an assessment approach used in special schools to understand how pupils with complex needs learn. It focuses on five key areas—exploration, realisation, anticipation, persistence, and initiation. We use it to track how students interact with activities. Instead of measuring traditional outcomes, it helps teachers observe small but meaningful responses, adapt teaching, and support personalised progress.



# Autism Education Trust

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The AET assessment framework helps schools understand and support the strengths and needs of autistic pupils. It provides structured tools to track progress in areas such as communication, social understanding, emotional regulation, and independence. By focusing on individual profiles and practical strategies, it guides staff in creating personalised support plans and improving outcomes for autistic learners.



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# Maths and English

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To support the tracking of progress in subject areas, we have developed our own Castle Assessment Levels.

In Maths and English these are based on Birth to 5 Matters Stages of Development and National Curriculum End of Year or End of Key Stage Assessment Criteria. We have named each level after a colour of the rainbow or a gemstone. The criteria can be found in the booklet which is available in the Annual Review room or on our website.



# Communication

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We see communication as a core area of our work. We have developed communication assessment criteria based on Birth to 5 Matters Stages of Development, as pupils move beyond these the focus changes to speaking and listening.

We have used the criteria from the National Curriculum to develop speaking and listening Gemstone levels.

The criteria can be found in the booklet which is available in the Annual Review room or on our website.



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# Tracking

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We track progress in Maths and English including communication across the year and report to parents within the Annual Review process.

Tracking is done within Evidence for Learning which attaches evidence to each of the criteria so we can visually see progress and plan for next steps.

Levels are also included in the EHCP paperwork.

More information about Evidence for Learning is available on the website.



# PSHE

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The PSHE Association SEND framework supports us in delivering personalised PSHE that meets the needs of each learner. It breaks learning into small, achievable steps across 6 area Healthy Lifestyles, Self-Care Support and Safety, Self Awareness, Managing Feelings, The World I live in, Changing and Growing.

The framework helps teachers plan accessible lessons, track progress, and build essential life skills in a way that matches each pupil's abilities and developmental stage



# PE and Swimming

PE and Swimming, we use our own bespoke Castle Levels to assess and track pupil progress. These levels provide a clear, structured framework that reflects the specific skills, knowledge, and physical competencies we aim to develop. To support accurate and meaningful assessment, all tracking is carried out using Evidence for Learning. This platform allows us to attach photographs, videos, and observations directly to each assessment criterion. By visually capturing pupils' achievements, we gain a detailed picture of their development over time. This evidence-based approach enables staff to clearly identify progress, celebrate success, and plan purposeful next steps tailored to each learner.



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## Other subject areas

### Semi formal and Formal

In Upper Key Stage 2 and across the Secondary Department, aspects of the curriculum are delivered through discrete subject areas. Each subject has developed its own set of assessment criteria to ensure progression is meaningful, relevant, and aligned with subject-specific expectations. These criteria are broken down into small, manageable steps, enabling pupils to make progress at an appropriate pace. This structured approach allows staff to identify individual starting points, recognise achievements, and plan targeted next steps. It also ensures that learning is sequenced effectively and that progress can be monitored consistently across all subject areas



# Statutory Assessment

At the end of Key Stage 2, we complete statutory assessments in Maths and English in line with national requirements. To ensure accuracy and consistency, we use the Pre-Key Stage Standards and the Engagement Model provided by the Government. These frameworks enable us to assess pupils' attainment against nationally recognised criteria, ensuring that progress is measured fairly and appropriately for all learners. The statutory outcomes contribute to a clear picture of each pupil's development as they move into the next stage of their education.



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# Accreditation

In Key Stage 4 and Sixth Form, all pupils work towards appropriate accreditation that reflects their individual learning pathway. The qualifications offered vary according to need, ensuring that every pupil is able to achieve meaningful outcomes that support their future aspirations.

Accreditation options include OCR Life and Living Skills, OCR Entry Level qualifications, and Functional Skills in Maths English and Digital Literacy. Further details can be found in the accreditation section of the website.



# Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP) Setting outcomes and targets

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Each pupil's EHCP is central to their educational journey through school. It is a legal document which is of vital importance. It shapes the provision and the opportunities for learning that the pupil receives.

In order to maximise clarity around how the EHCP shapes what happens in and out of the classroom for each child, there needs to be uniformity of approach across the school, including the type of objectives set for each child, and the language and the format we use when writing the EHCP. The type of targets set may vary per pathway, but the general principles are outlined in the next slides.



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# Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP) Setting outcomes and targets

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Long term outcomes will be generally set for each key stage. Short Term targets will be reviewed and updated at three assessment points throughout the year. January, June and the time of the scheduled Annual Review. These will be developed using advice from a range of staff including the Multidisciplinary professionals and parents



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# Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP) Setting outcomes and targets

## EYFS- KS 3

Long term outcomes and short-term targets will be set under 4 headings -

- Cognition and Learning
- Communication and Interaction
- Sensory and/or Physical and Life skills
- Social, Emotional and Mental health



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# Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP) Setting outcomes and targets

KS4 and 6th form

Long term outcome and short-term targets will be set using the 4 areas of the Preparation for Adulthood agenda.

- Education and Employment
- Independent Living
- Community and Friendships
- Healthy lifestyles



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## More Detail

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If you would like more detailed information .  
Please read the Castle Curriculum and Assessment -A Guide for Parents or explore the tabs at the side of this page.  
If you are not sure about anything speak to you child's class teacher.



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