Castle School
Together We Learn

Castle School
Creativity Curriculum

A guide for parents and carers, staff and visitors

Be Confident | Be Kind | Be Creative

Creativity

Creativity is at the heart of learning at Castle School and is woven into daily life in every classroom. We use creative approaches across all subjects and learning pathways to inspire curiosity, engagement and enjoyment in learning. Creative activities are highly motivating and help our pupils to achieve their individual learning goals across all





Our Pathways

Pre-Formal
(Reactive and Pro-Active)

Aims:
- Explore materials and experience and contribute to music and movement via sensory experiences through creative activities linked to the class story topic

Delivery:
- Holistically embedded throughout the day
- Rich variety of art, music, dance, choi r, and Arts projects
- Integrated input from art and music therapists
- 1:1 input from art and music therapists where need is highlighted

Semi-Formal

Aims:
- Experiment with creative expression
- Begin to develop understanding of creative techniques
- Explore creativity linked to class story topic
- Accreditation – AQA units
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Delivery:
- Holistically embedded throughout the day
- Rich variety of art, music, dance, choir, and art projects
- Structured art and music sessions
- 1:1 input from art and music therapists where need is highlighted

Formal

Aims:
- experiment with and refine creative expression
- build knowledge and understanding of a variety of creative techniques
- Explore creativity in subject-based session
- Accreditation- Entry Level and GCSE

Delivery:
- structured art and music sessions
- rich variety of art, music, dance, choir, and art projects
- 1:1 input from art and music therapists where need is highlighted

How Creativity Is Taught

- Pre-Formal Pathway
  Creativity is used as a key vehicle for engagement and for achieving individual EHCP outcomes, with a focus on sensory exploration, communication and interaction.
- Early Years & Key Stage 1 (Fields Site)
  Teaching is fully integrated and based on the Birth to Five Matters framework through the area of Expressive Arts and Design.
- Semi-Formal Pathway
  Creative learning is linked to topics and delivered through integrated teaching and discrete lessons in Music, Art and Dance.
- Formal Pathway
  Creativity is taught through discrete, subject-based lessons in Art, Music,D and Dance, following the National Curriculum



Our Curriculum
Pre-Formal Pathway

In the Pre-Formal Pathway, creativity is a central vehicle for learning and engagement. Pupils access a wide range of sensory-rich creative experiences that support the development of key skills and individual EHCP outcomes.

Creative activities are used to:

- Encourage exploration, curiosity and active engagement
- Develop communication skills, including attention, interaction and early turn-taking
- Support social development through shared experiences and supported interaction
- Promote emotional expression, wellbeing and regulation
- Build early independence, choice-making and confidence
- Learning is highly personalised and responsive, allowing pupils to explore creative materials, sounds, movement and mark-making at their own level, within a safe and supportive environment





Our Curriculum
Early Years and KS1

Creativity provides an opportunity for our pupils to participate in arts and culture. At the Fields site, pupils are provided with plenty of opportunities to convey their ideas and feelings by fostering imagination, curiosity, creativity, cognition, critical thinking and experimentation.

For many of our pupils, when they first attend Castle School, they require a sensitive approach to expressive arts and design. They need time, space and opportunities to revisit and reflect on experiences using a multisensory, first hand approach. We provide learning opportunities in an enabling environment which caters for the needs of the individual child so that they can connect and enquire about the world in a safe, practical and supported way.

The creativity curriculum has been developed from the 'Birth to Five Matters' document and is a specific area of learning called "Expressive Arts and Design". We have two pathways to monitor development for each child: pre formal and semi formal. This means that we can show developmental progress as our unique children gain in confidence and ability during their time at Fields.

Through our use of Evidence for Learning (EfL) we record and evaluate steps of progress as identified by our assessment frameworks. We ensure that pupils learning follows a coherent sequence that is planned and that (where possible) is applied in a real-world context.



Our Curriculum
Semi-Formal Pathway

Creativity plays a significant part in our curriculum. We view Creativity not just as a subject, but as a tool embedded in our practice that supports emotional regulation, allows pupils to express themselves freely, and helps develop fine motor skills, functional life skills and confidence.

The statutory requirements of the National Curriculum for Music and Art are integrated thoughtfully into our curriculum in a way that is accessible for all learners. Through our three-tiered curriculum, we cater for pupils at the very early stages of their creative learning journey, as well as those who are more advanced and ready to progress to formal classes.

Our Long Term Plan is designed to provide pupils with rich and engaging projects that are motivating and accessible, while linking to the termly topic or class text. Pupils also explore and celebrate the festivals and celebrations that occur throughout the year. We are proud to take part in whole-school projects, whether performing or contributing to collaborative pieces of art.

In Primary, we use Evidence for Learning to share pupils' achievements and successes with parents, and track progress using the Castle Rainbow framework, as pupils progress this moves to the castle levels which reflect the subject areas.



Our Curriculum Formal Learners
Art

As pupils move into the Formal Pathway in KS3, teaching is delivered through discrete subject areas. In Art, pupils follow a sequenced and progressive scheme of work covering a wide range of themes and media.

Progress is assessed using Castle Levels, which align with Entry Level and GCSE criteria across four key strands:

- Develop ideas through investigation and artist research
- Record ideas, observations and imagination
- Refine ideas through experimentation with materials and techniques
- Present a personal and meaningful response linked to intention and purpose



Our Curriculum Formal Learners Music

Formal Pathway – Music

In the Formal Pathway from KS3, Music is taught as a discrete subject with a sequenced and progressive curriculum. Pupils explore a wide range of musical styles, skills and experiences, including listening, performing and composing.

Progress is assessed using Castle Levels, aligned with the National Curriculum, across four key strands:

- Explore sounds and musical ideas through listening and practical investigation
- Perform using voice, instruments and music technology
- Compose and develop musical ideas through experimentation
- Evaluate and respond to music, including the work of others



Our Curriculum Formal Learners Dance

Formal Pathway – Dance (KS3)

In the Formal Pathway at KS3, Dance is taught through discrete lessons that develop physical, creative and expressive skills. The curriculum is progressive and covers a range of styles, themes and movement experiences.

Progress is assessed using Castle Levels, aligned with National Curriculum , across four key strands:

- Create movement ideas and sequences
- Perform with control, coordination and expression
- Develop skills through rehearsal and refinement
- Evaluate performances, including their own and others



Our Curriculum
Strands of Learning for Formal Learners
Drama

Formal Pathway – Drama (KS3)

In the Formal Pathway at KS3, Drama is taught as a discrete subject focusing on communication, creativity and self-expression. Pupils explore a range of drama techniques, styles and performance opportunities.

Progress is assessed using Castle Levels, aligned with Entry Level and GCSE criteria, across four key strands:

- Explore characters, themes and dramatic ideas
- Develop performance skills using drama techniques
- Perform confidently as part of a group or independently
- Reflect on performances, including the work of others



National Curriculum Programmes of Study

Key concepts from the National Curriculum Programmes of Study in Art, Design, Drama, Dance and Music are embedded across all Key Stages and learning pathways, ensuring clear progression and continuity in creative learning.

Pupils experience a broad range of artistic, design and musical stimuli, exploring different styles, cultures and traditions, with flexible opportunities to create, perform and exhibit throughout their time at Castle.

The core elements of Art and Music underpin the development of essential creative skills, providing a strong foundation for accreditation pathways at Key Stages 4 and 5



Assessment and Accreditation

Assessment is an ongoing process and is an integral part of our teaching and learning. It allows us to identify what pupils already know and can do and helps us to plan the next steps in learning. It also helps us to identify any barriers to learning and then put in the necessary support.

Creativity is assessed discretely once our semi-formal and formal pupils reach Key Stage 4 & 5. Until this point, creative skills are acquired and strengthened through music, dance and art-based activities built into the curriculum and through enrichment opportunities available in all learning pathways.

Our pupils achieve accreditation in GCSE Art, OCR Life & Living Skills in Arts & Crafts and Performing Arts at Entry Levels 1-3 and the Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme.

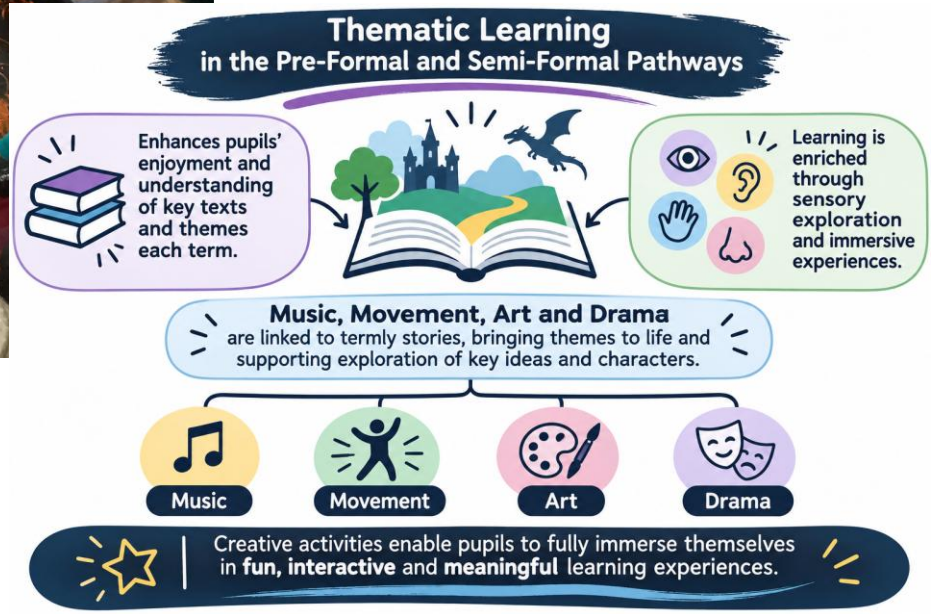


Thematic Learning Through Themes and Text

Thematic learning in the pre-formal and semi-formal pathways enhances pupils' enjoyment and understanding of key texts and themes each term. Learning is enriched through sensory exploration and immersive experiences.

Music, Movement, Art and Drama are linked to termly stories, bringing themes to life and supporting exploration of key ideas and characters. Creative activities enable pupils to fully immerse themselves in fun, interactive and meaningful learning experiences.



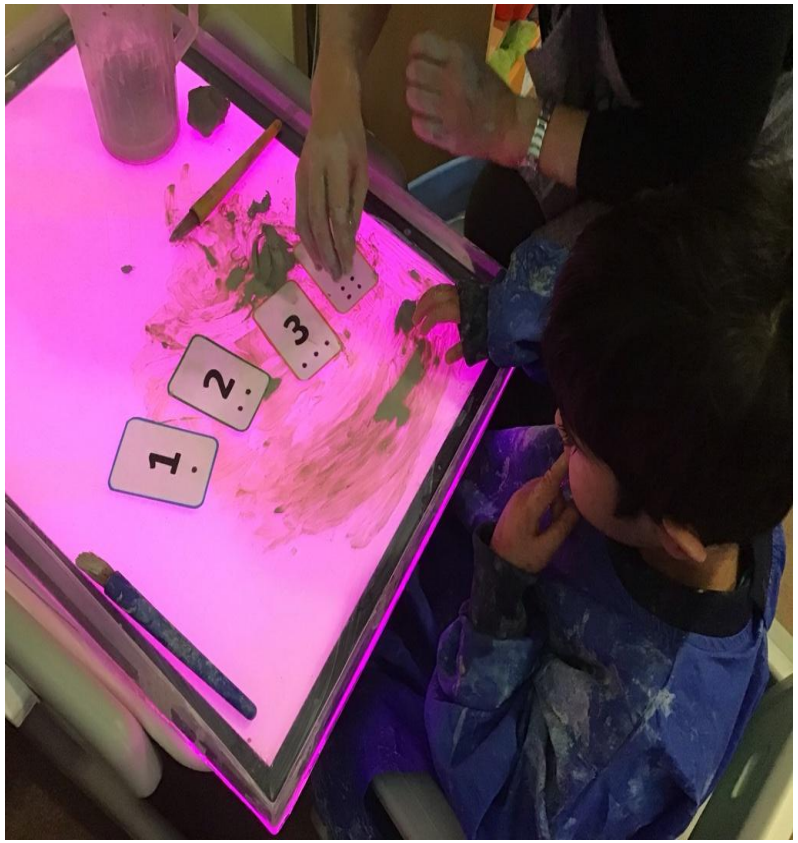


Cross-curricular Learning

Creativity runs as a golden thread throughout Castle School, enriching learning across all subjects and pathways. Creative approaches are highly motivating and support pupils to access learning and demonstrate understanding.

Creative learning takes place in classrooms and through wider opportunities such as choir, Colours of Dance and creative carousels.

Across the curriculum, creativity is used to introduce new learning, deepen understanding and enable pupils to express their knowledge in meaningful ways, making it an essential part of everyday practice at Castle.



Preparing for Adulthood

Creative learning plays a key role in supporting pupils' Preparation for Adulthood, developing essential skills that extend beyond the classroom.



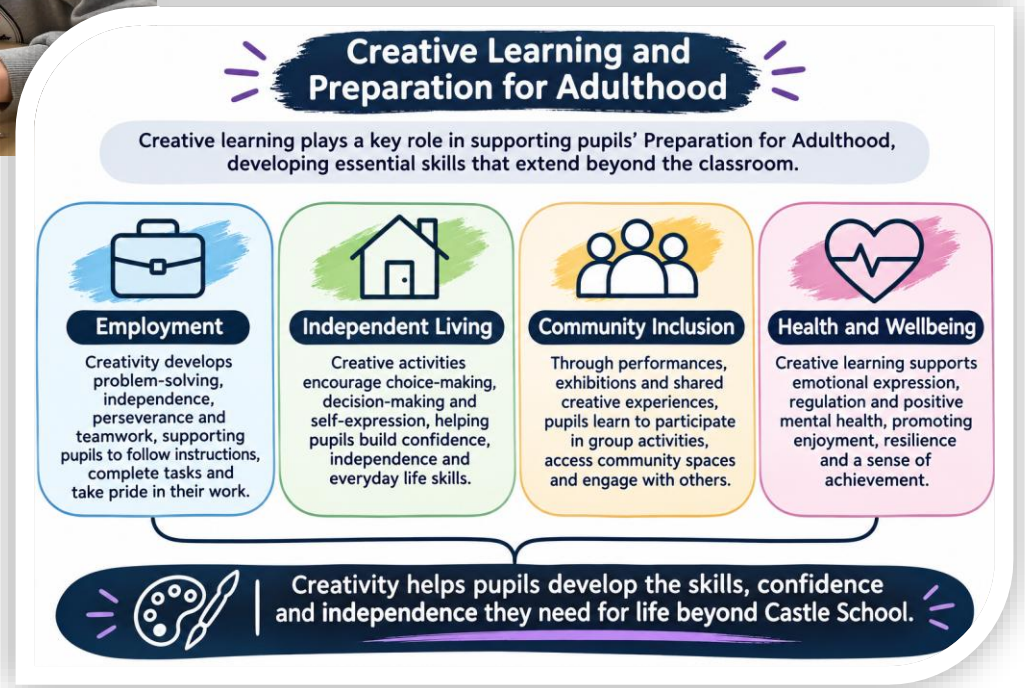
Employment
Creativity develops problem-solving, independence, perseverance and teamwork, supporting pupils to follow instructions, complete tasks and take pride in their work.

Independent Living
Creative activities encourage choice-making, decision-making and self-expression, helping pupils build confidence, independence and everyday life skills.

Community Inclusion
Through performances, exhibitions and shared creative experiences, pupils learn to participate in group activities, access community spaces and engage with others.

Health and Wellbeing
Creative learning supports emotional expression, regulation and positive mental health, promoting enjoyment, resilience and a sense of achievement.

Creativity helps pupils develop the skills, confidence and independence they need for life beyond Castle School



Digital Industries
Creative Work Experience

Creative learning is extended through digital industries work experience, where pupils develop skills in filming, editing and digital production. These opportunities allow pupils to apply creativity in a real-world context, building practical and transferable skills.



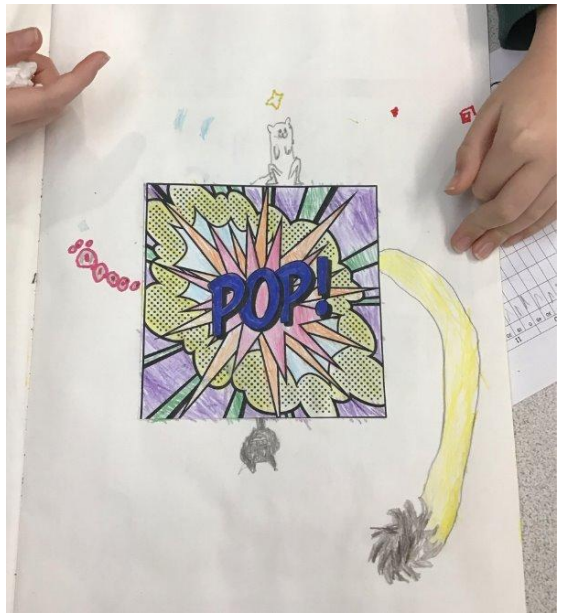
Through digital media projects, pupils learn to plan, film and edit content. The pupils, each week, work on creating the Castle News where they can put these skills into practice. Different themes are reported on each half term and uploaded onto the School website.

Though these tasks they will:

- Develop teamwork, communication and problem-solving skills
- Use industry-style equipment and software
- Experience creative roles linked to future employment pathways
- Digital industries placements support Preparation for Adulthood, giving pupils insight into creative careers while building confidence, independence and employability skills.

Enrichment Opportunities

The arts are an essential part of every child's education at Castle School. We use creativity to engage, inspire and motivate our pupils across the curriculum. Each year, pupils access high-quality enrichment opportunities through creative projects, workshops and performances, allowing them to approach learning through a creative lens. We have strong links with Cambridge's creative community, including Kettle's Yard, local museums, The Junction, The Corn Exchange and the Music Hub, enriching pupils' experiences beyond the classroom







Lunch-time Clubs

Creative lunch clubs, such as drumming and recorder club provide valuable opportunities for pupils to engage in music in a relaxed and inclusive setting. These sessions extend learning beyond the classroom and allow pupils to explore their interests and talents in an enjoyable, low-pressure environment.

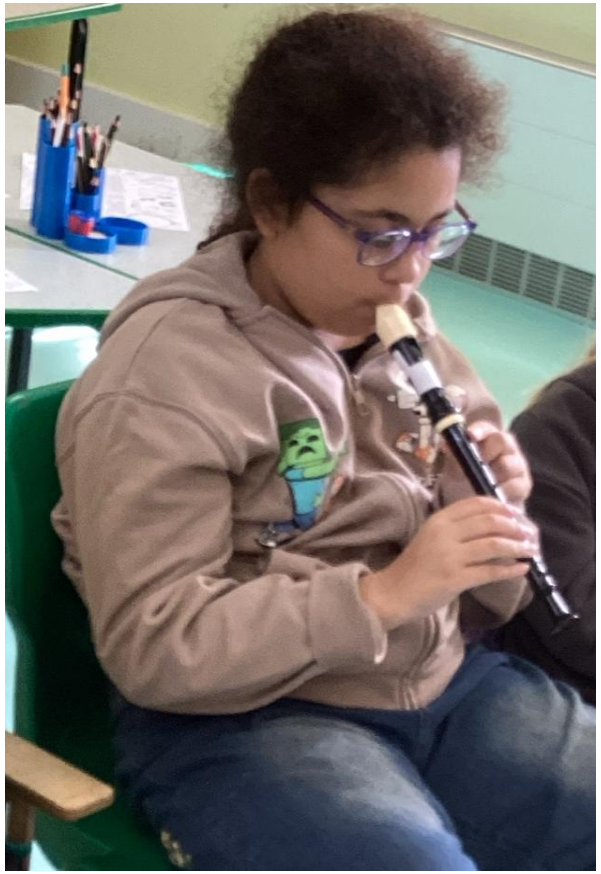
Lunch clubs support: Social interaction and teamwork, as pupils play, practise and perform together

Communication and listening skills, including turn-taking and responding to others

Confidence and self-esteem, through developing skills and experiencing success

Emotional wellbeing, offering a positive and motivating way to regulate and express feelings

Drumming and recorder clubs also help pupils develop rhythm, coordination and musical understanding, while fostering a sense of belonging and community within the school



School Choir

Our school choir is a valued creative opportunity, developed in collaboration with the Music for Life Foundation. The choir provides pupils with the chance to experience music-making as part of a supportive and inclusive group.

- Through choir, pupils develop:
- Communication, listening and turn-taking skills
- Build confidence and self-esteem through shared performance
- Experience teamwork and collaboration in a meaningful context
- Support emotional wellbeing through expressive and enjoyable music-making
- Working alongside school staff and professional musicians, pupils are encouraged to explore their voices, respond to music and take pride in performing together. The choir fosters a strong sense of community and belonging while enriching pupils' musical experiences

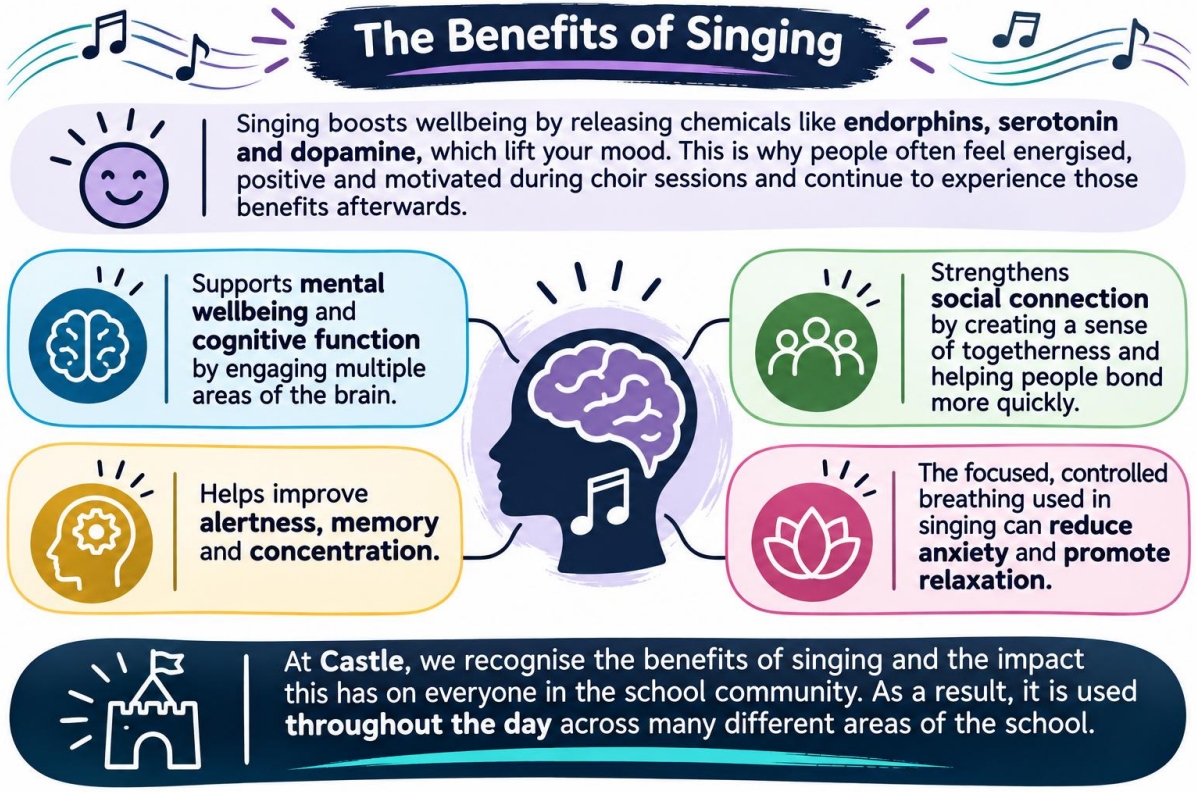




Singing and Wellbeing

Singing boosts wellbeing by releasing chemicals like endorphins, serotonin and dopamine, which lift your mood. This is why people often feel energised, positive and motivated during choir sessions and continue to experience those benefits afterwards. Singing supports mental wellbeing and cognitive function by engaging multiple areas of the brain, which helps improve alertness, memory and concentration. It also strengthens social connection, as singing with others creates a sense of togetherness and helps people bond more quickly. Additionally, the focused, controlled breathing used in singing can reduce anxiety and promote relaxation.

At Castle, we recognise the benefits of singing and the impact this has on everyone in the school community. As a result, it is used throughout the day across many different areas of the school.



Colours of Dance

Colours of Dance sessions provide pupils with high-quality, inclusive dance experiences that support creativity, movement and self-expression. These sessions enable pupils to explore dance in a structured yet expressive way, supported by specialist practitioners.

Through dance, pupils:

- Develop physical coordination, balance and control
- Build confidence and self-expression through movement
- Strengthen communication and social interaction skills
- Support emotional wellbeing through creative and active engagement
- Colours of Dance sessions offer pupils the opportunity to work collaboratively, respond to music and movement, and experience the joy of performance in a supportive environment, enriching creative learning across the school.



Art Now – Creative Collaboration with Kettle's Yard

Art – Creative Collaboration with Kettle's YardArt at Castle School is enriched through a creative collaboration with Kettle's Yard, building on a lasting legacy of an artist-in-residence programme. This partnership provides pupils with meaningful, interactive experiences inspired by contemporary and historical art.KS4 pupils play a key role in facilitating interactive art experiences, supporting younger pupils to explore materials, techniques and ideas. Through this approach, pupils:

- Engage with art in an immersive and hands-on way
- Develop leadership, communication and confidence
- Share creative skills and knowledge with others
- Experience art as a collaborative and inclusive process
- This model strengthens creative learning across the school while supporting progression, independence and Preparation for Adulthood.





Arts Mark

Castle School is proud to hold the Artsmark Gold Award, recognising our commitment to high-quality arts and cultural education across the whole school.

Artsmark Gold reflects:

- A strong, inclusive creative curriculum across all pathways
- Meaningful partnerships with artists and cultural organisations
- High levels of pupil engagement, participation and achievement
- Clear progression and leadership in the arts

This award celebrates creativity as a central part of school life and recognises the positive impact of the arts on pupils' confidence, wellbeing and life chances







Celebrations and Events



Extended Opportunities and Partners

- Wonder Week
- Art Now Event - artist in residence
- I Am Drums performance at Cambridge Junction
- Christmas Performance events – church service at St Giles, Christmas Choir performances, Primary Nativity, Carols round the tree
- Better Together Concert at West Road Concert Hall
- Choir Performance at Cambridge Christmas Lights
- Arbury Carnival Procession and performance
- Castle's Got Talent
- GCSE Art exhibition
- OCR Life & Living Skills Art Exhibition
- Celebration events linked to festivals (e.g. Eid party)
- Royal Shakespeare Company Schools Project
- Links with Cambridge Care Home and opportunities to perform to the residents
- Annual visit to see local theatre productions



Resources

- Specialist Art and DT room
- Performance space with lighting & sound rig
- Subject Specialist Teachers for Art, Music and Dance
- Visiting artists and performers
- In-house Art & Music therapists
- Specialist Music resources – Charanga, instruments, music technology packages, recording equipment
- Soundbeam
- Vibroacoustic
- Memory Garden – Musical installation
- Specialist Art Now reflection equipment
- Textiles resources
- 3D printer
- Batik equipment (textiles)
- Screen Printing
- Light Room

