Castle School
Together We Learn

Castle School
Physical Development

A guide for parents and carers, staff and visitors

Be Confident | Be Kind | Be Creative

Physical Development

At Castle School, we deliver a dedicated Physical Development curriculum led by our specialist PE team. Our class teams and physiotherapists work closely alongside them, ensuring all pupils benefit from high-quality physical activity, including personalised programmes and targeted interventions. Each learning pathway is carefully designed to meet the individual needs of our pupils, supporting their physical, social, and emotional development. We also offer a wide range of PE resources and whole-school projects, including our vibrant cycling initiative, which proudly earned Castle School the Bikeability School of the Year Award (2022).





Our Aim

The aim of the Castle Physical Development offer is to ensure students develop their Physical Literacy so they can enjoy Physical Activity for life and use the skills they have learnt to enhance their lives. Through purposeful and engaging physical experiences, we also promote lifelong wellbeing, independence, teamwork and a positive sense of self.









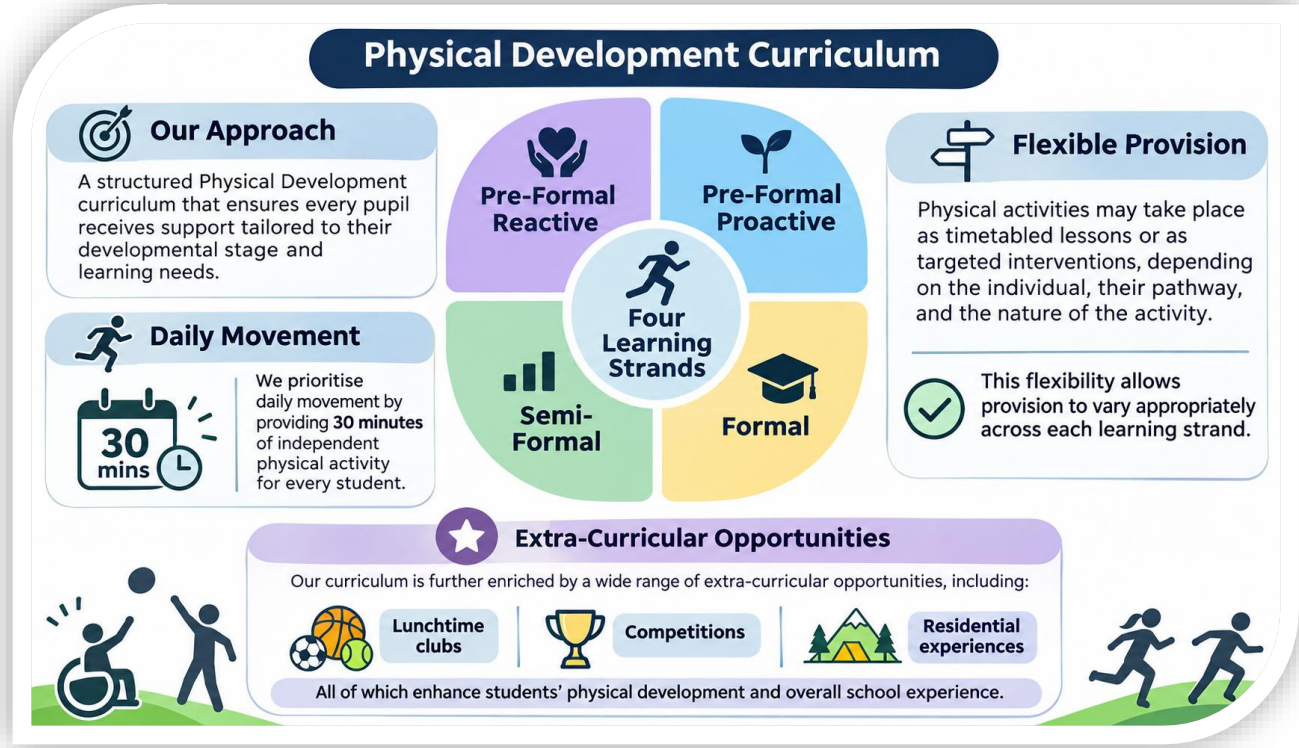






How we organise our learning

- Within our Physical Development curriculum, we cater for four distinct strands of learners: Pre-Formal Reactive, Pre-Formal Proactive, Semi-Formal, and Formal.
- This structured approach ensures that every pupil receives support tailored to their developmental stage and learning needs.
- As a school, we prioritise daily movement by providing 30 minutes of independent physical activity for every student.
- Physical activities may take place as timetabled lessons or as targeted interventions, depending on the individual, their pathway, and the nature of the activity. This flexibility allows provision to vary appropriately across each learning strand.
- Our curriculum is further enriched by a wide range of extra-curricular opportunities, including lunchtime clubs, competitions, and residential experiences, all of which enhance students' physical development and overall school experience





Physical Literacy

Providing our pupils with the movement foundations and motivation to enable continued participation in physical development

Our Pathways

Pre-Formal (Reactive and Pro-Active)

Aims:

- Develop physical literacy, fitness, and confidence.
- Meet individual physical EHCP targets with individualised support

Delivery:

- postural care and support from moving and handling trained staff
- movement programmes such as Sherbourne Movement, or individual physiotherapy programmes.
- bespoke sessions in specialist areas such as swimming in the hydrotherapy pool and rebound therapy on the trampolines.

Semi-Formal

Aims:

- Develop physical literacy, fitness, , and confidence.
- Experience and enjoy physical activity, swimming, cycling, dance, bikeability, trampolining and social walks.

Delivery:

- Structured PE, swimming and cycling sessions
- Physical activity embedded
- across each day and linked to individual EHCP targets
- Bespoke interventions when required
- Lunchtime clubs

Formal

Aims:

- Develop physical literacy, fitness and knowledge of the effects of exercise on the body
- experience and enjoy sports, dance, swimming, cycling, bike ability, fitness suite use, rebound and social walks.

Delivery:

- structured PE sessions
- Specialist session for dance and cycling
- lunchtime clubs
- trips and competitions

Specific taught curriculum based on National Curriculum programmes of study

All staff are involved in the delivery of school physical activity programmes. Staff:

- Encourage enjoyment
- Cater for varying levels of ability by differentiating learning intentions.
- Provide equal encouragement to all students to allow them to acquire skills and develop confidence.
- Ensure the programme is available to all students in the school, regardless of ability.
- Signpost athletes with exceptional talent to local athletics or sports clubs.
- Provide students with good quality, structured activities during break and lunch time.
- Where possible use staff and students who have had the training required to provide fun and challenging inclusive activities.
- Prepare and conduct sessions based on sound coaching and teaching principles.
- Set realistic goals and objectives for students;.
- Ensure a safe and productive environment.



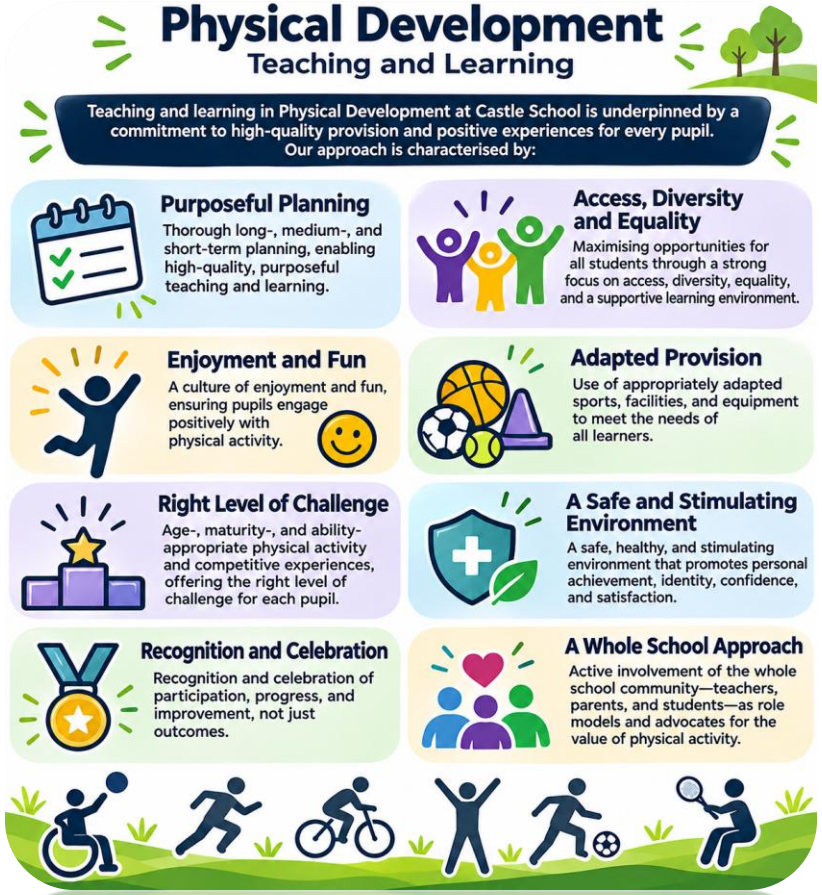




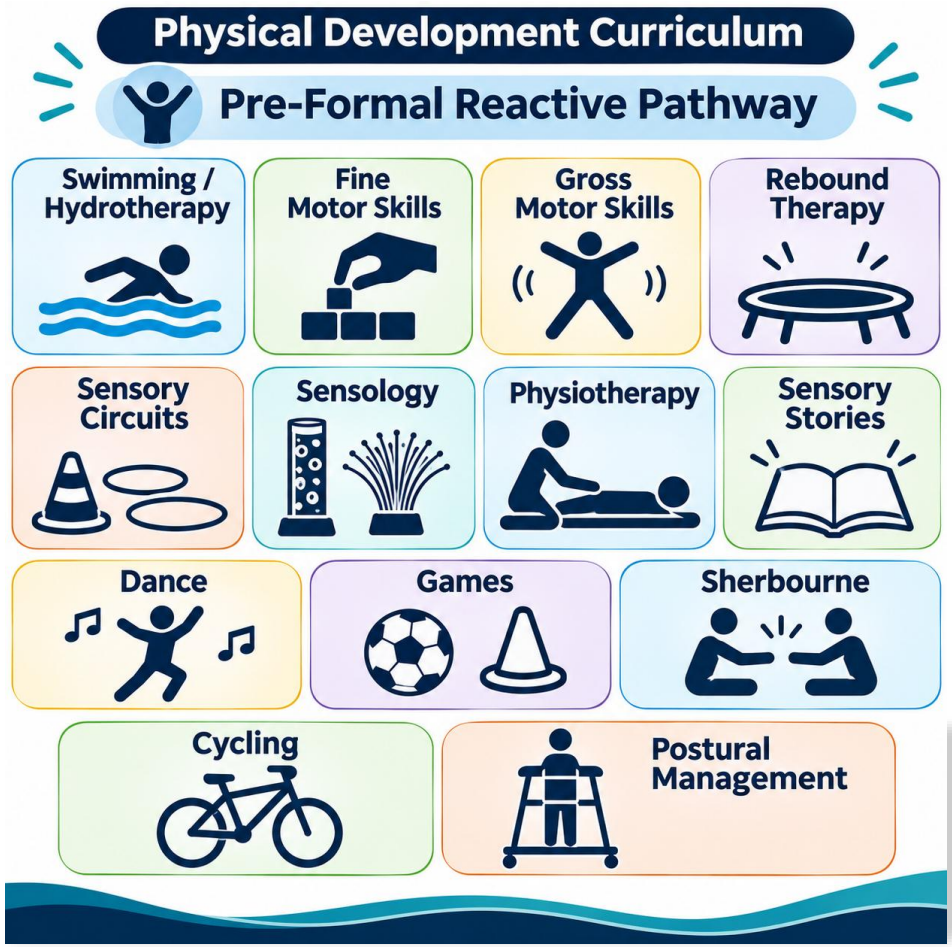


How we sequence learning and plan for progression

- Teaching and learning in Physical Development at Castle School is underpinned by a commitment to high-quality provision and positive experiences for every pupil. Our approach is characterised by:
- Thorough long-, medium-, and short-term planning, enabling high-quality, purposeful teaching and learning.
- Maximising opportunities for all students through a strong focus on access, diversity, equality, and a supportive learning environment.
- A culture of enjoyment and fun, ensuring pupils engage positively with physical activity.
- Use of appropriately adapted sports, facilities, and equipment to meet the needs of all learners.
- Age-, maturity-, and ability-appropriate physical activity and competitive experiences, offering the right level of challenge for each pupil.
- A safe, healthy, and stimulating environment that promotes personal achievement, identity, confidence, and satisfaction.
- Recognition and celebration of participation, progress, and improvement, not just outcomes.
- Active involvement of the whole school community—teachers, parents, and students—as role models and advocates for the value of physical activity



Pre-formal Reactive Physical Development Curriculum











Pre-formal Proactive Physical Development Curriculum











Semi-Formal Physical Development Curriculum

Interventions such as physio-therapy, rebound therapy and hydro-therapy are undertaken when appropriate















Formal Physical Development Curriculum

Interventions such as physio-therapy, rebound therapy and hydro-therapy are undertaken when appropriate









How Formal Physical Development is taught

When undertaking Physical Development, our formal students are taught in 4 main areas to ensure they develop their knowledge, skills and understanding.

These 4 areas are:

Acquiring and developing skills
Selecting and applying skills, tactics and compositional ideas
Evaluating and improving performance
Knowledge and understanding of fitness and health

Supporting Learning

Teachers, Instructors and any other members of the school community involved in the school physical activity programme also need to:

- Read and follow school risk assessments.
- Recognise the difference between student and adult physical and emotional characteristics.
- Understand the short and long-term medical conditions of students (this includes previous and existing illnesses and injuries).
- Use correct moving and handling procedures for all activities.
- Awareness of individual physio programmes (Standing frame time, floor time, structured walking frame time)
- Structured morning sensory circuits and access to sensory circuits throughout the day within the classroom setting.
- Ensure that equipment and facilities are safe and in good working order.
- Enforce the use of recommended protective equipment required for a particular game or sport.
- Provide access personalised physio equipment. Access to appropriate first aid facilities, including access to defibrillator.





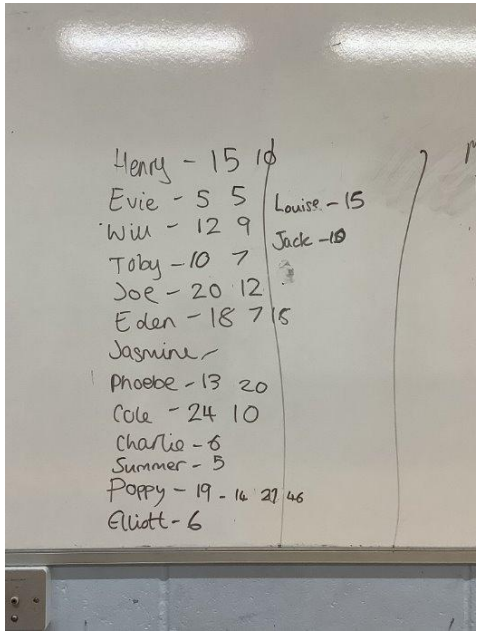


Cross-curricular learning

At Castle School teachers are encouraged to incorporate physical activity across their teaching and learning programme. Examples include:

- Within the access of internal and external gyms the use of pulse rate and blood pressure instruments aid the students understanding of our working body.
- Using space, shape and area in Maths. Using work completed in PE to help with understanding tables and data in Maths.
- In PSHE lessons adopting a healthy lifestyle impacts upon mental and health and physical well-being.





Cross-curricular learning within PE Lessons:

Examples Include:
Mathematics

- Skip counting: Practice multiplication tables or skip counting during warm-ups like jumping jacks.
- Data tracking: Have students log their running laps or heart rate..
- Measuring: Students to measure distance / Height jumped.

Science & Anatomy

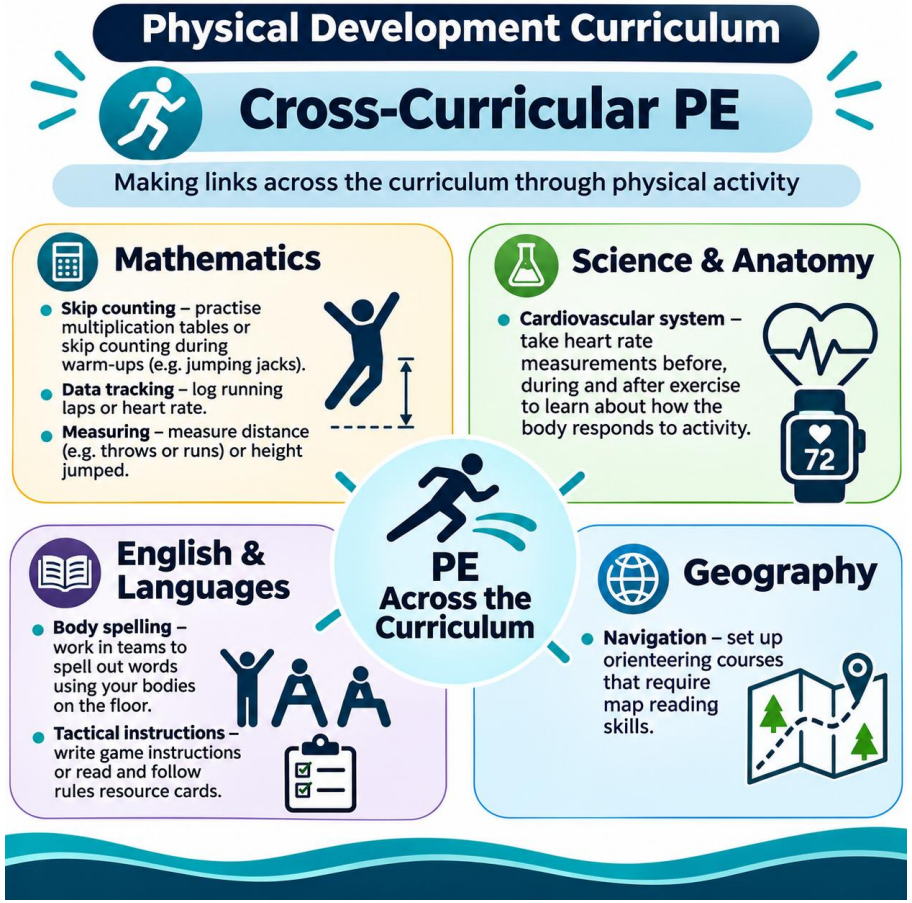
- Cardiovascular system: Take heart rate measurements before, during, and after exercise to learn physiology.

English & Languages

- Body spelling: Challenge student teams to spell out words using their bodies on the floor.
- Tactical instructions: Require pupils to write out game instructions or read rules resource cards.

Geography

- Navigation: Set up orienteering courses requiring map reading skills.



Communication in Physical Development

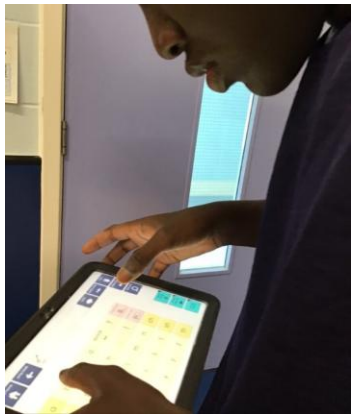
In Physical Development we communicate in many different ways to ensure our children understand:

- Body language
- Eye pointing (shared attention)
- Intensive interaction
- Switches for choice making
- Signing
- Picture exchange communication system
- Verbal communication

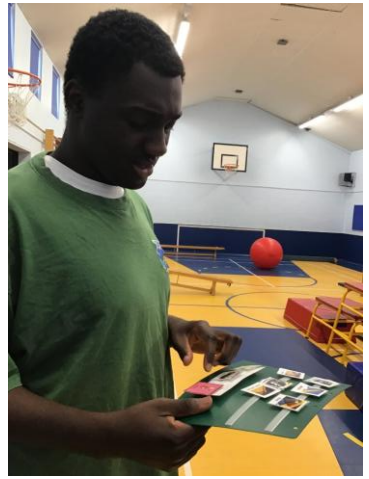














Physiotherapy

Physiotherapy plays a crucial role in supporting our pupils' physical development, mobility, and overall wellbeing. Through personalised exercises and targeted interventions, it helps children strengthen their muscles, improve posture, and develop functional movement skills that support greater independence. It also reduces discomfort, prevents secondary health issues, and enhances participation in everyday activities, both in school and at home.









Cycling

At Castle, every student has the opportunity to take part in our Cycling programme. We offer a carefully structured, progressive pathway that enables all pupils to participate at a level that suits their needs and abilities. Our goal is to help students experience the enjoyment of cycling as a leisure activity, while also developing the skills and confidence that can support greater independence in travel. We were proud to be recognised as the Bikeability School of the Year in 2022, celebrating the commitment and achievements of our pupils and staff









Rebound Therapy

Rebound Therapy is a valuable part of our curriculum because the trampoline provides a unique, low-impact way for pupils to develop balance, coordination, and body awareness in a highly motivating environment. The movement and rhythm help regulate sensory needs, support relaxation, and improve concentration, which can carry over into learning in the classroom. It also offers powerful opportunities for communication, confidence-building, and positive interaction with staff, making it an enjoyable and therapeutic experience for many of our pupils.







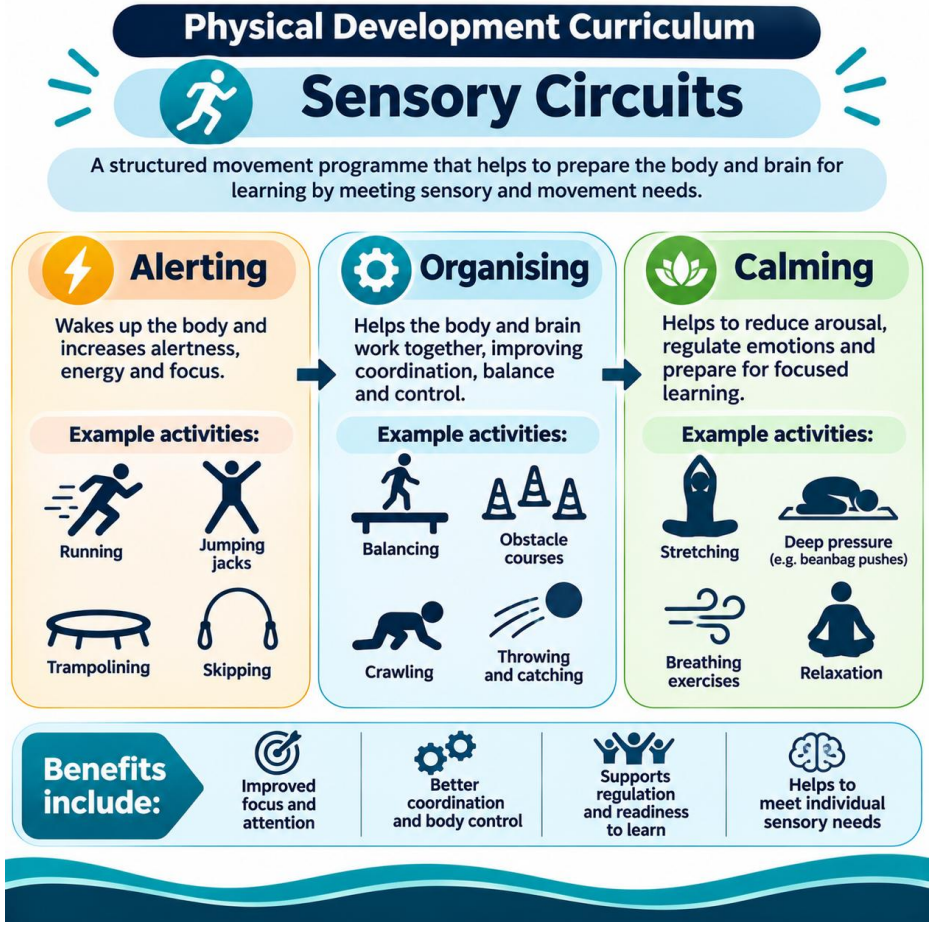


Sensory Circuits

Sensory circuits are a series of activities that gives students the opportunities for movement breaks and aids their regulation.

Sensory Circuits is divided into three sections.

- Alerting: where students bounce on a trampette, Physio ball or space hopper; travel clockwise and anticlockwise in a spinning top or on a body board
- Organising: where students have to complete activities that involve thinking and planning their movements e.g. match coloured bean bags or balls to coloured buckets
- Calming: where students engage in deep pressure activities e.g. lying under a weighted blanket experience deep pressure on their back and shoulders with a physio ball
- The idea is that once sensory circuits is completed, students return to class calm, organised and ready to learn.



Assessment and accreditation

Assessment is a continuous process and a vital part of our teaching and learning. It helps us understand what pupils already know, what they can do, and what they are ready to learn next. Through this ongoing insight, we can plan personalised next steps, identify any barriers to learning, and put the right support in place promptly.
We use our own bespoke assessment frameworks, carefully designed and adapted to meet the diverse needs of our pupils.

Many of our Key Stage 4 learners work towards OCR Entry Level accreditation, ensuring their achievements are formally recognised.

Evidence of progress is gathered throughout the year using
Evidence for Learning, allowing us to build a rich picture of each pupil's development and celebrate their successes.

Young Leaders

Our school is proud to develop leadership skills through our Young Leaders initiative. Each year, a selected cohort of learners receives dedicated Young Leader training, helping them grow in confidence and responsibility.

Many of our Young Sports Leaders go on to become Sports Ambassadors, representing the school at a range of external sporting events.

Through active participation in physical education, sport, and general play during break and lunchtime, students develop key leadership qualities such as teamwork, cooperation, communication, and understanding.

These leadership opportunities form an important part of our whole-school programme and are available throughout the year during lunchtime activities, school sports days, clubs, and tournaments



Celebrations and events

Castle School is committed to providing a healthy and inclusive level of competition for all students. Competitive activities take place at both intra-school and inter-school levels, as well as through less formal, social events. All competitions are delivered in a way that is appropriate to the age, confidence, and experience of the learners.

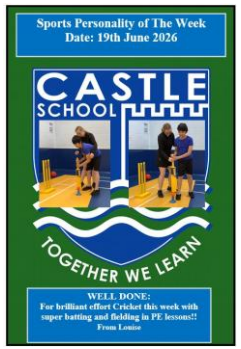
Our competitive programme also follows the National School Games framework, ensuring high-quality, structured opportunities for pupils to develop their skills.

Teachers, instructors, and all members of the school community involved in physical activity play an important role in helping students understand that while winning can be exciting, taking part, trying their best, and developing resilience are equally important values.

Our yearly programme includes:

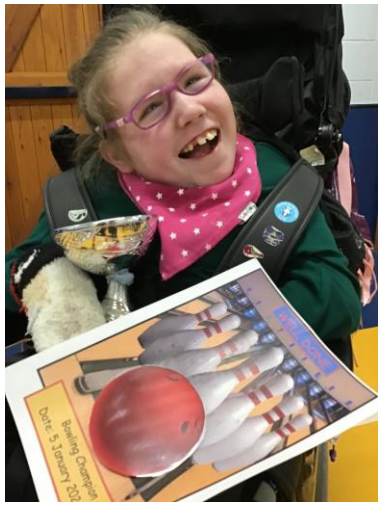
- Weekly lunchtime clubs
- Fun Run and sensory slalom/obstacle course
- Sports Days
- Swimming Gala
- Triathlon











Clubs and Teams

At Castle we run lunchtime clubs, everyday of the week for both our primary and secondary students.

Our sports teams compete in inter and intra school competitions throughout the year. Sports which we have competed in include Cricket, Boccia, Football, Athletics and Basketball.









Links and Partnerships

- At Castle we have built up really strong links and partnerships with many different groups:
- Padel United who let us use their new padel courts.
- Cambridge Rugby Club who provide free weekly sessions at school.
- Colours of Dance who undertake regular lessons at school.
- Cambridge United FC who provide regular coaching events at school and assist us in fundraising events.
- Cambridge Lawn Tennis Club who provide coaching and facility use.
- Cambridge University Sports Centre whose gym we use every week.
- Power2Inspire an fantastic charity who we work closely with.
- Halliwick Swimming Association – we host courses at school.
- Rebound Therapy – We have been hosting courses for the past 7 years.

