

## KS4 Curriculum Overview



*At The Castle School, we believe our curriculum allows our students to develop the skills, knowledge and understanding to empower them to achieve their personal, academic and career aspirations, with curiosity, creativity, community and communication at the centre. Each pupil at The Castle School drives their own pathway to provide a broad and balanced curriculum that is bespoke and relevant to their own needs.*

In Key Stage 4 we aim to provide a curriculum based on functional topics that supports students in their next steps. We ensure that they are supported to build on the skills and knowledge they have, broaden their life experiences and help them to think about their future. For some students, this may be their final Key Stage at The Castle School. Therefore, we aim to equip learners with the skills and qualifications they need to move on. Most students will go on to Post-16 at The Castle School.

### **Registration**

Not only is this the time check attendance, it is a vital time for students to transition from home to school. Activities will be set up to enable students to share information about their evenings with their peers and staff and help them get ready to learn.

### **Getting Active**

This is a time to get active whilst also providing a time to emotionally get ready for the day ahead. Pupils can choose from a range of activities including 'wake up shake up', yoga and outdoor sessions on our track. This also provides an opportunity for staff to engage in pupil-led conversations.

### **Math / English**

We have a functional approach to English and Maths which are taught through current affairs; issues happening locally, nationally and globally and real-life contexts that are relevant to the students and/ or will support them in understanding the world around them. This will include functional elements such as letter writing, debates, reading and understanding menus/ leaflets, timetables, money, distance etc. The functional approach will involve trips to the local community and communication activities that are relevant to the pupils, for example running a café, or playing a game with a peer. It will also encompass the community and practical sessions including measuring and

counting through cooking. We also teach English through novels which are specifically chosen to link with other aspects of the students' learning.

### **Functional Skills (English/Maths)**

Functional Skills are the fundamental English and Maths skills that people need for their working and personal lives. Students can study for the qualifications in practical ways and apply core skills to real-life situations.

### **World of Work/ Life Skills/ Community**

World of Work/ Life Skills/ Community. These sessions will take place both in the classroom and out in the community such as visiting the library, shops, local Care Home and places of worship. Students will practise and develop their communication skills, road safety and using money in a real world context

This session is very student-led and embodies activities that the students are interested in and would like to develop. This session can also include *Growing Together* and the *Agricultural Challenge*. This allows our students to communicate with judges and meet students from other Special Schools across Berkshire. Some students will have the opportunity to do work experience within The Castle School.

Our award winning World of Work Programme has been set up with the ultimate aim of gaining paid employment for students who have the drive and desire to work. As well as supporting students with work experience placements, they are given support in all aspects of employment from writing their CVs to how to search for vacant jobs. Our three stage model helps students to progress into employment. Typically, this process starts once a student reaches post-16, however, for some students at KS4, we are able to offer aspects of the three stage below:

#### **Stage One – Work Experience**

As the name suggests, this stage is all about gaining experience in different work settings. Students will normally spend a morning or an afternoon per week in a work environment for six weeks to gain experience in work environment skills. We aim to give students as many work experience opportunities as possible to help them find a sector they are passionate about.

#### **Stage Two – Work Placement**

Once a student finds a sector they really enjoy, we aim to put them on a long term placement. This can be for a morning/afternoon or a day a week for anything between two-nine months.

### Stage Three – Supported Internship

Supported internships are a structured study programme based primarily with an employer. They enable young people aged 16-24 with an Education, Health and Care Plan, to achieve sustainable paid employment by equipping them with the skills they need for work through learning in the workplace.

#### **Home Skills**

Home Skills covers the areas needed to live as independently as possible including:

Cooking and making hot drinks.

Clothes washing, reading washing labels and using the washing machine

Budgeting for cooking.

How to find the telephone number of a local plumber or electrician, practising using the telephone to make enquiries

Making a bed

Personal hygiene and dressing skills.

#### **ASDAN Transition Challenge – Introduction and progression (or sensory if needed)**

Some students will work towards their ASDAN, Transition Challenge Gold award. The programme will give pupils regular opportunities to develop their communication and independence skills as well as links to all areas of the KS4 curriculum. Pupils will have regular opportunities to develop their skills in the community and record their learning in a functional way, including through letters, and posters. They will also develop sentence writing by answering questions about what they have done. Teachers will choose the units that will be most relevant to pupils needs.

#### **Afternoon Registration**

Students coming in after lunch and quietly reading, drawing or colouring to self-regulate themselves after lunch. It also gives time for students to talk to adults about any issues that may have come up over lunch time.

#### **Life Lessons**

Key Stage 4 will follow the secondary PSHE planning based on the PSHE (Personal Social, Health and Economic education) association SEN planning framework. This covers all statutory areas of RSE (Relationships and Sex Education) and Internet Safety. The most relevant topics are chosen based on the needs and experiences of the students.

## **Wellbeing**

Mental Health and Wellbeing is built into our foundations. If not emotionally in the right place, students will not participate and learn to the best of their ability – we understand the importance of identifying and using own strategies as well as building resilience and self-esteem in order to help prepare students for their future. We use our knowledge of the whole child to ensure that sessions meet key social and emotional outcomes for our students. Our wellbeing planning is informed by many therapeutic approaches that are currently key thinking within education. We use inspiration from many different approaches but here a few: Theraplay®, ELSA (Emotional Literacy Support Assistant), PACE ((Playfulness, Acceptance, Curiosity, Empathy), Trauma Informed Schools and Attachment Theory

## **Options**

It is important for students to have some ownership of their learning. When appropriate, we provide an opportunity for them to select an *Option* as they would if they were in mainstream. This is an opportunity for students to access an area of interest and find out more about a topic they have a genuine interest in. We also offer an exciting opportunity for KS4 students to mix with students they might not usually work with including our KS5 students at Post-16. A variety of activities will be offered and students will choose a different activity each term. These activities may include some that take place out in the local community.

## **PE**

Sessions cover a range of sports to help students to develop skills whilst also developing teamwork and communication. Sports covered include athletics, hockey, football, netball to name just a few.

## **Art**

Art is taught through the 7 elements of art; line, shape, texture, form, space (area around an object), colour, value (light and dark- shading). Within this, the students use and experience a range of media. Where it is appropriate, KS4 students will complete their art based around a specific artist or piece of artwork that links into The Castle School whole school topic.

## **Music**

Music at Key stage 4 focuses on the building blocks of music; melody, rhythm, dynamics, structure, tempo, timbre, harmony and texture. We approach a variety of musical styles from contemporary commercial music through the western classical tradition and music from different cultures, such as Gamelan

and Raga. Where possible, students play appropriate instruments for the topics. The scheme of work is linked to the wider school topic and units fall into two forms; composition and performance which are showcased by recordings.

### **Drama**

Through Drama, students develop their skills in acting; working specifically on role-play, improvisation and presenting drama and stories to others. All students are given the opportunity to be part of a dramatic process that involves them exploring, creating, feeling, thinking, communicating, playing, moving and sensing.

### **Story**

Story is a class novel or short stories that will be read for pleasure every day before lunch.

### **Social Skills/Communication**

Social Skills/ Communication are vital for everyday life and this is embedded in to the curriculum however additional standalone sessions allow students to mix for planned activities such as board games but in a structured format or for example, an adult teaching students how to play a card game and then a group play together. For some students, we use the 'Toolkit for Talking' and talking mats to support their learning, both in discrete communication sessions and throughout the day. These students will have opportunities to use their toolkit for talking through choosing activities at the end of the day.

### **Duke of Edinburgh Award**

The Duke of Edinburgh Award is an option for some students and is incorporated into their curriculum. The Duke of Edinburgh Award is available to 14-24 year olds and it is the world's leading Youth Achievement Award. It equips young people for life regardless of their background, culture, physical ability, skills or interests. This award is a personal challenge and not a competition against others; it pushes young people to their personal limits and recognises their achievements.

### **Lunchtime**

This is a fantastic time for communication, inclusion and socialising. Pupils have the opportunity to take part in a variety of activities with their peers and staff. This is also a time for many students to spend time, on the school playground, away from staff members allowing independent and spending vital time with their peers.