

The Castle School Self Evaluation 2023



Overview of The Castle School

The Castle School is a community special school based on two sites in Newbury. This consists of a the main Primary and Secondary school located at Love Lane and a Post-16 centre situated adjacent to Newbury College.

The Castle School's catchment area is predominantly the Western half of West Berkshire. However, a small, but increasing number of pupils are placed here from Wiltshire, Hampshire and Oxfordshire.

The school has experienced significant growth over the past 11 years. In 2011 the school catered for 127 students. As of September 2023 there are 180 students on role.

Year	Number of pupils
2011/2012	130
2012/2013	136 (4.6%)
2013/2014	143 (10%)
2014/2015	150 (15.4%)
2015/2016	157 (20.8%)
2016/2017	162 (24.6%)
2017/2018	169 (30%)
2018/2019	163 (25.4%)
2019/2020	173 inc. 4 WOW+ students (33.1%)
2020/2021	165 (26.9%)
2021/2022	170 (30.8%)
2022/2023	180 (39.2%)
Total increase since 2011	50 (39.2%)

Characteristics of learners

The Castle School caters for students from 3 to 19 years of age. There is provision for pupils with a wide range of needs including Profound and Multiple/Complex Needs (PMLD) (9%), Severe Learning Difficulties (SLD) (14%), Moderate Learning Difficulties (MLD) (35%) and Autistic Spectrum Condition (ASC) (42%). The majority of students are white British. 13% are from ethnic minority groups and this is roughly representative of the local area.

Admissions profile September 2020

On roll	Joined	Left	CIC	PPG	Dual roll	Boys	Girls
180	21	22	3 (1.76%)	69 (38%)	0	127 (71%)	53 (29%)
Nursery/ Reception	Key Stage 1&2	Key Stage 3	Key Stage 4	Key Stage 5			
1	46	69	30	34			

Vision and Values

Our Purpose

The Castle School exists to provide a caring, nurturing and outstanding educational community for the learners of West Berkshire and beyond. Our key purpose is to educate, motivate, inspire and celebrate all children with additional needs and to provide a quality educational experience which encourages equality for all; to develop individual self-worth, esteem and potential in all learners and uphold their rights.

Our vision is to create a happy, secure and stimulating learning environment which will encourage and challenge our learners to develop their skills and knowledge as far as they can and provide the best education possible.

Our aims are to:

- encourage all our learners to be curious and hungry to learn, now and in the future
- enable our learners to become valued citizens who contribute positively within their community and beyond
- set high expectations in all areas of learning and create an environment that enables our learners to flourish
- deliver outstanding provision that is at the cutting edge of good practice
- develop positive, mutually-trusting partnerships with families to improve the outcomes of our learners
- empower our learners and equip them with the skills to achieve a full and independent adult life
- engender confidence, resilience, self-worth and a passion for life-long learning

We believe that anyone with the drive and desire can reach their goals. Our role is to inspire young people to achieve and provide the support to enable our learners to become independent, self-confident and resilient members of the community.

We will strive to do this together by:

- providing each learner with the skills, resilience, drive and passion needed to be successful and happy through a well-differentiated broad, balanced and inspiring curriculum
- celebrate everyone's achievements and talents and embrace the wonderful diversity of our inclusive school community
- having a highly trained, creative and innovative staff team
- empowering each learner through a total communication environment enabling everyone to express themselves and to remove barriers
- supporting each learner with engaging and active challenges to encourage everyone to become life-long learners.
- working together with learners, parents, carers, professionals and members of the community to improve outcomes for all.

SEF Judgements

	Date	Overall effectiveness Grade	Comment
Last OFSTED Inspection	Jan 2019	1	Outstanding
Current grade based on SEF judgements	Sept 2023	1	Outstanding

OFSTED inspected the school in January 2019. The Castle School was judged as continuing to be Outstanding in all areas.

Some key quotes from the report:

"Pupils' safety and well-being have the highest priority for all staff."

"Pupils say that they feel safe and know that they can share any concerns with an adult. Parents agree that their children are safe in school and that they are well looked after."

"Pupils make exceptionally strong progress during their time at the school, both academically and personally."

"Clear embedded routines, the knowledge of expert staff, and creative and flexible approaches enable all pupils to be as independent as possible."

"The curriculum is engaging and fun, with a broad range of activities to motivate pupils in lessons."

"pupils enjoy learning"

"The 'World of Work' is a key area of the curriculum and recognised as a best practice model of delivery, with significantly higher-than-average numbers of pupils on supported internships or gaining employment."

"Teamwork is embedded in the culture of the school, and working together successfully further enhances the high-quality teaching and learning."

"Staff are highly motivated and enjoy working at the school"

"Excellent relationships were evident between staff and pupils"

"The staff demonstrate patience and care at all times and are dedicated to encouraging pupils to be as independent as possible."

"The curriculum reflects the strong safeguarding ethos of the school. Pupils learn how to keep themselves safe through managing their own feelings as well as being alert to dangers beyond the school, particularly online."

Covid recovery

Over the past 3 ½ years, we have had to adapt and adjust due to the impact of Covid-19. This has been an extreme challenge. However, as a school family, we have come through. Down to the tireless work of the staff team, parents and students, along with support from governors and careful strategic and day-to-day planning from SLT and members of the extended leadership team, we have managed to support everyone through these challenging times.

As a school, we have remained open for the vast majority of the past 2 ½ years. Even during the most restrictive lockdown at the start of 2021, we managed to set-up a system that saw a majority of students having on-site provision. In terms of on-site attendance, nationally secondary schools had around 5% of students in school, primary schools had 21% in and special schools had 30% in. We managed to have 44% of our pupil cohort in school full-time, which was very pleasing given the circumstances. We did this alongside a staff weekly rota, which enabled us to have more room in school and to keep everyone as safe as possible.

For those pupils remaining at home, we developed a comprehensive remote learning offer, bespoke to each class. This included a mix of Zoom sessions as well as other resources to enable all students to have daily link to school and enabled development of learning.

When students returned to school in September 2020 we developed a whole school recovery curriculum. This was developed from Barry Carpenter's research. As a school community our focus was on how we support children and staff to work through any challenges and or anxieties they may have experienced during lockdowns or ones that they are likely to continue to be exposed to in the future. Some of our students have and had many unanswered questions so it was important that we provided as much scaffolding as is possible to help them understand why their daily lives have been changed and how we are all working towards achieving some kind of normality.

A wealth of information has been produced around a 'recovery curriculum'. The reasoning behind this is for it to support our young people recover from their experience of the pandemic. The recovery curriculum was based on themes of recovery whilst recognising the variety of experiences each student will have all been through.

The overriding themes were as follows:

Safety, Connection, Belonging, Reassurance, Empathy, Self-Care, Self-Esteem and Emotions.

These are then broken down into 6 areas in which the themes of recovery can be expressed through. They are as follows:

Communication, Community, Sensory, Physical, The Arts and Wellbeing.

As we move further towards a situation where we live with Covid, the recovery will continue and staff will utilise the recovery curriculum where appropriate.

Covid still has a significant impact in day-to-day as well as strategic decisions. Along with other schools, our absence rates remain high and we have to work hard to cover and ensure staff and students are best supported. Although a last resort (and thankfully very rare) we have had to close some classes on a temporary basis due to staff shortages and illness.

Pressure on places

We have seen a significant increase in demand for places at The Castle School. This is a national issue and is placing huge pressure on special schools across the country. We have seen a huge increase in requests for visits to see our school as well as a very significant increase in placement requests from other local authorities. To give some scale to this, as recent as 2018, it would be unusual for me to have to refuse a placement request for a student whose needs we could meet. However, due to lack of physical capacity, I am now regularly sending out response letters stating that we cannot offer a place. During the academic year 2022-2023 we have had 158 requests for spaces. We could only give 21 places out due to the constraints explained above.

Overview

We have moved assessment systems from BSquared to a system called Earwig. The catalyst for change was based on the reflection that BSquared was not capturing all of the outstanding progress our students make in all areas. A prime example of this could be students gaining employment. In addition, Earwig is able to track progress of EHCP Outcomes in a way that will enable us to analyse the progress more effectively.

Other benefits to moving to Earwig:

- Reduction of admin workload
- Empowering all Teachers and Leadership to access and analyse data
- Bring together all pupil progress on to one system

The process of selecting a new assessment systems was carried out over the period of two academic years and involved looking at a number of different assessment systems.

Leadership, Middle Leaders and then all staff were involved in the process to ensure we captured views from all users.

Other schools who use Earwig were contacted and questioned to get an understanding of the system over time from a user's perspective.

We phased the use of Earwig in to school over the 2021 Spring and Summer Terms.

Earwig is divided in to two clear sections: Frameworks and Records

Frameworks: A list of statements that students would work to achieve. We have three Frameworks:

1. EHCP
2. Castle Core
3. Discoverer

Records: Allows us to capture any element of progress for a student that is not found on a Framework.

Earwig is proving to be a very useful tool for data entry; both hard attainment data against learning statements (Castle CORE) and the softer timeline *learning journey* moments are easy to input into Earwig. However, the analysis and group reports which can be exported out of Earwig are less practical for our needs. Through liaison with Earwig, we are creating our own whole school Castle CORE database which can be interrogated to show both attainment AND progress for the following:

- Individual students
- Classes
- Key Stages
- Ethnicity
- Groups: Gender PPG / non-PPG, EAL / non-EAL, LAC / non-LAC. More groups will follow

This database will enable the production of data reports for Governors, Senior Leaders, Key Stage leaders and class teachers. These reports will be used during Annual Reviews and Pupil Progress meetings. When appropriate, they can also be shared with external agencies. This will reduce workload for teachers and leaders significantly; it will allow them time to concentrate on accurate data entry and analysis of their students' learning. The reports will enable for easier identification of strengths and areas for development across the whole school, key stage and ultimately class level. The outcomes of the data analysis will feed into class, key stages and whole school learning priorities.

We have agreed that there will be 6 *data collection points* per year. Teachers will need to ensure that Earwig is up-to-date at the end of each term. Once the *data collection* window has closed, relevant reports can be run and published to begin the process of analysis with a view to improving provision for students. It is expected that the analysis of this data will also drive training priorities for school staff.

We will be conducting internal moderation of Earwig data entry this term. We will be using the data reports with teachers and Governors from Term 5 this academic year.

September 2023 – Full Year Analysis

Progress data analysis for students on Castle Core assessment framework 2022-2023

1. The assessment frameworks.

Since last academic year, we have introduced more assessment frameworks to measure attainment and progress more accurately for students with a wide range of needs. We introduced the NC-KS3 for Castle @ Theale for English and Maths and we have been trialling an Early Years assessment framework for Primary 1. For this academic year, the significant majority of students' attainment and progress were measured using The Castle Core assessment framework (153 out of 173). This framework is divided into four areas: English, Maths, Communication & Language (C&L) and Health & Well-being (H&Wb). Students make progress as their work is assessed against the learning statements. If a student has all learning statements at *independent*, he/she will have 100% for that area.

We continue to use an EHCP assessment framework to track students' progress against their EHCP outcomes. However, due to the bespoke nature and wide range of outcomes including time frames we do not collate and analyse this data in the same way as the Castle Core framework. The effectiveness of each EHCP is reviewed at the Annual Review. This process is overseen by the SEN team at West Berks.

2. Context.

This academic year, there have been 8 strike days which resulted in Love Lane and P16 closing at least half their classes on each occasion and Castle at Theale was fully closed 6 times

2. Measurement of progress.

Progress for this report is measured from early in term 1 (Baseline Sept 2022) to the end of term 6 (Sum 2) of the academic year.

3. Student numbers.

There were 153 students assessed against the full CORE Framework.

There were 11 students assessed against the Discoverer (engagement) framework (Blaise class) for which we don't produce group data.

There were 10 students assessed against the English and Maths areas of the NCKS3 Assessment Framework for which we don't currently produce reports due to the low numbers.

3. Whole school progress.

Progress across the four different areas remained even for the second consecutive year. Although

progress was down compared to last year, this is accounted for by a much more rigorous baselining process at the beginning of the year. See appendix 1

The progress of male and female students was equal for English and only differed by 1% for Maths, C&L and H&Wb. See appendix 2

Students for whom English is not spoken at home made slightly less progress than those who do speak English at home. The progress gaps are as follows: English -2%, Maths -4%, C&L -2% and H&Wb +0%. The attainment gaps between EAL and non-EAL are as follows: English -13%, Maths -15%, C&L -17% and H&Wb -12%, It is worth noting that the gap has reduced for all four areas compared to last year. See appendix 3. Although the early analysis was that EAL students are not catching up, on closer inspection, on an individual student level, it appears that it is the neuro-atypical needs of each student which is the primary barrier to learning rather than simply an EAL issue. More research is needed in this area

Part of the PPG trend continued this year, students who receive the Pupil Premium Grant (PPG) made higher attainment in all areas of the framework up to 8% in C&L compared to students who don't receive the grant. Unlike last year, however, PPG students did not make more progress than their peers, across all 4 areas they made less progress by -2% in English, -3% in Maths, -1% in C&L and H&Wb. See appendix 4

Ethnic minority (global majority) students made the same amount of progress as White British students in English and Maths and more progress in C&L and H&Wb . However, in terms of attainment, Ethnic minority students remain behind by -14% in English and Maths, -15% in C&L. The attainment is equal for H&Wb. The gap is closing but the gap remains significant. See appendices 5&6

4. Progress at Key Stages.

Key Stage 2 (P2) remained the area where most progress was made, and Key Stage 1 (P1) made the least which is not unexpected and underlines the importance of our planned use of an Early Years assessment framework. Key Stage 2 (P2) and Key Stage 3 (S1) showed the most progress in Communication and Language. See appendices 7, 8, 9, 10 and 11.

5. Areas of need

Rates of progress across the four main areas of need (ASD, MLD, PMLD, SLD) are broadly similar with PMLD and then SLD students making the least progress, this is expected.

6. Strengths.


The attainment of the PPG students is an outstanding strength of the school. Progress of PPG students being on a par with non-PPG students is also a strength. The Pupil Progress meetings sit at heart of our data collection process. Teachers have access to and can talk through individuals' data and Key Stage leaders have access to their areas' data. We have conducted moderation meetings to develop consistency of assessment. Early baselining has also been beneficial.








7. Areas for development

There is a gap in attainment of Ethnic minorities when compared to White British students. This needs some more research as a cohort and individuals. Key Stage 1 (P1) needs an assessment framework which better describes progress that the students are making. Castle@Theale will continue to develop relevant assessment frameworks.

8. Next steps

Pupil progress meetings will continue to take place 5 times a year. In-year analysis of progress will continue for individuals and be developed for cohorts at Key Stage and whole school level. Analysis of PPG data leading to provision for students is to continue to feed into the PPG strategy. Appendices are below

 1.pdf	 2.pdf	 3.pdf	 4.pdf
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 5.pdf	 6.pdf	 7.pdf	 8.pdf
 9.pdf	 10.pdf	 11.pdf	

Outcomes for Children and Other Learners - Areas for development 2023-2024:

- To enable clear analysis and monitoring of data to develop actions to ensure pupils are making at least good progress
- To identify clear groups, patterns and trends in order to develop clear plan for support.

Quality of Teaching, Learning and Assessment – judged to be *Outstanding*

Teaching is monitored 3 times annually through Practice Enhancement sessions and any issues addressed through methods such as action plans, coaching and team teaching. The school is confident that teaching is outstanding because observations are moderated by the Senior Leadership Team. OFSTED further support this in their most recent inspection as stated in the January 2019 report:

“The curriculum is engaging and fun, with a broad range of activities to motivate pupils in lessons. Learning activities are designed to meet the individual needs of pupils. As a result, pupils enjoy

learning, are able to sustain their concentration, and develop skills and understanding in line with the high expectations set for them.”

“...teachers and teaching assistants are highly skilled and effective in supporting pupils in their learning. Teamwork is embedded in the culture of the school, and working together successfully further enhances the high-quality teaching and learning.”

A Quality of Teaching summary gives a holistic view of the impact of teaching and learning and includes book looks, practice enhancements and progress data, along with information gathered from learning snapshots.

Parents are invited in to school 3 times per year to attend a SAP Parents evening. At these meetings they will review and set new targets with the teaching staff, based on EHCP objectives. Parents can also request a telephone conversation if they are unable to attend in person.

New Curriculum

Our new curriculum is now up and running across the school. We have developed a number of pathways to ensure that we can meet the learning needs of all our students. This year we are embedding the curriculum as well as reviewing how well it is going in classes. We will adjust and adapt where needed. The details on the curriculum can be found on the school website at

<https://www.thecastleschoolnewbury.org.uk/page/?title=The+Castle+Curriculum&pid=27>

Quality of Education/Early Years - Areas for development 2023-2024:

- To ensure that the Castle Curriculum has good breadth and balance
- To review and develop Maths Curriculum across school
- To develop play based learning throughout the school. To introduce Floortime to key classes. Floor time is relationship-based learning through play. The intervention aims to improve the six key milestones:
 - Self-regulation and interest in the world
 - Intimacy, or engagement in relationships
 - Two-way communication
 - Complex communication
 - Emotional ideas
 - Emotional thinking

Personal Development, Behaviour and Welfare – judged to be **Outstanding**

Safeguarding

Safeguarding remains the highest priority for the school.

Since the start of the academic year, there have been 357 MyConcerns raised, this compares to 199 for the same period last year. The categories of these concerns, as determined by the DSL, are varied, the highest frequency of concern has been behaviour related. A large number of concerns relate to mental health and emotional health. This academic year there have been 6 referrals to social care, through the CAAS Team. All of the outcomes are known to school.

There is one student subject to a Child Protection Plan and three students that are CIC (Child In Care).

So far this school year, there have been two sessions of full Universal Training delivered by Caroline and James.

We are currently trialling the use of Smoothwall. This will monitor students' internet use through search history. Any searches that are of a concerning nature are identified and a report is emailed directly to the DSL, if these concerns are deemed serious (risk of significant harm) then a telephone call is put through to the DSL. We intend to review this application over the course of 2023/24 and will report on its effectiveness.

All staff are up to date with Safeguarding Training. Prior to any training taking place all new staff have a brief introduction to safeguarding as they walk through the door.

All visitors are required to sign in at the reception at all sites. Visitors are issued with a badge which states who the designated safeguarding lead (DSL) is. We have redesigned and re-located our reception at Love Lane to increase security and safeguarding for our pupils.

All staff use the online MyConcern system to report any concerns about pupil safeguarding. The reports are actioned by the DSL or deputy DSL.

All teachers and Teaching Assistants will complete online training on FGM (Female Genital Mutilation), CSE (Child Sexual Exploitation) and DV (Domestic Violence) Training by 1st December. They have been given time in lieu so that they can complete it at home if they so wish. In this academic year, new Teachers and Teaching Assistants will again be required to complete this on-line training.

All new staff starters and new governors will receive Prevent training to ensure that everyone is up to date.

Caroline Whitlock is the DSL (Designated Safeguarding Lead) and we have 5 Deputy DSLs, including The Headteacher and all Deputy and Assistant Headteachers.

The school is committed to the Rights Respecting School Award and we have achieved the bronze award. We will be investigating moving towards RRSA Gold.

Pupil voice is a central part of what we do at The Castle. We have a representative group of pupils (which allows all pupils the opportunity to be involved as it rotates membership) which is called P4PC. These are conferences which look at particular areas and seek to gain opinion and views from pupils and act on them. Pupils are involved in the recruitment process and form pupil panels for teacher interviews.

Pupils for Positive Change continues to be a successful element of reviewing and evaluating whole school life. There have been regular events gathering the thoughts, opinions and values of students and utilised Zoom for inclusion of Post-16 students.

From September 2023 we will be having at least 3 x P4PC Conferences over the year. Debate topics in previous years have included Annual Review feedback and Music Garden Design.

Behaviour around the school site is exemplary. Students are polite, friendly, courteous and kind. They are very welcoming to people coming in from outside and especially to new students. They are keen to interact with each other and visitors and staff.

Exclusion numbers are extremely low. We manage behaviour in a positive way following the PRO-ACT SCiPr de-escalation training and using a therapeutic approach. The school approaches behaviour proactively and positively. Staff training is updated progressively 3 times per year.

Robust systems are in place to deal with any issues – class team; Team Leaders; Leadership Team; PROACT SCiPr training for all staff; Behaviour Plans are written for pupils who have additional difficulties or challenges with behaviours. We have 4 members of staff who are PRO-ACT SCiPr trainers and we are seeking to train further staff to plan for succession. We have recently appointed a member of staff as Therapeutic Thinking Lead.

Celebration of students' achievements include weekly Star of the Week, Website Blog, Headteachers Award and Star of the Year awards.

We have a very rich Music and Arts curriculum. We have specialist teachers for music, art and drama.

We have a well-subscribed School Choir. We attend events throughout the year including the Anvil School Concert and The St Nicholas Church Carol service.

We have Safeguarding training for all staff and also for students who will be taking up work placements where they will be working with young children.

Pastoral Support

Boost group is now embedded within the school. Referrals are received from class teachers, Senior Leadership Team and sometimes from Child In Need, Annual Review or parent meetings. Boost continues to use the 'hook' of a light breakfast to enable independence and social skills to be targeted and supported in a structured, nurturing, environment. We remain fortunate enough to enable this group to run on a daily basis led by the Family Liaison Worker and ELSA's, overseen by

the Pastoral Manager and there is now a waiting list; we all clearly see the benefits of such intensive collaborative support.

ELSA's (Emotional Literacy Support Assistants) continue to carry out 1:1 sessions across the week; we now deliver 5 days in total by way of the time allocated across the school. This is a massive level of support and one that provides our students with the time and space to develop their emotional understanding and emotional regulation; all aiding their engagement with learning and building trusted relationships.

The Pastoral Manager and Family Liaison Worker continue to be on hand to all new families and respond to all those families across the school who need support in one way or another. One action that we have needed to pass over to the school office is the collation of information received from external agencies and the process of this being quickly disseminated to parents; particularly around courses that are on offer or meet ups with specific groups. With so many things now going on across the week it has become impossible to respond to these requests/information releases fast enough to ensure that parents do not miss out on important training/additional support.

Areas for development 2022-02

- To continue to embed Therapeutic Thinking Practice across the whole school (not on SDP 2023-2024)

Effectiveness of Leadership and Management – judged to be *Outstanding*

The leadership team at The Castle School is broad and has a wide range of skills. The leadership is well delegated and this allows for the team to lead on many aspects of the school development. The extended leadership team consists of:

Headteacher

2 x Deputy Headteachers

3 x Assistant Headteachers

School Business Manager

1 x Therapeutic Thinking Lead

1 x Pastoral Manager

1 x Lead Teacher

5 x Team Leaders

1 x Maths Lead

1 x English Lead

1 x PSHE Lead

The Leadership team know their school well – areas of strength and areas for development are identified and linked into SDP. Line Management Structure provides clear routes for supporting staff.

Monitoring Schedule – A very clear and robust system of monitoring is in place including practice enhancements, learning walks, learning looks, appraisal, moderation of work (internal and external) and pupil progress meetings.

The extended leadership team use FADEs (Focus, Analysis, Do, Evaluate) to analyse areas of need and how to move forward.

Strong, determined and passionate leadership.

Very high expectations of all staff.

Induction package for all new staff. This covers Safeguarding (with PREVENT), PROACT SCiPr-UK, Makaton, Manual Handling and Roles and Responsibilities. New teaching staff also receive a pre-induction day prior to starting which covers assessment, curriculum, risk assessment/EVOLVES as well as time at all school sites.

Support Assistant Training – A new system has been established to ensure that all support staff receive training on a variety of key aspects.

High levels of support for all staff through training and mentoring.

Comprehensive, relevant and evaluated training programme. All teachers and Teaching Assistants attend various training activities which are delivered in two dedicated hour-long slots each week. The training is evaluated weekly through an online tool and the feedback is used to adjust and change the programme to suit need. Additional targeted training is put in place and evaluated where appropriate. We invest over £30000 in external staff training each year in addition to the internal weekly training.

World of Work is a key area of our curriculum and is embedded in our work at Key Stage 4 and 5. The World of Work Team have been visited by many schools from the local area and wider regional area and are recognised as a best practice model of delivery by organisations such as BASE. Below is information of progress linked to World of Work aspects.

Very high expectations for all students to ensure outstanding progress and achievement.

Effective and robust assessment systems enable staff to set challenging targets and drive forward improvement.

Curriculum – continually adapted and changed to meet needs of students.

Pupil Premium utilised very carefully to ensure greatest impact – see pupil achievement.

Leaders at all levels are empowered to make decisions and take initiative on situations. Leadership is well delegated throughout the school.

Rigorous safeguarding arrangements are in place.

The school website is a key portal of information for the school. The Headteacher ensures that the website meets statutory requirements and that the information is relevant and accessible for parents and other stakeholders. The news blog on the website is updated at least weekly with lots of positive information and pictures of what is happening in school. The website can be accessed at this address: www.thecastleschoolnewbury.org.uk

Governing board

Governors know the school well and are aware of strengths and areas of development – Information is fed to governors in a number of ways including, regular meetings between Headteacher and Chair, Annual Strategic Session to plan School Transformation Plan, governor visits to school, governors' subcommittee meetings, Pay Panel meetings, Full governors meetings and budget setting meetings. Governors are closely involved in all aspects of the school and offer strong challenge and support.

Governors attend staff training where appropriate and there has been specific bespoke training for governors including on progress and achievement. Governors have all attended safeguarding universal training and Prevent Training.

Governors have a good understanding of schools areas of strength and areas of improvement.

Governors are passionate about positive outcomes and have very high expectations of the Leadership Team and the staff creating a high level of challenge.

Governors are involved in the Headteacher's Performance Management Review and are clear about the targets set for all staff, based on the current SDP. The review is assisted by an external School Improvement Advisor. The governors have 3 review meetings with the Headteacher throughout the year to check on progress of the objectives.

The governing board has a robust approach to monitoring the school's finances resulting in very effective management of the school budget enabling the school to develop and grow and staff all classes appropriately. Key governors form the Finance Committee meet with the School Business Manager and Finance Officer termly to reconcile the school accounts.

Pupil Premium spend is closely monitored by the governing board through Curriculum and Pupil Committee and through the HT Performance Review Panel. This is carried out by governors analysing and challenging committee reports from the Leadership Team.

Castle @ Theale

West Berkshire Local Authority have commissioned The Castle School to develop and deliver a 42 place provision for students with SEMH and/or autism. The provision is designed for students who cannot be successfully supported in mainstream education due to the presentation of behaviours.

The Castle @ Theale is a planned specialist educational centre for students with Social, Emotional and Mental Health difficulties and Autism. It is run and managed by the Castle School and offers a bespoke, therapeutic environment where young people are thoroughly and expertly supported by a team of highly skilled professionals. This provision helps young people to overcome the challenges they face and achieve their very fullest potential. The Castle @ Theale celebrates young people for who they are and the skills that they have. Curriculum pathways are structures within which personalised learning is planned to enable students to engage with and thrive in a broad and diverse curriculum.

This provision will be opened in September 2022 and supporting 12 children initially. A new class of students joined in September 2023 in new purpose built accommodation. The number of students will rise to 42 pupils at full capacity from Year 7 to Year 13 in 5 years' time. The Castle @ Theale is a specialist provision for children of secondary age with an EHCP identifying primarily SEMH needs who may have a diagnosis of Autism. It may be possible for children who are resident in other LAs to be considered but placement requests would need to come from the LA where the child lives as they would be responsible for funding the placement if one is offered. Admissions will be decided through the Local Authority's SEN Panel following a child's annual review.

Leadership and Management - Areas for development 2021-2022:

- To support transition to new building in order that staff continue to meet the needs of all learners within their environment.
- To continue to develop and embed the therapeutic approach
- Development of curriculum at Castle @ Theale
- To gain Artsmark Platinum Award (this is a two year process governed by the awarding body)