

The Castle School

ACHIEVE | BELONG | PARTICIPATE



Achieve

Belong

Participate





Welcome

I am delighted that you have decided to find out about the opportunities available for students at The Castle School. We are very proud of our school and the achievements of our students, which are many and which show particular excellence in Sports, Music and the Arts. The Castle School is a vibrant and lively school that bustles and is full of energy. I always encourage parents to visit so you can meet our students, who are our greatest asset and our pride. It also means that you can really imagine your child here and genuinely see if this is the right environment.

Our aim is for every child to achieve, belong and participate and this is at the heart of everything we do at The Castle School. Rated as 'outstanding' by Ofsted, we have been for some years now not only at the top of the performance tables in Somerset but in the top 5% of schools nationally for academic achievements. You can see our latest exam results. We believe in the absolute moral responsibility we have for equipping students with the best possible exam results; we know that this opens doors for students and prepares them with outstanding attitudes and a strong moral foundation.

Equally important is nurturing every student's potential beyond the curriculum and you will see in this prospectus and on the website, the huge range of enrichment available. We aim that every child participates in enrichment activities.

This success is not simply the result of the outstanding teaching at The Castle School, but the strong family ethos and sense of belonging that we engender.

The Houses, (Balmoral, Buckingham, Caernarvon, Lancaster, Sandringham and Windsor) play a major role in ensuring that we never lose sight of the individuality of each child and that no child is invisible at The Castle School.

Should you think The Castle School is the right school for your child, please do contact the school and make an appointment to visit or come to one of our Open Mornings. Our students are always delighted to show off their school and answer any questions. We look forward to your family being part of our success.

Mrs Sarah Watson
Headteacher



Our approach

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“There is no doubt that the whole school community is committed to doing the very best for every student within a culture where there is ‘no ceiling to achievement’.” OFSTED

Our aims and values

Every Child Achieves. Every Child Belongs. Every Child Participates.

Our aims are simple. We want every child at The Castle School to achieve their true potential, participate fully, and enjoy a strong sense of belonging. We achieve this by delivering high quality teaching and learning through a broad and balanced curriculum, and a safe and structured environment where all students can thrive, and have a 'can do' attitude that means every child can and will take part in enrichment.

We also encourage personal development and improvement by promoting values that celebrate:

- Resilience, resourcefulness and responsibility
- Leadership, loyalty and teamwork
- Integrity, motivation and independence
- Trust and respect for each individual

These are values that enable students to leave school able and motivated to make the best possible contribution to society.

Our school

“This is an outstanding school, because of the excellent ways in which teachers and other staff create such exceptional learning.” OFSTED

We teach 1,200 students aged 11-16 at our extensive campus off Wellington Road, where we foster a supportive, family atmosphere and a strong sense of belonging for every student.

Our Facilities

Our excellent facilities enhance life at The Castle School, supporting both the students' learning and their personal development.

The Arts

We have an outstanding reputation in all the Arts and a number of Arts Showcase events throughout the year. We have a well-resourced Music Department with specialist classrooms and a suite of practice rooms and school musical instruments for students' use. There are subsidised instrumental lessons and a plethora of music bands, choirs, orchestras and plenty of performances. For example, there is the Jazz Band, Tour Band, Percussion Group, Steelband, Brass Group and Staff and Student Choir to name but a few. In Drama and Dance, there are a whole host of performances which students can become involved with as well as become part of the Tech Team (Technical Crew) who operate the sound and lighting equipment under the supervision of our technician. We have a national representation and are regularly invited to perform at conferences, national concerts and events.

Sports Facilities

The Castle Sports Centre, run with Leisure Trust 1610, is a lively hub for both the school and local community. On campus, we enjoy an all-weather sports pitch (with synthetic turf), an athletics track, sports hall, and a state-of-the-art gym in our newest building and two dance studios. Along with our excellent coaching staff, these facilities support many of our students to compete at regional and national level in a huge range of sports. We invariably win a good number of county cups and regional leagues as a school.

IT Facilities

In addition to classroom IT resources, we have six dedicated computer rooms, and encourage students to apply IT skills across the curriculum. There is wi-fi across the school and we allow students to use their own mobile devices in school and in lessons to support their own learning and independence. There are also class sets of iPads to assist students with their research.

The Library

Our library is an integrated learning centre with forty computers, two smart boards and a seminar room, offering a safe, quiet place for school work, homework and reading for pleasure. The library is supervised until 5pm and is open to all students until that time.

Disabled Access

We are committed to constantly improving our access at The Castle School.





“Thanks to you all for the excellent work you do for our children at The Castle School. My daughter has excelled as a child, a pupil and now a teenager ready for college, thanks to the support you gave her.”



“Pupils do particularly well in subjects across the whole National Curriculum.” OFSTED

Achieve

At The Castle School we want to challenge students to think better, further, and more clearly. All students are stretched and challenged in lessons to inspire young people to learn and to encourage them to question.

We aim to ensure our students achieve their full potential, and for our more able students to achieve grade 9.

Our aim is also for all teachers to challenge all of our students in lessons.

Most of our students participate in at least one of the enrichment activities on offer at the school including:

- Maths Challenge;
- School Council;
- Activities at Kilve Court and Hestercombe House;
- Public Speaking;
- Music;
- Creative Writing.

Challenge Plus Programme

The Challenge Plus Programme gives our most able students the chance to work with – and compete against – students from across the South West; activities as diverse as organising and running debates to controlling an airline for the day.

This programme includes visits to universities from Year 9 onwards, including Exeter, Bristol, Cambridge and Oxford universities.

Special Educational Needs

Our Learning Support Department offers extra help to students experiencing learning difficulties; from relatively minor problems to significant difficulties with literacy, language & communication or numeracy. We also support students with social, emotional or mental health issues, physical disabilities, medical needs and attendance concerns. Help is available in the classroom, individually or in small groups (depending on circumstances) and there are daily clubs where students can access help with homework. Please ask to see the school's policy on SEND, or refer to the School Offer, which is on the school website.



The curriculum

“At the end of Key Stage 3 and at GCSE, attainment of pupils is well above national expectation.”
OFSTED

The Curriculum

The school ethos of all students achieving, belonging and participating to secure the best possible qualifications in a positive and resilient way is fundamental to our philosophy.

The curriculum is designed to be balanced and broadly based and to promote the spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical development of our students and to prepare them for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of adult life. Our aim is to provide a curriculum that is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all our students' needs.

Subjects for Years 7, 8 and 9

All students are taught core subjects: English including Philosophy for Children, Mathematics, Science, Religious Education and PE.

In addition, they will also be taught the following:

- Humanities subjects: History and Geography.
- Modern Foreign Languages: either one or two languages from French, Spanish, German and Mandarin.

- Arts: Art, Textiles, Dance, Drama and Music.
- Design Technology, Computing and Food.
- Personal, Social and Health Education, which is taught via timetable enrichment days at various times through the year.

Subjects for Years 10 and 11

All students study English Language and Literature, Mathematics, Science, PE, PSHE, Careers and Religious Education. Students select a further three option subjects. These options include:

- Modern Foreign Languages: French, German, Spanish, Mandarin.
- Humanities: Geography, History, Philosophy Ethics & Religion.
- Computer Science or Information Communication Technology.
- The Arts: Music, Drama, Dance, Fine Art, Photography, Textiles.
- Design Technology: Resistant Materials or Graphic Products.
- Health related subjects: GCSE PE or Food Preparation and Nutrition.

Homework

We believe that homework makes an invaluable contribution to students' progress, and so we support them to find good independent learning habits either at home, or in the school library with its extensive IT facilities. Students prefer variety in the tasks set and to have choice, therefore, tasks and projects range from interviews, experiments, research and essay writing. Show My Homework is an online system for parents and students. All homework is available via this easily accessed site, with resources and deadlines so you know what is required of your child and can support them in their learning.







Student development

“Students’ personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is outstanding. The school has a strong sense of community and the way in which students of all ages readily accept responsibilities within the school is most impressive.” OFSTED

While qualifications are vitally important, we also want to equip our students with the knowledge, skills and attributes required to succeed in life.

We do this by motivating students to participate in enrichment which develops their skills. It is an important part of the curriculum that we inform students of choices for careers and further education and encourage lifelong learning and discussion on ethics, health and sexual relationships.

Recognising success

We have high expectations of our students, and recognise and reward those who achieve success, or who strive to improve on their performance in any area of school life. These awards come in many shapes and sizes, from ‘colours’ awarded for sport, music, dance and drama, to achievement awards given for a student’s contribution to their House.

Student leadership opportunities

At The Castle School, students and staff elect Year 11 students to be Senior Students who meet regularly with the School Leadership Team. They also co-ordinate the School Council Committees in which students from all years contribute. Prefects, House Captains and Deputies are appointed by the Houses and there are Captains of all the school teams.

Leadership plays a very important part in Sport. Students begin leadership opportunities as early as Year 7. In Year 8, they get sports leadership training as part of their enrichment programme to then organise the Sports Festival for the new Year 7’s who will join the school the following September and they also help to organise and run some primary school events. There are opportunities for students to gain qualifications in officiating and helping run House and school matches.

Career guidance

Our students receive guidance on careers during PSHE enrichment days as well as:

- Access to careers advice offering guidance on education and training.
- All students in Years 9, 10 and 11 will have at least one careers interview.
- University visits. All Year 9 students are offered the opportunity to visit Bath Spa University.

Sex, Health and Religious Education

We teach students to lead a healthy lifestyle and develop positive attitudes to their relationships. We teach tolerance and an open mind, with discussions on ethical issues and on the different beliefs, cultures and attitudes that exist in society.

We deliver these topics through Personal, Social and Health Education (PSHE), Religious Education (RE) and Science. As part of our sex education programme, we also invite health professionals to work with students in Years 9 and 10. We address mental and emotional health issues through the PSHE days and health professionals run workshops and talks for students that have had a significant and positive impact on our students.

If you are concerned about any aspect of this teaching, please contact the school. All parents have a right to withdraw students from Religious Education and Sex Education classes.

As a school we have a strong tradition of participation and supporting each other. We have great respect for all individuals and we promote the core British Values. We encourage all our students to be fully involved in school life, to be tolerant, respectful of rules and to value others.

Belong

“The school successfully involves parents and carers in their children’s learning.”
OFSTED

We actively involve students, parents, carers and members from the local community in the daily life of the school.

The Houses

The Houses are essential in fostering the strong family ethos at The Castle School. We very much believe in the partnership between parents and the school. The House system enables us to work with you as families; siblings always go into the same House so we get to know you as families.

On joining The Castle School, students are allocated to one of six Houses - Balmoral, Lancaster, Caernarvon, Buckingham, Windsor and Sandringham - and students spend part of each school day with their tutor group. The Houses ensure every child belongs and has a sense of their own worth, through participation in House competitions such as House Languages, House Drama, House Dance and House Sports.

This system not only creates a culture of support and belonging among House members of all ages, it provides valuable pastoral support. Tutors usually stay with their tutor group throughout the full five years and will oversee your child’s progress providing vital knowledge of their personal development.

In the first term you will have an opportunity to meet with the tutor and Head of House to check how your child is settling in. Later in the year there are opportunities to meet with subject teachers and tutors at parents’ evenings.

You will receive regular reports and access to online information that tracks your child’s progress. We do encourage parents to contact tutors or subject teachers with any concerns.

Parents, students and staff enter into a home-school agreement, which outlines everyone’s responsibility in supporting the aims and values of the school.

Local community links

We encourage students to make a positive contribution to the community here, such as raising money for local charities and participating in local exhibitions, performances and sports clubs. Over the last 12 months, students at The Castle School have raised over £7,000 for charity. There is always some sort of fund raising going on in school, initiated by students.

To enrich our students’ learning, we have created strong links with leaders in local business, industry, public service and the arts and we regularly invite speakers, lecturers and performers to the school.







Participate

“There is an exceptionally high participation rate in the outstanding range of clubs and out of school activities.” OFSTED

What goes on in the classroom is only part of The Castle School education. Equally important is our students' participation in extra-curricular activities, where students are free to explore and develop their leadership skills, creativity, sporting talents, travel, and musical ambitions.

With such an enthusiastic and vibrant school community, it is not surprising that there is something for everyone. Clubs include creative writing, public speaking, debating, drama, photography, art and languages.

Music and The Arts

We are extremely proud of our creative and performing arts provision. There are many opportunities for students to get involved in The Arts, from attending clubs and workshops to major performances.

Our House Dance competition gives students the chance to get involved in a major dance performance, while our senior students develop Arts leadership and choreography. In Art, Photography and Textiles students work towards competitions, exhibitions, and with visiting artists.

An impressive number of students choose to learn to play instruments with us. To foster this talent and enthusiasm we provide free, out-of-school music groups, for example, Jazz Band, Steelband, Choir and Percussion Group.

There are many occasions for our students to perform both in school and in the wider community. We have a well-resourced Music department comprising of a Mac suite and specialist practice rooms which contain school musical instruments for students' use. Visiting peripatetic music teachers provide 1-2-1 lessons in a wide variety of instruments. A large number of students participate in an impressive array of ensembles including Orchestra, Junior and Senior Steel Band, String Group, SATB Choir, Junior Choir, Percussion Group and Junior Band alongside other smaller ensembles. Students have the opportunity to perform in concerts, gigs, European concert tours and full musicals.

A highlight of the school year is our school production; a chance for all students to get involved in a major performing arts production and, for those who prefer behind-the-scenes, the Design and Tech Teams provide an exceptional service of professional quality.

Sport and PE

As a leading Sports College with outstanding facilities, including an all-weather pitch and one of the only athletics tracks in the area, we enjoy a superb sporting reputation at county, regional and national level.

We have a very popular after-school club system which caters for a huge range of sporting abilities and interests and range from the traditional sports (rugby, hockey, football, netball, cricket, rounders, basketball, tennis, and athletics) to more diverse sports/activities such as fencing, trampolining, judo, strength and conditioning, archery and the Fitness Suite).

Notable sporting achievements last year include:

Cricket

- County 3rd place in girls U13s and U15s
- County 3rd place in boys U13s and U15s
- 3rd place in girls Broderick Tournament
- County Softball - girls U13s and U15s finalists

Futsal

- County winners - Year 9 and 11 boys
- County winners - Year 9 girls

Football

- County winners - Year 9 boys
- District cup winners - Years 8,9 & 10 boys
- District cup Runners up - Year 11 boys

Indoor athletics

- County winners - Year 7 girls
- County 3rd place - Year 8 boys

Netball

- County winners - Year 7, 8 and 10 girls
- County 3rd place - Year 11 girls

Hockey

- County winners Year 7, 9 and 10 boys
- County winners Year 9 and 11 girls

Badminton

- Taunton Schools League - U18 boys Div 4 - winners & U15 boys Div 1 - runners up
- National Schools Competition - Years 7, 8 & 9 girls County finals - Silver & Years 10 & 11 boys - Silver

Clubs, activities and expeditions

With such an enthusiastic and vibrant school community, it is not surprising that there is something for everyone at lunch or after school. Clubs and societies include creative writing, public speaking, debating, drama, photography, art and languages.

We also offer outdoor education and teambuilding activities for all Year 7 students, and the school runs a Duke of Edinburgh Award scheme which gives an exciting opportunity for older students to experience a physical and mental challenge, and develop their team and leadership skills.

Other opportunities for travel include exchange trips to Spain and Germany, and every other year we organise a skiing trip to Corchevel, a watersports activity visit to the Ardèche in France as well as various other trips to New York, China, Sorrento and Auschwitz in Poland.

Regular study and cultural visits are organised through subject departments, both here and abroad.







Joining the school

Open mornings

Choosing your child's secondary school is an important decision for every parent. You will want to ensure that it reflects your child's academic, sporting and creative ambitions, and that the culture suits their individual needs and personality.

That is why we encourage every prospective parent and student to visit us during one of our open mornings. Our students will give you a tour during a normal school day. This way parents can imagine their child attending lessons, making friends, using the library, playing sports, and enjoying our clubs and activities.

To attend an open morning, please call the School Office or email office@castle.somerset.sch.uk

Reception of new Year 7 students

Going to a new school can be daunting for children and parents, so we do everything we can to ease the transfer.

All new students spend two days at the school during the summer term, and we hold a welcome evening for parents. If your child has special needs, we can discuss their requirements in more detail.

Our teachers also work closely with staff at contributory schools to devise appropriate educational topics to bridge the end of primary and a student's first few weeks at The Castle School. Working on familiar projects in a new environment helps build confidence and provides curriculum continuity.

Our House system is especially comforting for new students. We team them with a 'buddy' in their House - a caring Year 8 student who will look out for them and show them the ropes. Most Year 8s thoroughly look forward to being a 'buddy' as they all appreciated having an older 'brother' or 'sister' to look after them in their own first few months. Some of these relationships can last throughout school life and encourage the very supportive ethos within the Houses and beyond.

Admission to the school

If you have attended an open morning and would like to apply for a place at The Castle School, Somerset County Council operates a co-ordinated admissions process for the Year 6 to Year 7 transfers in September and you should contact the Admissions Team via Somerset Direct. For in-year admissions, please contact Julie Gregory at the school. Further information is available on our website.

Because places at the school are currently over-subscribed, we recommend registering your child before the closing date of 31 October. This cannot be stressed enough - even if you live in the catchment area, a late application often means you are forced to go to appeal and there is no guarantee of a place. Please see the school website for the admissions criteria.

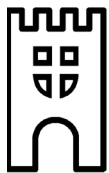
The safety of students

At The Castle School, the safety and welfare of our students is paramount. We work closely with other agencies such as social services and health professionals to ensure this. If any student or adult has a concern about a child's safety, please contact Mr Randle, Assistant Headteacher. We take Child Protection very seriously and all allegations or concerns will be fully investigated. There are links on our website to take parents or students straight to CEOPS or Childline if anyone, child, parent or staff member, feels uncomfortable with any safety concerns. We are determined to maintain a culture of vigilance at The Castle School.

Equality for all

We are fully committed to providing equality of opportunity and access to all of our students. Please see our equalities statement on our website: www.castleschool.co.uk





The Castle Partnership Trust

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The Castle School
Wellington Road
Taunton
TA1 5AU

Telephone: 01823 274073
Fax: 01823 274080
Email: office@castle.somerset.sch.uk
www.castleschool.co.uk