

## Parent Handbook



# CASTLE COURT SCHOOL

We have one childhood. It has to be the best.

## Introduction to Castle Court

Castle Court was founded in 1948 by Donald and Mary Scott. After 75 years, Castle Court's governance and leadership remains committed to our founders' intention of providing all our pupils with a first-class, all-round education firmly rooted in Christian principles.

### **Our Vision:**

Our vision is for each pupil to receive an outstanding, all-round and innovative education in an inspiring and naturally beautiful learning environment. We want to cultivate a love of learning and enable each child to grow and flourish in all areas of life within a loving, nurturing community. Castle Court has the Christian faith at the centre of its foundation, and as such family values are at the core of school life.

### **Our Aims:**

#### **To provide a 21st-century education whereby:**

- The pupil's learning and well-being is at the heart of all that we do
- The educational experience is knowledge-rich, rigorous and well-balanced and where academic expectations are continually exceeded.
- Each pupil is nurtured through outstanding pastoral care so they can flourish inside and outside the classroom.
- Each pupil is provided with a strong foundation and compass for life – prepared with the skills needed for future success in a global world.

### **Values – the 7Cs**

#### **All Castellans are encouraged to be:**

- Compassionate
- Curious
- Creative
- Courteous
- Courageous
- Committed
- Collaborative

These values create an environment of tolerance and respect for all and underpin all aspects of life at Castle Court. We want to demonstrate that the education pupils receive here goes beyond just academic progress; it should also instill in pupils' key values and qualities which we hope will guide and support them throughout their life.

## General Information

### Points of Contact

If you have any concerns the first port of call should **always** be your pupil's **Form**

**Tutor:** (s)he will have direct responsibility for your child. The Section Leaders have overall responsibility for their section and liaise closely with the Assistant Head Pastoral. Their contact details can be found below:

PrePrep – Graham Antell [gantell@castlecourt.com](mailto:gantell@castlecourt.com)

Middle (Years 3-6) – Louise Munns [lmunns@castlecourt.com](mailto:lmunns@castlecourt.com)

Senior (Years 7-8) – Kirsty Thompson [kthompson@castlecourt.com](mailto:kthompson@castlecourt.com)

Assistant Head Pastoral & DSL – Paul Dunsford [pdunsford@castlecourt.com](mailto:pdunsford@castlecourt.com)

The Head and the Leadership Team are always happy to meet with parents to discuss any concerns or queries you may have and can be contacted via for the following emails or through the school office (01202 694438)

Head - Katie Johnson [head@castlecourt.com](mailto:head@castlecourt.com)

Parents are encouraged to contact members of staff by e-mail wherever possible, or alternatively, by telephone using the main school number (01202 694438) where a message can be taken. The staff member will respond as soon as (s)he is free, bearing in mind their varied commitments. Please make an appointment if you wish to have an extended discussion with a member of staff. The main school office will be answered between 8:00 and 17:45 on school weekdays.

### Visitors

During a normal working day all visitors, including parents, should report to the School Office. Visitors will be requested to wear a visitor's badge, depending on where or whom they are visiting in the school.

### School Information and news

#### Newsletter

The weekly newsletter is the principle source of news and information about key events in the school. This is sent to parents via email every Friday afternoon and includes key calendar dates for the term ahead.

## **Edulink**

Edulink is the school's online platform which enables you to access key information about your child including their timetable, assessments data and achievements. The school will provide you with login details to access this and Ben Cheadle (Head of ICT) provides an induction training for all new parents to ensure that you feel confident navigating this platform.

## **SOCS**

All parents are given log-in details for SOCS which is the portal for booking breakfast club, pre-school sport, after-school activities, tea, prep and minibuses, as well as being the information area for sports fixtures, tournaments and festivals.

## **School Website and Social Media**

The school posts news and photos on the Castle Court website and on social media including Instagram, X (Twitter) Facebook, LinkedIn, YouTube and Vimeo.

## **Texting**

For very urgent and important messages, Castle Court will operate a text messaging service. It is important that the school office has an up-to-date mobile number for you. Please email [office@castlecourt.com](mailto:office@castlecourt.com) if any of your contact details change.

## **Food and Catering**

We are very fortunate to have our own in-house catering team at Castle Court, and they operate a "nut free" policy. The food is excellent, varied and nutritious; pupils are encouraged to eat well, learning to try at least a small amount of each course as it is felt that this is an important part of their education. Special dietary needs are accommodated (please email [medicalcentre@castlecourt.com](mailto:medicalcentre@castlecourt.com) with any concerns or queries). An alternative to the main course is available every meal time, with a salad bar, plain pasta and in the colder months homemade soup.

Good manners are encouraged throughout. We expect pupils to display appropriate table manners at all meals.

Snacks are available twice a day, either in their classrooms or play areas (Badger Cubs to Year 2) or in the main house for older pupils. A light tea is also available at 16:15 for those who stay for tea club (Badger Cubs to Year 2) or Prep/Activities (Year 3 to Year 8).

The menu is available on the school website and the signage boards around school.

If your child has an allergy to any food items, please email the Medical Centre ([medicalcentre@castlecourt.com](mailto:medicalcentre@castlecourt.com)), preferable with a written doctor's dietary recommendations.

### Mobile Phones

Mobile phones are not permitted in school. Should it be felt that a pupil needs a mobile phone a request needs to be sent to the Assistant Head Pastoral (email: [pdunsford@castlecourt.com](mailto:pdunsford@castlecourt.com)). If a pupil brings in a mobile phone, without prior permission, the device will be confiscated, and parents contacted.

### Dogs

Parents and visitors are welcome to walk their dogs on the school grounds and bring them to watch matches. However, it is extremely important that ALL visiting dogs are kept on their leads whilst on the school grounds. Owners are responsible to ensuring that all dog waste is collected and taken off site. Children must not be left in sole charge of a dog (s).

## The School Day

### Timings

**7:45 - 8:15** Breakfast Club available

#### Years 3 & 4

**8:15 – 8:30** Registration  
**8:30 - 10:30** Lessons  
**10:30 – 11:00** Break  
**11:00 – 12:00** Lessons  
**12:00 – 12:30** Lunch  
**12:30 – 13:30** Lessons  
**13:30 - 13:55** Break  
**13:55 – 14:15** Tutor  
**14:15 – 16:15** Lessons

**16:15** Pupils may depart  
**16:15 - 16:45** Tea available  
**16:45 – 17:45** After school activities

#### Years 5 - 8

**8:15 – 8:30** Registration  
**8:30 – 10:30** Lessons  
**10:30 – 11:00** Break  
**11:00 – 13:00** Lessons  
**13:00 – 13:30** Lunch  
**13:30 – 13:55** Break  
**13:55 – 14:15** Tutor  
**14:15 – 16:15** Lessons

#### Years 1 & 2

#### EYFS (Reception)

<b>8:15 – 8:30</b>	Registration	<b>8:15-8:30</b>	Registration
<b>8:30 - 10:30</b>	Lessons	<b>8:30 – 10:00</b>	Lessons
<b>10:30 – 11:00</b>	<b>Break</b>	<b>10:00 - 10:30</b>	<b>Break</b>
<b>11:00 – 12:00</b>	Lessons	<b>10:30 –12:00</b>	Lessons
<b>12:00 – 12:30</b>	<b>Lunch</b>	<b>12:00 – 12:30</b>	<b>Lunch</b>
<b>12:30 – 13:00</b>	<b>Break</b>	<b>12:30 – 13:00</b>	<b>Break</b>
<b>13:00 – 15:00</b>	Lessons	<b>13:00 – 13:55</b>	Lessons
<b>15:00 - 15:15</b>	<b>Break</b>	<b>13:55 – 14:15</b>	Break
<b>15:15 – 15:45</b>	Story	<b>14:15 – 15:30</b>	Lessons/story time
<b>15:45 – 16:15</b>	Pupils may depart. After-school clubs	<b>15:30 – 16:15</b>	Pupils may depart. After-school clubs
<b>16:15 – 17:45</b>	Tea available	<b>16:15 – 17:45</b>	Tea available

### Whole School Assemblies

Castle Court has two whole school assemblies each week which pupils from Reception to Year 8 attend. These take place on a Monday and Friday morning at 8:30am. Monday's whole school assembly is a more formal Christian act of worship where the Head gives a talk focusing on a Christian message which reflects the Christian ethos of the school. This assembly always includes a hymn and prayers. Friday's assembly, known as celebration assembly, is a time to recognise and celebrate pupils' achievements both inside and outside of school. In this assembly, the Head's weekly awards are announced (see achievements) and the musician, artist, sports team of the week are also announced. If your child has an achievement you would like celebrated in this assembly, please contact your child's tutor. Pupils are expected to wear a blazer to assembly and ensure that their uniform is neat and tidy.

### Breakfast club

The school operates a breakfast club each day which takes place in Knoll House in the dining room from 7:45am until 8:15am. Please park on the terrace and walk your pupils to the main

house. All pupils arriving in school before 8:10am should go to Breakfast Club. Breakfast club can be booked at the start of each half-term as part of the Activities booking system.

### **Drop off and Pick Up**

From 8:10am pupils should be dropped off at the following areas of the school:

<b>Pre-Prep</b>	<b>Years 3, 4 &amp; 5</b>	<b>Years 6,7 &amp; 8</b>
Main Car Park	Jubilee 'Drop & Go'	Changing Room 'Drop & Go'

At the end of the school day, if your child is not staying for tea or after school activities, please pick up from the following areas:

<b>Pre-Prep (from 15:30)</b>	<b>Years 3 – 5 (16:15)</b>	<b>Years 6, 7 &amp; 8 (16:15)</b>
Main Car Park and Lower Tennis Court. Please walk to the flagpole to collect your child from the Pre-Prep Entrance.	Main Car Park and Lower Tennis Court. Please collect your child from the terrace outside Knoll House.	Changing Room 'Pick and Go'

**Pick Up Arrangements at 17:45pm** is from the Terrace for all year groups. Please park in the Main Car Park or Lower Tennis Court. Please do not arrange to pick up your son/daughter from the changing rooms (or elsewhere on the school site).

### **After School Activities**

For EYFS (Badger Cubs to Reception) the day ends at 15:30 and for Years 1 and 2 it is 15:45. In Years 3-8, lessons finish at 16:15. However, many pupils choose to stay on for after school activities which start for Years 3-8 at 16:45 – 17:45 following a light afternoon tea. After school activities may include Art, basketball, band, book club, DT, chess, cricket, cross-country, cookery, dance, drama, golf, Minecraft coding club, netball, multi-sports, Greek, science extension, orchestra, sailing, skateboarding, tennis, verbal reasoning and volleyball. Parents make bookings for after school activities using the SOCS software. Each half term, the school will send information about the activities programme as well as further guidance on how to book these. After school activities are generally free, although some activities do include a small fee which will be added to your end of term bill.

### **Late Arrivals**

If your child arrives after registration has finished at 08:30, please ensure that they report to the school office so that his or her attendance can be recorded.

## **Absences**

If your child is going to be absent from school, please call or email to report this before 8:30am on the day of the absence (and each subsequent day of absence) and advise when they are expected to return. If phoning, a voice message can be left (01202 694438). Emails can be sent to the school office ([office@castlecourt.com](mailto:office@castlecourt.com)). If emails are sent to the pupil's form tutor, these need to be cc'd in to the school office too. If we do not receive any communication, calls will be made from 09:00 to check if your child is coming to school.

When reporting a child absent, please briefly detail why they are unable to attend school e.g vomiting. We will mark absence due to physical or mental illness as authorised, unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness.

Where the absence is longer than 5 days (10 sessions), or there are doubts about the authenticity of the illness, the school will ask for medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence. We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily.

If the school is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised, and parents will be notified of this in advance.

## **Minibuses**

The school offers a number of minibus routes which can be booked using SOCS. Minibuses run before school. There is also an early minibus service at 16:15 and a late minibus service at 17:45. If you require further information regarding the minibus routes please contact [minibus@castlecourt.com](mailto:minibus@castlecourt.com) .

## **Uniform**

A full uniform list is available from the school office. School uniform can be purchased from Bartletts in Wimborne. Please contact Bartletts for an appointment [bartlettsofwimborne.co.uk](http://bartlettsofwimborne.co.uk) (01202 856205). The school also operates a pre-loved school uniform shop. Please contact the school office (01202 694438) [office@castlecourt.com](mailto:office@castlecourt.com) if you would like to make an appointment.

Pupils are expected to ensure that their uniform is neat and tidy. They are expected to wear their blazers at all times, with the exception of breaktimes. Ties should be done up to the top button, and shirts should be tucked in. Skirts should be of an appropriate length (knee length or just above the knee). Hair that is shoulder length or longer should be tied back. Hair bands and slides should be either red or black. Pupils should not wear make-up, false nails or earrings other than one pair of studs. Pupils are not allowed to wear any other jewellery items.

## Pastoral

Excellence in pastoral care is at the fore-front of a happy and successful school. Pastoral care is a partnership between pupils, staff and parents and thrives off excellent communication between all three. There are a number of different pastoral strands that are woven together at Castle Court to provide the strong, yet sympathetic, pastoral care web that has become one of the enduring strengths of the school.

**The Tutor System** – offering day-to-day help for pupils and parents alike.

**The House System** – a vertical grouping existing across all years in the school except Badgers and Badger Cubs, enabling pupils to interact with pupils from other year groups. All staff who have regular contact with pupils are also included in a house.

**The Heads of Section** – who oversee Pastoral Care and the PSCHÉ curriculum across their section, except in the Senior Section where it is led by the Assistant Head (Pastoral).

**The Medical Team** – who have oversight of the day to day health/welfare of pupils across the school.

**The ELSA Team** – who provide targeted support to pupils who require additional emotional support.

**The Designated Safeguarding Lead for Child Protection (DSL)** – who has particular responsibility for Safeguarding. The DSL is supported by a team of Deputy DSLs within the school.

**All members of staff** – who seek to be sympathetic towards those in their care during any given lesson or activity to ensure that pupils feel valued, cared for and supported. The excellent relationships that are enjoyed between pupils and their teachers (both in academic and in other spheres of school life) are essential ingredients that go a long way to making Castle Court the happy and successful school that it is.

## The Pastoral Structure

The school is divided into 3 different sections: Pre-Prep (nursery – Years 2), Middle (Years 3-6) and Senior (Years 7-8). Each section is led by a Section Leader who has overall responsibility for the pastoral care of their section. The Middle and Senior Section Leader are also Deputy DSLs and work closely with the Assistant Head (Pastoral)/DSL, SENDCO and ELSA team to support the well-being of the pupils in their care. This team meet regularly with the Assistant Head

(Pastoral) to discuss pupils' well-being and behaviour and to implement and monitor interventions for pupils needing further support.

### **House System**

All pupils and members of staff are allocated to a house. The four houses at Castle Court are:

- Brownsea (red)
- Corfe (green)
- Lulworth (blue)
- Studland (yellow)

House assemblies take place regularly throughout the year and enable pupils from the different year groups to build positive relationships with other pupils within their house and create a team spirit. Within each house, the pupils are placed in a House family which is led by a Year 8 pupil. This is designed to engender a sense of togetherness and community throughout Castle Court School. The Year 8 pupils act as mentors to the younger pupils in their house family offering leadership, advice, support and encouragement to the younger pupils during the academic year.

Achievements awarded to pupils contribute to the house's overall totals. The weekly total for each House is announced in the Monday celebration assemblies. There are also regular house events, for example cross country, house matches and Sports Day which provide further opportunities to gain pluses for your house. For further information, please see achievements.

### **School Council**

Our School Council is an important voice for pupils in the way our school is run. The Council consists of one representative from each form in Years 3-7 and is chaired by Year 8 leaders with the support of the Assistant Head-Pastoral. Pupils can apply for the position at the beginning of each year with tutors deciding on the suitability of candidates. The council meets once or twice a term. Prior to meetings, the representatives will ask their forms to highlight issues which they would like raised. These form the basis of the agenda. Once discussed, it is important that the council get to see how their ideas and concerns are acted upon and how they can effect change at Castle Court through this forum.

### **Achievements and Sanctions**

#### **'Track It Light 'House Point System**

At Castle Court School, we use a Track It Lights system in Years 2-8, which is a visual, interactive whiteboard tool, supporting pupils in taking ownership of their own behaviour. It is linked to our PSB core skills and the 7Cs which are our whole school values. For positive

behaviour, pupils are awarded a green Track It Light which earns them a house point. You can view the achievements awarded to your child on the Achievement tab on Edulink.

Each week the running house point totals for each house is read out during Whole School Assembly. When pupils in Years 2-6 receive 100, 200, 300 or 500 house points they are given either a Bronze, Silver, Gold or Platinum certificate to recognise their achievements. These certificates are awarded in Section assemblies.

For those in Years 7 and 8 we recognise that the pupils have often outgrown rewards such as certificates and badges. Therefore, in discussion with their tutors and section leaders, appropriate 'collective' rewards will be agreed on. Examples of these could be a trip to Starbucks or a movie night.

If a pupil's behaviour falls short of our expectations, they are awarded either an amber (level 1), yellow (level 2) or red (level 3) depending on the severity of their behaviour.

If a pupil is given a 'red', they will spend a period of reflection time at break with their Section Leader. This will involve pupils having time to reflect on their choices. This focuses on addressing the root cause of the behaviour and how to repair the damage. In this way, we develop mutual respect, empathy, consideration, and the taking of responsibility. If a pupil receives 3 reds in quick succession (within half a term), the third reflection will be with the Assistant Head-Pastoral. At this point, a meeting will be held with that pupil's parents/guardians and they will be put on to a Report Card.

### **Show Ups and Head's Commendations**

Work considered to be outstanding or of a particularly high standard relative to the ability of a particular pupil may be given a 'Show Up' to the Head. The Head takes a keen interest in meeting individual pupils and congratulating them on their work. Where appropriate the Head may choose to escalate a particular piece of work (or any other contribution to school life) to be awarded a 'Head's Commendation', this is awarded in a Whole School Assembly.

### **Head's weekly award**

Each week a pupil is chosen from each form group to receive the Head's weekly award which is given out in the whole school celebration assembly. The award is linked to one of the 7Cs and the tutor gives a brief explanation as to why the pupil has been selected and which 7C they have demonstrated. Head's weekly awards are recorded in the Achievement section of Edulink so that you can view the reasons for your child gaining this award.

### **Pre-Prep**

In Pre-Prep and Year 1, staff encourage good and appropriate behaviour, the following of the 7Cs and effort in the PSB strands. A similar system to Trackit Lights is used but this is age

specific and display based involving velcro lights and pupils being able to move themselves between the colours. Pupils in Pre-Prep and Year 1 do NOT receive house points. We celebrate such achievements every day with plenty of praise and sometimes some more tangible rewards. We ensure that each pupil feels valued and their efforts celebrated. The various rewards are listed below:

- Stars - the pupils in Reception and Year 1 may receive a star for their star chart. Staff may also award a class award if the class have collaborated or made a particular effort in an aspect of school life.
- The Head's Weekly Award is given to one pupil in each class by the Head, for excellence in one or more aspects of the 7Cs. The winner of this award has the achievement added to their EduLink profile and parents receive notification of this.
- Weekly Merit badges are awarded to a member of Year 2 in Year 1 and 2 assembly. In Year 1, a piece of work is selected by the teacher, for a pupil who has put special effort into the activity. The pupil receives a certificate, and their work is displayed as Work-Of-The-Week in class.
- Good Manners badges are awarded weekly to a pupil on every lunch table, by the member of staff who heads the table. This draws pupils' attention to the need to maintain high standards of courtesy at this time of the day.
- Any pupils who have completed an outstanding piece of work, for their level of ability, may take this for a 'Head's Show up'. Sometimes this might be a group of pupils or even the whole class.

## **Safeguarding**

Castle Court school is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of all of our pupils. Each pupil's welfare is of paramount importance. The Safeguarding of pupils is the responsibility of everyone in the school. School staff are particularly important in safeguarding and promoting the welfare of pupils as they are in a position to identify concerns early and provide help for pupils.

Everyone working in or for our school must share the objective to help keep pupils and young people safe by:

- Providing a safe environment for pupils and young people to learn and develop in our school setting.
- Identifying and responding to 'early help' needs of pupils and families.
- Identifying pupils and young people who are suffering or likely to suffer significant harm, and taking appropriate action with the aim of making sure they are kept safe both at home and in our school setting.
- Maintaining a culture of vigilance and an attitude of 'It could happen here'.

The School's Designated Safeguarding Lead is Mr Paul Dunsford and his Deputies are Mrs Louise Speer, Mrs Louise Munns and Ms K Thompson. Please refer to the school's safeguarding policy (available on the school's website) for further information.

## Academic

### Curriculum

Castle Court is a PSB school and therefore whilst the National Curriculum is broadly followed in Years 1-8, it is further enhanced by the development of the core PSB skills as well as preparation for academic scholarships in Years 7-8, where appropriate (see below). Details of the school curriculum can be found on the curriculum statement policy available on the school website.

### PSB

The Pre-Senior Baccalaureate was introduced in September 2019, with the first Year 8s receiving their PSB certificates in July 2021. The PSB is an assessment model which focuses on the development of the values, skills, attributes and behaviours required for pupils to succeed and flourish in an ever-changing world.

At the heart of the PSB are the core skills which permeate through all the different subjects.

The core skills are:

- Thinking and learning
- Reviewing and Improving
- Communication
- Independence
- Collaboration
- Leadership

The PSB is about developing the whole pupil and creating a love of learning. This is best achieved by pupils developing a clear understanding of their skills and areas for development. By focusing on the core skills, pupils are best equipped to deal with the challenges and opportunities of senior school life and beyond.

The Pre-Senior Baccalaureate is – on the whole – based on the National Curriculum (which in turn is what Common Entrance is based on). The mode of delivery and its emphasis though is different: its approach allows considerably more freedom thus encouraging individualised and focused study. What is important for pupils is developing a passion for learning, not the need to memorise facts to pass a test, not to be able to write a “set” essay, not to parrot 20 capitals of the world.

Best practice within PSB schools enables pupils to produce high-quality work whilst being driven by genuine interest in their subject. The PSB enables the brightest pupils to fly higher, while ensuring that all pupils are able to show what they can do, not what they cannot do.

Castle Court has an outstanding reputation for exceeding academic expectations and the PSB enables us to build upon the strong foundation of a knowledge-rich, academically challenging

curriculum. Our pupils study syllabuses that are based upon the best of the National Curriculum and other examination boards.

## **Special Educational Needs**

A pupil has SEND where their learning difficulty or disability calls for special educational provision, namely provision different from or additional to that normally available to pupils of the same age.

In the Learning Development Department, we aim to provide an education for each pupil, enabling them to achieve their full potential at every opportunity and responding to individual need. This process is achieved by:

- Identifying SEND and adapting teaching strategies in response to the diverse needs of pupils, therefore differentiating according to need. This is a core requirement of the teachers' standards (2012). Teachers are guided and supported in this by the SENDCO and information is shared appropriately and frequently.
- The early identification of pupils with SEND is a crucial factor in overcoming barriers to learning. The SENDCO works closely with the Deputy Head to analyse school tracking data and test results.
- Whilst the SENDCO has overall responsibility for the identification of pupils with SEND in the school, other members of teaching and pastoral staff have a key role to play in the process. Each teacher has access to a pupil's Individual Profile, which shares details of individual learning styles and needs. The profiles are updated regularly and enable differentiation to occur within the classroom and an individualised programme of study to be organised for any pupils with SEND.
- The school reflects the Code of Practice in that pupils are identified as SEND if they do not make adequate progress after they have had interventions, adjustments and good quality personalised teaching. This is an ongoing process and the Learning Development department works closely with all areas of the curriculum, in order to achieve this goal.

Please refer to the SEND policy for further information.

## **Feedback**

At Castle Court School we believe that in order for feedback to be effective it should be based around the following 4 key principles.

Feedback should be:

- Timely
- Specific
- Understandable

- Acted upon

We believe that feedback should be seen as responsive teaching and therefore works best when it takes place in the moment and can be acted on. Pupils should receive regular feedback in all subjects which identifies what they have done well (in relation to the learning outcome) and provides action for improvement. However, this does not mean that pupils should receive written comments on every piece of work. An over reliance on written marking also means that teachers have less time to focus on the most important aspect of their job which is teaching pupils.

At Castle Court, our feedback policy is designed to ensure the best outcomes for our pupils and our teachers. We aim to do this in two key ways:

- Encouraging pupils to take responsibility for reviewing and improving their own learning. It is important that teachers do not do the thinking for pupils by correcting all their mistakes.
- To utilise teachers' time more effectively so that it has the biggest impact on pupils' outcomes. By freeing up the time teachers would have used marking, they can focus their attention on planning effective lessons which are tailored to meet the individual needs of the pupils in their class.

It is not necessary or effective to mark every piece of work in detail. Often, a check is all that is needed, for example, to challenge incomplete work, to address common misunderstandings or identify pupils needing more support or challenge. More detailed feedback should be used for those pieces of work which will have the greatest impact on pupils' learning. For example, practising key skills which will be needed for an assessment or exam.

At Castle Court we use a range of strategies to ensure that feedback to pupils is timely, specific, understandable and acted upon. These include:

- Directed Improvement and Reflection Time (DIRT)
- Whole Class Feedback
- Live Feedback
- What a good one looks like (WAGOLL)

More detailed pieces of work and assessments should be marked in accordance with the PSB's 5Es which are: emerging, evolving, expected, exceeding and exceptional. Each subject has a specific 10-point PSB scale which enables teachers to assess the level pupils are currently working at (please see assessment and reporting). This grade indicates if a pupil is meeting the 'expected' standards within that subject, for their age group. This is benchmarked against nationally agreed standards within the PSB group.

## **Homework**

The purpose of homework, commonly referred to as 'prep' at Castle Court, is to encourage the continuation of learning at home and to help pupils learn how to work independently.

Homework not only helps to reinforce the work covered in class, but also helps to develop key skills and attributes, such as organisational skills and self-discipline, which are essential if pupils are to be life-long learners.

The nature and type of homework will change throughout a pupil's time at Castle Court as they develop greater independence and maturity. Likewise, the amount and frequency of homework should increase as pupils get older, but this may also vary through the school year and should be appropriate to the ability of the pupil.

Typically, pupils can expect to receive the following homework:

### **Pre-Prep**

- In Reception, pupils are encouraged to take home and read their reading book every day. In the Spring Term, pupils are given 3 or 4 high frequency words to read at home.
- In Years 1 and 2, pupils continue to be given reading books from our reading scheme(s). In addition, they are given a list of 10 spelling words to learn.
- In Year 2, there is an optional weekly maths activity worksheet for pupils to complete.

### **Junior (Years 3-4)**

- In Year 3, pupils continue to have a reading book and spellings. In addition, they are asked to learn their times tables for a fortnightly test.
- In Year 4, pupils continue to have a reading book and a spelling list. In addition, pupils are given two homeworks of around 30 minutes in Maths and English. These homeworks aim to consolidate or extend the work covered during the week.
- All homework is set on Edulink.

### **Middle**

- In Year 5, pupils continue to have a reading book and spellings. In addition, they have weekly homeworks of around 30 minutes each in Maths and Science, plus an ongoing learning task in French.
- In Year 6, pupils continue to have a reading book and spellings. In addition, they have weekly homeworks of around 30 minutes in:
  - English, Maths, Science, French and occasional homework in Geography and History.

- All homework is set on Edulink.

### **Senior**

- In Years 7 and 8, homeworks are set each day. Each homework should take between 30 and 45 minutes. Homework is set in the following subjects:
  - English, Maths, Science, French, Geography, History and Latin
- In Year 8, pupils are set two maths homeworks each week.
- All homework is set on Edulink.

You can view your child's homework on the homework tab on Edulink. Once pupils have completed their homework they should click the 'completed' button on Edulink.

### **Holiday work (half term and main holidays)**

This is not generally set for our pupils, except for Year 8 academic scholarship pupils during the Christmas holidays. Pupils of all ages are, however, encouraged to continue in their daily reading.

## **Assessments**

### **Standardised Testing**

The following tests are carried out on an annual basis to help teachers and Heads of Department gain a better understanding of pupils' attainment and progress. The Deputy Head, Heads of Department and SENCO analyse these results to ensure that individual pupils and pupil groups are making expected progress.

#### **Autumn Term:**

- **New Group Reading Test (NGRT):** Years 2-8
- **New Group Spelling Test (NGST):** Years 3-8
- **CATs:** Years 4, 6 & 8 (and new pupils)

#### **Spring Term:**

- **Progress Test in English (PTE):** Years 3-7
- **Progress Test in Maths (PTM):** Years 3-7
- **Progress Test in Science (PTS):** Years 4 & 6
- **CATS:** Year 2

All results from standardised tests, are shared with parents via the assessment tab on Edulink. Parents have the opportunity to discuss these results further at Parents Evening which take place in the Autumn and Spring Terms.

**Summer Term:**

- **Progress Test in English (PTE):** Year 2
- **Progress Test in Maths (PTM):** Year 2

**Exams**

At Castle Court, we feel it is important that pupils experience more formal, timed exams in preparation for their Senior Schools. The following formal exams take place within the school:

**Autumn Term:**

Year 8 Mock Exams (core subjects), in-class assessments and Year 8 Mock Academic Scholarship exams.

**Spring Term:**

Year 8 pupils sit senior school admission tests or academic scholarship tests.

Year 8 PSB Exams and assessments in all subjects.

**Summer Term:**

Year 7 exams (core subjects) and formal assessments in other subjects.

**Year 8 Pre-Senior Project Qualification (PSPQ)**

The PSPQ, like its senior school counterpart 'The EPQ', gives pupils in Year 8 the opportunity to engage in independent research on an aspect they are passionate about. Pupils are expected to write an extended essay or create a portfolio on a question of their choice and present their project to others. The scholarly skills that such a project entails have significant benefits for pupils in preparing them for their future schools and beyond.

The aim of the PSPQ is to encourage and enable Castle Court pupils to show:

- Self-Leadership: Participate in a sustained and self-directed inquiry within a global context.
- Thinking and Learning: Generate creative new insights and develop a deeper understanding through in-depth investigation.
- Independence: Demonstrate the skills, attitudes and knowledge required to complete a project over an extended period of time.
- Communication: Communicate effectively in a variety of situations.
- Collaboration: Demonstrate responsible action through, or as a result of, learning.

- **Reviewing and Improving:** Appreciate the process of learning and to take pride in their achievements.

Prizes for the best PSPQ projects are awarded at Speech Day.

### Reports and Parents Evenings

Pupils in Years 3-8 receive an Interim Report at the end of the first half-term in the Autumn and Spring Term. The Interim Reports reflect the PSB grading system and recognise pupils' attainment (their PSB subject grade) and their development of the PSB core skills (Attitude to Learning grade).

Parents Evenings take place after half-term in the Autumn and Spring terms for all year groups, including nursery. These evenings give you the opportunity to discuss your child's learning in more detail.

### Interim reports grading for PSB Attitude to Learning and Core Skills (Years 3-8)

Research has now shown that developing 'core learning skills' has a significant impact on pupils' learning outcomes. At the heart of the PSB framework, is a pupil's attitude to learning and the individual development of their core learning skills. In the Interim Reports, a pupil's attitude to learning is shown using a number which relates to one of the PSB levels shown below.

PSB Level		
9-10	Exceptional	Demonstrates exceptional effort and engagement in class and homework tasks; takes a key role in discussions; presenting ideas precisely; showing mature leadership; displaying initiative; outstanding collaborator; highly committed and reflective learner.
7-8	Exceeding	Regularly exceeds the expectations in terms of effort and engagement in class and homework tasks; frequently contributing to discussions, listening and communicating well; courteous with a positive influence on others' learning; collaborating well; a highly committed and reflective learner.
5-6	Expected	Contributes expected effort both in class and homework. Engaged in lessons; happy to participate in discussions (although perhaps at times may need prompting); courteous with a positive influence on others' learning; in general, collaborates well; growing in their ability to reflect on their learning; committed to making good progress.
3-4	Evolving	Inconsistent in effort and class engagement and in homework tasks; some reticence to take a lead in class; working towards having a positive

		influence on others' learning; may lack confidence to contribute to class discussions and may need prompting to participate; sometimes a 'quiet follower' in group discussions; beginning to collaborate with others; some evidence they are reflecting on their learning.
1-2	Emerging	Regularly requires support to contribute to lessons effectively; rarely taking a lead in class; regular prompting needed to review their work or work independently; struggles to work independently; emerging in their ability to work with others.

### PSB Grade (attainment level) for Years 3-8

Each subject has a specific 10-point PSB scale which enables individual teachers to assess what the 'working at' level for a pupil is, for the reporting period. The grade given will indicate if a pupil is meeting the 'expected' level within that subject, for their age group.

PSB Level		
9-10	Exceptional	A full grasp of new concepts and recent topics; always applies knowledge and skills independently to a range of situations with creativity, adaptability and flair; working well above the year-specific expected level.
7-8	Exceeding	Confident understanding of new concepts and recent topics; can apply knowledge and skills consistently and mostly independently; can transfer skills to other areas with growing creativity.
5-6	Expected	Sound understanding of new concepts and recent topics; almost always applies knowledge and skills independently. Has reached the level we expect from our pupils at Castle Court in this subject, at this age range (which is moderated against national PSB standards)
3-4	Evolving	Knowledge, concepts and/or skills have started to be grasped and used with some independence. There is a requirement for support and scaffolding at times to reach the expected level. This is a continual process during the school year and your child is being supported to reach the expected level.
1-2	Emerging	Knowledge, concepts and skills have yet to be understood fully and support is required to complete the tasks set. Your child is being well-supported to make progress towards the next level in this subject.

### PSB Year 8 Certificate

At the end of Year 8, all pupils are presented with a PSB certificate which details their attainment in all their subjects, as well as the PSB core skills. This certificate also includes a pupil's PSPQ title and the grade they were awarded. A similar version of this certificate is sent as a transfer document to senior schools to give them a better understanding of the whole pupil.

## **End of Year Reports**

At the end of the Summer Term, parents receive an end of year written report for all subjects. These reports also include a tutor comment and reports from individual lessons in music, dance and drama teachers where appropriate. The Head also writes a comment for every pupil in the school.

## **Future Schools**

Our pupils transfer to a wide range of senior schools both in the independent and maintained sector. Typically, pupils leave Castle Court at the end of Year 8 and transfer to the following key schools (amongst others):

Independent Senior Schools: Canford, Bryanston, Bournemouth Collegiate School (BCS), Winchester College, Clayesmore, Millfield, Leweston, Milton Abbey, Talbot Heath, Sherborne

Maintained Senior Schools: QE, Corfe Hills, The Thomas Hardye School, Lytchett Minster

A number of pupils also transfer to local Grammar Schools at the end of Year 6, or other independent schools who transfer at this age group. These include: Poole Grammar, Bournemouth Grammar, Parkstone, Lytchett Minster, Ballard.

Castle Court is committed to preparing pupils for their future schools and beyond. All tutors in Year 5 and above, should be aware of the future schools their tutees are aiming for and take a proactive approach in supporting their tutees in this process. The school helps prepare pupils for admission to their future school in the following ways:

- Providing interview practice to help pupils with admission and scholarship interviews.
- In Year 5, pupils have a weekly study skills lesson which helps pupils prepare for the 11+ exams and ISEB pre-tests.
- After school activities focusing on verbal reasoning are offered in the Autumn (first half) and Summer Term.
- Pupils have access to Atom Learning which provides further practice and guidance on verbal reasoning, non-verbal reasoning, English, maths and science.
- Liaising closely with senior schools to ensure a smooth transition.

## **Scholarships**

The school has an excellent track record of preparing pupils for scholarships to senior schools in a range of areas including: academic, sport, music, art, DT, drama, performing arts and all-rounder. The school provides additional support to these pupils through:

- Scholarship preparation groups either at lunchtime or after school
- Giving pupils the opportunity to take part in relevant trips and activities

- Providing interview practice
- Information evenings to parents and pupils explaining the scholarship process
- Mock academic scholarship exams in the Autumn term of Year 8

If you would like to discuss future schools or scholarships in more detail, please contact the Head, Katie Johnson, [head@castlecourt.com](mailto:head@castlecourt.com)

## Music

We have a strong tradition in music-making with a wide range of curricular and extra-curricular musical activities. Singing forms part of the curriculum for all year groups, in addition to instrumental playing from Year 2 onwards. Pupils in EYFS receive 1 curricular music lesson per week and pupils in Years 2 - 8 receive 2 curricular music lessons per week. In all classes, from Badgers upwards, music is taught by specialist musicians. Many of our pupils receive individual music lessons in a wide range of instruments, including singing and music theory.

We currently have a number of extra-curricular music groups rehearsing on a weekly basis including orchestra, choir, plus a range of ensembles. Typically, these involve pupils from Year 3 onwards. Performing opportunities for these groups are many and varied, including an informal concert series, major school concerts and regional orchestral courses at Bryanston. All pupils experience performing in whole-school concerts and events, including singing in nativity plays and forming choirs for the Carol Service in Wimborne Minster. By the time they leave Castle Court, a number of pupils achieve Grade 6 or above in an instrument or voice and a number win music scholarships to their chosen senior school.

There are a number of visiting music teachers who are able to provide additional private music lessons. Please contact Mr James Smith (Director of Music) [jsmith@castlecourt.com](mailto:jsmith@castlecourt.com) for more information.

## Performing Arts

The performing arts are an important part of life at Castle Court School. Through Drama and Dance we aim to build confidence, develop creativity and communication skills and allow pupils the opportunity to work successfully as part of a group. Opportunities to perform exist throughout the school. Pupils in Badgers and Pre-Prep, directed by their class teachers, perform nativity plays at the end of the Autumn Term and go on to present a full-scale musical production in both Years 3 and 4.

All pupils in Years 3 to 8 also receive specialist timetabled Drama and Dance lessons. In Drama, they learn new skills including mime, improvisation, role-play and script work. We use poems, stories and play texts as the starting point for drama work and in this way support the work of the English department. Pupils develop confidence in performing their work to others, as well as learning to respond positively as a member of an audience.

In Dance, pupils in Badgers and Reception have a ballet lesson each week, pupils can continue these lessons in Year 1 and Year 2. From Year 3, all pupils have a weekly dance lesson in our dance studio in which they are taught a range of dance styles from different eras and cultures. These include Street Dance, Salsa, Ballroom, Charleston, Bollywood and African dance. As pupils progress, they are taught about performance, presentation, and learn about choreography and improvisation from Year 5.

For pupils who wish to develop their skills further, there are opportunities to do so in after school activities. There are junior drama and dance clubs for pupils in Years 4 and 5 and for pupils in the senior school there are optional drama and dance activities which culminate in a Summer Term performance to parents. Previous productions have included Shakespeare's '*The Tempest*' and musical productions of '*Wind in the Willows*', '*Bugsy Malone*' and '*Matilda*'. For pupils in Years 2 to 8, they may take private dance lessons in Ballet, Tap and Street dance. Pupils in Years 5 to 8 may also take private Speech and Drama lessons in which they work towards LAMDA examinations in either Acting or the Speaking of Verse and Prose. Please contact Mrs Wilde (Drama) [lwilde@castlecourt.com](mailto:lwilde@castlecourt.com) or Miss Dani Tomblin (Dance) [dtomblin@castlecourt.com](mailto:dtomblin@castlecourt.com) for further details.

Opportunities to watch live theatre are also provided when possible, either by bringing professional companies to school or by taking trips to the theatre.

## **Sport**

At Castle Court our fundamental aim is to ensure that every pupil leaves the school with an affectionate connection to sport and physical activity. We truly believe that there is a sport or physical activity which every child can enjoy, and we are committed to allowing all pupils the moments to find it. We seek to offer pupils a broad range of sporting opportunities as they progress through the school, with an emphasis on participation and representing the school. We are also committed to building competitive teams and developing individual sportspeople, recognising that there will be many pupils who seek excellence in a variety of sports and physical activities. We work hard to support and guide these pupils to exceed their expectations across all sports.

In Years 3-8, pupils benefit from sport every day receiving coaching across the main sports (Autumn: Football/Rugby for boys, Hockey/football for girls; Spring: Hockey for boys, Netball for girls; Summer: Cricket, Athletics, Swimming for all).

Interschool matches take place on Tuesday (Years 3 and 4) and Wednesday (Years 5 to 8) afternoons, where the emphasis is very much on representing the school, enjoying participating in a team environment and learning about the highs and lows of competitive sport. As pupils reach Year 6 (U11) and Year 7/8 (U13) the focus is on team and individual development to compete in local, regionally and nationally. Fixtures are supplemented by festivals and tournaments in the major sports that may take place on any day during the school week,

enabling pupils (particularly in Years 6, 7 & 8) to gain experience of the additional pressures and joys that come with playing multiple matches back-to-back across an afternoon. Local and regional tournaments are often the gateway to more prestigious national events and we take pride in prioritising these events to give our pupils the best opportunity to experience competition at a national level. Promising individual players are identified in major sports and nominated for representative trials (ISFA rep teams, County Netball & Cricket, Talent ID Hockey etc.) and we are very proud of the many pupils who achieve these representative honours every year.

Our timetabled sports lessons are supplemented by additional opportunities before school (e.g. swimming at Canford School, tennis sessions), at breaktime (e.g. biathlon club & Sport Scholarship Preparation) and during after-school activity sessions. In addition, we take part in Biathlon, Swimming, Athletics, Sailing and Cross-Country festivals/tournaments throughout the year at a local, regional and national level, as appropriate.

Above all, we are committed to inculcating a lifelong love of sport and physical exercise that is grown and nurtured at Castle Court but becomes so fundamental that it is treasured for life. For some, this will mean excelling at mainstream sports, enjoying participating in training sessions and matches; but for others there may be more niche areas of sport and physical activity which they strive to be involved in. We are currently developing pathways and profiling tools to help pupils chart their progress as they head through the school and know that, as this is embedded in the coming years, we will see increased levels of affectionate connection and success in sport and physical activity.

### **Trips and visits**

We seek to put on a range of trips and educational visits throughout the school year for all pupils in the school. Many of these relate directly to pupils' learning in the classroom in particular subjects, but others are put on to enhance pupils' awareness of the wider world more generally or to improve skills such as teamwork and leadership. Costs for a number of these trips are chargeable as 'extras' via school bills in arrears. Parental permission is sought in advance for all trips that involve an additional cost, an overnight stay or pupils in EYFS.

At the start of the Autumn term, pupils in Years 7 & 8 kick start their leadership programme by taking part in an adventure day. Previous trips have seen pupils involved in coasteering and climbing. These challenges offer a great opportunity for pupils to develop the PSB skills of leadership, communication and collaboration whilst also giving them the chance to display many of our 7 Cs values such as courage and commitment, all of which we will be looking for them to exhibit as leaders of the school during the remainder of the academic year.

Activities Weeks take place in the Summer Term, enabling pupils to enjoy aspects of the wider world with an emphasis on fun, friendship and activity. There is a degree of progression as

pupils head up through the years, with younger pupils enjoying an on-site camping experience and older pupils travelling further afield for more adventurous activities and opportunities. Activities Weeks are chargeable as 'extras' via school bills in advance, usually in instalments to spread the cost over several payments.