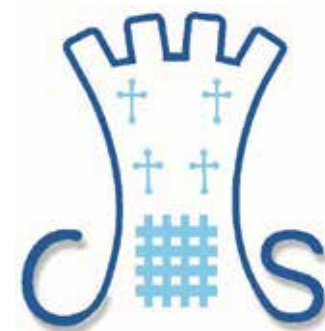




Castledon School & College

School Prospectus



Learn to live



Welcome to Castledon School

Foreword: Philippa Holliday, Principal says

On behalf of the pupils, staff and governors I would like to welcome you to Castledon School. We are an 'all age' school which has both Primary, Secondary and Sixth Form departments.

Respect and independence

We are a school that actively promotes mutual respect for everyone, both in school and in the wider community. Pupils are encouraged to make a full contribution to their education and the life of the school. At Castledon our passion is to see all pupils reach their potential by working on the attributes necessary to lead as independent and fulfilled a life as possible.

Learn to Live

Our motto 'learn to live' is at the core of everything that we do.

Individual support

We provide a personalised approach to learning, supporting each pupil by providing an extensive range of programmes and therapies both on and off site alongside smaller classes.

Dedicated staff

I am also very proud of our exceptionally experienced and dedicated staff, who ensure that all our children are well supported to achieve their true potential, and work hard with families to overcome any barriers to learning.

Castledon School

We offer provision to pupils from year 1 to year 11 with an EHC plan that have a wide range of complex needs, these include autism and communication difficulties. Through strong partnerships with parents and collaboration with a range of

other agencies the school offers a caring and friendly learning environment in which pupils make excellent progress.

Castledon College

From September 2017 Castledon is extending its age range to include 16 to 19 years by establishing Castledon College. This will be located on a separate site. It is a very exciting time for us all!

Parent partnership

We place great importance in the partnership between school and home. We believe that it is vital to have an open, honest and mutually supportive relationship with parents and carers, working together to achieve what is best for our children and young people. I hope this prospectus will give you useful information about our school but, if there are any questions you would like to ask, please feel free to visit and talk to any of us here.

Learn to Live – School motto

We are here to help our young people develop and maximise their life chances, impacting positively on themselves, their families and the wider community.

- To provide a curriculum that is broad, balanced and appropriate.
- To provide pupils with the skills to learn at their own individual level and realise their potential.
- To promote independence.
- To have tolerance and consideration for others
- To provide an environment where pupils can take risks and develop good self-esteem.
- To provide pupils with the skills to take their place in the community and become citizens of the future



Examples of our school-parent partnership can be seen in the parent and pupil stories within this prospectus. The stories demonstrate that you, and your child, are very important to us!

Get in touch

We would urge you to visit our amazing school. I am truly confident you will find Castledon a welcoming and supportive school, with staff that listen, consult and actively encourage your involvement. To make an appointment to visit, or to simply ask us a question, please email admin@castledon.essex.sch.uk



School day: settling in

The school day starts at 8.45am and ends at 3.10pm Monday to Thursday, and 2.10pm on a Friday.

Transport

If your child is entitled to school transport, or you need any information, you should visit the SEN Transport Assessment Team website at www.essex.gov.uk/schooltransport, or contact the team at SENtransportAssessment@essex.gov.uk or 0845 603 2200.

Uniform

We expect to see all children in a school uniform. This ensures the children look smart, which in turn, encourages them to take pride in their school and approach learning in the right frame of mind. A school uniform helps promote a sense of belonging and community.

School meals and snacks

Children have the choice of either a hot nutritious meal from the on-site kitchen or bringing a packed lunch into school.

Free school meals

For children in the Foundation Stage, and Years 1 and 2, the government provides free school meals. For older children, you need to be in receipt of certain benefits.

Break-time and drinks

Under the Fruit in School scheme Key Stage 1 children are entitled to a piece of fruit each day free of charge. This is given as a playtime snack. Children in Key stage 2 may bring a healthy snack from home. Secondary children have the opportunity of buying buttered toast at break time. Water is available throughout the day.

Milk is provided free to pupils who are eligible to receive free school meals and to children up to the age of five. Milk is available to other pupils through the Cool Milk Scheme for a small charge.



Roger and Danielle have watched their son blossom into a confident and achieving young man through the care and opportunities offered by Castledon School

Roger and Danielle Mendes live in Basildon with their son Rogerio who is thirteen, and four year old Alaina.

A fine line

The line between the need for mainstream versus specialist education can be a very fine one, and this is something Roger and Danielle are fully aware of. Whilst they were initially advised that Rogerio would be well supported in a mainstream secondary setting they felt instinctively that this was not necessarily the route they should follow. "Until about half way through primary school Rogerio was doing well," says Roger. "Then he began to become withdrawn and apparently disruptive and his teachers thought he was just being naughty. When he was diagnosed with Asperger's at eight years old his behaviour started to make sense but obviously he needed additional support."

A chance to flourish

"The improvement we saw in Rogerio was swift and dramatic," says Roger. "From being quiet and withdrawn, lacking confidence and being obsessed with perfection in his work, he became much more outgoing and able to accept that everything he did, did not have to be 'just so' all the time. He is much more tolerant now, of himself and others, and he is able to participate in everything the school has to offer."

Amazing opportunities

And Castledon does have a great deal to offer. Roger is amazed at the opportunities his son has been given and the vision the school demonstrates in promoting the interests and enthusiasms of the students. "A great deal of time and effort is put into finding ways to capitalise on the children's strengths and to help them reach their potential. For example, Rogerio has a fascination for trains so if his class are going on a trip, instead of taking a coach he is allowed to plan the journey so they can go by train instead. Further, the school made an arrangement with a local engineering firm so that he and some of the others were able to spend one day a week for a year in the company's workshop, learning about motor mechanics. The school also has reciprocal arrangements with other mainstream schools whereby Castledon students have the chance to use facilities not available on site. To me this is a demonstration of how seriously Castledon takes the welfare of its pupils."

Maximising potential

Giving the children the chance to follow their interests and recognising the potential in each of them is what, Roger believes, makes Castledon such a perfect setting. "The staff aim to ensure that every child should leave school with as many skills as possible. They are given career-based, practical opportunities and the chance to thrive and I cannot fault what they do. If we as parents have a suggestion or an idea for further provision, usually it has already been actioned. That's what makes a great school."

Improvement at every level

He has made excellent progress on the specific targets that have been set for him but just as importantly is gaining the additional skills he will later need for independent living. "Socially and on a practical level he is improving all the time, and every day he comes out of school with a big smile on his face." Knowing that your child is so well provided for and is happy in the process is enough to put a smile on any parent's face, too.



Curriculum: stepping stones to a fulfilling future

Primary

The Primary Department has classes at Key Stage 1 and 2, for pupils from Year 1 to Year 5.

Pupils are taught through the National Curriculum at a level appropriate to their individual needs and age.

Middle

The Middle School Department has classes for pupils from Year 6 and Year 7. Pupils are taught through the National Curriculum at a level appropriate to their individual needs and age.

Secondary

The Secondary Department consists of Key Stage 3 pupils in Years 8 and 9 and Key Stage 4 pupils in Years 10 and 11. Secondary aged pupils are taught in ability groups.

Castledon College

From September Castledon College will be offering a Sixth Form curriculum.

Life skills

Our students also work towards qualifications in functional skills, vocational skills and life skills development. All these courses support our ethos that we are helping our pupils to gain the skills that they require to live in the real world and be as independent as possible.

Careers education

Careers education is an integral part of school life for all pupils in Years 10 to 11. As well as forming part of the 'Life Skills' curriculum, the students participate in the Employability Charter, gaining recognition for their achievements and constructing a CV which they can share with employers.

Work experience

All students undertake a two week work experience whilst in Key Stage 4, involving placements outside of the school setting to further develop their understanding and skills for working life.

Transitions Pathways

A representative from Transitions Pathways is available to talk to students and parents or carers to discuss their options post-16.

Facilities

We are very proud of the facilities we have available for our children. These include:

- A large playing field and playing area.
- Two sets of custom designed play apparatus built on safety surfacing.
- A school garden centre.
- A 16 metre indoor swimming pool for all pupils to enjoy lessons.
- Specialist areas for life skills, gardening and practical work.
- A sensory room.

- A communication room.
- A life skills base.
- A training centre.
- A library.
- A new and contemporary sixth form centre.



Enriched curriculum: trips and visits

To further enrich our curriculum, all children are offered a range of visits which are connected with work in the classroom. We make visits locally and further afield and invite visitors into school from the wider community.

A range of residential trips are offered throughout pupils time at Castledon. Including trips such as a one night local outdoor pursuits activity break to a four night Centre Algarve, Portugal trip.

In the face of almost insurmountable difficulties, Ann had no-one to turn to until Castledon School pulled out all the stops to help

Ann and Philip Parsons live in Basildon with their two sons. Callan is aged eighteen, and Jacob, aged twelve.

Invaluable intervention

To say that Ann and Philip have had problems over the last few years would be something of an understatement. With both of their children having a wide range of complex mental health issues, they have faced enormous difficulties in obtaining the support they so desperately needed to ensure the boys' wellbeing and Ann believes it is only because of the intervention of Castledon School that she is still able to retain her own sanity.

Complex needs

Both Callan and Jacob attended mainstream school until the age of seven, largely against their parents' wishes but because their problems were not deemed sufficiently severe for a place in a special setting. "Between them, the boys suffer with ADHD, OCD, Tourette's Syndrome, Asperger's and autism," explains Ann. "Perhaps because they are also very intelligent, their symptoms were not seen to be serious enough and yet Callan's mainstream school continually excluded him because of his behaviour. He is unable to make eye contact and can be hyperactive but this was seen as naughtiness rather than a result of his condition, and the school could not or would not accept this."

A life-changing experience

Eventually, Callan was allocated a place at Castledon and that, says Ann, has changed his life. "We fought to get that place and it was worth the fight. Within a couple of weeks he was a different child. At his previous school he was only allowed to go in for an hour or so every day and even that he felt hard to cope with. When he started at Castledon he went straight into full days, took to it like a duck to water, and absolutely loved it. Because of how he had been treated before his confidence was at rock bottom; before he left Castledon he was awarded a Gold Medal in the Jack Petchey Awards for achievement. That is how far he has come."

A sibling of a sufferer of autism or Tourette's is believed to have a 40% chance of also inheriting one or other of the conditions and when Jacob was about 18 months old, Ann was quick to recognise traits similar to those she had earlier seen in Callan. "Once we realised that Jacob was similarly affected, we knew we had to get him into Castledon, too," she says. "The boys are very different but Castledon had done so much for Callan we knew it was what Jacob needed."

Excellent and effective support

Whilst Callan has very successfully moved on to college and achieving very well in his chosen field, Jacob still has a long way to go but Ann is convinced that he is in the right place. "It's not just that Jacob is receiving excellent, sensitive and effective support from the school, but that we as a whole family are supported incredibly well. I truly believe that if it were not for the care and understanding we have been shown by everyone at Castledon School I would not have been able to cope to the extent that I have. Jacob still has huge difficulties and those have affected us all greatly, but because I have such amazing back-up from people who completely understand, I can keep going."

A positive approach

Perhaps the thing that Ann values most about Castledon School is the faith it shows in the power of positivity. "All the boys' teachers emphasise the fact that they can achieve what they want if they are prepared to work for it, and that they are not doomed to failure because they have certain problems to overcome. I love the fact that each and every child at the school is allowed to recognise their individuality and appreciate each other for who they are, rather than being stigmatised for being different."



Plans, reports and reviews:
making sure we support your child in the best way possible

Education Health Care Plan:
understanding a young person's needs

All pupils will have an Education Health Care Plan (EHCP). EHCP's are the new plans that replace statements of SEN. As with statements there will be a timed process to write these plans, and parent/carer views are central to this process. We will talk to you about these assessments and ensure that we plan for your child or young person's specific needs.

Support

We also undertake home visits, liaise with any professionals that have worked with or assessed your child, and observe your child in any previous setting or at home. All this planning helps us to know your child or young person's interests and dislikes, your views and family needs and enables us to set up the required support in the classroom.

Annual reviews

Annual reviews of EHCPs are held at school during each school week throughout the year. These will usually be chaired by the class teacher/form tutor, but there may be additional representation from speech and language, Therapeutic Support, Medical Team or Senior Management.

Annual Reviews in the Autumn term are usually for our Year 11 pupils, to enable applications to post 16 provision to happen in a timely fashion. Representation from Transitions Pathways attends all Year 11 and Year 9 reviews and as many Year 10 ones as possible.

Curriculum Reports

We publish curriculum reports once a year for our pupils. For the primary school and Key Stage 3, these are published in the Summer term and parents/carers are invited to a parent's evening to discuss the report.

Parent's evening

At Key Stage 4 reports are published in the Spring term. This is to ensure our pupils have the opportunity to respond to their predicted grades and have all the information they need to make college applications. Parents/carers are invited to a parent's evening after the publication of the report to discuss the content.

We welcome the opportunity to discuss your child's progress throughout the year and welcome you to contact us if you have any concerns at all. All of our teaching staff can be contacted via telephone message to the main reception or through emails.



Behaviour and self-development

Safe and happy

We believe pupils learn best when they are in a safe and happy environment. We are in no doubt that such an environment is fundamental to learning, progress and positive personal development.

Respect

We encourage pupils to respect the feelings of all other members of the school community and behave in a manner which does not bring themselves or the school into disrepute.

Positive behaviour for learning

We have a 'positive behaviour for learning policy' which is available on our website or upon request at the school office. You can view it online at <http://www.castledon.essex.sch.uk/>, 'About Our School', 'Policies'.

Celebration of success

As a school we are committed to ensuring the safety of all pupils and have a child protection policy in place, which all staff are committed to. Our ethos is to 'catch pupils getting it right' and celebrating that success on an individual basis, promoting self-worth and independence.



Clubs

We aim to provide as much extended school provision as possible so the children can socialise and play together whilst getting the opportunity to try new things that may not be on the school curriculum. We offer as much variety as we can and aim to cater for all different interests and needs. Examples include:

- Running Club.
- Gardening Club.
- ICT Club.
- Football Club.
- Cooking Club.
- Art Club.
- Animal Care.

Sport

The PE and swimming curriculum allows students to reach their full potential in traditional and modified sports. Students are able and encouraged to access physical activities during supervised lunchtime and after school clubs.



Because her son is so very special Lisa wanted a very special place for him, and she found it at Castledon School

Lisa and Jonathan Bobbett live in Rayleigh with their three children. Alisha and Harry are in their teens and Oliver is seven years old.

Very specific needs

When Oliver was about four it became evident that mainstream education could no longer address his needs and so Lisa and Jonathan began the task of finding a suitable alternative setting. Having investigated several options it was Castledon School they felt to be the most appropriate and they applied for a place. "Unfortunately, not everyone agreed with our choice and we had to work hard to convince the authorities," explains Lisa. "Whilst the other schools we looked at were good in themselves, we felt strongly that only Castledon offered the right approach as far as Oliver's specific condition was concerned. Having finally gained agreement to send him there, I know that we were right to stand our ground."

Castledon could help

As well as having autism and ADHD, Oliver has been diagnosed with a global developmental delay and it is this, says Lisa, which most impacts on his ability to learn. "When we first had the GDD diagnosis I assumed it meant that he would just take a bit longer for him to catch up with his peers but I now know that is not likely to be the case... As his parents we know him better than anyone and instinctively knew that Castledon could help."

The value of life skills

Lisa describes Oliver as someone who rigidly compartmentalises his life, meaning that home is home and school is school. But where there is something of a crossover is in the life skills which the school promotes and which Lisa and Jonathan encourage at home. "Helping the children towards a measure of independence is a big part of what Castledon does, and is probably one of the most valuable things it offers to Oliver. They are taken into the town and to shops and cafes where they are encouraged to choose, ask and purchase, and familiarise themselves with everyday life. Even though I would not expect Oliver to be able to live completely independently in the future, these skills will enable him to look after himself to a degree and that is a great deal better than nothing."

Constant improvement

Oliver is making progress in many ways. His speech has improved considerably since starting at Castledon and his concentration span, hindered by his ADHD, has also increased. "His classroom workstation area helps to avoid distraction and he is learning how to complete a required task, which he struggled to do before," says Lisa. "He is learning about cause and consequence, and no longer needs the constant supervision which had previously been necessary."

Understanding the individual

Although Oliver has always been a sweet-natured, happy child his social skills were compromised and Lisa often had to prompt him to engage with other people. Since starting at Castledon, however, this is another aspect of his behaviour which has improved. "Everyone he meets now becomes his best friend! Perhaps he can be a bit too trusting with strangers and that is a potential worry but it's lovely to see how his confidence has increased in the last few years."

Lisa believes that Castledon School has been instrumental in bringing about such a positive change in Oliver's achievements and his potential. "You can't just tick boxes with children like Oliver; you need to completely understand the individual and Castledon does that. It has given me the peace of mind I needed for the welfare of my son."



Admissions

Referrals

Castledon School works with the local authority to provide education for children between Years 1 – 11 (KS1 to KS4) with moderate learning difficulties and/or complex needs. Following statutory assessment the local authority will make a judgement as to where the needs of a child with SEN may best be met.

In considering the referral of a child to Castledon School, the Principal and Governors will consider the appropriateness of the referral and will be mindful of the agreed size of the school roll and class size. The school currently accommodates 144 pupils in twelve classes of approximately twelve pupils.

Visiting the school

In deciding the appropriateness of the referral, full consideration of the statement and other supporting reports will be made. If there is any doubt then a senior member of staff will visit the pupil in their current school. It is expected that parents will have visited the school to fully understand the provision being offered and the context of the school by attending a Prospective Parents' Presentation.

Transition

The transition into school will be supported by the school's outreach and transition manager, liaising with school and parents and arranging visits. The move into Castledon School will be monitored and supported to ensure as smooth a transition as possible.

Parents Code of Conduct

At Castledon School we are very fortunate to have parents that recognise that educating children is a process that involves partnership between home and school and understand the importance of a good working relationship to equip children with the necessary skills for adulthood. For these reasons we welcome and encourage parents/carers to participate fully in the life of our school. The purpose of this policy is to provide a reminder to all parent and visitors to our school about expected conduct so that we can work together to ensure a safe and positive school environment for our children.

RESPECT AND CONCERN FOR OTHERS AND THEIR RIGHTS.

We expect parents and carers and pupils to show respect and concern for others by:-

- supporting the respectful ethos of our school by setting a good example in their own speech and behaviour towards all members of the school community in and out of the school premises;
- working together with teachers for the benefit of children. This includes approaching the school to resolve any issues of concern and to discuss and clarify specific events in order to bring about a positive solution;
- reinforcing the school's policy on Behaviour;
- parking with consideration and respect for others when delivering and collecting children from school.

In order to support a peaceful and safe school environment, the school does not tolerate:-

- disruptive behaviour which interferes with the operation of a classroom, an office area or any other part of the school grounds;
- using loud and/or offensive language or displaying temper;
- threatening harm or the use of physical aggression towards another adult or child.
- damaging or destroying school property;
- abusive, threatening, malicious or inflammatory emails, phone or social network messages
- smoking and consumption of alcohol or other drugs or accessing the school site whilst intoxicated ;

The above behaviours on school premises will be reported to the appropriate authorities and Governors may prohibit an offending adult from entering the school grounds to safeguard our school community. We trust that parents, carers and visitors will fully support this Code of Conduct.

Nationally social media websites are being used increasingly to fuel campaigns and complaints against schools, Headteachers, school staff, and in some cases other parents/pupils. Castledon School considers the use of social media websites being used

in this way as unacceptable and not in the best interests of the children or the whole school community. Any concerns you may have must be made through the appropriate channels by speaking to the Class Teacher, the Headteacher or the Chair of Governors, so they can be dealt with fairly, appropriately and effectively for all concerned.

In the event that any pupil or parent/carer of a child/ren being educated at Castledon is found to be posting libellous or defamatory comments on Facebook or other social network sites, they will be reported to the appropriate 'report abuse' section of the network site. All social network sites have clear rules about the content which can be posted on the site and they provide robust mechanisms to report contact or activity which breaches this. The school will also expect that any parent/carer or pupil removes such comments immediately. In serious cases the school will also consider its legal options to deal with any such misuse of social networking and other sites. Additionally, and perhaps more importantly, is the issue of cyber bullying and the use by any member of the school community to publicly humiliate another by inappropriate social network entry. We will take and deal with this as a serious incident of school bullying, if necessary involving the police.

Getting involved

Voluntary helpers

We value the contribution of parents and family and we actively encourage your help during the school day. Parents and family help with a variety of activities which include reading with our children, helping children to choose a library book, sewing, cooking, and acting as extra pairs of hands on educational visits. We accept all help gratefully. All volunteers must have a DBS check before they commence work in school.

Governorship

We have a full and active Governing Body, which includes parent governors as well as representatives from staff, the local authority and the local community. The governing body has a range of duties and powers and a general responsibility for the conduct of the school with a view to promoting high standards of educational achievement including setting targets for pupil achievement, managing the school's finances, making sure the curriculum is balanced and broadly based, appointing staff and reviewing staff performance and pay.

Vacancies for Parent Governors are advertised as they arise.

Do you want to be a Governor?

Our Parent Governors give parents a voice in decision making. They are elected by parents through a ballot. If you are interested in becoming a Governor, please contact the school office.

How to find us



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