



# CASTLE MEAD SCHOOL

**“CASTLE MEAD IS AN INCLUSIVE SCHOOL.  
PUPILS WITH SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS AND/OR DISABILITIES  
ARE WELL SUPPORTED AND LEARN SUCCESSFULLY”\***

## About us

Our Resource Base holds 35 places for primary school children with complex needs. Typically, our children have varied needs including; global delay, Down Syndrome, Cerebral Palsy, Autism Spectrum Disorders, speech and language and communication needs, sensory processing difficulties and/or visual impairments. The provision is staffed by dedicated and experienced qualified teachers and Teaching Assistants, many of whom have personal experience of raising children with additional needs. We are committed to ensuring our Resource Base is a place where our children are happy and safe, motivated to reach their full potential, and equipped to become resilient and independent learners.

## Our class structure

There are 3 classes, which are each tailored to meet the needs of the individual children. Spotted Bats offers opportunities for the children to develop their early engagement skills whilst following a predominantly Early Years Foundation Stage curriculum. For children who demonstrate a more developed engagement profile, Long-Nosed Bats offers more in-depth learning opportunities using more advanced communication. Finally, Flying Fox Bats begins to adopt a more formal approach to teaching which prepares children for their next steps in education. This might include increased inclusion opportunities in mainstream classes, which will also support the children's transition to secondary school.

## Our curriculum

We believe the children in our Resource Base are entitled to, and deserve, a broad, balanced and rewarding curriculum that provides them with the skills and knowledge to flourish in life. The curriculum is designed to draw out and prioritise the most pertinent aspects of the Early Years Foundation Stage and National Curriculum, to provide each child with powerful knowledge that inspires and equips them to act increasingly independently in their ever-widening world.

Our curriculum prioritises the skills that are most important to each individual. We break these into small steps of learning which are then carefully sequenced and taught to enable the children to acquire the skill and use it independently. Each child's learning journey is closely aligned to their own targets as set out in their Education, Health and Care Plan.

For some of our children, sensory experiences form an integral part of their curriculum. Our sensory curriculum allows these learners to develop their engagement for learning through experiences such as Sing & Ball, Sensology, and Attention Autism. Our sensory swing also provides opportunities to develop engagement, self-regulation, and physical skills.

## How we assess progress

To be responsive to each child's learning needs, we continually assess and review their progress and adjust their pathway through the curriculum and teaching accordingly. Our intimate knowledge of children's progress allows us frequent opportunities to celebrate their achievements, which we believe is fundamental to success. Progress towards targets are shared regularly with parents so we can celebrate them together and work in partnership.

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## Our approach to teaching

Our teaching approach is always cognisant of the unique needs of each child and their preferred style of learning. As a result, a wide range of teaching methods, approaches and strategies are used responsively within the Resource Base, including those recommended by the TEACCH philosophy, Attention Autism, colourful semantics and THRIVE.

To implement our curriculum appropriately, we follow a TOTAL communication approach which includes a variety of communication methods matched to the needs of each child. For example, some children use P.E.C.S. (Picture Exchange Communication System) as a way of communicating. Others communicate using a communication aid/object of reference or photos or symbols, Makaton, gesture, facial expression or speech, or a combination of these. Simultaneously, attention and listening skills are developed continuously throughout the day in a variety of situations through direct teaching and role modelling.

## Wider curriculum & therapeutic support

Children within our Resource Base have regular opportunities to experience enhanced curricular activities for academic, emotional, social, physical and sensory development. These may include activities such as music therapy, play therapy, Forest School, martial arts, swimming, horse riding and yoga.

Alongside these enhanced curricular activities, educational visits are carefully designed to deepen the children's experiences of the world around them by taking their learning out into the community, equipping them with powerful knowledge that enriches their lives. These educational visits give the children experiences to understand their learning in the classroom in the real world, provides them with experiences to maximise their potential to enjoy the world and be independent and develops their capacity to be part of their local and national community. Educational visits have in the past included train rides, termly trips to the local library, visits to the dairy farm, theatre trips, visits to the beach, and adventures to the enchanted garden of lights (American Museum).

Our Resource Base children are very much part of our school community and where appropriate all opportunities for inclusion are explored and encouraged. Experiences within the mainstream school are carefully considered and planned, while opportunities for inclusion with other children are actively sought - including joining assemblies, sports day, and curriculum lessons in groups or class.

## Communication with families

Communication with families and gaining insight into their child's learning is a vital means by which we are able to respond to children's most pressing needs. There are many ways in which we seek to build relationships and communicate with parents and carers. Most importantly, this occurs through natural day to day conversation; we always endeavour to make time to talk. However, we know that time is often pressed so we have other channels of communication including our digital classroom platform, which is also used to provide information and reflections about the knowledge and skills being taught each week, as well as to share photos to illustrate this learning. In addition to this, there are more formal meetings such as the child's annual review.

## Find out more

You can read more about our approach to Resource Base provision, and book a tour of our classrooms, on our website:

[www.themeadtrust.org/our-approach-to/resource-base-provision/](http://www.themeadtrust.org/our-approach-to/resource-base-provision/)

Please also feel free to get in touch via the details below.



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