

# The Abbey Hill CURRICULUM

How powerful  
is a castle?

*Achieving our dreams together*





# How powerful is a castle?

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## Key Idea:



Step inside a world of towering walls, grand halls, and brave knights—where castles were not just homes, but fortresses of strength and power. Built to protect against invaders, these mighty castles had tall towers, drawbridges, and moats to keep enemies at bay. Inside, royal families feasted in the great hall, while women managed households and sometimes even helped defend their stronghold! From Eleanor of Aquitaine's rule to the knights who protected the lands after the Battle of Hastings, castles were full of action, mystery, and unforgettable stories.

## We will:



Build our very own Castles and hold an open day to test them out!

## Core Text:



Prince Cinders  
Babette Cole



## Core Knowledge



- 1.Castles were built to protect people from invaders.
- 2.Castles had strong walls and towers and some had a drawbridge and moat to stop invaders from entering.
- 3.Castles had rooms like the great hall for feasts, kitchens, and bedrooms
- 4.Women in castles played important roles, managing the household, overseeing servants, and sometimes defending the castle.
- 5.E&D: Eleanor of Aquitaine was a powerful queen and landowner, often associated with castles.
- 6.Norman knights wore armour and helped defend castles after the Battle of Hastings in 1066.
- 7.The Bayeux Tapestry shows pictures of the Battle of Hastings, where William the Conqueror won and became king.
- 8.Peveril Castle is named after William Peverel, a Norman nobleman (He was granted the land after the Norman Conquest.)
- 9.Bolsover Castle and Peveril Castle are local castles in our area that were built long ago

## Disciplinary Knowledge



### Being a Historian:

Know about new ideas and inventions of the time.

Know why people did things, why events happened and what happened as a result of this.

Know several ways of finding out about the past e.g. books, artefacts, people, the internet.

Know who was important in a simple historical recount and give reasons why.

### Being a Geographer:

Know basic geographical vocabulary to refer to key physical features including beach, cliff, coast, forest, hill, mountain, sea, ocean, river, soil, valley and vegetation.

Know basic geographical vocabulary to refer to key human features including city, town, village, factory, farm, house, office, port and harbour.

Know that aerial photographs and plan perspectives to recognise landmarks and basic human and physical features.



*Achieving our dreams together*





## Lesson 1: History Detectives – What makes a castle?

| Icon                                                                                                     | Detail                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
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|  Learning Intention     | Understand why castles were built with strong walls, towers, drawbridges, and moats to protect from invaders.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
|  Disciplinary Knowledge | Know why people built castles and their defensive features.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
|  Key Knowledge          | 1. Castles were built to protect people from invaders.<br>2. Castles had strong walls and towers and some had a drawbridge and moat to stop invaders from entering.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
|  What the teacher does  | Show photos/images of castles from different periods.<br>Ask pupils to spot features they notice and share any castle names they know.<br>Prompt: "Why do you think castles have strong walls, towers, moats, and drawbridges?"<br>Explain the purpose of each feature.<br>Model labelling a castle diagram and complete sentence frames with pupils (e.g., "The _____ protects the castle because _____"). |
|  What pupils do         | Observe images carefully.<br>Discuss and share observations.<br>Complete a labelled castle diagram.<br>Use sentence frames to explain features.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
|  Key Questions        | What features can you see on the castles?<br>Why do you think castles have these features?<br>What does a moat/drawbridge do?<br>How did these features protect people?                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
|  Evidence             | Labelled castle diagrams and sentence frame work.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
|  Adaptation           | Scaffolding and scribing support for writing and labelling.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
|  Resources            | Castle images, labelled diagram templates, sentence frames, writing materials.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |

## Lesson 2: Local Castles and Aerial Views

| Icon                                                                                                       | Detail                                                                                                                       |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|  Learning Intention     | Explore local castles and how they look from above and over time.                                                            |
|  Disciplinary Knowledge | Know local castles and recognise landmarks using aerial photos and images.                                                   |
|  Key Knowledge          | 8. Peveril Castle is named after William Peverel.<br>9. Bolsover Castle and Peveril Castle are local castles built long ago. |
|  What the teacher does  | Use Google Maps satellite view.<br>Locate Abbey Hill Primary School, then Peveril Castle and Bolsover Castle.                |





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|                  | <p>Zoom in to see castles from above.</p> <p>Show photos comparing castles today and historic illustrations.</p> <p>Support pupils to compare images and discuss changes.</p> <p>Guide pupils to create photos with speech bubbles explaining differences for a class display.</p> |
| 👤 What pupils do | <p>Locate the school and castles on Google Maps.</p> <p>Discuss what they see from above.</p> <p>Compare historic vs. modern images.</p> <p>Create photos with speech bubbles describing castles then and now.</p>                                                                 |
| ? Key Questions  | <p>Where is our school in relation to the castles?</p> <p>What do you notice about castles from above?</p> <p>How have castles changed over time?</p> <p>Why might castles look different today?</p>                                                                               |
| 📷 Evidence       | <p>Photos with speech bubbles for a classroom display comparing local castles then and now.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| 🔧 Adaptation     | <p>Adult support during discussions for vocabulary and concept development.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| 📄 Resources      | <p>iPads/computers with Google Maps, printed photos, craft materials for speech bubbles.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                       |

### 🏰 Lesson 3: Castle Life – Rooms and Roles

| Icon                     | Detail                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
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| 🎯 Learning Intention     | Learn about important rooms in castles and the roles of people living there, especially women.                                                                                                                                |
| 📖 Disciplinary Knowledge | Know about castle rooms and the roles people had in castle life.                                                                                                                                                              |
| 🧠 Key Knowledge          | <p>3. Castles had rooms like the great hall for feasts, kitchens, and bedrooms.</p> <p>4. Women played important roles managing the household, servants, and sometimes defending the castle.</p>                              |
| 👤 What the teacher does  | <p>Introduce key castle rooms and their functions.</p> <p>Discuss women's roles using pictures and storytelling.</p> <p>Lead pupils in a role-play sequencing a day in the castle, focusing on different rooms and tasks.</p> |
| 👤 What pupils do         | <p>Participate in role play acting out castle life.</p> <p>Sequence pictures or cards showing castle rooms and daily activities.</p> <p>Discuss what women did in the castle.</p>                                             |
| ? Key Questions          | <p>What rooms did castles have?</p> <p>What did women do in castles?</p> <p>How did people live and work?</p>                                                                                                                 |
| 📷 Evidence               | <p>Photos of role play and sequencing activities.</p>                                                                                                                                                                         |





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| Adaptation | Chunking of information and adult modelling during role play. |
| Resources  | Role play props, images of castle rooms, sequencing cards.    |

## Lesson 4: Eleanor of Aquitaine – Queen and Castle Keeper (Role-play)

| Icon                   | Detail                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
|------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Learning Intention     | Understand Eleanor of Aquitaine's importance as a powerful queen and castle manager.                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| Disciplinary Knowledge | Know who was important in history and why.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| Key Knowledge          | 5. Eleanor of Aquitaine was a powerful queen and landowner associated with castles.                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| What the teacher does  | Use a detailed role-play script featuring 5 characters.<br>Guide pupils through the story of Eleanor's life and castle role.<br>Support pupils to participate in role play and respond to questions.<br>Help pupils create simple illustrations or labels about Eleanor and her role. |
| What pupils do         | Take on roles and perform the story.<br>Listen and answer questions.<br>Draw or label illustrations related to Eleanor's life.                                                                                                                                                        |
| Key Questions          | Who was Eleanor of Aquitaine?<br>Why was she powerful?<br>What did she do in castles?                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| Evidence               | Role play participation, pupil drawings and labels.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| Adaptation             | Chunking the script, adult modelling, and support.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| Resources              | Role-play script, character props, drawing materials.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |

## Lesson 5: Norman Knights – Armour and Defence

| Icon                   | Detail                                                                                                                              |
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| Learning Intention     | Learn about Norman knights, their armour, and their role in castle defence.                                                         |
| Disciplinary Knowledge | Know about inventions and why events happened in history.                                                                           |
| Key Knowledge          | 6. Norman knights wore armour and helped defend castles after the Battle of Hastings in 1066.                                       |
| What the teacher does  | Introduce Norman knights and their armour.<br>Explain the Battle of Hastings briefly.<br>Model labelling a knight's armour diagram. |
| What pupils do         | Discuss knights and their role.<br>Label and annotate a knight diagram with support.                                                |





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| ? Key Questions | What did knights wear?<br>Why was armour important?<br>How did knights protect castles? |
| 📷 Evidence      | Annotated diagrams of knights.                                                          |
| 🔧 Adaptation    | Scaffolding and scribing support.                                                       |
| 📄 Resources     | Knight diagrams, labels, pencils.                                                       |

## Lesson 6: The Bayeux Tapestry – Our Class Castle Story

| Icon                     | Detail                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
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| 🎯 Learning Intention     | Explore the Bayeux Tapestry and create a class version telling a castle story.                                                                                                                                                     |
| 📖 Disciplinary Knowledge | Know several ways of finding out about the past and recount important people/events.                                                                                                                                               |
| 🧠 Key Knowledge          | 7. The Bayeux Tapestry shows pictures of the Battle of Hastings.                                                                                                                                                                   |
| 👩 What the teacher does  | Explain the Bayeux Tapestry and its story.<br>Organise pupils to create freeze-frame scenes from the story.<br>Support pupils to use iPads to voice-annotate their scenes.<br>Combine recordings to create a class tapestry story. |
| 👦 What pupils do         | Create freeze-frame scenes acting out parts of the story.<br>Use iPads to record voice explanations.<br>Share their sections to form the class tapestry.                                                                           |
| ? Key Questions          | What story does the tapestry tell?<br>What are you doing in your scene?<br>Why is this part important?                                                                                                                             |
| 📷 Evidence               | Photos and voice annotations of freeze-frames.                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| 🔧 Adaptation             | Adult support with technology and language during recording.                                                                                                                                                                       |
| 📄 Resources              | iPads, props for freeze-frame scenes.                                                                                                                                                                                              |

## Lesson 7: Castle Investigation Day

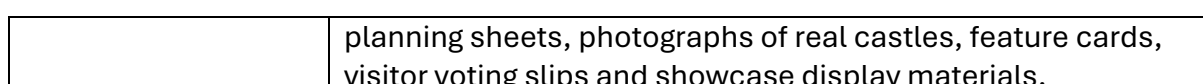
| Section                  | Details                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
|--------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 🎯 Learning Intention     | <b>To apply our learning by investigating, designing, constructing and defending a castle that would withstand a medieval attack.</b>                                                                       |
| 📖 Disciplinary Knowledge | Apply historical knowledge of castle design, defence and daily life to solve a real design problem. Use historical evidence to justify design decisions.                                                    |
| 🧠 Key Knowledge          | Medieval castles were carefully designed to defend people from attack. Features such as moats, drawbridges, curtain walls, keeps, gatehouses, towers and battlements each had a specific defensive purpose. |





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| <p> <b>What the Teacher Does</b></p> | <p><b>Stage 1 – Castle Investigation</b><br/>Revisit the defensive features explored throughout the unit using photographs, plans and aerial views of real castles. Present a design brief: <i>"Build the strongest castle possible using everything you've learnt."</i> Encourage pupils to investigate which features would best defend against different types of attack.</p> <p><b>Stage 2 – Planning</b><br/>Model how architects annotate designs, explaining how every feature should have a purpose. Support pupils to sketch and label their castle plans before construction begins.</p> <p><b>Stage 3 – Construction</b><br/>Provide a range of construction materials and support pupils in building their castle models, encouraging teamwork, problem-solving and adaptation as they work.</p> <p><b>Stage 4 – Investigation &amp; Testing</b><br/>Introduce a series of medieval attack scenarios (siege tower, battering ram, archers, scaling ladders). Pupils evaluate how successfully their castle would defend against each challenge and identify possible improvements.</p> <p><b>Stage 5 – Castle Showcase</b><br/>Organise a showcase where pupils present their castles to families, explaining how each defensive feature protects the castle and why they made particular design choices. Visitors vote for the castle they believe would best withstand a siege.</p> |
| <p> <b>What Pupils Do</b></p>      | <p><b>Stage 1 – Investigate</b><br/>Study real castles and discuss which defensive features are most effective.</p> <p><b>Stage 2 – Design</b><br/>Create a labelled castle plan, explaining why each feature has been included.</p> <p><b>Stage 3 – Build</b><br/>Construct a model castle using a variety of materials, adapting designs where necessary during construction.</p> <p><b>Stage 4 – Test</b><br/>Evaluate how well their castle would survive different attacks, discussing strengths and weaknesses before making improvements where possible.</p> <p><b>Stage 5 – Present</b><br/>Lead visitors around their castle, explaining how its features work together to defend the people living inside.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| <p> <b>Evidence</b></p>            | <p>Completed castle models, annotated design plans, photographs of construction and testing, and the <b>Castle Showcase</b>, where pupils confidently explain and justify their design decisions to visitors.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| <p> <b>Resources</b></p>           | <p>Cardboard, boxes, tubes, lolly sticks, masking tape, glue, scissors, string, fabric, paint, construction materials,</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |









## Scene 4: The Messenger Brings News

**Messenger:** *(Enters briskly from one side, looking alert, holding an imaginary scroll)*

Your Majesty, I have urgent news from the battlefield! Our knights and soldiers are fighting bravely to protect our lands. The enemy is strong, but with your leadership and the strength of the castle's walls and soldiers, we hope to keep the castle safe. I travel quickly to bring important news to you so you can decide what must be done next.

*(Mime handing over a scroll or bowing to Eleanor; look serious and hurried)*

## Scene 5: The Soldier Guards the Castle

**Soldier:** *(Standing tall and firm, holding imaginary shield and sword)*

I am one of the brave soldiers who protect the castle. Every day and night, I stand watch from the towers, looking out for any sign of danger. I wear heavy armour to keep me safe in battle. The walls, towers, and moat are all built to help us defend the castle, but it's the courage of the people inside that truly keeps us strong. We train hard so we are ready to fight if enemies attack.

*(Look around vigilantly; mimic looking through binoculars or over a wall; raise imaginary sword in a strong pose)*

## Scene 6: The Child's Perspective

**Child:** *(Sitting or standing playfully, smiling, maybe holding a small toy or book)*

Hello! I live here in the castle with my family. My days are full of fun and learning. I play with other children in the great hall, watch the servants working, and sometimes explore the castle's rooms. The castle is like a small town, with everyone having a job to do. I'm proud that my family lives in such a strong and important place.

*(Gesture excitedly, maybe mime playing or exploring; look happy and curious)*

## Scene 7: Eleanor's Final Words

**Eleanor:** *(Returning to centre stage, looking out warmly)*

Thank you all for sharing your stories. Remember, a castle is more than just stone walls and towers—it is a home, a place of safety, and a symbol of power. My life was full of challenges, but I was proud to lead and protect my people. I hope you now understand how important castles and those who lived in them were in medieval times.

*(Open arms wide as if embracing everyone; smile kindly)*

