



POLICY FOR MORE ABLE AND/OR TALENTED PUPILS

September 2019

Beliefs and Values

At Southend High School for Boys we believe that all pupils are entitled to an education that will enable them to develop their full potential, be that intellectual, physical, aesthetic, creative, emotional, spiritual or social. We believe that pupils should be able to live and develop as well-adjusted, autonomous and valued members of society.

The DfE have no national definition of 'most able' and expect schools to develop their own systems of identifying and tracking their most able students. Ofsted assess the outcomes of students attaining most highly at KS2 in order to consider whether the most able students are making as much progress possible in KS4.

Introduction

It was agreed by SLT and MAT Coordinators in the 2015 academic year to change the terminology from Gifted and Talented to More Able and Talented, in order to reflect Growth Mindset literature that people are not innately gifted or talented and that effort is a key characteristic of being a high achiever.

Our approach is to provide personalised learning that tailors education to individual need, interest and aptitude. Provision for the MAT is not a 'bolt on' but an integral part of effective teaching and learning. We regularly look to our Teaching and Learning Groups and MAT Coordinators as a way to monitor and adapt our approach.

Aims and Objectives:

Southend High School for Boys is committed to providing a sufficiently challenging curriculum for all its pupils (as outlined in the Equal Opportunities policy). In addition, we will provide opportunities to identify and in turn nurture those who are 'more able and/or talented' and their exceptional talents and abilities. It is the responsibility of all staff to address the needs of all pupils, including those who are more able and talented.

All pupils have an entitlement to the following:

- Staff commitment to develop their full potential at all times.
- A broad, balanced and appropriate curriculum.
- Lessons that stimulate, interest, challenge, inform, excite and encourage through partnership and dialogue with teachers and other pupils and through active participation in the lesson.
- Skilled, well-prepared and informed teachers who have a perspective and understanding of whole school needs, problems and policies, especially those which concern issues relating to those pupils identified as more able and/or talented
- A review of the curriculum to provide accelerated progression pathways for MAT.
- A high achieving learning ethos throughout the school.
- An entitlement beyond subject teaching, including preparation for adult life and preparation for the world of work.

Identification

Following previous guidelines laid out by the DCSF, MAT should make up between 5% and 10% of the cohort. If it is perceived by any of the concerned parties that inclusion is no longer beneficial, students may be moved out either temporarily or permanently.

As a school, we identify more able and talented pupils using a variety of identification methods:

- National Curriculum assessments – KS2, KS3, GCSE
- Teacher assessments
- Assessments made through other organisations, for example music services
- Teacher recommendations/observations
- Scrutiny of work done by pupils
- Parental recommendation

There needs to be flexibility with identification as some pupils underachieve for varying factors and some pupils may 'bloom' at a later stage.

Exceptionally Able

Exceptionality is by definition scarce, which may make it even less of a priority in a busy school. There can also be the perception that students who have been identified as exceptionally able are blessed with special qualities and advantages that will help them to succeed and that they don't need additional consideration. (NACE)

Teachers will identify, and address the individual learning needs of, those pupils who are exceptionally able in specific subject areas. These are pupils who are regarded as being in the top 2% of the nation or "off the scale" in an academic sense. They are intellectually independent and may be identified as more able and talented in a number of subjects. Provision for such pupils may include acceleration of GCSE and A level exams, Oxbridge entrance, MENSA application, additional qualifications, release for external opportunities, such as sporting excellence programmes or further study courses, etc., university essay competitions, Physics Olympiad, Biology Olympiad, county and national competitions, etc.

Multi-exceptionality

The term dual or multiple exceptionality is used in the UK to describe children who have both high learning potential and would be classed as having a special educational need because of a learning difficulty or a disability. The term dual or multiple exceptionality reflects the fact that an individual may have more than one issue alongside their high learning potential, for example have both an autism spectrum disorder and attention deficit alongside exceptional cognitive abilities. Please refer to the SEN profiles provided by our SENCo for how to support individual pupils.

Arrangements for Coordinating Provision

- The appointment of a named individual to co-ordinate the school's response to meeting the needs of more able and/or talented pupils.
- Identification documents from NACE are provided to all subject leaders. (See appendix 1).
- Additional identification document for Exceptionally Able students. (See appendix 2).
- The appointment of MAT coordinators to each department.
- Termly MAT department coordinator meetings.
- All schemes of work are planned by subject leaders to include specific enrichment material and ideas on a module by module basis.
- An awareness amongst all staff of their role in the identification of more able and/or talented pupils based on subject specific criteria and the need to make the curriculum sufficiently challenging.
- The establishment of a register of more able and/or talented pupils which is published to all curriculum and pastoral areas.
- Continuing professional development for staff that addresses the provision for more able and/or talented pupils.
- The effective assessment of pupils' potential and performance.
- The regular monitoring and reporting, to the MAT coordinator, of individual pupil performance
- An audit of enrichment and extension opportunities provided by the wider extra-curricular programmes, led by the MA&T coordinator.
- The active encouragement of pupils to enter local and national events, including residential courses and competitions.
- The provision of discrete pastoral care (where required) on an individual basis.
- The provision of mentoring where appropriate.
- Opportunities for more able and/or talented pupils to work together.
- Recognition, celebration and rewarding achievement of all pupils.
- Close liaison with external support agencies and the home.
- Mechanisms to identify, monitor and address underachievement.
- Collobarting with external organisations such as InvestIN and Make It Happen.

Pedagogic responses

We encourage a wide variety of teaching strategies to promote effective learning including:

- Lessons that are informed with evidence and reflected in teachers' pedagogy to ensure pupils learning and development is optimised.
- Planned differentiation within lessons to include enrichment tasks.
- Assessment for Learning, to ensure that there is always a next step towards which pupils should be working, keeping all, including the EA pupils, stretched.
- Pace and depth of learning including higher-order thinking challenges.
- Target and/or task related.
- Teaching and learning styles.
- Cross-curricular and ICT opportunities.

Monitoring and Evaluation

The evaluation process is designed to assist senior leadership team and teachers to plan for improvement and to target resources more effectively. It should increase teacher understanding of what works and engender confidence in order to try new things. Targets are published for identified students in all subjects and these are cross-referenced to exam and test results.

Departments self-evaluate and review their provision and the outcomes of interventions to inform future MAT provision. MAT activities are integrated into performance appraisal, target setting, assessment, planning and IAR analysis. MAT Coordinators and subject leaders put systems in place for identifying and addressing underachievement. Training is provided at the beginning of each year to ensure new teachers are aware of our policy.

Pastoral Leaders

- To track pupils' performance and discuss with subject leaders the levels of challenge and standards achieved.
- To ensure effective mentoring programmes are in place where appropriate.
- To liaise with the SENCO and More Able and Talented Coordinator regarding support for pupils of exceptional ability.

Subject Leaders

- To identify pupils according to agreed methods with their departments.
- To ensure schemes of work contain enrichment/extension material for identified pupils.
- To ensure that teachers have access to the MAT register.
- To ensure provision is outlined in the department handbook.
- To monitor levels of challenge, standards achieved and underachievement.

Senior Leaders

All senior leaders must:

- Support teachers in the delivery of the More Able & Talented Policy.
- Monitor MAT provision in those departments they line manage.

The Involvement of Parents

Parents will receive regular pupil assessment information including information on any underperformance. Information will also be made available regarding supporting and challenging the pupil at home, e.g. Year 7 Challenge information evening for parents. The Home School Agreement encourages parents to support pupils "in homework and other opportunities for independent and extended learning" and "to make every effort to attend parent/staff consultation and challenge evenings."

Identifying more able learners: general characteristics



More able learners may display a selection of the following characteristics:

Personal traits

- Inquisitive, curious, alert and responsive to new ideas
- Quick/agile thinkers
- High self-motivation/initiative; can work well independently
- Socially adept
- Show leadership qualities
- Good/unusual sense of humour
- Sensitive/sensitivity and empathy with others
- Socially immature/isolated; prefer computers to people

Learning ability

- Learn new ideas and concepts quickly/easily/readily
- Good at reasoning/logical/analytical thinking
- Good at dealing with abstractions/abstract thinking
- See relationships between things; can generalise from specific facts
- Good at understanding things/meanings; show unusual insights
- Able to memorise quickly/easily
- Follow complex directions easily
- Keen powers of observation
- Advanced vocabulary/verbally fluent/good self-expression
- Learned to read early, often before school age; rapid readers
- Good attention; concentrate and persevere for long periods if interested

Learning styles

- Dislike repetition of concepts and closed tasks; get bored easily
- Informed/show interest in ideas and concepts beyond their years
- Creative/imaginative; original ideas in problem-solving; may be artistic/musical
- Inclined to choose unusual but effective methods of working, perhaps using a different line of logic or jumping steps
- Many interests/hobbies; read across a wide range of subjects
- Prefer verbal expression; reluctant to record things in writing
- Resent imposed timetable restrictions if interested in a task
- Perfectionists; may lean towards being obsessive

Key question: Do your planning and teaching provide opportunities for learners to reveal and develop these characteristics?

Who are the exceptionally able and how do we know?

Like every other pupil, those deemed to have exceptional abilities and talents deserve our attention and our consideration of their particular needs and how to meet them in school. Exceptionally able (EA) pupils – whether younger or older – may be at risk of being neglected as they are such a diverse group.

Exceptionality may go unrecognised, because too difficult to deal with, because schools have many other priorities, or because it is felt that the needs of the exceptionally able can be provided for alongside their “more able” peers.

There is no universally agreed term for students whose ability exceeds that of even their “more able peers”. Some descriptions include “genius, gifted, very bright, high flyer, very or highly able and talented”. The term “exceptionally able” is used in this guide to describe students whose needs go beyond those of students already deemed to require opportunities for enrichment and extension in the normal curriculum.

The following checklist is indicative of some of their characteristics but should be used critically and carefully, taking particular account of age, developmental milestones and the wider profile of the individual pupil

Exceptionally able students may:

- Possess extensive general knowledge, sometimes know more than the teacher.
- Show good insight into cause-effect relationships.
- Easily grasp underlying principles and need the minimum of explanation.
- Quickly make generalisations and extract the relevant points from complex material.
- Have mental speeds faster than physical capabilities.
- Show exceptional short- and long-term memory.
- Have reading ability well beyond their chronological age.

Some of the most observed characteristics of exceptionally able individuals, taken from the literature, also include the following:

- Rapid and thorough comprehension of the whole idea or concept.
- Unusual ability to perceive essential elements, underlying structures and patterns in relationships and ideas.
- Ability to relate a broad range of ideas and synthesize commonalities among them.
- A high degree of ability to think abstractly that develops early.
- Appreciation of complexity; finding myriad alternative meanings.
- Ability to learn in an integrative, intuitively non-linear manner.
- Extraordinary degree of intellectual curiosity.
- Flair and passion.
- Seeking alternative opportunities independently.
- Exceptional fine motor skills.
- Exceeding beyond requirements of the curriculum.
- Exceptional practical performance.
- Ability from an early age to think in metaphors and symbols and a preference for doing so.
- Ability to learn in great intuitive leaps.
- Awareness of detail.

Recognition of exceptional ability is closely tied to provision; EA will be demonstrated only when pupils have a range of opportunities to do so in a rich, challenging and supportive school environment. Approaches to teaching and learning for these learners often resembles those used with the broader range of very able students, the major differences typically being the extent of complexity, pace and greater personalisation.

Strategies cited by many schools making good provision for EA include:

- Setting high-challenge independent research tasks;
- Higher-order questioning, dialogue and technical/ disciplinary language;
- Giving pupils information about additional study materials and guidance on how to use them;
- Providing more challenging homework and independent learning assignments;
- Giving differentiated success criteria;
- Setting creative open-ended tasks;
- Incorporating AS-level units into GCSE; Using feedback and marking to allow for progress in accordance with ability.

Teaching strategies should take account of the need for:

- Pace of learning commensurate with rapidity of learning in some areas (with implications for classroom management and learning focus in class);
- Conceptual learning to feature highly, with tasks which prioritise problem solving, enquiry, high-level analysis, application and synthesising of learning; bigger picture thinking;
- Advanced material and resources; sources taken from contemporary developments and research;
- Cross-curricular links (“interconnectedness”) and real-life exemplification;
- Development of independent learning and research;
- Flexibility to allow for the pursuit of individual interests and aptitudes.

The needs of exceptionally able pupils are therefore by definition complex and sometimes challenging. They include:

- Having their abilities and talents recognised and valued.
- Understanding of them as individuals.
- Access to and mastery of broad and balanced learning opportunities as well as specialist support where needed.
- Well-planned and differentiated learning in the everyday classroom complemented by enrichment and experiences beyond.
- Longer-term planning for their needs in areas of the curriculum where they excel.

It is of course essential that opportunities in school and beyond allow such abilities to be displayed – and that teachers are also in touch with information about children’s strengths and passions from a variety of sources, including parents and children themselves. Strong communication between all involved in the child’s education is key to successful provision and support for exceptionally able children.

Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA) Guidance on teaching the able, gifted and talented: “MAT pupils may excel in some of these qualities but may have difficulties with others and need encouragement to overcome barriers. In particular, pupils may be hesitant about taking risks or speaking in class because of a fear of failure. Other pupils may need encouragement to put in the work needed to let their gifts flourish.”

<http://4cudiu253fp819kr1q2rgolw.wpengine.netdna-cdn.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/NACE-Essentials-Guide-3-exceptionally-able.pdf>

Starters CHALLENGES	STRATEGIES
Avoiding repetition or re-learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expect pupils to articulate rules or patterns to clarify understanding • Use differentiated examples • Plan for consolidation and confirmation rather than repetition • Use the pace as a new challenge • Look for new contexts in which to practise skills • Select pupils to set the starter activity • Address the same objective through tasks at varying levels
Providing sufficient differentiation in such a short time	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Set investigations across a sequence of lessons • Use pair/ small group work • Have tasks which make use of higher order thinking skills • Use differentiated or open ended questioning • Make a statement and ask for it to be justified • Use the follow up question – ‘what makes you think that?’
Offering appropriate challenges	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have ability pairings/ groupings at times • Build an incline of challenge with stepped tasks • Ask abler pupils to articulate the skills involved in completing particular tasks
Introduction CHALLENGES	STRATEGIES
Providing an appropriate level of stimulus and challenge for the most able without losing the majority	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use differentiated questions • Differentiate expectations • Prepare questions targeted on particular pupils which reflect their needs and personalities • Prime able pupils for contributions which extend the experience of all
Involving able pupils in whole class interactive discussion although they may not wish to contribute or might dominate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be aware of reasons for reluctance and avoid over exposure of able pupils • Direct questions to individuals • Use response partners • Allocate scribing • Expect able pupils to articulate what has been learned
Using modelling productively in relation to the needs of able pupils	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Give an oral commentary with the more able in mind • Involve pupils in modelling if appropriate • Ask able pupils to articulate explanations and principles • Use modelling to build the confidence of able pupils • Model problem solving at different levels • Model only that which abler pupils need to know
Development CHALLENGES	STRATEGIES
Ensuring that grouping maximises learning opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create task-specific groups • Vary group membership • Ensure that there are times when the ablest pupils work together • Ensure that able pupils have the opportunity to follow and to lead • Give able pupils roles in group work that reflect their abilities

Negotiating learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote self-evaluation and self-target setting • Encourage pupils to set questions, not just to provide answers • Negotiate over styles of response and criteria for evaluation • Decide together on the objectives to be addressed by able pupils • Discuss possibilities of varying presentation
Developing the skills of able pupils through working with others of differing abilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allocate challenging roles in group work, e.g. chair • Peer editing/ marking • Help able pupils to contribute to the success of others as well as their own
Maintaining the optimum pace for learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Give all learning a time frame, but match timing to potential • Offer challenging tasks • Expect different rather than just more • Differentiate objectives • Explore possibilities for acceleration
Planning activities which extend learning in breadth and depth	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Compact the task • Give a limited focus to promote depth • Plan to engage with higher order learning skills
Plenary CHALLENGES	STRATEGIES
Involving able pupils without diminishing the achievements of others or inviting peer group resentment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expect able pupils to offer explanation, not just presentation • Exploit the possibilities of presenting in role and reporting back • Encourage able pupils to take notes for feedback • Allow able pupils a different timescale for feedback, e.g. via OHP or ICT at the end of the week • Be aware of the attitudes of other pupils
Engaging with able pupils' level of understanding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focus on the articulation of what has been learnt, using appropriate terminology • Tackle demanding objectives • Build understanding of the big concepts • Offer the inspiration that can come from meeting older pupils who are more able and talented
Independent work CHALLENGES	STRATEGIES
Marking for maximum progress	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Marking should be formative, not just celebratory, and should be focused on specific criteria • Share differentiated success criteria in advance • Vary styles of response and avoid excessive pressure • Encourage self-checking based on prompt sheets for self-analysis
Using homework well	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Foster originality, independence and initiative • Set investigative, research based tasks • Monitor independent reading round the subject • Make time for individual feedback

Taken from guidance published by The National Strategy

Support for Exceptionally Able Pupils

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- Cross-curricular links (“interconnectedness”) and real-life exemplification;
- Development of independent learning and research;
- Flexibility to allow for the pursuit of individual interests and aptitudes.

Effective approaches to managing differentiation may include:

- Giving challenging (in-depth/beyond mastery) tasks that are related to the class activity – this is a good option as it keeps the pupil working in the same context as the rest of the class and supports the classroom community.
- Giving material from later in the key stage – usually done alone and with little support as the teacher has the rest of the class to cope with. Able students are entitled to teaching as much as all the others, so use this selectively.

There are a number of ways differentiation can be planned for e.g. by:

1. Task – pupils start at a higher level than their age peers and may move through concepts more quickly. They may also skip work within levels.
2. Outcome – pupils engage with the same content or task but the outcome may be open ended to allow the more highly able pupil to explore and extend their thinking

3. Resource – the class may be working on the same problem but the resources on offer within the class are different. For highly able pupils this might mean more complex texts or abstract concepts. This allows exceptionally able pupils to explore ideas in greater depth.
4. Pace – some exceptionally able pupils can benefit greatly from working at a faster pace than their peers. Exceptionally highly able pupils do not require the over learning that others do. Some will make connections and may not require concrete materials. Teachers should also be aware that some exceptionally able pupils will also relish the opportunity to work more slowly allowing time for in depth study.
5. Choice – all pupils will benefit from what Bruner (1996) calls agency over their learning. Exceptionally able pupils should be given the opportunity to select their own activities. They could also select to use a variety of materials to complete a task or could choose to start a task from a different point.
6. Questioning/dialogue – Exceptionally able pupils may not require such detailed explanations of the task. Alternatively, they may be offered much more complex instructions and information prior to embarking on a task. Targeted questions that involve higher order thinking skills and more intricate language can be directed towards highly able pupils.

Out-of-school led initiatives for exceptionally able pupils. Events such as:

- Special projects e.g., Architecture and Design challenge events; Science Fairs; Debates events; Maths challenge days.
- Subscription to specific journals/magazines/apps.
- Classes run by University Departments.
- Lectures and events hosted by, for example, The Institute of Physics; The Science Centre; Museums.
- National sporting competitions.
- Enterprise Days - opportunities for real life challenges.
- Guest speaker to expose students to new ideas/language.
- Work experience days/lectures – Careers Ready provide a variety of workshops.

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