



Policy for Able, Gifted and Talented

Our mission statement is 'Valuing Potential; Creating Opportunities'
This policy to be read in conjunction with all curriculum policies

Rationale

At Hartsbourne Primary School, we are all committed to:

- providing teaching which makes learning challenging, engaging and enables pupils to reach their potential
- helping our pupils to develop their skills and abilities, intellectually, emotionally and socially;
- working for quality and equality of opportunity

This policy is an integral part of the school's broader development of maximum inclusion of educational opportunity for all pupils and states our commitment to providing an environment in which all pupils are enabled to realise their potential. Underpinning the aims and values of the National Curriculum, it is important that the curriculum offered at Hartsbourne provides opportunities for all students to learn and achieve at an appropriate level and prepares them for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of life in the community.

We have high but realistic expectations of all pupils at Hartsbourne, are committed to high quality teaching and offer an exciting and stimulating curriculum. We provide a firm and well-balanced academic foundation and believe that children should be given the chance to excel in a wide range of activities including sport, technology and the creative and expressive arts. We expect our children to give of their best, appreciate what they can do well and what they could make better. We want our children to enjoy school, to be enthusiastic, to develop perseverance and a love of learning that will stay with them throughout their lives.

We believe in the uniqueness and high value of every child, and our teaching is devoted to helping all children to develop towards their fullest potential. We know that children have different abilities and needs but we feel that every human being has the potential to behave in a gifted way at some point in their lives.

To this end, our policy for able and exceptionally able pupils is one of inclusivity, not one where the majority of children are excluded and only a select few benefit. All of the children within our school will be encouraged to develop levels of higher order thought processes and the skills necessary to become creative problem solvers. We aim to provide paths that all children may follow whilst recognising that some children will travel further than others.

We aim to provide within our classrooms, a differentiated curriculum that promotes higher order cognitive processes, teaching strategies that accommodate both curriculum content and learning styles, and special grouping arrangements appropriate to particular children. In addition we would offer the opportunity for individuals or groups of children to develop creative projects in response to problems that are of specific interest to them.

Aims

This policy is intended to support the following aims:

- High expectations of achievement for all pupils
- To provide opportunities for pupils to engage in higher order thinking skills
- The raising of aspiration for all pupils
- The promotion of creativity across the whole curriculum
- To ensure equal opportunities for all pupils to reach their potential
- Greater enterprise, self-reliance and independence for all pupils
- Drawing on the interests of all pupils
- Exposing pupils to skilled academics, scientists and engineers to inspire and develop creative ideas
- Encouraging pupils to be problem solvers
- Helping pupils to develop the skills necessary to complete tasks and supporting them while they produce a solution

In order to achieve these aims, we will ensure that all students have opportunities to develop specific abilities, skills or talents.

Definitions

There are many definitions of 'gifted and talented'. DCSF guidance suggests:

- 'Gifted' learners are those who have abilities in one or more subjects in the statutory curriculum other than art and design, music and PE;
- 'Talented' learners are those who have abilities in art and design, music, PE or performing arts such as dance and drama.

Within the school we recognise that able, gifted and talented pupils can be:

- good all-rounders
- high achievers in one area
- of high ability but have poor communication/writing skills

Gifted behaviour happens in certain people, at certain times and under certain conditions.

Highly gifted behaviour depends upon a child having an above average level of ability, a commitment to task and creativity. (Joseph Renzulli – see appendix)

Task Commitment involves the child having

- The capacity for high levels of interest, enthusiasm, fascination and involvement in a particular problem, area of study or form of human expression.
- The capacity for perseverance, endurance, determination, hard work and dedicated practice.
- Self-confidence, a strong ego and a belief in one's ability to carry out important work, freedom from inferiority feelings and drive to achieve.
- The ability to identify significant problems within specialised areas; the ability to tune into major channels of communication and new developments in given fields.
- The ability to set high standards for one's work, maintaining an openness to self and external criticism, developing an aesthetic sense of taste, quality and excellence about one's own work and the work of others.

Identification

There are many ways in which teachers can identify children's special abilities and talents. We believe the following to be of particular importance:

- Teacher observation
- Other staff observation
- Peer or self-nomination
- Parental nomination
- Standardised assessment scores
- External examination results e.g. in a musical instrument, Dance
- Reading ages

This information is collated by the able, gifted and talented co-ordinator and the assessment co-ordinator and is made available to all staff. The able, gifted and talented register is regularly reviewed and updated. Able/exceptionally able children may not always show their abilities and talents in ways that we expect them to. We need to remember that these children may:

- withdraw into a world of their own
- exhibit poor social skills
- show poor motivation
- disguise their ability to avoid peer group jealousy
- have poor co-ordination skills
- not present their work legibly

Children displaying such behaviours are supported within the school through our social and emotional programmes.

Register of able, gifted and talented pupils

The able, gifted & talented Coordinator will collate a central register, highlighting not only student names, but also their strengths and special interests, as well as any parental comments. This register will be readily accessible to staff within school, but also to outside agencies where relevant.

Organisational approaches

Whole School:

- The provision of opportunities for able, gifted and talented pupils to work with pupils of similar ability. This will mean that it is appropriate for pupils to work with older pupils occasionally.
- Mentoring and additional provision for pupils of exceptional ability.
- The provision of enrichment/extension activities and tasks.
- Differentiation within subject areas.
- The development of independent learning by allowing pupils to organize their own work, to carry out tasks unaided, evaluate their work and become self-critical.
- Provision of opportunities for able, gifted and talented students to work with others of a similar ability outside Hartsbourne School.
- Schemes of Work will include tasks and challenges to stimulate able, gifted and talented students, taking multiple intelligences into consideration.
- Opportunities for gifted and talented students to follow their own interests and to extend their breadth and depth of subject-specific knowledge (rather than simply accelerating their knowledge to higher National Curriculum levels), both within class lessons and also through research and other tasks to be completed outside of lessons, either by individuals or a group of students with similar ability.

Within the classroom:

- High teacher expectation and praise for achievement.
- Lesson plans which provide planned, appropriate differentiation for able, gifted and talented students.
- Pace of lessons to match speed of individual learners.
- The use of questioning to engage higher level thinking skills.
- The use of a variety of teaching and learning styles, together with encouraging able, gifted and talented students to reflect on their own learning styles.

Provision

Our Able, Gifted and Talented programme has three strands:

Type 1 Activities

High quality teaching for ALL pupils

These are concerned with developing higher order thinking skills, independent study skills and cognitive, affective, research and enquiry skills. These activities are open-ended and are differentiated by task so that all levels of ability can be involved. Staff are encouraged to include enrichment activities which develop higher order thinking skills (analysis, synthesis and evaluation) in all their schemes of work. All children have access to these enrichment activities, thus ensuring that the able/exceptionally able child who may need much less time to master facts, skills and routine applications can move on to more creative enquiries and pursue independent study. Whole staff INSET sessions draw on the creativity and experience of high-quality practitioners such as Pie Corbett (English) and Fran Bradshaw (Mathematics).

Type 2 Activities

Expertise and enrichment for ALL pupils

Introduce the child to topics or areas of study that they might develop an interest in. Topics may be introduced by guest speakers, mini-courses, demonstrations, artistic performances, films, slides, audio tapes/records, videotapes, TV programmes, newspaper/magazine articles, displays, field trips, museums, learning centres, classroom enrichment areas etc. All levels of ability may benefit from these activities.

Type 3 Activities

Specialised programme of study for selected pupils

These are where the child becomes the actual investigator of a real problem or topic by using appropriate methods of inquiry. The success of this kind of activity depends on the task commitment of the child, the encouragement given by adults and the resources available. Some Type 3 activities may be short and succinct, others may be long ranging. Support for the child will be provided by staff at the school or carefully vetted mentors. A successful activity is one that solves a problem and leads to a finished product of high quality. Type 3 activities are most likely to be for children who are of above average ability, task committed and creative.

Out of class activities

The following are offered on a regular basis and, although these benefit all pupils, they are particularly apt for ensuring that pupils who have potential in these areas are given opportunities to practice and extend their skills.

- Enrichment days
- Residential experiences
- School clubs
- Mathematics workshops
- Musical and sporting activities

One-off activities

At various times throughout the year, an opportunity for a one-off enrichment activity may present itself. The able, gifted and talented coordinator should be aware of these opportunities and ensure that they are taken. A record of such activities should be kept by the coordinator.

At home

Parents will be informed of their son's/daughter's inclusion in any activities for able, gifted and talented students. Guidance and advice will be available for parents wishing to continue their child's learning at home.

Coordination, monitoring and evaluation

The able, gifted and talented coordinator responsibilities include:

- being an agent for change, an exemplar of good practice and to share good practice and ideas with staff
- ensuring that the policy is implemented
- promoting differentiation by task and the development of an exciting, challenging curriculum within the classroom.
- coordinating the monitoring of progress
- ensuring that the professional development programme includes relevant aspects of gifted and talented provision
- supporting and encouraging teachers in the use of different strategies to ensure a high quality of teaching output
- being familiar with current initiatives and research so as to keep staff informed
- using assessment data to measure progress of able, gifted and talented pupils
- questioning gifted and talented students about their learning and preferred learning styles
- providing opportunities for staff to meet to discuss provision for gifted and talented students
- identifying good practice and sharing with colleagues
- coordinating a "mentor and outside agencies" list
- supporting staff in drawing up and delivering individual education plans for gifted and highly able children.
- updating resources
- liaising with parents

Parents

As always, parents have an important role to play in helping their children to develop their talents and abilities. Parents are given details of the school's Challenge Programme when their child joins the school, they are asked to share their knowledge of the special interests that their children have outside the school, and to share any concerns that they may have with the teacher and/or the co-ordinator. They are also encouraged to help with the enrichment programmes and any special projects that their child may become engaged in, and, hopefully, some of them will have the skills and talents to become mentors for other children working on creative projects.

Resources

Our most important resource is the knowledge and skills of staff and parents who are able to inspire children and lead projects. The coordinator is responsible for seeking out specialists who can work with our children and establishing frameworks within which they can work e.g. visits, mentoring sessions etc. The coordinator keeps abreast of current developments, often using key websites and publications and share ideas from these with staff. A range of publications are also kept in the staffroom or available on request from the coordinator.

Challenge Areas or Challenge Boards will be displayed around the school with opportunities for children to interact with problems at their own level.

APPENDIX

Generic checklist

Able, gifted and talented students will not necessarily share the same talents, but are more likely than most students to:

- remember something previously learned and make use of the information in a new context;
- explain their understanding of concepts to others in their own words;
- have analytical ability, e.g. understanding how parts relate to the whole, understanding structure, motive and style in literature, able to identify strengths and weaknesses;
- have the ability to synthesise re-forming individual parts to make a new whole, e.g. in designing, composing, creating, constructing, interpreting, developing and improving;
- be able to evaluate, making judgements against criteria and giving valid rationales for their decisions;
- think quickly and accurately;
- work systematically;
- generate creative working solutions;
- have a flexible approach to work;
- communicate their thoughts and ideas well;
- be interested in finding patterns;
- be determined and diligent in seeing tasks which interest them through to the end;
- be particularly creative;
- show great sensitivity or empathy;
- demonstrate some particular physical dexterity or skill;
- make sound judgements;
- be outstanding leaders or team members;
- be fascinated and/or passionate about a particular subject or aspect of the curriculum;

Underachievers who are able, gifted and talented may not demonstrate many of the above, due to disability or disadvantage. However, they are likely to show some of the following characteristics:

- apparently bored and unmotivated;
- quick to learn new concepts;
- inventive and original, but impatient and reluctant to persevere;
- critical of the school and its values;
- abrasively humorous with an ironic perception of other people's weaknesses and motives;
- orally good, while written work may be poor or incomplete;
- not interested in seeking the teacher's approval;
- restless and easily distracted, also the cause of distraction to others;
- friendly with older students or adults, rejecting the peer group;
- able to pose and solve problems, especially if unrelated to school tasks;
- challenging in behaviour, suffering from low self-esteem;
- setting unrealistic goals – too high or too low;
- able to ask provocative, searching questions;

Renzulli's definition of able, gifted and talented

