

SAINT CHRISTINA’S SCHOOL: “MORE ABLE”, GIFTED AND TALENTED

Review Initiated by	Headteacher
Last Review	Summer 2020
Next Review	Summer 2022

This Policy, which applies to the whole school including the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), is publically available on the School website and on request a copy may be obtained from the School Office.

1. Introduction

1.1. We believe in providing the best possible provision for pupils of all abilities. We plan our teaching and learning so that each child can aspire to the highest level of personal achievement. Our School has a responsibility to ensure sustainable and effective provision for the needs of gifted and talented pupils. The aims of this policy are aspirational and evolutionary. ‘more able’ provision should meet the specific learning needs of these pupils. Such provision should improve achievement for all pupils by giving appropriate challenges. Provision for the ‘more able’ should be rooted in the notion of ‘developing expertise’, and is not just about passing more exams. Gifted and Talented Education includes able, gifted and talented pupils. The ‘more able’ policy is integral to the school’s inclusion agenda and reflects best practice in the school.

1.2. Definitions

- **‘more able’:** pupils who have the potential or capacity to develop expertise in one or more areas of learning or performance;
- **Gifted:** pupils who have a broad range of achievement at a level well above average, typically in the more academic subjects;
- **Talented:** pupils who excel in one or more specific fields, typically those that call for performance skills, such as sport or music, but who do not necessarily perform at a high level across all areas of learning.

1.3. The following criteria illustrates the possible dichotomy between bright/able children and truly gifted and talented individuals:

Bright child	Gifted and talented child
Interested in excess of the norm	Highly curious; wonders a lot and articulates a creative response
Often has good ideas	Inevitably has strong insights and often conspicuous signs of lateral thinking
Answers questions appropriately with strong degree of accuracy	Elaborates on sharp insightful observations; makes excellent connections with other information domain - good at bridging
Repetition is required for strong skill	One or two repetitions are required for mastery of deep understanding
Has strong propensity to understand	Constructs abstractions readily
Grasps meanings beyond that which expected	Draws inferences, readily concludes
Recreates with great accuracy	Creates original work
Solid technician or operator	Readily creates and invents
Absorbs information	Manipulates information
Has a good ability to memorise	Very good at memorising and making informed guesses
Makes sound observations when shown how	Highly self-critical and has a tendency to set exceedingly high standards
Enjoys and motivated by straightforward sequential challenges	Thrives on complex challenges

- 1.4. There will be a percentage of the children in our school considered as gifted and/or talented. Provision will be made for these children within normal class teaching, but sometimes we will provide enrichment or extension activities to promote their skills and talents still further. Children who fall into the category of very able learners require a specific orientation to ensure their needs are addressed.
- 1.5. For identification purposes gifted and talented children can be grouped as follows:
- Broadly gifted - excel in all they do and enjoy that success; easy to identify;
 - Talented - possess a particular, if not striking, ability in one area, e.g. Maths or Music; relatively easy to identify as they tend to be academically able and successful;
 - Rebellious gifted - possess some behavioural difficulties which manifest themselves as potentially disruptive and under-achieve; often such children are identified as purely disruptive or as a lower ability.
 - Creatively gifted - deep thinkers who may be unpopular with peers due to a perceived lack of social skills; may be incorrectly identified as disruptive.
 - Concealed gifted - under-achieving children who do not want to be different from their peers so they may merge into their peer group; often such children are incorrectly identified as underachievers or simply less able.
- 1.6. While we recognise and cater for these particular categories of children in our school, at the same time, we respect the right of all children, irrespective of differences in ability, to access various areas of learning, both for their self-fulfilment, and for their eventual development into active and responsible adults. We value the individuality of all our children and ensure that our teaching and learning takes into account the needs of all the children. We are committed to giving all our children every opportunity to achieve the highest of standards. This policy guides the way in which this happens for our very able and “more able” children. In our mission statement, we declare accordingly that we value the individuality of all our children.
- 1.7. Saint Christina’s is committed to raising the achievement of all pupils:
- We believe that raising achievement for the ‘more able’ pupils is a basic issue of equal opportunities
 - We believe that raising the achievement of the ‘more able’ will raise the achievement of all pupils
 - Our school ethos values and celebrates all forms of achievement
 - Providing for and raising the attainment of Able, Gifted and Talented pupils is the responsibility of all staff

2. Aims

- 2.1. All children have a right to a challenging and appropriate education. If pupils have ability or abilities beyond the large majority of their peer group, they need a curriculum that goes beyond the standard curriculum. Able, Gifted and Talented Pupils within Saint Christina’s School shall:
- Be identified
 - Have their potential realised through work that is matched to their needs and ensure that they achieve their potential
 - Have opportunities to develop their skills and talents
 - Ensure that we challenge and extend the children through the work that we set them
 - Have their emotional/ social needs considered alongside their intellectual needs
 - Have their progress monitored
 - Be supported by appropriately trained staff
 - Have their parents involved in the educational process (as appropriate)

3. Identification of gifted and talented children

- 3.1. **Who are the able, gifted and talented?** DFE and Ofsted define gifted pupils as those with academic ability which 'places them significantly above average for their year group'. Talented pupils are defined as those with practical abilities 'significantly above average' in art, music, dance or sport.

This group of pupils is made up of the following:

- Able/Gifted - Academically most able, (in at least one statutory curriculum subject) performing significantly above the level of their peers.
- Able/Talented - showing ability or expertise in art, music, P.E., or any sport or creative art medium.
- LEA guidelines (top 10% of pupils)

In addition, we recognise that there might be a group of underachieving pupils, with the potential to achieve in these areas, who could also be included within this group. Our aim is to develop and provide appropriate levels of challenge for all pupils.

- 3.2. The school acknowledges that exceptional ability may be subject specific or more general or in a particular skill area. Areas of ability can be usefully grouped thus:

- Linguistic – reading, writing, speaking, listening, factual recall;
- Mathematical – number manipulation, logical and sequential processes;
- Naturalist – hierarchical ordering, awareness of natural world;
- Visual & spatial – observation, artistic representation;
- Musical – musical appreciation, singing, instrumental;
- Physical – fine & gross motor skills, sports, creativity;
- Social – relationships, leadership;
- Personal – self-awareness, emotional intelligence.

- 3.3. **Identification:** We use a range of strategies to identify gifted and talented children. The identification process is ongoing, and begins when the child joins our school. Each child's pre-school record gives details of achievements and interests in particular areas. Discussions with parents and carers enable us to add further details to these records. Children undergo baseline assessment within the first term of joining our Nursery / Reception class. This gives information about their developing skills and aptitudes across several areas of learning. We discuss each child's Foundation Stage profile with the parent or carer, and use this information when planning for individual needs. As the children progress through the school (and new children join), we test them regularly to ensure that they are making the sort of progress that we are expecting of them in their personal targets. We identify them as very able and 'more able' children when they achieve high levels of attainment across the curriculum (very able), or in particular skills or aspects of subjects ('more able').

- 3.4. Multiple criteria and sources of evidence are used to identify able, gifted and talented pupils within the school.

- 3.5. We also recognise that those pupils who are gifted and talented do not always show their ability. Such pupils are gifted and talented even though their abilities may be hidden or remain as potential.

- 3.6. Given that there is no perfect single instrument to identify 'more able', Gifted and Talented pupils, these pupils will be identified by making a judgement based on an analysis of various sources of information including:

- Observations of children
- Analysis of ongoing work and of formal and informal assessments
- Teacher / phase leader identification through ongoing observations / progress meetings
- Identification by club leaders (e.g. after school dance, football clubs, etc)
- Identification by outside agencies (e.g. Educational Psychologist)

4. **Monitoring Progress:**

- All class teachers are expected to monitor the progress of all pupils they teach including the 'more able', Gifted and Talented

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- Using prior attainment data (KS1 tests) to predict potential grades at KS2 and monitoring pupil progress against children of the same age
- Outcomes of pupil work
- Regular review of 'more able', Gifted and Talented Enrichment Progress Tracker Register
- Monitoring of pupil achievement in conjunction with phase leaders/class teachers

5. Raising Teacher and Pupil Expectations through:

- Maintaining a culture where achievement is recognised and valued
- Raising pupil expectations and ensuring that a culture of high achievement is celebrated
- Appropriate INSET
- The sharing of good practice
- Work reviews which focus on the 'more able'
- Discussions with able pupils about how they best learn
- Setting appropriate targets

6. Curriculum Planning and Delivery:

- 6.1. We provide a broad, balanced curriculum and encourage intellectual curiosity with many opportunities for our 'most able' children to excel in what they do both within and beyond the classroom. Teacher skills and high degree of subject knowledge enable work to be planned in breadth, depth and pace. Themed weeks, clubs, programmes in and out of school time, visits made, visitors to school, such as Theatre Companies, Authors, parents, all contribute to a curriculum that encourages engagement and intellectual stimulation and stretch.
- 6.2. Children are provided with 'in depth' learning which includes high order questioning, differentiated activities, which challenge children's thinking and develop independent working, both individually and in groups. There is an emphasis in providing opportunities for the 'most able' children to be challenged in their thinking through:
- discussion and debate
 - prediction
 - deduction and inference
 - justification
 - reflection
 - processing and analysis
 - reasoning and arguing
 - language richness and economy
- 6.3. Reading beyond the text is developed during guided reading sessions through higher order questioning. Children are also encouraged to raise questions and to 'find out'.
- 6.4. Through the range of grouping strategies (see Teaching and Learning Policy), the 'most able' children not only benefit from working in same ability groups but are able to recognise the benefit this has for them by working with children of mixed ability. Working as part of a team and acting as role models enable the 'most able' to articulate and refine their thinking and understanding.
- 6.5. In Sports the most talented children are able to demonstrate and coach their peers.
- 6.6. Independent activities also include the use of IT and computer programs, as well as the use of the Internet with websites such as NRICH for maths and problem solving activities. Further independence and responsibility are encouraged through a variety of opportunities, such as having responsibility in class, being class monitors.
- 6.7. Homework is another way in which our 'most able' children are challenged and extended with opportunities to do some research and consider ways of presenting their work.
- 6.8. Children work in range of groupings, including small ability groups (typically for Phonics, Literacy, and Maths) as well as in mixed ability larger groups and in pairs. Planning is differentiated and there is progression and continuity in lessons planned and knowledge and skills to be taught. Learning objectives

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are shared both in the short term and in the long term allowing children to see the 'Bigger Picture' emerge. They are challenged further, particularly in the Literacy and Numeracy Strategies by following Programmes of Studies at the next level.

7. Checklist of Criteria for identifying possible children with high potential:

- Ask lots of questions. Want to know why something is so. Not satisfied with simple answers to questions
- Has lots of information on many things. May show more interest in 'big ideas' than in basic skills knowledge
- Remember things that have only been heard or seen once. Seems to understand easily
- Become easily upset at injustices. Interested in adult concerns
- Often has a better reason than you do for not doing what you want done
- Has high expectations of self and others
- Seems restless if given unchallenging tasks
- Likes solving puzzles and problems
- Reads books that are normally read by older children
- Enjoys meeting or talking with older children or adults

8. Creative Ability may be displayed many of the following characteristics:

- Tries to do things in different, unusual, imaginative ways
- Has an unusual or quirky sense of humour (e.g. using puns, making unusual connexions)
- Likes variety and novelty
- Has a vivid imagination
- Responds emotionally to stories and events
- Enjoys personal risk taking
- Invents new ways of doing things e.g. new rules for games

9. The Need for Early Identification

9.1. Like many other children, gifted and talented children can often fail to achieve their potential and may be unable to cope with their abilities and can suffer from many difficulties. Early identification, assessment and provision is important for gifted/talented children for the following reasons. It can minimise difficulties that can be encountered when interventions and provision occur. These difficulties are typically:

- low confidence and self-esteem;
- high degree of frustration and self-blame;
- poor study skills;
- social isolation and a belief that they are misunderstood and different to their peers;
- problems with concentration;
- living in own 'private' world.

9.2. It can maximise the likely positive response of the child, for e.g. gifted and talented children who are underachieving may be given a much needed boost by realising their potential by achieving a high IQ rating. It can allow for a temporary learning difficulty to be overcome and for future learning to be unaffected. The process starts by referral to the Special Educational Needs Coordinator. Able children, like all children having special education needs, have their own unique cluster of characteristics. The psychological imprints that learning abilities may have caused will effect individuals in different ways. Often dyspraxic able children feel greater levels of social threat for example than dyslexic children. ADHD able children typically will be less emotionally resilient than others. It is difficult to make generalised statements about features of the failing able child but there is recognition of certain characteristics which are considered in regard to the management of special needs.

- **Coping Strategies.** Able children with special needs do not necessarily have heightened emotional resources. Often the opposite is the case. These children may have suffered from inaccurate assumptions based on coping expectations which fall short of requirement. Sometimes such children are skilled at masking difficulties.

- **Parental Expectation.** High scores on such tests as the CATS and NFER tests may suggest that the child has strong potential across all or most intellectual activities and/or spatial reasoning. No-one would assume for example a gifted musician need be similarly gifted in say English, chess or Drama. Often able children are slated to achieve to a high level in all areas despite evidence that seldom is ability expressed uniformly across the board. Realistic expectations need to reflect the best interests of the child. Parents and carers may need to be reassured that such areas as setting (English and Maths), the nature of support, general educational management and expectations are considered responses given the nature and effect of learning abilities.
- **Developed Verbal Reasoning.** Good language resources can increase the ability to grasp complex concepts. Such skills can also arm a child to further develop avoidance and manipulative strategies. To avoid exposure and any resulting ill effect, able children may use language forcefully to protect self-esteem and market self-worth as opposed to a strongly developed adjunct to learning. In some cases a lack of tolerance is proportional to the command of verbal reasoning.
- **Social Difficulties.** Able children, like all children generally, require recognition for their successes. If they experience an overdose of failure heightened by untoward discrepancy in performance given expectation, social problems may be a further by-product of such experiences. The quest to prove worth by marketing intelligence can intrude on social reasoning.
- **Agenda Search.** Able children who rely on determining factors that give reasoning an edge, may assume answers are too accessible to justify the challenge. They may search for hidden possibilities and thus steer an inaccurate course. The resulting wrong answer may cause acute embarrassment.
- **More Stretching/Challenge.** Sometimes able children with special abilities and learning styles have a higher threshold of boredom. Even though processing skills may be developed, filing and accessing may be poor. Despite the need to stretch and challenge to keep them on tract, stimulated and motivated, due consideration is required regarding aspects of inefficient functioning.
- **Concept Command.** Given the possibly superior bridging abilities, concepts may be grasped readily. This need not imply that they can be expressed adequately. To gain recognition able special needs children may have developed an appetite to forcefully express knowledge publicly and thus advertise their success. When denied success in certain areas of functioning there may be a need to set the record straight in terms of rectifying any untoward publicity when contrasted with others.
- **Frustration.** Able children may be better able to identify their own possible dysfunction. This may lead them to feel very sad or worried about their lives. It can lead to depression and acute frustration.

9.3. The school policy on such children is:

- To help them to understand the reasons behind how their minds works, any under achievement and that this is a temporary inconvenience and not a lifelong handicap. They require help in managing the dichotomy in learning variation;
- To rectify untoward responses to learning style as quickly as possible;
- To help them develop key life skills. Able special needs children may require a considered intervention. They may have a better developed contribution to make toward their own assessment. Also, they may have a stronger potential to develop self-advocacy skills;
- To assist them in utilising strengths. Able special needs children may require specific help in learning how to learn. Given the real strengths, these could be employed to help overcome any weaknesses;
- To reassure and encourage. Such children may need to become more accepting towards themselves, especially if they have become reliant on seeking the advantage from expressing ability. Like all children, they need to know that the teacher cares and is with them and for them and skilled in techniques to put things right which may need due attention.

10. Teaching and learning

10.1. At Saint Christina's School we will:

- Ensure lesson plans include effective and explicit strategies for differentiation which provides appropriate challenge for the most able. Learning objectives and learning outcomes should also be differentiated to meet the needs of the most able students.

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- Ensure stretch and challenge is included in planning and that planning recognises that ‘more able’ pupils need qualitatively different learning experiences, and not just more of the same.
- Utilise a variety of learning strategies and approaches which acknowledge that individuals learn in different ways.
- Provide opportunities for pupils to use and develop higher level thinking skills through extended writing in all curriculum areas, problem solving and extended research.
- Create a challenge area in and around our classroom to provide extra opportunities to those needing extension.

10.2. Teachers use a wide variety of teaching strategies to facilitate challenge, including:

- Assessment for Learning to aid individual planning and target setting
- Provision for extending the breadth and depth of understanding
- The use of open-ended tasks, where original responses are valued
- Differentiated resources and tasks
- Higher order questioning techniques
- Grouping by ability within the mixed ability classroom for specific tasks
- Detailed planning
- Opportunities for reflective analysis through self and peer assessment (DIRT – Directed Independent Reflection Time)
- Differentiated homework tasks.

10.3. **Role of the Co-ordinator**

- Support teachers in the identification of extremely able children and help to provide for them in the classroom
- Liaise with senior leadership to ensure evidence on framework is accurate
- Organise an Extremely Able Tracking Register
- Ensure that assessment is implemented and provision in place and monitored
- Support the class teacher with developing suitable challenge tasks for those pupils identified as extremely able
- Where useful, set up a central bank of resources and extensions activities
- Be aware of trips, competitions, etc., that will give ‘more able’ children an opportunity to extend themselves in other arenas
- Along with SLT monitor extra-curricular clubs and programmes for school
- Keep up to date with new initiatives in ‘more able’ education
- Identify the need for staff training and organise inset to develop provision in class
- Ensure teaching assistants are trained and are confident in providing the appropriate support
- To monitor planning and teaching to ensure appropriate challenges are set

10.4. **Teaching Assistants / Specialist teachers / Learning Support:** will support the whole school approach to education of the extremely able. Grouping of children of like ability is encouraged for extension and enrichment activities. The School will in addition utilise its resources in a flexible way, including, as appropriate, through the use of Learning Support resources in order to meet the needs of individual children.

10.5. **Role of the Class Teacher**

- To identify, assess and with the appropriate support, provide for the educational needs of children in their care
- To set appropriate targets for the extremely able in their class
- To ensure that teaching objectives for extremely able children are differentiated as appropriate
- To regularly assess the pupils’ work and record progress
- To examine classroom organisation and review provision of extension and enrichment materials in relevant curriculum areas

- To ensure there is a designated challenge area for their class
- To try to ensure each area of the curriculum encourages pupils to develop skills, confidence and enjoyment in information processing, creative thinking, problem solving and communication
- To include and show clearly evidence of challenge in planning and work completed in class – challenges to be shown in red on planning and marking colour in books
- Teachers must fill out the “more able” plan for each child they identify. This will clearly show the plan of provision and allow for others to see clear targets and areas of development
- Send the plans of provision to the ‘more able’ co-ordinator when completed – usually but not restrictive to every half term

10.6. **Monitoring and review:** The provision of able and gifted education at Saint Christina’s School is rooted in the day to day classroom experience and enhanced by additional opportunities offered both within the school and outside of it (for a full list of activities held for our Able, Gifted and Talented pupils please see the table below). The needs of able and gifted students are met in a variety of ways, which can be summarised under 3 principal headings:

- **Differentiation:** This relates to the core provision of teaching and learning opportunities in the school. We are committed to developing teaching and learning strategies that support all students and challenge the most able. Lessons include regular opportunities for extension in depth, in level of challenge and level of complexity with
- **Enrichment:** This involves the provision of extension opportunities for students, both within the school and from external providers. At Saint Christina’s School, additional activities are provided beyond the classroom experience and students are encouraged to engage in these as often as possible.
- **Partnership:** It is widely recognised that parents and carers should be seen and should see themselves as co-educators of their children, with a key in supporting learning. Parents play a vital role in supporting and enhancing the school’s provision for able and gifted students. This role can vary from involvement in home learning, where parents can take the opportunity to work with their children on set tasks in order to broaden and deepen their understanding and knowledge, to encouraging and supporting them in taking up additional opportunities and to helping them maintain a healthy work/life balance.

10.7. The provision for the pupils and the outcomes achieved will be monitored by all teachers within their own subject responsibilities along with Phase leaders, Curriculum Co-ordinators, the Senior Leadership Team, SENCO / SENCO Support, Deputy Head. The Head Teacher will monitor the progress of the identified Able, Gifted and Talented pupils using various strategies including data and interviews with pupils, staff and parents.

10.8. **The Able, Gifted and Talented Register:**

At Saint Christina’s we have the Enrichment Progress tracker Register which includes the ‘more able’, Gifted and Talented pupils. It is maintained by the ‘more able’ Coordinator and it is her responsibility to review/update the register on an annual basis, to acknowledge emerging ability and talent, in consultation with class teachers and phase leaders. A note will be made on individual children’s records on the school management system.