

## **CHALLENGE AND PERSONALISED LEARNING POLICY**

St. Thomas More's Catholic Primary School

### **RATIONALE**

At St Thomas More's Primary School, we value the abilities and achievements of all the children. We are committed to ensuring the accessibility, flexibility and enrichment of the curriculum through differentiation of objectives, activities and outcomes. We also use a variety of learning and teaching styles.

In the past, children with high potential may have been referred to as gifted or more able. At St Thomas More's we do not believe intelligence is fixed but instead see that every child has strengths and weaknesses, gifts and talents. We avoid the use of phrases like 'less able' and 'more able' because we want to avoid fixed labelling and limiting of potential.

We also believe that every child is 'Gifted', blessed with unique gifts to be used in the service of God.

Therefore, we prefer not to refer to children as Gifted, or More Able, but instead identify 'Children with the Potential for High Levels of Attainment' and 'Talented Pupils' and encourage them to go DEEPER with their learning once they have mastered age expectations.

The Revised National Curriculum 2014, expects all children to achieve Year Group expectations and expressly discourages progression of children to skills or expectations from year groups above their own. Instead children are encouraged to continue to develop and refine, use and apply, explore and reflect, deduce and infer, reason and explain, thereby going deeper in their understanding and developing higher order skills within the confines of expected knowledge and understanding.

To be regarded as children with potential for high levels of attainment or talented, we consider, is to be outstanding in general or specific abilities in a relatively broad or narrow field. Children with potential for high levels of attainment are those pupils who are capable of excelling academically in one or more subjects, and talented are those who may excel in practical subjects such as sport, leadership, artistic performance or in an area of vocational skill. Children with potential for high levels of attainment and talented children may also be referred to as 'high attainers'. Six areas may be considered:

- physical talent
- mechanical ingenuity
- visual and performing abilities
- outstanding leadership and social awareness
- creativity
- high intelligence

Likewise children whose level of achievement is lower than is expected must be appropriately supported to access what is expected. Children with SEN must not be underestimated and should also be given the opportunity to be challenged.

## **Aims**

We believe that raising achievement is about providing equality of opportunities. Providing for, and raising the attainment is the responsibility of ALL staff. Our aim is to develop and provide appropriate levels of challenge for all pupils.

We will:

- Set suitable learning challenges;
- Respond to children's diverse learning needs;
- Overcome potential barriers to learning for individuals and groups of children;
- Value all children equally and encourage them to achieve;
- Celebrate all forms of achievement;
- Value parental contributions in promoting their child's development and learning.

## **The Children with Potential for High Levels of Attainment & Talented Register**

A register of Children with Potential for High Levels of Attainment and Talented Pupils is kept by the Challenge Champion and reviewed/updated on a termly basis, to acknowledge emerging ability and talent, in consultation with class teachers.

## **Identification**

Pupils are identified through:

- Analysis of information gathered during the nursery setting/home visits in preparation for beginning at St Thomas More's Primary School;
- Observations of children, their interests and their passions;
- Outcomes of parent/carer consultation meetings;
- Analysis of ongoing work, formal and informal assessments;
- Teacher identification through ongoing observations/progress meetings;
- Identification by outside agencies (e.g. after-school dance, gymnastics, football clubs, etc).

A checklist to support the identification of possible children with high potential;

They:

- Ask lots of questions or want to know why something is so. Often they are not satisfied with simple answers to questions;
- Have lots of information on many things. They may show more interest in 'big ideas' than in basic skills knowledge;
- Remember things that have only been heard or seen once. They seem to understand easily;
- Become easily upset at injustices and are interested in adult concerns;
- Have high expectations of self and others;
- Seem restless, if given unchallenging tasks;
- Like solving puzzles and problems;
- Read books that are normally read by older children;
- Enjoy meeting or talking with older children or adults.

Creative ability may be displayed with many of the following characteristics;

A child will:

- Try to do things in different, unusual, imaginative ways;
- Have an unusual or quirky sense of humour (e.g using puns, making unusual connections);
- Like variety and novelty;
- Have a vivid imagination;
- Respond emotionally to stories and events;
- Enjoy personal risk taking and seem adventurous;
- Invent new ways of doing things e.g. new rules for games.

### **Monitoring Progress**

All class teachers monitor the progress of all pupils they teach, including the children with potential for high levels of attainment and talented pupils. This includes:

- Whole school progress checks for all pupils which are carried out termly to monitor progress across the core curriculum areas;
- Using prior attainment data (KS1 SATS) to predict potential attainment at KS2 and monitoring pupil progress against this;
- Monitoring and assessing the outcomes of pupil work;
- A termly review of the Children with Potential for High Levels of Attainment and Talented Register;
- Pupil perceptions and responses in the form of questionnaires and discussions;
- Monitoring pupil achievement of children on the Children with Potential for High Levels of Attainment and Talented Register. This will be co-ordinated by the Challenge Champion in conjunction with class teachers.

We provide for our children with potential for high levels of attainment and talented pupils by using a variety of the following:

- Grouping/setting of pupils;
- Differentiation;
- Locality enrichment courses;
- Extension activities planned;
- A range of clubs available
- Musical and sporting opportunities;
- Enrichment opportunities with other schools.

Teacher and pupil expectations are raised 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;
- Sharing best practice;
- Annotated exemplar work;
- Work reviews and Governor Visit days which focus on the more able;
- Discussions with able pupils about how they best learn;
- Setting appropriate targets;

### **Curriculum Planning and Delivery**

We provide a rich, broad, balanced and creative curriculum with many opportunities for our 'most able' children to excel academically, artistically and in sporting activities. Teachers' skills and high degree of subject knowledge enables work to be planned in breadth, depth and pace. Our Themed days, clubs, visits made and indeed visitors to school (such as theatre companies, artists, musicians and parents) all contribute to our enriched curriculum.

Children are provided with 'in depth' learning which includes high order questioning and differentiated activities to challenge children's thinking and develop independent working, both individually and in groups. Children are also encouraged to raise questions and to 'find out'. 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.

Independent activities include the use of IT and computer programs, as well as the use of the Internet with websites such as NRICH and NCETM for maths and problem solving activities. Further independence and responsibility are encouraged through a variety of opportunities, such as having responsibility in class, stepping forward as School Councillors or Eco-Warriors members.

Homework is another way in which our children are challenged and extended with opportunities to do some research and consider ways of presenting their work.

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 are shared both in the short term and in the long term allowing children to see the 'bigger picture' emerge.

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;
- Opportunities for reflective analysis through self- and peer-assessment;
- Differentiated homework tasks.

Furthermore, at St Thomas More's Primary School we will:

- Ensure schemes of work and 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 all pupils;
- Ensure planning recognises that children with potential for high levels of attainment and talented 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.

### **Monitoring and Evaluation**

This policy will be revisited by all staff and Governors as part of the 3 year review cycle.