



MOST ABLE POLICY

AIMS

At Thomas's our mission statement asserts that we will offer:

- opportunity through our broad curriculum
- expertise through our specialist teaching staff
- confidence through fulfilment
- contentment through achievement at all levels
- kindness through the practical application of moral behaviour
- openness through active partnership with parents

We believe that every child in the school has the right to receive our assistance in achieving his or her full potential. This clearly includes pupils who are most able. We believe that supporting the most able pupils is the responsibility of all staff with support from the Senior Leadership Team. Our philosophy with regards to most able pupils is shared across our schools and also with partner institutions where appropriate.

DEFINITION OF ABILITY

We believe that Most Able children are those who demonstrate a significantly higher level of ability than most pupils of the same age in one or more curriculum areas or in other areas such as leadership or creativity.

IDENTIFICATION

Our aim is actively to identify our particularly able children. We recognise that these pupils may be:

- good all-rounders
- high achievers in only one area
- of high ability but with low motivation
- of good verbal ability but poor writing skills
- very able with short attention span
- very able with poor social skills
- keen to disguise their abilities

(Deborah Eyre, 1993)

The attitude of the staff is a crucial element in identification, as information has to be gleaned from many different sources and some indicators will be evident only to open-minded,

sympathetic and perceptive teachers. We will use all available information to identify children who may be underachieving. Information will be drawn from:

- Test results, including evidence of underachievement
- Detailed records from previous classes
- Discussion with the child
- Good communication between teachers, including the completion of our subject checklists for particular abilities where the teacher feels that it is appropriate
- Formal classroom observations
- Parental information
- Continuous assessment by the teacher of tasks which are open-ended enough to allow the child to show what he or she can do
- Teacher familiarity with the characteristics of able children
- Detailed individual assessment by an educational psychologist if the co-ordinator for able, gifted and talented pupils feels it is appropriate
- Outside agencies

PROVISION

WHOLE SCHOOL APPROACH:

The School aims to create a climate in which success is valued by everyone and where individual differences are accepted. This will involve:

- A Most Able register for all year groups
- The identification of the particular needs of able children in all our planning
- The provision of appropriate resources
- The encouragement of children to be independent in their learning and taking ownership of their own learning. This will include the provision of opportunities for them to organise their own work, access the resources they need, work unaided, make their own choices about work, evaluate what they are doing and be self-critical
- Flexibility of organisation which might include withdrawal, setting for a particular subject, cross-curricular enrichment projects or partial acceleration, thereby providing opportunities for the able child to work with others of similar ability. (We do not move Most Able pupils out of their age-appropriate forms, although they may attend some classes with older pupils)
- Celebration of achievement
- Regular reviews with class teachers to identify reasons for underachievement of able, gifted and talented pupils and implement strategies to address their needs.

Where a child is identified as being 'exceptionally able' the school will provide them with suitable enrichment. The child will have an IEP and be assigned a staff mentor within the appropriate area. The mentor will assist the Most Able Leader and Head of Department/Subject Leader in setting and reviewing IEP targets and help facilitate the child's learning and enjoyment of the specific area of talent. They will liaise with the parents and classroom teachers to assist with teaching strategies and ways that they can help enrich their child's learning through opportunities outside of the classroom with external agencies.

IN THE CLASSROOM:

It is important to establish what prior knowledge, understanding and skills the pupils have so that we are not wasting time or demotivating the pupil by unnecessary repetition or duplication.

The power of peer group pressure to under-achieve will not be under-estimated. It will be confronted with sensitivity to both parties.

We are aware that the “bright but lazy” pupil requires particular challenge and motivation.

We are aware of the danger of assuming that highly able pupils are easier to teach than other pupils.

In class our aim is to:

- Provide appropriate challenge through high quality tasks for enrichment and extension which will always be available (providing for different starting points and not “more of the same”) growing out of the subject/topic being studied by the whole class
- Extend pupils’ thinking skills through effective questioning, open-ended challenges and higher order thinking skills activities
- Plan work so that extension tasks are always available for able children, allowing for flexibility to adapt to changing needs/directions
- Differentiate appropriately through stimuli, resources, tasks, outcomes and responses
- Provide wide variety in what we prepare for the pupils and in what we ask them to do for us
- Set individual targets, not class targets
- Set individual homework
- Encourage pupils to become independent learners by:
 - organising their own work
 - carrying out unaided tasks which stretch their capabilities
 - making choices about their work
 - developing the ability to evaluate their work and so become self-critical
 - taking ownership of their learning

OUTSIDE THE CLASSROOM:

We aim to provide:

- A wide range of extra-curricular activities including after-school clubs, invitational sports clubs, instrumental lessons, choirs, orchestra, extra drama, ballet
- Preparation for scholarships and exhibitions at senior schools in Years 6 to 8 for academic, artistic, sporting and dramatic arts talents
- Internal awards in music and art
- Local and residential trips
- Opportunities for entering competitions
- Guiding and supporting pupils in accessing opportunities for developing their specialism out of school
- The use of outside agencies and experts

MONITORING

We shall appoint a Leader for Most Able pupils who will be responsible for monitoring how this policy is carried out and will carry out the additional duties identified in the job description.

See also: Assessment Policy, Curriculum Policy, Equal Opportunities Policy,
Staff Handbook: CPD Policy

This policy will be reviewed annually		
Latest Review: April 2016	By:	Joanna Copland, Vice Principal
Next Review: April 2017	By:	Joanna Copland, Vice Principal and Most Able Leaders