



# More Able and Talented Policy

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## 1. Mission Statement

To raise aspirations for all pupils by actively promoting opportunities to exceed expectations.

## 2. Rationale

At St. Michael's Church of England High School we aim to:

- help pupils to develop their skills and abilities, intellectually, emotionally and socially;
- provide teaching which makes learning challenging and engaging, and enables pupils to reach their potential;
- and
- we are committed to working for quality and equality of opportunity.
- This policy is an integral part of the school's broader development of educational opportunity for all pupils and states our commitment to providing an environment in which all pupils are able to realise their potential.

## 3. Aims

This policy is intended to support the following aims for **all** pupils:

- The raising of aspirations
- High expectations of achievement
- Greater enterprise, self-reliance and independence

In order to achieve these aims, we will ensure that all pupils have opportunities to develop individual skills or talents.

This policy relates to pupils who are deemed 'More Able', 'Most Able' or 'Talented'.

## 4. Definitions

There are many definitions of 'gifted and talented'. Our definitions are:

- **'More Able'** learners are those who joined on a KS2 average of 4.7 or above, or 104 or above in line with the requirements of Progress 8;
- **'Most Able'** learners are those who have clear academic abilities in one or more subjects in the statutory curriculum other than art and design, music and PE;
- **'Talented'** learners are those who have clear visuospatial or practical abilities in art and design, music, PE or performing arts such as dance and drama.

Quantities of pupils deemed '*most able*' or '*talented*' are relative to the overall ability profile of pupils at the school, with a guideline figure of circa 10% of the full cohort. Quantities of '*more able*' pupils will change annually based on KS2 data, thus will not be subject to measurement.

In terms of the strategic programme in relation to these pupils, the following definitions will be used:

- **'Gifted and Talented'** will remain in circulation, but only used to refer to the **'Gifted and Talented Co-ordinator'** (for national parity).
- **'Most Able and Talented'** or **'MA+T'** should be used in reference to this policy, the overarching CPD programme and as a noun (singular and collective) for identified pupils.

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

- good all-rounders
- high achievers in one curriculum area
- of high ability but having poor writing skills

We also recognise that those pupils who are most able or talented do not always show their ability; such pupils are MA+T even though their abilities may be hidden or remain potential.

## 5. Identification

Most able and talented students are identified by making a judgement based on an analysis of various sources of information, including:

- End of key stage levels
- Teacher nomination, based professional judgement and to subject-specific criteria
- Predicted test/examination results
- Data trends
- Reading and spelling ages
- Peer or self-nomination
- Parental nomination.

This information is collated by the Gifted and Talented Co-ordinator; the co-ordinator should ensure that the nomination criteria and the '*most able and talented register*' are annually reviewed and updated, then distributed to all staff.

## 6. Organisational and in-class approaches

Important strategies include:

- The coherent management of pupil groupings and recognition that, whilst there may be a higher concentration of MA+T pupils in some groups, there will be pupils who have gifts and talents in all groups.
- Opportunities to work with pupils of similar ability (meaning it can sometimes be appropriate for younger pupils to work with older peers).
- Mentoring and additional provision for pupils of exceptional ability.
- The provision of enrichment/extension activities and tasks.
- Differentiation within subject areas, within groups, and even within specific tasks..
- Peer- and self-assessment, as well as red-pen plenaries.
- The development of independent learning by allowing pupils to organise their own work, to carry out tasks unaided, evaluate their work and become self-critical.

All teaching staff have a responsibility to ensure learners are supported and have their curriculum appropriately enriched, regardless of their educational need. It is crucial that we support learners deemed more or most able with the same vigour we work with pupils with other complex learning needs. Departments have a responsibility to regularly review their practice, self-evaluating against appropriate criteria, and improving provision for identified pupils.

## 7. Out of class activities

The following, but not limited to these, are offered as enrichment; although these may 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. Departments will develop and lead on subject-specific activities; the Gifted and Talented Co-ordinator will support departments in this , as well as developing and leading on supra- and cross-curricular activities.

- Enrichment days and activities
- Residential experiences
- Interactions with Universities and local colleges
- School clubs
- Musical and sporting activities

## 8. Co-ordination and monitoring

This policy addresses support given to all learners identified as more able, most able or talented.

- Pupils identified as MA+T will be actively supported through the *Aspire* programme, which will **not** be branded as GaT or MA+T. This will allow the programme to be inclusive and for staff to clearly provide targets and support which promote aspiration by ALL learners, not just those identified as most able.
- Pupils identified as 'more able' will be supported through this programme where possible and relevant, regardless of their 'MA+T' status and normally through referral or data assessment.

The Gifted and Talented Co-ordinator has overall responsibility for:

1. Ensuring that this policy is implemented;
2. Co-ordinating progress monitoring for pupils targeted by this policy;
3. Managing the MA+T working group, including tracking outcomes;
4. Ensuring that departments are held to account for progress with pupils identified by this policy and assisting in the self-evaluation and improvement of practice;
5. Ensuring that the professional development programme includes relevant aspects of most able and talented provision.

## 9. Review Schedule

This policy should be reviewed on an annual basis, in the summer term.

Signed by:

	Headteacher	Date: _____
	Chair of governors	Date: _____

## MA+T Annual Schedule: Quick Reference

Autumn 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Y8-Y11 MA+T pupils sent letters welcoming to Aspire community</li> <li>● Y8-Y11 MA+T pupil data added to/removed from SIMS</li> <li>● Y8-Y11 MA+T identification list sent to all staff.</li> <li>● Departmental audit of practice - annual baselining (replaces whole-school CPD)</li> <li>● MA+T Working Group - Progress Review</li> </ul>
Autumn 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Identification of Y7 MA+T pupils.</li> <li>● MA+T Working Group</li> <li>● MA+T T&amp;L Development</li> </ul>
Spring 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Y7 MA+T pupil data added to SIMS</li> <li>● Y7 MA+T pupils sent letters welcoming to Aspire community</li> <li>● Y7 MA+T identification list sent to all staff</li> <li>● MA+T whole-school CPD</li> </ul>
Spring 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Departmental audit of practice - annual review (replaces whole-school CPD)</li> <li>● MA+T Working Group</li> </ul>
Summer 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● MA+T nomination criteria annual review</li> <li>● MA+T policy/procedure annual review</li> <li>● MA+T T&amp;L Development (with MA+T Working Group reps supporting in departments)</li> </ul>
Summer 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Review of next year's Y8-11 MA+T nominations</li> <li>● Identification of any new MA+T pupils</li> <li>● Y11 leavers removed from list</li> <li>● MA+T Working Group leads MA+T whole-school CPD</li> </ul>

## Working with MA+T Pupils: A Guide for Staff

### Definitions

- Those who excel in academic disciplines are termed 'most able'.
- Those who excel in areas requiring visuospatial skills or practical abilities are 'talented': Art, Dance, Drama, Music, Sport.
- Those who entered secondary on a KS2 score of 4.7+ in English, Maths or by average are considered 'more able'.

### Word Association

Capable	Inquisitive	Able	Challenging
Excited Learner	Innovator	Motivated	Creative
Leader	Risk Taker	Independent	Potential
Fast Learner	Bright	Accelerated Learner	Insightful
Achieve	Outstanding	Advanced	Spontaneous

*There is a significant difference between a bright child and a gifted learner.*

### Recognising Most Able and Talented Pupils

Place the words above into three piles:

- Most Able or Talented
- More Able
- Bright and Keen

### Some Characteristics of Most Able and Talented Pupils

- They learn more quickly
- They ask searching questions
- They challenge accepted theories
- They are autonomous learners
- Divergent thinkers – they look for the unusual
- They often display a keen sense of humour
- They have a vivid imagination

### Most Able and Talented Underachievers - characteristics

- Bored and restless with flashes of brilliance or interest
- High quality oral work but poor written work
- Poor test results but asks searching questions
- Dislike of routine work – often unfinished

- Creative interests or hobbies outside school but not reflected inside school
- Disruptive behaviour in some lessons but not in others where work is challenging
- Low self esteem or highly self critical
- Hostile to authority and able to articulate this
- High scores in specific aspects of SATs, but lower overall KS2 average

### **What is best for the more able learner?**

“Education is not the filling of a pail, but the lighting of a fire.” *W. B. Yeats*

- Beyond the comfort zone
- Stimulating questioning
- Challenging tasks
- An element of risk
- Opportunity to question accepted theory
- A chance to break the rules.
- Exposure to experts
- Features of Effective Classroom Practice
- Higher order thinking skills
- Development of expertise
- Exploration of alternative views
- Questioning that encourages creativity
- Problem solving and enquiry
- Connection of learning: the big picture
- Independent learning

### **Planning Lesson Objectives for Most Able and Talented Learners**

- Add breadth: enrichment through a broader range of texts and tasks
- Give depth: extension through more detail and complexity
- Accelerate the pace of learning: tackling objectives earlier
- Promote independence
- Support reflection and self-evaluation
- Structuring Challenging Tasks
- Use an alternative text or stimulus
- Allow pupils to jump steps
- Create open ended tasks that enable unusual responses
- Set extended, independent projects
- Encourage research and experiment
- Restrict time or word limit
- Bloom’s Taxonomy: higher order skills
- More Challenge ≠ More Work!

Remember, challenge tasks should be branded with the Aspire logo, in order to clearly denote them as activities which stretch learning: *Aspire*



## Designing Challenging Tasks

Giving a more able student the same level of work throughout the lesson will not stretch them.

- **Suggestions for differentiation by task**

- Use an able pupil to recap on last lesson's learning for other pupils.
- Many starter activities ask for students to come up with a number of examples. A more able student could be given a higher target.
- Start pupils at an appropriate level of difficulty on tasks - allow them to decide: 'Try starting at qn. 5; if that's too easy, try going to qn. 10...'
- If taking feedback in lesson, enlist an able student to write ideas up on the board.
- Ask able pupils to model their writing/thinking by explaining their answer/solution to a task to a neighbour
- Use MA+T pupils to provide the plenary. Alert them at the start of the lesson to be ready to present their learning at the end.
- Ask MA+T pupils to come up with questions to ask during the plenary to test the other students' understanding.
- Use higher level questioning and direct questions at particular pupils rather than waiting for the hands up approach.
- Use group work activities in order to allow MA+T pupils to disseminate knowledge to other pupils or to demonstrate leadership skills.
- Be ready to probe beyond the first question in order to make them really think: 'Why do you think that?' 'How did you come to that conclusion?'

- **Suggestions for differentiation by resource**

- Provide dictionaries and ask MA+T pupils to look up and explain definitions of key words or technical vocabulary used throughout the lesson.
- Use unedited or full length versions of abridged texts you are using with the rest of the class.
- Produce a reading list of texts and electronic resources to encourage wider reading or research around a class topic.
- Use a wide variety of texts and resources.
- Using homework to encourage independent learning
- Homework is an invaluable way of encouraging all students to enrich and extend their learning independently.
- Give students tasks which will grab their interest and present challenge
- Ideally, tasks should allow students to conduct research, decide upon their own views and present their findings in a way that they have chosen.

- **Suggestions for differentiating homework tasks**

- A homework given to KS3 science students to be completed over a 3 week period independently
  - *The statements below have been written in textbooks. Read them and use research of your own to decide if they are correct. Explain what your views are.*

- *The largest animals are usually herbivores*
- *Eating white bread and cereals causes acne*
- *All food chains get their energy from the sun.*
- Half-termly questions given to students to research and present findings in a way of their choice (poster/leaflet/presentation/short documentary):
  - *Could we survive on mars?*
  - *Will robots take over from humans?*

### **Using ICT in the classroom - a way of tackling underachievement?**

- Set a homework assignment for students to produce a starter activity for the IWB - can be brought in on a memory stick and uploaded at start.
- AFL - peer assessment - photograph students work during lesson and project onto board. Students can edit on the screen and discuss how to improve.
- Editing/reviewing work. Use Word to produce a good, not excellent, response to a question. Allow students to move text around on screen/ add additional phrases etc.
- Form time: [www.agameaday.com](http://www.agameaday.com); [www.wordplays.com](http://www.wordplays.com); [www.dailysudoku.co.uk](http://www.dailysudoku.co.uk)
- ICT for independent learning

### **Moodle and Doodle:**

- Have more challenging and stretching background reading/research material/alternative tasks.
- Upload examples of high quality work - modelling.
- Allows able pupils to look ahead at the curriculum pages of older students.

### **Questioning**

Look at it from the pupils' point of view. What could the teacher do?

- Change the type of questions asked
- Encourage pupils to think for themselves/develop thinking skills in lesson
- Encourage pupils to ask questions themselves/more able to develop higher order questions, perhaps using a questioning matrix
- Provide more opportunities for discussion

### **WHY?**

It is important that our most able and talented pupils are encouraged to think independently and to inquire into their preferred area of expertise. To fulfil the potential of our most able and talented pupils, we need to provide the opportunity, support and time to engage in independent thinking.

### **HOW?**

Most able and talented pupils often express frustration at being required to work through repetitive questions. Many most able and talented learners need less time to review and consolidate their learning; they want to move onto using their newly acquired knowledge to create new ideas or connect with other previously learned ideas.

### **Variety example**

A science teacher has explained about sound and how the vibrations move through air. She then shows a guitar. What's an example of a question that could stimulate higher order thinking in this situation?

- **How does the guitar make a noise?**
- **How does the sound get to your ear?**
- **What must happen for you to hear a note from this guitar?**

Actually, the first two are examples of recall and knowledge based questions. On their own, they don't stimulate higher order thinking.

However, asking what must happen to hear a note signals that there are ideas to think about and put together before offering an answer. It requires analysis and synthesis of previously learned knowledge in order to apply it to a new situation, making it a good example of a question that stimulates higher order thinking.

Even so, pupils will only use higher order thinking if they are used to being expected to do so and they are given sufficient time before an answer is expected.

### **Encouraging and supporting pupils in asking their own questions**

#### **How long is 0.9 seconds?**

- That's how long.
- So what? Well, that's how long teachers typically leave after asking a question before they expect an answer or answer it themselves. That's barely enough time to react – never mind think about it.

#### **What would happen if you left a little more time, like 3-5 seconds?**

- You give the pupil time to reflect, synthesise, evaluate and provide more thoughtful answers.

#### **What if you allow pupils to ask their own questions? Think about it for a moment...**

- Pupils who ask questions learn much faster than those who simply answer them. Most able and talented pupils are able to take an overview of the topic and to look for subtleties and connections to other knowledge.

*Variety:* Asking their own questions: two examples...

- The students were reaching the end of a topic and their history teacher wanted to know whether they had fully understood all aspects of the topic and which aspects they had found difficult. She asked her pupils to work in groups of four to write five questions. One on an easy part of the topic, one on a hard part of the topic, and three on an interesting part of the topic.

- Once the questions had been written they were passed on to another group. The group had to try and identify which question fell into each category. The students then picked which question they felt was 'best'.
- Each of the 'best' questions was read out to the class. Often these best questions were on a difficult part of the syllabus. The teacher collected up all the questions and constructed an assessment activity out of them so that her pupils could be challenged to show what they really understood and could do.

### **Why use peer- and self-assessment with most able and talented pupils?**

1. Using peer- and self-assessment enables most able and talented pupils to learn how to create, understand and apply assessment criteria and understand the quality of outcome that they could achieve.
2. Peer- and self-assessment supports most able and talented pupils in exploring what constitutes a high-quality outcome, and coming to know how to direct their efforts and abilities to produce high-quality outcomes themselves.
3. Peer- and self-assessment encourages most able and talented learners to develop the skills they need to become independent autonomous learners.

Exemplars may be:

- a response produced by a pupil in previous years
- an answer provided by the exam board
- a poster on a different subject that is already on the wall
- a piece written by the teacher to show the desirable qualities
- a manufactured item
- a jointly constructed response using 'the best bits' from several people's work.
- Challenge all Learners

## Example Welcome Letter

# Aspire



Date

Dear pupil,

A very warm welcome to the brand new Aspire community.

You have been selected by your teachers as being more able than most in one or more subjects here at St. Michael's, which makes you eligible to be part of a brand new programme. Aspire is designed to help you to achieve as highly as you can in all of your subjects, in order to get the best GCSE grades possible at the end of your time with us.

As part of Aspire, you will be given access to a wide range of additional support, including 1:1 support by teachers, additional activities such as university visits and after-school clubs, registration for academic mentoring groups such as IGGY.net, and much more. You will be looked at as a subject expert in the areas you've been identified as higher ability, and will support others with their learning. You will even, in year 11, be eligible for support to access courses at some of the best providers in the West Midlands. Aspire will help you to progress and to make the most of your time at school; all we ask in return is that, whenever you see the logo, you attempt the additional tasks given.

To explain your membership to you in a little more detail, we would like to invite you and your parents to a presentation on **Date, between time and time**. You may attend on your own, but we think it would be great if your parents could come along too, in case they've any questions about your membership. One last thing: your membership of this community will be reviewed annually, so you must continue to work hard in all subjects to retain the perks.

Well done and, once again, welcome.

Yours faithfully,

Mr D Kelly  
Gifted and Talented Co-ordinator

Headteacher: **Mrs J Gray, MSc, NPQH**

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