



Policy: Most Able and Talented (MAT)

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Chair of Governors:

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Policy for Gifted and Talented

Rationale

At Wellfield School we recognise that all students of all abilities should be challenged to ensure

- high achievement;
- the acquisition of skills that enable them to take risks;
- resilience that drives them to find solutions;
- the ability to be effective independent learners who know how to collaborate and communicate effectively with others safely across a range of media, digital and conventional;
- ingenuity and inspiration.

However, Gifted and Talented, which we call the Most Able students, have specific learning needs which we must address and need opportunities that facilitate the above that meet their particular needs and enable them to meet like minds. They often require a different type of support and experience without which their particular ability or gift may become a barrier to them experiencing success and achieving their full potential. By recognising and providing for those needs we will ensure that we develop an appropriate curriculum which creates opportunities for extension, enhancement and enrichment activities and hereby allow our most able and talented students to flourish.

We endorse the view that, "if a school looks systematically at its provision for the most able, then overall school standards will rise." (Deborah Eyres, *Able students in Ordinary Schools*, 1992). We believe that a focus on the learning needs of our most able and talented students will enhance teaching and learning across the school and thereby raise attainment.

Purposes

- To provide a whole school commitment to Most Able students, including a policy and action plan, leading to an ethos where high achievement is valued and success is celebrated.
- To identify Most Able students, including *exceptionally* Most Able students understanding the characteristic differences between the bright child and the gifted child.
- To provide a curriculum that offers breadth, depth, challenge and flexibility to meet the needs of Most Able students.
- To provide a wide range of learning opportunities, teaching approaches and organisational strategies to meet the needs of Most Able students ensuring that they work at higher cognitive levels.
- To ensure teachers have the skills to achieve excellence in meeting the needs of Most Able students.
- To provide pastoral care of Most Able students that includes their learning needs and their access to independent information and guidance.
- To raise aspirations and enable Most Able students to develop their potential.
- To review progress of Most Able students regularly to identify and support underachievement, 'underlearning' and disadvantaged students.
- To listen to and take account of the views of Most Able students and encourage them to take responsibility for their own learning.
- To provide extension, enhancement and enrichment activities for able and talented students to enable them to develop specific skills or talents and meet similar students regionally, nationally and globally.

Guidelines

1. Definition

At Wellfield we identify the top 5% of our students as Most Able young people and refer to them 'Most Able'. These are the students who achieve or have the potential to achieve at a level significantly in advance of their peers in many areas of the curriculum, in a more limited range of subjects or in a creative area such as Art, Music, Drama or Sport.

The identification process highlights students with specific academic ability in a given curriculum area and those with creative, technical or sporting talents. Students who are identified as very able in one or two areas only or who have a particular talent are not identified on the Most Able list, but should be identified on subject specific lists. In addition we identify those who meet national criteria Most Able.

That is those who:

- are identified by KS2 data and/or
- reach top CAT/MIDYIS scores of greater or equal to 129 and/or
- have exceptionally high Reading Ages and/or
- are talented in specific areas.

We use both generic descriptors which highlight the general characteristics of Most Able students and subject specific criteria. (see Appendix 1)

2. Identification of Most Able students

We recognise that there is no fool-proof, watertight method for identification and use a wide range of data: Cognitive Ability Tests (CATs/MIDYIS), national attainment data and non-test evidence, including primary school recommendations, to identify Most Able students, able underachievers and students with a specific academic ability or talent in a specific area. (See Appendices 1 and 2).

The school has a list of Most Able students for each year group which identifies the top 5% of the school. The list is reviewed annually during the Autumn Term at the same time as students in year 7 are identified. However, identification is not limited to any particular point in the academic year but is flexible and recognises that giftedness can emerge at different stages and ages.

The Senior Head of Learning (SHoL) identifies students according to the criteria on entry in Year 7. The information is collated by the G&T co-ordinator and is then circulated to the SLs and tutors to give them the opportunity for further comment.

During the Autumn Term, each subject area identifies the most able 5% in that year for their curriculum area and able underachievers are also identified. These students are identified on the subject list of More Able Students and names are passed to the G&T co-ordinator. If a student is recommended by a number of subjects across the curriculum, they may be added to the school list for Most Able students.

For subsequent year groups, the Head of Learning (HoL) and Subject Leaders (SL) review the list of Most Able students at least annually in the Autumn Term.

All teachers and tutors receive a copy of the definitive school list (via the SL / HoL).

If a student is identified as Most Able or potentially Most Able, parents may be asked to complete a questionnaire about their child, including their early developmental milestones. This is particularly important in the case of a student whose identification is not related to attainment data.

3. Meeting the needs of Most Able students

a. In class provision

It is the responsibility of Subject Leaders and individual subject teachers to ensure they meet the learning needs of the Most Able students that they teach in their day-to-day planning (including homework), providing appropriate extension work and enhancement opportunities.

All curriculum areas identify specific tasks and extension materials either in schemes of work or in a separate document. SLs are responsible for monitoring the work and progress of able students in their curriculum area. Heads of Learning monitor their progress after each assessment milestone (DC).

b. Enrichment activities - Beyond School Experiences

In addition, some curriculum areas provide enrichment activities, in particular music and PE. There are specific curriculum provision opportunities in MFL through dual language opportunities, ICT, through the GCSE, and Science through the Triple course.

Opportunities for Most Able students to meet and work with similar students externally are offered as they are available including visits to industry and universities.

4. Monitoring

a. Monitoring progress of individual students

In addition to the monitoring undertaken within Learning Areas via Data Collection system, the G & T co-ordinator and HoL or DH monitor progress on a half- termly basis using the data provided by the Data Capture system. Underperformance is identified and the school systems are used to intervene (either via SL, tutor or HoL depending on whether the underperformance is limited to one or two subjects or is across many subject areas). Parents are involved if the underachievement is across many subjects.

A termly progress report is made to the Head Teacher. The HoL also provides an evaluation of the achievements of able students in external examinations and assists in the target setting process, which are then reported to the Head teacher and Governors.

b. Monitoring curriculum / enrichment provision

The G & T co-ordinator monitors the curriculum provision by:

- ensuring all curriculum areas provide extension and enhancement work in their schemes of learning;
- ensuring specific learning needs are met by meeting with groups of Most Able students throughout the year, discussing their specific learning needs and responding to these;
- liaising with curriculum areas to promote enrichment activities and to explore possibilities of fast-tracking / alternative provision.

The SL monitors curriculum provision in their subject area by:

- regularly reviewing the scheme of learning to ensure adequate and appropriate provision is made for able students;
- monitoring lesson plans to ensure teachers are planning extension and enhancement activities;
- evaluating the performance of able students as part of the subject area evaluation of GCSE and end of KS3 achievement.

Monitoring by Leadership Group

Provision for Most Able is undertaken via curriculum reviews, analysis of progress data and the lesson observation cycle.

Appendix 1**Identification of Most Able students from entry**

1. In the Autumn term, students in Y7 are identified for the school list of Most Able using the following criteria:

a. Test and Data evidence

- KS2 data: currently combines raw score in the national top 5% in English and Maths. (This is under review as the new KS2 assessment procedures are implemented).
- Highest attainment at KS2 in English and Maths.
- Cognitive ability test/MIDYIS: A standardised age score of 129 or above in one battery (V, Q, NV).
- Reading Ages

b. Non-Test evidence

- Primary teacher recommendations
- Recommendation by a subject based on student demonstration of perceived potential. This may include evidence from specific pieces of work or characteristics demonstrated in e.g. group or project work.
- Evidence of outstanding achievement in an academic related activity pursued outside of school e.g. success in national level debating competition or masterclass or other Gifted and Talented programmes.
- An independent assessment identifying ability in the top 5% ability range e.g. report from an Ed Psych.

c. Talented criteria (Art, Art and Design, Drama, Dance, Music, Sport)

- Outstanding performance at school which is considerably higher than expected for the child's age (on entry to KS3 from primary/junior school).
- Outstanding performance in vocational grade tests – music, drama, and dance.
- Attendance at a centre for advanced training or excellence in music or dance.
- Holders of dance and music scholarships, national grants for music and dance or dance and drama awards.
- Selection for and participation in sports at academy or national level.

Possible underachievers are identified by:

- identifying students who score high on potential (e.g. high CATs scores) but low on attainment;
- monitoring performance to identify a drop off in performance over time;
- identifying discrepancies between verbal and non-verbal scores in CATs - students with high non-verbal scores but high non-verbal ability might have weak literacy skills but other talents and abilities;
- identifying correlation between poor behaviour/low self-esteem and under performance.

2. Each subject area identifies the top 5% in their subject area. They use a subject specific definition of Most Able for their subject area and students' attainment levels. They also identify underachievers.
3. Heads of Learning use the range of data, their knowledge of their students and characteristics and descriptors used to identify different aspects of ability to identify Most Able students, as well as underachievers.
4. Parents/carers may also be asked to nominate their child for the list, via a questionnaire. They can provide valuable insights into the strengths and issues of their son's/daughter's learning needs and are consulted so that support offered in school can be maintained at home. We are aware that 'Children who are looked after' (CLA) may have no such advocate. Consequently, we take extra care when following other methods of identification to ensure that these students are given a greater focus in order to redress the imbalance.
5. All the information is collated by the G & T co-ordinator re-examines all the information collected and finalises the list for that year group. This list is circulated to all staff.

Review of the Most Able register

At the same time as the identification of students for the year 7 list, the Most Able lists for Years 8 – 11 are reviewed by all subject areas and Heads of Learning and appropriate amendments are made by the G & T co-ordinator as appropriate.

Appendix 2

Characteristics often demonstrated by Most Able students, especially the gifted child

Able students will not display all of these characteristics and this list is not intended as a tick list, but as a range of sometimes conflicting descriptors which are used to identify different aspects of ability. Gifted and Talented students may:

- possess extensive general knowledge, often know more than the teacher and find reference books superficial;
- easily grasp underlying principles and need the minimum of explanation;
- show good insight into cause-effect relationships;
- quickly make generalisations and extract the relevant points from complex material;
- have mental speeds faster than physical capabilities and so be often reluctant to write at length;
- prefer to talk rather than write and often talk at speed with fluency and expression;
- be reluctant to practise skills already mastered, finding such practice futile;
- have exceptional curiosity and constantly want to know why;
- be inventive and original when interested;
- ask searching questions, which tend to be unlike other students' questions;
- often see the unusual rather than the conventional relationships;
- be able to pose problems and solve ingeniously;
- display intellectual playfulness, fantasise and imagine and be quick to see connections and to manipulate ideas;
- read rapidly and retain what is read and can recall detail;
- listen only to part of the explanation and appear to lack concentration or even interest but always know what is going on;
- jump stages in learning and be often frustrated by having to fill in the stages missed;
- leap from concrete examples to abstract rules and general principles;
- have quick absorption and recall of information, seem to need no revision and be impatient with repetition;
- be keen and alert observers, note detail and be quick to see similarities and differences;
- see greater significance in a story or film and continue the story;
- see problems quickly and take the initiative;
- have advanced understanding and use of language but sometimes be hesitant as they search for and use the correct word;
- become absorbed for long periods when interested and may be impatient with interference or abrupt change;
- persist in completing activities when motivated;
- often set very high personal standards – be perfectionists and may be self-effacing
- be more than usually interested in 'adult' problems such as important issues in current affairs (local and world), evolution, justice, the universe etc;
- be concerned to adapt and improve institutions, objects, systems (e.g. can be particularly critical of school);
- be philosophical about everyday problems and common sense issues;
- be perceptive in discussion about people's motives, needs and frailties
- daydream and seem lost in another world;
- show sensitivity and react strongly to things causing distress or injustice;
- often take a leadership role;
- empathise with others and be very understanding and sympathetic;
- be confident and competent express their own feelings;
- attribute ideas to others;
- reflect on their own performance;
- give inventive responses to open-ended questions;
- have a keen sense of humour in the unusual and be quick to appreciate nuances and hidden meanings;
- appreciate verbal puns, cartoons, jokes and often enjoy bizarre humour, satire and irony;
- criticise constructively, even if sometimes argumentatively;
- be unwilling to accept authoritarian pronouncements without critical examination and want to debate and find reasons to justify the why and the wherefore.

We remember that not all students will display all of these characteristics and, importantly, able underachievers might hide their abilities displaying instead challenging behaviour, lethargy, poor written work and poor motivation.