

Bushey St James Trust



More Able Policy

Last Reviewed:	December 2024	Next Review:	December 2027
Approved by:	Trust Board	Date:	12.12.24

Rationale

The schools within the Bushey St James Trust (BSJT) believe in 'Growth Mindset', with no limits to any learner's potential. Therefore, this More Able Policy, although aimed specifically at the more able, is inclusive in its nature and in its intentions. We aim to nurture and develop talent and provide opportunities through the timetabled and extended curriculum to discover, extend, enrich and use individual talent. Intelligences are cultivated through learning and are not fixed traits. By raising the achievement of the more able we aim to raise the achievement of all students within the school.

Aims

The Bushey St James Trust aims to provide:

- an environment and culture to raise the aspirations of all learners to achieve at the highest levels possible
- an appropriately differentiated education for all
- a curriculum which will stretch students of all abilities, including those with more able traits
- opportunities for more able students to learn and be challenged beyond the classroom
- an ethos to stimulate a lifelong commitment to learning

Practice

Research has identified characteristics which may be evident in some more able learners. A learner may have one, none or many of these characteristics. The characteristics themselves do not imply that a learner is more able. When planning a curriculum and learning opportunities, it is important that teachers are aware that these characteristics may exist.

More able learners:

- often enjoy a creative and sometimes a more cross curricular approach to teaching and learning
- often have a passionate interest in a particular area, for example a specific period of history or aspect of science
- can be more acutely aware of their progress and demonstrate this in a variety of ways
- may sometimes feel reluctant to show their ability or talent or disguise it to 'fit in'
- can have more diverse learning preferences and approaches and therefore need a wider variety of teaching strategies
- might need to be encouraged to fulfil their potential
- demonstrate curiosity and are keen to appreciate the finer details and wider learning opportunities of a given topic
- can be perfectionists which may act as a barrier to learning as students become reluctant to complete tasks unless the work is going to be perfect

1. Definition and Identification

We recognise that all children, regardless of academic ability, have skills and expertise. Many of these skills can be identified and nurtured within an educational environment.

We define more able learners as those who display a potential to exhibit exceptional performance in one or more areas of endeavour, be they academic, expressive, physical or social.

The progress of all learners is tracked throughout the year by class teachers, subject leaders, middle leaders and senior leaders within each of the schools. This progress is also monitored by the senior leaders and governors. The progress of more able learners is tracked separately in order to ensure that learners arriving at each of the schools as 'academically more able' are able to make at least expected progress (and, in very many cases, more than expected progress). Where an academically more able learner is at risk of not achieving their potential this is communicated to the learner, parent and carers with appropriate intervention put in place.

Opportunities for more able learners are created within the curriculum, through extra-curricular clubs and through leadership or community events. As a Trust we are committed to the identification of ability and to provision which is consistent and well-planned, allowing skills to be fostered over time. We seek out resources and activities to stimulate this talent. In addition, more able learners are encouraged to participate in events across the local and wider community.

2. The More Able Register

The More Able Register, comprising the Core Group List and all Subject Group Lists, is disseminated to all staff. All relevant staff will make themselves familiar with this list in order to fully support the learners and encourage them to achieve their potential.

3. Provision

Curriculum and Student Leadership

More able provision is facilitated through timetabled lessons, a vibrant and extensive curriculum and wide ranging leadership opportunities. These opportunities aim to draw on personal interest or develop talent. Where it is beneficial to the learners, the schools work collaboratively to enhance their provision, provide opportunities for more able pupils to work with others and draw from best practice. Our student leadership programme lends itself to stretching the more able and there are many opportunities for our leaders to flourish in this area.

Some of the strategies we use to meet the needs of more able learners within the curriculum include:

- setting by ability where appropriate
- addressing relevant aspects of more able provision within the Continuing Professional Development (CPD) programme for staff
- encouraging wide ranging extracurricular provision to include: competitions and national challenges, creative and Performing Arts events, STEM (Science Technology, Engineering and

Mathematics) events, engaging with external societies and groups which specialise in their field of interest

- the provision of a mechanism for validating, rewarding and celebrating 'super curricular' learning - that is, studies undertaken independently by the learner in his or her own time in pursuit of their interests or hobbies
- key events during the year, such as rewards assemblies, more able evenings and other raising achievement evenings
- sharing outcomes and achievements being shared with the school community through various curricular and extracurricular showcased events and via the schools' websites and / or newsletters

Within the Classroom

Through Quality First Teaching, teachers in the schools are able to personalise teaching to meet the varying needs of all pupils, and with this in mind, differentiation is a feature of all lessons at all levels. Planning includes sharp objectives, clear success criteria and effective monitoring. The teachers demand high levels of learner interaction, involvement and engagement and teaching staff should aim to teach the skills required for a top achieving student from Nursery to Year 13.

Excellent practice will be developed through the use of staff training sessions, staff meetings, leadership meeting discussions and learning walks. Teachers will use effective questioning, modelling and explanation to support learning and will make regular use of encouragement and authentic praise to engage and motivate learners. There is also an expectation that learners will accept responsibility for their own learning and learn to work independently.

Teachers will liaise with parents to support the efforts, aspirations and progress of the learners. Teachers will provide precise and effective feedback so that learners are able to make rapid progress and gain a greater depth of understanding in their work. Teaching is further enhanced by the commitment to extend pupils who have an interest and ability to take their studies further or to develop talent.

We design a curriculum which meets the needs of all learners but also has appropriate opportunities for the more able cohort. A curriculum for the academically more able includes classroom expectations which are of the highest possible standard.

Strategies that class teachers will employ to meet the needs of more able learners within their classroom provision include:

- planning exciting and engaging sequences of learning to develop students' intellectual curiosity
- differentiating learning activities in a variety of ways
- encouraging and developing learners' ability to think independently
- planning lessons which take account of a variety of learning styles and intelligences
- classrooms that will display more able criteria for all learners to aspire to
- guiding learners to lead their own learning in the classroom and in home learning

- encouraging 'super curriculum' learning, within the classroom setting – that is, studies undertaken independently by the student in his or her own time in pursuit of their interest or hobby
 - teachers and those supporting learning to have a secure subject knowledge and how this relates to other areas of the curriculum
 - teachers having an excellent understanding of progression within their subject, particularly in relation to achievement at the highest levels
 - opportunities for creativity
 - a clear focus on higher order thinking and extension of subject vocabulary
 - opportunities to develop collaborative working skills with adults and peers that can be transferred back into the classroom
 - fostering independence with opportunities for pupils to lead and make choices
 - time and opportunity to plan and complete extended, in-depth writing
 - opportunities to take risks, to explore, to reflect on ideas and make useful mistakes
 - developing questioning skills and curiosity
- providing clear, visual opportunities to stretch and challenge learners in lessons or home learning tasks, for example, highlighting stretch and challenge opportunities on lesson resources

Pastoral Care

The implementation of the More Able Policy will always take account of the impact an action may have on a child's social-emotional development and will give due consideration to:

- effective pastoral care being made available where required to help more able students achieve their potential
- their sense of personal involvement in decisions affecting their schooling
- providing opportunities for students to be involved through the school's student leadership scheme
- creating a culture where achievement is celebrated, rewarded and respected
- encouraging students to strive for excellence
- providing opportunities to develop traits and skills such as leadership, organisation, resilience, initiative and communication

4. Partnership with Parents and Carers

Parents and carers of more able learners will be encouraged and supported to take an active role in the learning of their children and the life of the school. Regular and consistent communication between the school and home will seek to ensure that parents and carers are aware of the importance of their role in recognising the various talents and abilities demonstrated by their children.

Parents and carers are encouraged to:

- support events for more able learners

- share their own experiences to ensure learners are well informed of high level career opportunities
- read information about activities for the more able through newsletter entries and communication home
- be aware of how to recognise and develop their child's abilities
- foster curiosity, develop independence and support continued academic progress

5. Monitoring

Each subject or phase leader is responsible for evaluating the effectiveness within their curriculum area. Student voice, lesson observation, quality assurance and work sampling to evaluate teaching and learning provision is routine.

Each school within the Trust has an appointed senior leader who takes responsibility for the monitoring and evaluation of provision and performance of the more able learners. Appropriate action points are included into the relevant school's improvement plans and an embedded cycle of evaluation encourages all staff to inform action plans and sustain improvement. The progress of more able students is discussed regularly at all schools across the Trust.

Regular reports are provided at governing body committee meetings and governors are invited to events showcasing the outcomes of more able learners. The more able list will be reviewed at least annually. Positive links with external agencies are encouraged and links with these organisations are shared.

6. Review

The Student Achievement/Pupil Progress Committees of the Local Governing Bodies will specifically monitor the provision for more able learners.