



Policy for Previously Higher Attaining Pupils (Gifted and Talented)

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Policy for Previously Higher Attaining Pupils (Gifted and Talented)

1. Entitlement

At St. Bede's, we aim to create an environment in which all pupils are encouraged to develop their full potential as individuals, spiritually, mentally and physically. All pupils, including those with particular gifts or talents, have a right to an education that is suited to their specific needs and abilities.

We strive to offer able pupils challenging and interesting work that stretches and extends their knowledge and skills. We look for opportunities to recognise and celebrate excellence in all areas of the both the taught curriculum and beyond. We want to help all our pupils prepare for the modern world by encouraging creativity, skills and critical thought. These are aspects of learning in which more able pupils may have great potential but, to develop this potential fully, they will need support and guidance so that their specific talents can develop and flourish.

We seek to ensure that such pupils are identified within each area of learning and that those pupils then have the opportunity to gain access to experiences that will help to develop their talents in the best possible way.

2. Definitions

There are many terms used to describe more able pupils and discussions with staff have identified a variety of meanings ascribed to many of them.

Prior to 2016, the generally accepted terminology was to refer to pupils who are higher achieving as 'gifted and talented'. 'Gifted' was used to mean 'very highly ability' in academic subjects. 'Talented' was applied, as per Government guidance, to identify pupils who show aptitude in sports or subjects in which there is an element of performance, such as music or art.

From September 2016, the defining terminology used within St Bede's for more able pupils is 'Previously Higher Attaining'.

The DfE and Ofsted define the more able in terms of those whose progress significantly exceeds age related expectations. Exceptionally able pupils are those who have the capacity to achieve or perform at the very highest levels.

3. Challenges to Overcome

In national surveys published by the OFSTED Inspectorate in 2013 and 2015, it was found that thousands of pupils who achieved well at primary school, especially those from more

disadvantaged backgrounds, were failing to reach their full potential after the age of 11. The reasons for this were:

- poor transition arrangements with feeder primary schools that left many academically gifted pupils treading water in their first few years of secondary school, rather than building on the gains made at key stage 2
- a culture of low expectations and a failure to nurture high ambition and scholastic excellence
- few checks being made on whether the teaching of mixed ability groups was challenging the brightest children sufficiently
- disproportionate effort being spent in many schools on getting pupils over the GCSE D/C borderline rather than supporting the most able to secure the top A/A* grades

(taken from the HMCI's Monthly Commentary, June 2016)

In order to address these concerns, here at St. Bede's we have worked to ensure that we are addressing the challenges which can result in PHA pupils under-performing. Whilst the final bullet point does not directly affect us, I have outlined here the steps we have taken to ensure that we address the first three possible concerns.

3.1 Addressing transition issues

At St. Bede's we have a rigorous and well-planned approach to the transition of our pupils, both from First School to St Bede's, and from our school to High School.

First – Middle School Transition

Several staff members are involved in the transition between First School and our school and we are in close contact with all of our feeder establishments. The Heads of the English and Maths departments, the Head of Key Stage 2 and the SEN Co-ordinator visit our main feeder schools to meet with children, teach taster lessons (to both give new pupils a flavour of our lessons and also allow us to learn about the ability of the pupils who will join us) and also open a dialogue about the pupils we will be receiving. They also conduct the GL tests with the Year 4 pupils who are coming to St Bede's, wherever possible.

We receive test data from all of our feeder schools, which includes:

- KS1 SATS results
- End of Year 4 results
- GL Test results (where appropriate)

Heads of English and Maths also discuss with class teachers whether the achieved test results accurately reflect the ability of the pupils, as this helps with organising ability sets for English and Maths. As a follow-on to this, discussions take place regarding the ability, performance and attitude of the pupils we will be receiving and suggestions are made for which ability set the pupils would work best in. These recommendations, alongside the test data outlined above, mean that pupils can be organised into provisional ability sets for English and Maths within the first TWO WEEKS of joining our school, and thus teaching can be specially tailored to meet the needs of all pupils, including PHA pupils, almost immediately.

Middle – High School Transition

The transition data and information that we provide to High Schools is also detailed, so this means that we do our best to ensure that the move between schools is seamless.

We provide:

- KS2 SATS data
- End of Year 8 data from ALL subjects

- Recommendations of which ability set would be appropriate for each child (where needed)
- GL Testing results
- Overview notes regarding the pupils (this practice is starting Summer 2017)
- Meetings between some HoD to discuss pupils – in particular those falling into the PHA category

In addition to this, English and Maths teachers from the High School visit St Bede's to take classes – again to get an understanding of the abilities of the pupils and also have an opportunity for pupils to get to know the new teachers they will be working with.

Moderation

We liaise frequently with other schools within our pyramid and within the town to ensure that standards are accurately judged and that PHA pupils and all others are being fairly and appropriately graded.

3.2 Managing expectations

Here at St. Bede's, we have worked hard to foster a very positive culture in which success and achievement is strived for and celebrated.

Striving for Success

Teacher expectations are high at St. Bede's, as is evidenced by the results of lesson observations and learning walks carried out by HoD's and SLT.

The Lead Teacher and SMT work with staff to make sure we offer suitable educational experiences for able pupils at the school, both inside and outside the classroom. Staff are given guidance on techniques to increase the level of challenge in lessons and on how to support pupils as they approach more challenging work. This has taken the form of gifted and talented sessions on INSET days and after school training.

There is also a range of additional activities that are provided especially for our PHA pupils. A list of both the current activities and activities that are presently in the planning stage is available as a separate document. Please see **Section 6 Additional Provision Outside of the Classroom** for further details.

Celebrating Success

Each year, we hold Awards Ceremonies that celebrate success in all areas of the curriculum and recognise achievements in relation to the non-taught curriculum. We also celebrate success through displays, assemblies, the weekly newsletter, social media and the local press. We aim to foster a positive attitude amongst pupils where achievement is seen as something to aspire to, so in addition to the things listed above, we also have a system of ePraise points and green notes to act as rewards.

3.3 Monitoring provision

St Bede's has a rigorous system of monitoring the teaching and learning taking place in school. Lesson observations are carried out by Departmental Heads, Heads of Faculty and members of the SMT. In addition to this, learning walks and pupil shadowing walks are carried out in order to provide useful snapshots of what is happening inside the classroom. Any concerns resulting from these checks are raised with the teacher to ensure that improvements are made for the future.

4. Identification of Pupils

The school uses a number of strategies to identify ability and monitor achievement and progress. SIMS currently holds the School Register of Previously Higher Attaining pupils that identifies high potential and achievement in our pupils. We also identify a broader section of the school community who fall just outside the top percentage overall but who achieve high CATs scores in one specific area or show high potential and achievement in a narrow range of subjects. We will also use a combined measure of GL Assessment and CAT results to highlight any underperforming PHA children.

We recognise that pupils can be classed as PHA in other areas than just academically, which is why we have organised the PHA lists into Faculty Categories primarily, with the subject-specific data that fed into these groupings also being available. The Faculty PHA lists are recorded on the SIMS system with pupils being easily identifiable for each aspect. The individual, subject-specific lists are available on a spreadsheet in the Staff Share computer storage area in:

Staff Share – Curriculum – PHA Pupils – Registers of PHA Pupils – PHA Subject Specific

Here, we record individuals who, in any given year, show very good performance in a school subject and / or relatively high GL scores. The broader list is updated by the Lead Teacher for PHA Pupils (LT), as information becomes available. This includes adding updated GL scores when these become available during the Summer Term and adding information from staff, after consultation with Faculty Heads, Heads of Subjects and Heads of Key Stages, about pupils in each Year group who shine in different subjects.

4.1 GL Testing

From 2017, when GL results are available these scores will be used to help inform the decisions made regarding pupils' inclusion on the PHA Register.

4.2 SATS results

Confirmed and validated SATS results from Key Stage 1 tests are used to help formulate the PHA register for Maths and English pupils in Key Stage 2, with pupils who achieve a level 3 in KS1 SATS being included on the list. Confirmed and validated Key Stage 2 SATS results are used to inform the KS3 PHA lists for Maths and English, with pupils who previously achieved either a level 5 or a 110+ in their SATs results being included.

4.3 Teacher nomination

Staff are consulted annually and Heads of Subjects are asked to nominate high achieving pupils from each year group in their subject. These nominations are then reviewed and the lists of more able students are amended. If, during the course of the year, staff believe that pupils need to be added to the list as a result of assessments or other evidence, they are requested to liaise with the LT for PHA in order to enable this to happen.

5. Provision in Class

Identification of pupils is clearly not an end in itself. Recognition should inform the monitoring of progress and lead to the shaping and monitoring of provision. Please see the additional

document **'Additional PHA Provision'** for an overview of the current activities available for our PHA pupils.

5.1 Higher order thinking skills

Higher order thinking skills include evaluation, analysis, synthesis, justification, questioning, creative thinking and others. By offering pupils the chance to experience a range of learning styles, we aim to develop such skills through encouraging both individual reflection and by promoting reflective discussion within a positive classroom climate.

In addition to this, assessment for learning is used as a way of closely matching learning objectives to the learning needs of pupils. It is recognised as an important aspect of the effective education of able learners (as well as other groups). By setting further challenges for PHA pupils, we are able to ensure they feel stretched and also develop independence.

5.2 PHA provision in lessons

In addition to the thinking skills and extra provision activities, teachers are encouraged to provide PHA pupils with options for deepening their level of study. Providing open-ended tasks that allow pupils to explore a concept in their own way and control their own learning is a clear way in which this can help more able pupils to flourish.

5.3 Working on advanced subject matter

In some subject areas, pupils who are exceptionally able are encouraged to work on subject matter that is more advanced than their current expected curriculum. Both the subject matter and the teacher expectations are raised so as to ensure that the pupils are challenged appropriately.

5.4 Ability sets for English and Mathematics

All pupils from Years 5 to 8 inclusive work in one of 6 (sometimes even 7) ability-based groups for English and Mathematics. Work set for each group is intended to be appropriate for their needs and members of staff provide additional differentiation within each of these groups to ensure that the needs of the pupils are met.

6. Additional Provision outside of the Classroom

In addition to the provision made within lessons to help our pupils reach their maximum potential, we also offer stimulating and enriching experiences outside of the taught curriculum. Below, you will find just a sample of the opportunities available for PHA pupils. Again, please see the additional document **'Additional PHA Provision'** for an overview of the current activities available for our PHA pupils.

6.1 Clubs

The school offers a wide range of sporting, musical, artistic and other activities in after school and lunchtime clubs. (See individual subject policies for further details.) We offer opportunities to all pupils, in which the participants have a chance to develop their skills, interests and abilities and to emerge as potentially gifted or talented in a particular area.

6.2 Educational visits and in-house workshops

The school offers a wide-ranging programme of educational visits for all pupils, designed to enrich learning and provide valuable experiences. These cover all year groups and a variety of curriculum areas.

6.3 Additional enrichment activities

Further provision is also made in many subject areas for PHA pupils to extend their learning and challenge themselves. Details of these can be found in the document '**Additional PHA Provision**'.

6.4 Small group sessions

From September 2017, the Lead Teacher for PHA will be running a variety of small group sessions for pupils identified as 'more able', including mentoring, study skills and developing useful group work and entrepreneurial skills. Future projects are also being looked into.

7. Partnerships with Parents and Carers

We believe it is important to listen to parents and to make sure they are informed about the progress of their children. From September 2017, we will inform parents about mentoring sessions or special workshops to which their children are invited. Those parents whose children are identified on the official School Register of Previously Higher Achieving pupils will be informed by letter and advised on various ways in which they can help their able child.