



Innovation, Aspiration and Excellence

Supporting Most Able Pupils Policy

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1. Context

At Houlton School we believe that all children are entitled to a transformational learning experience that will enable them to develop their full potential, be that intellectual, physical, aesthetic, creative, emotional, spiritual or social. All pupils have individual needs which puts personalised learning at the heart of our learning and teaching. Pupils who are exceptionally academically able and those who possess exceptional ability and potential in specific areas of the curriculum have needs that this policy sets out to address. Houlton School is committed to providing a sufficiently challenging curriculum for all its pupils and in encouraging excellence. In addition, we will provide opportunities to identify and in turn nurture those who are more able.

2. Statement of Intention

At Houlton School we endeavour to:

- develop each child's full potential, whether academic, artistic, physical, social, emotional or spiritual;
- recognise, develop and celebrate those pupils who are more able, gifted and/or talented; and
- acknowledge pupils' particular talents and actively encourage achievement.

In the light of these aims it is clear that we are committed to providing an environment which encourages all pupils to maximise their potential and this includes more able, gifted and talented, regardless of their background, race, religion, gender or ethnicity. We understand and acknowledge that some pupils will be working at a higher cognitive level than others and therefore recognise that provisions need to be in place to match the pupil needs. Some pupils will have specific skills and talents and we recognise the need to provide opportunities for these to develop.

Our ethos respects and celebrates the diversity of our community and aim to ensure everyone is given the opportunity to develop skills and abilities irrespective of race, religion, gender or special educational need.

3. Definitions

Our policy for more able pupils is directed towards those pupils capable of excelling in one or more areas, which place them in the highest achieving 5% -10% of our school population.

4. More Able

Pupils who are performing above the classroom average in one or more curriculum area (this may vary from year group to year group).

5. Gifted

- General intellectual abilities
- Specific aptitude in one or more subjects
- Creative or productive thinking
- Leadership qualities

6. Talented

- Ability in creative or performing arts
- Physical ability

7. Identification

Early identification of more able, gifted and talented pupils is important to ensure that every pupil is provided with every opportunity to be supported throughout their school years. Behaviours of more able, gifted and talented children can vary hugely, however some indicators may be:

- learning easily;
- being unique, imaginative and creative;
- being persistent, resourceful, self-directed;
- being inquisitive, sceptical;
- being informed in unusual areas often beyond their years;
- being artistic and/or musical;
- using outstanding vocabulary, being verbally fluent – remembering that this can relate to their home language;
- being an independent learner, showing or taking initiative;
- displaying logical thinking skills;
- showing unusual insights;
- showing a high level of sensitivity, empathy;
- have a 'quirky' sense of humour and of the ironic;
- exhibiting high motivation and self-expression;
- showing speed and agility of thought and preference for verbal rather than written expressions;
- displaying leadership qualities and/or be socially adept;

- making connections quickly between facts and concepts;
- being tactless, hypercritical and impatient;
- demanding impossible amounts of attention;
- becoming easily frustrated;
- being intolerant of pupils less able than themselves;
- asking proactive questions;
- being good orally; unwilling to put any on paper;
- being reluctant to practise skills they have already mastered.

Whilst the behaviours vary greatly, it is important that we as teachers are aware of these behaviours and become alerted to question why they may occur in our class.

8. Identification of more able pupils

Teacher nomination

Teachers are best placed to identify the more able as they have a range of skills, which enable them to do this. Judgements will be based on collection and analysis of information from a range of professionals who have contact with the child throughout their education, as well as parents/carers.

Record keeping and assessment

Every teacher has a professional duty to collect on-going assessments and records of achievements, which should form the basis of evidence to identify more able / gifted and talented pupils.

Subject specific assessment

This can be useful when assessing pupils with specific learning difficulties as it provides opportunities for all pupils to demonstrate ability in specific subject areas.

Verbal and non-verbal assessments

These are useful in the recognition of more able, gifted and talented pupils; including those within our special needs provision.

Peer nomination

Peers are usually very quick to recognise ability in others and so it is part of our policy to listen to their views when they are offered.

Awareness

Although not a formal method of identification, awareness is a useful one. The more we consider ability and look for outstanding ability in a variety of areas, the more pupils can be identified.

A more able, gifted and talented register exists and is regularly updated to recognise those who are more able gifted or talented.

Whole school level

Opportunities for extension and enrichment are built into all aspects of our school provision through encouraging:

- All pupils to become independent learners.
- The use of I.C.T; an invaluable resource for study and research.

Use of a variety of whole school strategies to support our most able / gifted and talented pupils include:

- enrichment days – working with visiting artists/poets/ writers / musicians etc;
- giving pupils opportunities to serve on various working parties (Pupil Fora etc.);
- providing opportunities for co-curricular learning (a wide range of clubs, which vary from term to term);
- recognising achievement (teacher praise, praise board, assemblies, Principal meetings etc.);
- participation in projects linked to other local schools;
- opportunities for subject based identified pupils to work together across year groups;
- identification of 'out of class' and 'out of school' opportunities for more able / gifted/talented pupils and to make the pupil aware of these opportunities;
- Focus groups for CIAG (e.g. Focus 9, Medical Society, Law Society)

9. Classroom Level

The classroom should offer a carefully structured positive atmosphere in which the contributions of all pupils are recognised, differences acknowledged and where enthusiasm for learning is fostered. Teachers should seek to provide tasks and interactive displays, which promote problem- solving skills associated with clear thinking & the spirit of investigation should be encouraged.

Teachers should ensure they use the Houlton Learning and Teaching non negotiables to support excellence in learning.

The following additional strategies will be employed where appropriate:

- varied and flexible groupings, sometimes allowing able pupils to work together sometimes allowing them to take specific roles in mixed ability groups;
- provision of problem-solving and using and applying tasks across the curriculum;
- opportunities for philosophical based thinking.

Houlton School will use PHRSE/LOIC session to build skills across all children and to encourage them to become independent learners. More able pupils will be stretched in this areas by:

- organising their own work such as editing skills;
- carrying out unaided tasks which stretch their capabilities;
- making choices about their work;
- developing the ability to evaluate their own work and so become self- critical;
- develop their interests out of school;
- creating their own success criteria.

10. Monitoring and Assessment

Analysis of data relating to more able, gifted and talented pupils, interventions arising from this analysis and monitoring of out of class provision and specific events will be carried out by the Pupil Experience Leader.

11. Pupils

The pupils identified as being more able / gifted and talented list will vary and change annually. For this reason, pupils are not routinely informed of their inclusion. We recognise that some identified pupils might have physical, medical and learning needs e.g. ASD/ dyslexia and might need extra support.

12. Parents/Carers involvement

Parents/Carers can help the school by providing relevant information; they see their child in a different context from the classroom.

Houlton School will seek to involve parents/carers where possible so that their knowledge of the child can inform the school's provision and the school can offer information and advice.

13. Role of the Pupil Experience leader

The Pupil Experience Leader in liaison with the Vice Principal for Personal Development, Behaviour and Safety will have the specific responsibility for coordinating activities associated with more able / gifted and talented pupils and will also:

- keep an up-dated register of gifted and talented pupils;
- inform staff of relevant information;
- work with the Vice Principal in the effective deployment of human and material resources in supporting more able / gifted and talented pupils;
- will analyse data to ensure those pupils on the register are making satisfactory progress;

The Vice Principal will coordinate and provide advice to teaching and staff concerning how best to ensure that gifted and talented pupils reach their aspirational target grades.

14. Role of the staff

All staff have a responsibility to help identify pupils who are gifted and talented in their class and to build into their lesson plans coherent provision for them.

All staff need to ensure that when pupils transfer between year groups, all information and record keeping is transferred.

15. Monitoring

The Principal (Michael McCulley) will annually review this policy. And submit to the Aim Board for approval.