

Most able students Policy

Approved by:	Governing Body	Date: November 2019
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Last reviewed on:	Spring 2017
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Next review due by:	Autumn 2021
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Introduction

The Archer Academy is committed to ensuring that all students realise their potential and are afforded the very best opportunities whilst at school.

The Archer Academy 'Most Able Students Policy' has been written in consultation with recent governmental and university based research to secure best practice. This policy takes full account of Ofsted's report, published in June 2013 on '*The most able students: Are they doing as well as they should in our non-selective secondary schools?*' and the subsequent review report in March 2015. Unless otherwise stated, all references or related references to Ofsted are a direct response to these reports.

Ofsted cites a report on '*Educating the highly able*' published by the Sutton Trust in 2012 which refers to how: '*Ensuring that the brightest pupils fulfil their potential goes straight to the heart of social mobility, of basic fairness and economic efficiency.*'

In order for most able students to receive a uniform approach, it is necessary for all staff to be aware of this policy and to act upon it. It is imperative that, teaching staff, provide a consistent approach and be aware that most able students have as much need of differentiated learning as any other student. Each department should consider their provision for this cohort and provide a statement of intent in line with the school policy, to be included in their departmental handbook.

Definitions

In the June 2013 report, Ofsted reviewed the standard use of definitions surrounding what were previously known as Gifted and Talented students. This policy is a result of our review of current research and as such refers to "most able" students throughout. The term 'most able' is only referring to those identified as being academically most able and not those identified as being exceptionally talented within, for example, the creative and performing arts or sports.

The term 'most able' students replaces all previous terms such as 'Gifted & Talented', able children etc.

Aims

Her Majesty's Chief Inspector begins his report: '*Too many of our most able children and young people are underperforming in our non-selective state secondary schools.*' It is a primary concern of the Archer Academy to:

- Maintain a culture and ethos that champions the needs of most able students;
- Help most able students to flourish and leave school with the best qualifications;
- Provide first-rate opportunities for most able students to develop the skills, confidence and attitudes needed to succeed at the best universities;
- Find ways of discovering and promoting hidden talent;
- Raise awareness among staff, governors and students about the needs of most able students;
- Encourage, support and evaluate the progress of most able students;
- Support and guide most able students into higher education, including leading universities.

The National Association for Gifted Children (NAGC) has developed ten principles of good practice for schools and we endeavour to secure these at all times:

1. Flexibility in meeting needs;
2. Valuing diversity and dealing with underachievement;

3. A partnership with students and parents;
4. The leadership of the headteacher and Senior Leadership Team;
5. Regular assessment and review with early, prompt intervention;
6. High teacher expectations;
7. Positive attitudes by teachers who are prepared to “Go the extra mile”;
8. Close primary/secondary liaison;
9. Good use of external resources;
10. The absence of labels; working to the child’s strengths.

How we identify most able students

It is the intention of the school to provide an appropriate curriculum and support to enable each student who has been identified as ‘most able’ to realise their potential. It is accepted that this may involve radical solutions to support exceptional children.

Who are the ‘most able’ students? In its June 2013 report, ‘most able’ was defined by Ofsted as the brightest students starting secondary school in Year 7 attaining Level 5 or above, or having the potential to attain Level 5 and above, in English (reading and writing) and/or mathematics at the end of Key Stage 2. Some students who are new to the country and are learning English as an additional language, for example, might not have attained Level 5 or beyond at the end of Key Stage 2 but have the potential to achieve it.

Since the introduction of new end of Key Stage assessment mechanisms, the Department for Education now identifies that students counted as “achieving at a higher standard” at KS2 must have a high scaled score of 110 or more in reading and maths, and have been teacher assessed in writing as “working at greater depth within the expected standard”. This benchmark is used at the Archer Academy to identify our ‘most able’ students, combined with CATs data, generally a score over 120.

The use of scaled score identification was introduced in September 2017 as part of our life beyond levels assessment and curriculum changes across Year 7 and Year 8; as part of the full adoption of the Archer Assessment Scale through ‘Big Ideas’ and ‘Flight paths’.

The DfE defines ‘most able’ student as a cohort of between 5% and 10% of the school’s population. (‘Excellence in Cities - The National Evaluation of a Policy to Raise Standards in Urban Schools’).

The National Academy for Gifted and Talented Youth defines their cohort as the top 5% nationally, requiring two CAT scores of 120+ or very significant achievement in one or more fields.

Application of this policy at the Archer Academy

It is Archer Academy Policy to identify and allocate ‘most able’ students according to KS2 data at the end of Year 6 before the transition to Year 7 (see appendix A). Using CAT tests and teacher recommendations within the first term of Year 7 ‘most able’ students are identified (approximately 10% of the school roll).

Transition from Primary

We look to identify most able students during Year 6 with a view to implementation in Year 7. Identification can be undertaken using a combination of the methods below:

- CAT/SAT scores and other tracking data, including teacher assessment;
- Staff nomination through use of identification checklists;
- Student referral sheets;

- A register of Most Able students;
- Liaison with feeder schools to seek nominations for new Year 7 students;
- Predicted GCSE grades;
- INSET training to enable staff to identify Most Able students;
- Assessment management and analysis and, initially, the KS2 scores that it contains;
- Reference to the framework for progress and those working significantly above national expectations.

All relevant information identifying most able students at the Archer Academy is immediately registered on SIMS so that teachers can respond appropriately. A comprehensive register of these students is circulated regularly to all teachers.

Inclusivity to address differential attainment

The Archer Academy is fully committed to ensuring equitable outcomes for 'most able' students regardless of gender, ethnicity or socio-economic background. Inclusion in the 'most able' cohort is not permanent, although the emotional needs of the child would be a high priority.

Disaffected bright students need to be targeted and supported through differentiated provision to realise their potential. Behavioural problems will never be a reason for non-inclusion, nor will being on the Code of Practice (SEND).

Students eligible for free school meals are a key sub-group within the 'most able' cohort. Effective deployment of the Pupil Premium is vital to prevent the under-achievement of this group in relation to their peers.

The role of mentors in supporting the 'most able' students will be fundamental whether they are the Head of Year, lead teacher for Able, Gifted & Talented Education, 6th form mentors, University student mentors or identified learning mentors.

Students Grouping Policy According to Ability

The Archer Academy deploys a setting system so that the 'most able' students will generally work in the top groups within their cohort. ADHD students or those with SEND requirements in addition to being most able may receive one-to-one or specialist group learning support.

Classwork, the Curriculum and Extension Activities

It is our policy to provide a broad, balanced, creative and academically rigorous curriculum, providing all students with the opportunity to thrive and to demonstrate skills and abilities that might not otherwise come to the fore. Stretch and challenge tasks are provided by all teachers in all classes as part of normal differentiated lesson provision, including homework.

Working with others of a similar ability is important. This is made possible by group work or by the use of setting. Differentiation provides activities requiring higher order thinking skills. The role of the teacher is vital in challenging the thinking of the 'most able' child, as is the learning environment.

The Archer Academy has an on-going commitment to ensure a rigorous programme of academic study in-line with recent DfE and Ofsted guidance. Our accelerated Key Stage 3 curriculum and extended Key Stage 4 curriculum has been reviewed to ensure that it supports, stretches and challenges every student best preparing them for Key Stage Five and beyond.

Funding for 'most able' provision can be through Pupil Premium or other appropriate channels.

Assessment, Tracking and Targets

The Archer Academy provides a detailed term by term evaluation of trends and results for all groups of learners within each cohort. The 'most able' cohort is an integral part of this assessment centred on the number of students achieving:

8 or 9 grade in both Maths and English.

7 or 8 grade in both Maths and English.

Three GCSE grades 8 and 9.

Five GCSE grades 9-6, including English and mathematics

Eight GCSE grades 9-4 ('Best Eight').

Three levels of progress from KS2 to KS4/English and mathematics.

Four levels of progress from KS2 to KS4/English and mathematics (top 25%).

% of students working on the 'Black Flight Path' across Yr7 and Yr8

% of students who are moved up onto the 'Black Flight Path' during Yr7 and Yr8

Assessment is an on-going process from KS2. The Archer Academy provides regular tracking data to all teachers, students and parents, including whether students are above, below or on target. Students are aware of their targets in all subjects. Departments have a responsibility to monitor and track the performance of their 'most able' students in line with the whole school development plan, their departmental development plan and the respective performance of individual students.

The Lead Teacher for Able, Gifted & Talented education develops a 'most able' student's inclusion provision map at the start of each academic year. This provision map is reviewed and refined following each whole school data collection. The provision map identifies specific interventions where there are concerns about progress over time for an individual student.

The Archer Academy believes that the 'most able' students have the potential to do better than the 6 grade implied by the 'expected progress' measure from previously used Level or the combined 110 KS2 score that is now used as a starting point for target setting. This is reflected in the aspirational grades allocated to every student at KS4 and flight paths allocated at KS3.

The future 6th form and University destinations of Archer Academy students will be disseminated widely throughout the school.

Training

Whole staff INSET includes provision for the 'most able' and talented cohort, often delivered in the form of Teaching and Learning training, but sometimes as a specifically focussed session on raising challenge, aspiration or achievement. There are also regular staff meetings that provide opportunities for teachers to discuss student progress and share good practice.

Enrichment

Our enrichment and extra-curricular activities allow students the space, time and support to develop their potential in subjects and wider interests outside of a classroom setting.

We also draw in 'experts' in various fields to provide novel perspectives on school subjects and extra-curricular activities as part of our Bright Ideas Lecture series and Careers Bridge Programme.

We encourage students who show a particular aptitude for a subject or skill to develop their talents, and to have pride in their achievements, whether these are academic, sporting, musical or creative.

Where appropriate we also encourage them to take part in local, regional or national competitions or to attend master-classes at centres of excellence.

Partnership with Parents

Parents and teachers at the Archer Academy work together for the needs of the 'most able'. It is acknowledged that parents can be a rich source of knowledge and expertise. Progression of most able students is enhanced by effective home-school partnerships. Parents of 'most able' students will be consulted about their educational programme by the lead teacher. Parents will be invited to workshops across the key stage to provide them with support.

Pastoral Care

It is essential that the 'most able' student programme embraces the support of the Archer Academy pastoral system. Teachers must be aware that the identification of a student as most able may lead to peer problems. It is also essential that a student's behaviour record is not a barrier to being identified as most able or talented.

The school strives to offer opportunity but without pressure. The school will consider at all times that we deal with whole people with complex needs. Progress will be reviewed as part of the Learning Review Day Programme for all students.

Student voice

Student voice will be solicited annually, as a minimum, as part of the provision map. Student voice exercises will ensure that students identified as most able feel sufficiently challenged in lessons and supported in their aspirations. Information may inform staff professional development and student enrichment activities.

Managing, Co-ordinating and Monitoring

The Assistant Headteacher for Teaching & Learning, has overall responsibility for the 'most able' and talented cohort; supported by the lead teacher for Able, Gifted and Talented Education and the Scholars Programme Co-ordinator. However, the principal responsibility for the implementation of this policy must remain with the classroom teacher.

The lead teacher, supported by the Assistant Headteacher, will co-ordinate provision. They will:

- develop the 'most able' students provision map
- analyse whole school data for the 'most able' student cohort following each data collection point
- support departments in further developing differentiated teaching, curriculum enrichment and extension and ensuring that resources are provided to improve provision for able, gifted, talented
- develop strategies to ensure that high achievement, effort and perseverance are valued and encouraged at individual, tutor group, year and whole school levels.
- report regularly, at least twice per academic year, to the senior leadership team (SLT) and the Governing Body.
- provide continuing professional development (CPD) through induction for NQTs and department heads or their representatives.

- alongside Heads of Department and Heads of Year, monitor and evaluate individual performance of the most able.
- identify and address the needs of underachieving or disaffected able learners.
- liaise with universities, key organisations and other local schools to share good practice and experience.
- provide published resources as available to departments.
- recommend extension and enrichment activities and opportunities.
- provide information and support for parents on how best to support the most able and talented children.
- lead formal student voice exercises, annually as a minimum

The Scholars Programme Co-ordinator will:

- champion the special needs of more able learners; through tailored workshops and student voice activities
- lead the academic scholars programme
- lead and organise additional opportunities for stretch and challenge through partnerships with organisations such as Debate Mate and Urban Scholars
- liaise with Woodhouse College to secure stretch and challenge opportunities, alongside effective preparation for KS5 and beyond
- provide mentoring and support for those on the register as appropriate, through a targeted Academic Mentoring programme.
- to organise and lead on a range of opportunities for students identified as academically gifted and able; such as Philosophy for Children, Book Clubs, Debating, Public Speaking, research and study skills, and entrance into local and national competitions.
- to establish a sustainable model for the independent 'Stretch & Challenge' project across Year 7 and Year 8; providing a bridge to the Extended Project.
- to manage the tracking of student's involvement in activities through the Central Student Register.
- to build relationships with organisations and Universities that provide bespoke provision and opportunities for students identified as academically gifted and able; such as the Sutton Trust, NAGTY, The GT Scholars Programme, MENSA and Potential Plus.
- to promote opportunities for students to take part in outside of school, support their applications and track their involvement.

The effectiveness of the school's provision for its 'most able' cohort is ultimately monitored by outcome, in terms of value-added by academic results, at GCSE but also by motivation to ensure they achieve as well as they can both in lessons, extra-curricular activities and in their post 16 destination of choice.

The evaluation process is designed to assist the SLT, teachers and governors to plan for improvement and to target resources more effectively. It should also increase teacher understanding of what works and engender confidence in order to try new things.

Stretch targets will be published for all most able and talented students at Key Stage Three and Key Stage Four. Departments will self evaluate and review their provision and the outcomes of interventions to inform future able and talented provision.

Most able activities are integrated into performance management, target setting, assessment, planning, and analysis. Whole school monitoring through learning walk reviews and focus marking reviews will be conducted throughout the year to ensure quality and consistency in delivery of most able lesson provision. All school monitoring systems

include a focus on academic challenge. Departments should put in place systems for identifying and addressing underachievement – as part of whole school systems.

The Education & Standards Committee of the Governing Body will monitor and interrogate the progress of most able students as part of its data analysis responsibilities. Aspirational targets, as outlined above, will be used to guide evaluation of our success and areas for development.

Policy review

There is a regular review of the policy and procedures to ensure they are up to date and fit for purpose. We will review this policy every two years and will make amendments as required by national or local changes to procedure.

Documents used to support this policy

1. Ofsted (2009) Gifted and talented pupils in schools
2. Ofsted (2013) G&T Report
3. Ofsted (June 2013) The most able students: Are they doing as well as they should in our non-selective secondary schools?
4. Sutton Trust (July 2012) Educating the highly able
5. Ofsted (2015) The most able students, an update on progress since June 2013

Appendix A

The Archer Academy has a strong policy for most able students which aims to:

- Stretch the most able

Stretching the most able

This will help as many students as possible reach the 3 8-9 grade targets for schools by supporting the most able students in order to realise their potential and achieve the best possible grades.

Appendix B

How to identify the target group for teacher nominations of most able students:

Areas for discussion/to guide discussion

- Types of extra-curricular activity the child likes.
- Reactions to these activities.
- Types of questions they ask.
- Magazines/books/websites/computer games they like.
- Do they enjoy problem solving/thinking games?
- Persevere for long time?
- Do they enjoy taking things apart to see how they work?
- Do they work independently
- Do they use language beyond their age?
- Do they show a particular talent on an instrument or in a sport?

A generic checklist of possible characteristics of a most able student*

- Superior powers of reasoning.

- Ability to transfer knowledge and skills across subjects.
- Ability to categorise knowledge and make independent links between new material and prior learning
- Ability to transfer ways of working and apply skills across topics and subjects.
- Learns new vocabulary quickly.
- Originality and initiative.
- Rapid absorption of material.
- Quick to spot weaknesses
- High personal standards
- Perfectionism
- Absorbed for long periods, impatient with interference.
- Keen powers of observation
- Good at adapting & using materials for purposes other than those for which intended.
- Prefers company of older children/adults.
- Exceptional curiosity.
- Interested in nature of man and universe.
- Can lead/influence others.
- Spots direction of situation long before others.
- Pursues subjects/interests in great depth.
- Individual approach – resists instruction.
- Wide range of interests/unusual hobbies.
- Excellent spatial awareness.
- High non-verbal reasoning ability.

**this checklist is used to guide staff discussions and is not seen as a list of absolutes. A similar list will be developed to support the identification of talented learners.*

The most able underachiever

- Difference between oral and written work.
- Tasks begun well, then rushed/abandoned
- Bored with flashes of brilliance.
- Poor team member.
- Hypercritical of self and others.
- Day-dreamer.
- Performs better when has a good relationship with the teacher.
- Dislikes routine tasks.
- Mood swings.
- Challenges, but not always positively.
- Poor presentation.

Teaching Strategies

- Stretch/Challenge tasks (rather than Extension tasks) for most able students (known as Honours Thinking/Honours Doing)
- Encouraging students to apply prior learning within a new context/subject area
- Test students to devise success criteria for a topic/object
- Open-ended questions as a starting point for extended discussion
- Providing work from the key stage above
- Creative tasks to test students in-depth understanding of a topic

- Sharing top scoring model exemplars with students and asking students to identify examples of success criteria being met
- Self and peer assessment
- Improving work after teacher assessment
- Differentiated independent learning.
- Students to study material/topic for independent learning prior to the class and then build on students' understanding within the classroom
- Most able student to play role of teacher or leader within the group or pair work
- Socratic discussion and questioning
- Talk as a rehearsal for writing – encourage students to always use standard English and academic terminology within class discussions.
- Allow independence and space for students to make mistakes and work through them themselves.
- Students participate in lesson delivery
- Clearly defined research projects with success criteria as independent learning to allow students to explore the subject further.
- The higher the attainment, the less instruction
- Multi-sensory activities.
- Share marking criteria with student before setting task.
- Emphasis abstract as well as basic concepts.
- Giving handicaps so the task is more challenging, for example not being allowed a calculator or only being able to answer in words that are 5 letters or more.
- Encourage students to use knowledge from other subject areas e.g. asking students within a science lesson to come up with economic arguments for and against environmental action.
- Teaching Backwards.
- Encourage out of school interests.
- Work with parents.
- Mentoring with older student/adults.
- Opportunities for Key Stage Five exposure from Year 9 onwards

Inclusive provision

There are 6 different types of gifted and talented students. This means that any student who fits one of these types will be supported to achieve to realise potential. What can I do as a teacher/parent?

As a teacher/parent, you can:

- learn the 6 types of Gifted and Talented personalities;
- use the colour-coded classroom strategies sheet to help students to learn;
- read the pages on 'How to recognise the 6 types in lessons' to help you spot students/your child;
- use the most able questionnaire to identify students'/your child's 'type';

Six types of gifted and talented personalities:

1. The Natural Gift: intuition Let them start when they're ready Why...? Because 'naturals' just 'get it' and learn in 'space'

2. The 'How...?' personality Talent: problem-solving Give them 'steps' to follow (e.g. 1, 2, 3, etc.) Why...? Because 'How...?' personalities need a system

3. The Dreamer Talent: creative thinking Allow them to scribble/doodle if needed Why...? Because this is the way they learn—internally

4. The Silent Worker Gift: internal motivation Have 'silent-working time' in each lesson Why...? Because silent workers need silence to think

5. The Talker Talent: verbal communication. Give specific 'talk' time Why...? Because extended silence makes talkers uneasy

6. The 'Why...?' personality Gift: maturity Give a reason (not "Because I said so.") Why...? Because 'Why?' personalities are mature and question