



MOST ABLE POLICY

This Policy applies to all year groups at Thomas's Schools, including the EYFS.

This Policy should be read in conjunction with Thomas's Assessment, Recording and Reporting Policy, Curriculum, Teaching and Learning Policy, Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Thomas's believes that every child in the school has the right to receive assistance in achieving his or her full potential. This clearly includes pupils who are particularly able. Encouraging the most able pupils is the responsibility of all staff with support from the Senior Leadership Team. The School's philosophy with regards to most able pupils is shared across the group of schools and also with partner institutions where appropriate.

Most Able children are considered to be those who demonstrate a significantly higher level of ability than most pupils of the same age in one or more curriculum areas or in other areas such as leadership or creativity.

2. AIMS

Thomas's aims to offer:

- opportunity through our broad curriculum;
- expertise through our specialist teaching staff;
- confidence through fulfilment;
- contentment through achievement at all levels;
- kindness through the practical application of moral behaviour;
- openness through active partnership with parents.

3. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

3.1 Most Able Leader

- To promote a school ethos in which success is celebrated and staff recognise a shared responsibility for their most able pupils.
- To develop and maintain knowledge of good practice in the management of More and Most Able Pupils.
- To develop and maintain policies and procedures for the definition, identification, provision and monitoring of these pupils.;
- To support staff with the identification of and provision for Most Able pupils.
- To monitor progress and achievements of More and Most Able pupils and feed back to the Senior Leadership Team.
- To lead CPD sessions for members of staff.
- To initiate enrichment activities and extension opportunities within and beyond school.
- To liaise with outside agencies, feeder schools and senior schools

3.2 Members of Staff

- To promote a school ethos in which success is celebrated and acknowledge a shared responsibility for Most Able pupils.
- To be aware of the different abilities of pupils in their class and support/challenge them appropriately.
- To liaise with the Most Able Leader to set individual targets.
- To keep records of attainment and progress to inform future provision.

4. PROCEDURES

4.1 Identification

When identifying particularly able children it is recognised that the pupils may be

- good all-rounders;
 - high achievers in only one area;
 - of high ability but with low motivation;
 - of good verbal ability but poor writing skills;
 - very able with short attention span;
 - very able with poor social skills;
 - keen to disguise their abilities;
- (Deborah Eyre, 1993)

The attitude of the staff is a crucial element in identification, as information has to be gleaned from many different sources and some indicators will be evident only to open-minded, sympathetic and perceptive teachers. A range of available information will be used to identify children who may be underachieving. This may include:

- test results, including evidence of underachievement;
- detailed records from previous classes;
- discussion with the child;
- good communication between teachers, including the completion of our subject checklists for particular abilities where the teacher feels that it is appropriate;
- formal classroom observations;
- parental information;

- continuous assessment by the teacher of tasks which are open-ended enough to allow the child to show what he or she can do;
- teacher familiarity with the characteristics of able children;
- detailed individual assessment by an educational psychologist if the co-ordinator for able, gifted and talented pupils feels it is appropriate;

4.2 Provision throughout the school

The School aims to create a climate in which success is valued by everyone and where individual differences are accepted. This will involve:

- a Most Able register for all year groups;
- the identification of the particular needs of able children in all our planning;
- the provision of appropriate resources;
- the encouragement of children to be independent in their learning and taking ownership of their own learning. This will include the provision of opportunities for them to organise their own work, access the resources they need, work unaided, make their own choices about work, evaluate what they are doing and be self-critical;
- flexibility of organisation which might include withdrawal, setting for a particular subject, cross-curricular enrichment projects or partial acceleration, thereby providing opportunities for the able child to work with others of similar ability. (We do not move Most Able pupils out of their age-appropriate forms, although they may attend some classes with older pupils);
- celebration of achievement;
- regular reviews with class teachers to identify reasons for underachievement of able, gifted and talented pupils and implement strategies to address their needs.

Where a child is identified as being ‘exceptionally able’ the school will provide them with suitable enrichment. The child will have an IEP and be assigned a staff mentor within the appropriate area. The mentor will assist the Most Able Leader and Head of Department/Subject Leader in setting and reviewing IEP targets and help facilitate the child’s learning and enjoyment of the specific area of talent. They will liaise with the parents and classroom teachers to assist with teaching strategies and ways that they can help enrich their child’s learning through opportunities outside of the classroom with external agencies.

4.2 Provision within the classroom

It is important to establish what prior knowledge, understanding and skills the pupils have so that time is not wasted or the pupil demotivated by unnecessary repetition or duplication.

The power of peer group pressure to under-achieve will not be under-estimated and will be confronted with sensitivity to both parties. Alongside this the case of the “bright but lazy” pupil is also acknowledged and will be targeted for particular challenge and motivation.

Provision within the classroom aims to:

- provide appropriate challenge through high quality tasks for enrichment and extension (providing for different starting points and not “more of the same”) growing out of the subject/topic being studied by the whole class;
- extend pupils’ thinking skills through effective questioning, open-ended challenges and higher order thinking skills activities;
- plan work so that extension tasks are always available for able children, allowing for flexibility to adapt to changing needs/directions;

- differentiate appropriately through stimuli, resources, tasks, outcomes and responses;
- provide wide variety in what is prepared for the pupils and in what they are asked to do;
- set individual targets, not class targets;
- set individual homework where appropriate;
- encourage pupils to become independent learners by:
 - organising their own work;
 - carrying out unaided tasks which stretch their capabilities;
 - making choices about their work;
 - developing the ability to evaluate their work and so become self-critical;
 - taking ownership of their learning.

4.3 Provision beyond the classroom:

Outside the classroom environment Thomas's aims to provide:

- a wide range of extra-curricular activities including after-school clubs, invitational sports clubs, instrumental lessons, choirs, orchestra, extra drama, ballet;
- preparation for scholarships and exhibitions at senior schools in Years 6 to 8 for academic, artistic, sporting and dramatic arts talents;
- internal awards in music and art;
- opportunities for entering competitions;
- guidance and support for pupils in accessing opportunities to develop their specialism out of school;
- the use of outside agencies and experts where appropriate.

5. MONITORING

The Most Able Leader will monitor the progress and achievement of all pupils on the Most Able Register and update targets in the light of data and feedback from members of staff. The list will also be reviewed regularly to reflect the ongoing abilities of the cohort.

6. POLICY REVIEW RECORD

This policy will be reviewed every two years unless there is a change in legislation		
Created: January 2000	By:	Jill Kelham, Vice Principal
Latest Review: March 2021	By:	Joanna Copland, Vice Principal Simon Lucas, Most Able Lead, Battersea Kathryn Mousa, Head of Learning Enrichment, Clapham Danielle Taylor, Most Able Lead, Fulham Hannah Morris, Most Able Lead, Kensington
Approved: March 2021	By:	Tobyn Thomas, Ben Thomas, Principals Simon O'Malley, Head, Thomas's Battersea Prep School Ben Thomas, Head, Thomas's Battersea Senior School Phil Ward, Head, Thomas's Clapham Annette Dobson, Head, Thomas's Fulham Jo Ebner, Head, Thomas's Kensington
Next Review: April 2023	By:	Joanna Copland, Vice Principal Cross-School Leads

