



The Federation Of Middleham CE VA And Spennithorne CE VC Primary Schools

Most Able and Talented Policy

1. Introduction

At both Middleham and Spennithorne CE Primary Schools, we recognise that each child is unique, displaying a range of intelligences and abilities. It is our policy to enable all children, including those who are 'most able and talented' to develop their full potential academically, socially and spiritually. We use the term 'most able and talented' rather than 'gifted and talented' since this indicates that every school has its own most able children within any cohort.

(Note: from this point forward the acronym MAT will be used for the expression 'most able and talented'.)

2. Rationale

In identifying MAT pupils in our school and providing suitably differentiated learning experiences, we are responding to OFSTED as well as to the LA and national initiatives with regard to special provision for this group of children.

'A growing body of evidence is emerging to suggest that if a school looks systematically at its provision for the most able, then overall school standards will rise.' Able Pupils in Ordinary Schools - Deborah Eyre.

3. Aims:

- to promote an ethos in which success and achievement across the identified range of intelligences (See Appendix 1) is recognised and celebrated throughout the school
- to meet the particular educational, social and personal needs of MAT pupils
- to raise achievement of all children and in particular those who may be underachieving by providing enjoyable, exciting and challenging experiences, in a stimulating and supportive environment
- to develop effective partnerships between school, parents and outside agencies
- to monitor and evaluate the procedures which have been established as a result of the implementation of this policy.

4. Objectives:

- to involve children in decisions made about their learning
- to develop staff expertise in the recognition and provision for children with special abilities and talents
- to develop a model of good practice throughout the school which caters for MAT children, and is easily understood and implemented by staff as part of their routine planning and classroom practice
- to enable a consistent approach for MAT children in each year group
- to provide opportunities for MAT children to work at higher skill and/or cognitive levels
- to improve continuity and progression including transfers between year groups and key stages.

5. Agreed Definitions:

'Pupils who achieve, or have the ability to achieve, at a level significantly in advance of their peers. This may be in all areas of the curriculum or in a limited range.' Deborah Eyre

'... the most able 5 to 10% of pupils from each school. These are pupils who achieve or have the ability to achieve at a level significantly in advance of the average for the year group in their school.' DFE

The staff at FEDMAS accepts all of the above statements as true definitions of more able and talented pupils. We also recognise that children described as more able and talented have specific needs.

6. Creating an ethos for MAT Pupils

In this school, it is our aim that:

- all pupils know that they are valued and cared for and have some special recognised talent .
- it is acceptable to have special talents identified and celebrated
- success is celebrated; academic, musical, sporting, caring, leadership etc. through assemblies, privately and in front of peers, staff and parents including both verbal recognition and letters/notes home
- 'failure' is understood to be an integral part of learning and is a valuable opportunity to make progress
- we build self-esteem - crucial to the wholesome development of all our pupils including the MAT
- we are sensitive to the social and emotional needs that may effect some MAT pupils i.e. self-critical, unable to cope with failure, difficulty relating to others
- we emphasise the positive and learn with optimism and good humour
- pupils value coming to our school
- we develop a valued rewards system which appeals to all pupils
- all pupils are active participants and contribute their own learning
- MAT pupils value challenge and are able to take educational 'risks'
- challenge for improvement does not result in pupil stress

7. Identification

We recognise the importance of early identification, assessment and provision for children who are very able. Our intention is to obtain a broad profile of MAT pupils using a range of criteria, which will include:

- teacher referral from observations and assessments
- standardised test and target-setting information
- performance in investigative maths/science and/or non-verbal reasoning tests
- subject-specific checklist of advanced performance criteria
- observations of others in different settings e.g. coach, parents, peers
- reading 'signals' from MAT children e.g. behaviour, comments, attitude

We recognise that each of the above components has advantages and worth but each also has limitations and drawbacks and so a 'net' approach, incorporating as many methods as possible, would be advantageous and more reliable.

8. MAT Registration

- class teachers, in consultation with the headteacher, will draw up class registers
- registers will be inclusive rather than exclusive and will commence during the foundation stage.
- our aim is to include as many of the pupils as possible on the register by looking carefully at the multiple intelligences as described in the work of Howard Gardner
- the MAT register will be informed by test results, teacher referral, pupil and parental nomination.
- records of pupils moving to different classes or schools will include any relevant information from the MAT register.
- pupils new to the school will be assessed as soon as possible.
- teachers will take account of the transfer records passed on from previous schools as well as parental and other evidences when updating the MAT register.

10. Monitoring

Provision for MAT pupils will be monitored through:

- medium term planning by subject coordinators
- short term planning by teachers
- classroom observations by headteacher

Children's progress will be closely monitored through:

- the school's assessment and record keeping systems
- review of children's targets (including IEP's for the 'severely gifted')
- annual staff review of MAT register

12. Review; and Development

Policy and practise will be reviewed in line with the school's policy review schedule. This review will include:

- manageability of identification procedures
- accuracy of identification procedures
- successful classroom strategies and programmes
- the effectiveness of current resources
- progress achieved by MAT pupils in each year group
- standards achieved in core subjects
- evidence that children are developing strategies to facilitate their own learning
- involvement of MAT pupils in non-core subject and non-curricular areas in occasional 'special projects' and/or 'special responsibilities' to further develop their identified talents and abilities.

This policy has been agreed and updated in line with the school's policy review schedule.

APPENDIX 1

Characteristics of the Intelligence in Curricular Terms

Mathematics

Pupils show their special talents in mathematics in a range of ways and at varying points in their development. Pupils who are gifted in mathematics are likely to:

- learn and understand mathematical ideas quickly;
- work systematically and accurately;
- be more analytical;
- think logically and see mathematical relationships;
- make connections between the concepts they have learned;
- identify patterns easily;
- apply their knowledge to new or unfamiliar contexts;
- communicate their reasoning and justify their methods;
- ask questions that show clear understanding of, and curiosity about, mathematics;
- take a creative approach to solving mathematical problems;
- sustain their concentration throughout longer tasks and persist in seeking solutions;
- be more adept at posing their own questions and pursuing lines of enquiry.

Some pupils who are gifted in mathematics perform at levels that are unusually advanced for their age. For example, a seven-year-old may work confidently with the mathematics described at level 3 in the national curriculum and begin to work successfully with concepts described at level 4. Other pupils with exceptional mathematical potential may not demonstrate it in this way. For example, pupils may have high levels of mathematical reasoning but be unable to communicate their ideas well orally or in writing. Sometimes gifted pupils reject obvious methods and answers as too easy, and opt for something more obscure. In these cases, formal testing alone is insufficient as a basis for identification. It is often helpful for teachers to provide enrichment and extension activities and to observe pupil responses to challenging activities.

Literacy

Creative flair

- writing or talking in imaginative and coherent ways
- elaborating on and organising content to an extent that is exceptional for their age

Stamina and perseverance

- using any suitable opportunities to produce work that is substantial and obviously the product of sustained, well-directed effort

Communicative skills

- involving and keeping the attention of an audience by exploiting the dramatic or humorous potential of ideas or situations in imaginative ways
- taking a guiding role in helping a group to achieve its shared goals, while showing sensitivity to the participation of others
- writing with a flair for metaphorical or poetic expression
- grasping the essence of particular styles and adapting them to their own purposes
- expressing ideas succinctly and elegantly, in ways that reflect an appreciation of the knowledge and interests of specific audiences
- using ICT to research ideas and create new text

Ability to take on demanding tasks

researching, comparing and synthesising information from a range of different sources, including ICT
engaging seriously and creatively with moral and social themes expressed in literature

Arguing and reasoning

creating and sustaining accounts and reasoned arguments at a relatively abstract or hypothetical level, in both spoken and written language

grasping the essence of any content and reorganising it in ways that are logical and offer new syntheses or insights

justifying opinions convincingly, using questions and other forms of enquiry to elicit information and taking up or challenging others' points of view

Awareness of language

understanding the nature of language and showing a special awareness of features such as rhyme, intonation or accent in spoken language, and the grammatical organisation of written texts

showing an interest and enthusiasm for language study, including an awareness of the relationship between the sounds and words of different languages that are not apparent to most of their peers.

Some pupils who are gifted in English may generally perform at levels of literacy or oral skills that are notably advanced for their age group. For example, the attainments in English of some 7-11 and 14-year-olds may be best described by aspects of national curriculum levels 4, 6 and 8 respectively. Other pupils may have unusual abilities in specific areas -- such as poetry, drama, or their understanding of the nature and structure of language -- while being unexceptional in the rest of their English work. In these cases, it may be hard to relate pupils' ability to level descriptions.

Science

Pupils who are gifted in science are likely to:

be extremely interested in finding out more about themselves and things around them

enjoy researching obscure facts and applying scientific theories, ideas and models when explaining a range of phenomena

be able to sustain their interest and go beyond an obvious answer to underlying mechanisms and greater depth

be inquisitive about how things work and why things happen (they may be dissatisfied with simplified explanations and insufficient detail)

ask many questions, suggesting that they are willing to hypothesise and speculate

use different strategies for finding things out (practical and intellectual) -- they may be able to miss out steps when reasoning the answers to problems

think logically, providing plausible explanations for phenomena (they may be methodical in their thinking, but not in their recording)

put forward objective arguments, using combinations of evidence and creative ideas, and question other people's conclusions (including their teacher's!)

decide quickly how to investigate fairly and manipulate variables

consider alternative suggestions and strategies for investigations

analyse data or observations and spot patterns easily

strive for maximum accuracy in measurements of all sorts, and take pleasure, for example, from reading gauges as accurately as possible (sometimes beyond the accuracy of the instrument)

make connections quickly between facts and concepts they have learned, using more extensive vocabulary than their peers

enjoy challenges and problem solving, while often being self-critical

Music

Pupils who are talented in music are likely to:

be captivated by sound and engage fully with music

select an instrument with care and then be unwilling to relinquish the instrument

find it difficult not to respond physically to music

memorise music quickly without any apparent effort, be able to repeat more complex rhythmical and melodic phrases given by the teacher and repeat melodies (sometimes after one hearing)

sing and play music with a natural awareness of the musical phrase -- the music makes sense

demonstrate the ability to communicate through music, for example to sing with musical expression and with confidence

Pupils more often show their musical talent through the quality of their response than the complexity of their response. Musical quality is very difficult to define in words, as music is a different form of communication to language. The closest we can get is to say that it 'sounds right': skills and techniques are used to communicate an intended mood or effect. Pupils who have a talent for music show a particular affinity with sound. This type of talent is sometimes hard to identify, especially when it is not combined with more general giftedness. It is however often most significant, since it may be a pupil's only route to real success, increasing their self-esteem and motivation for other areas of learning.

History

They may:

- show particular skill at inference and deduction when reading texts;
- synthesise information to present a cogent summary;
- use subject-specific vocabulary confidently;
- follow and contribute effectively to a line of argument in discussion by making relevant contributions and substantiating points with evidence;
- access complex source materials with growing independence.

Historical knowledge

They may:

- have an extensive general knowledge, including a significant amount of historical knowledge;
- develop with ease a chronological framework within which to place existing and new knowledge;
- demonstrate a strong sense of period as a result of study.

Historical understanding

They may:

- understand and apply historical concepts to their study of history;
- be able to draw generalisations and conclusions from a range of sources of evidence;
- seek to identify patterns and processes in what they study, while being aware of the provisional nature of knowledge;

Enquiry

They may:

- be able to establish and follow a line of enquiry, identifying and using relevant information;
- be good at reasoning and problem solving;
- think flexibly, creatively and imaginatively;
- show discrimination when selecting facts and evaluating historical evidence;
- be intrigued by the similarities and differences between different people's experiences, times and places and other features of the past;
- thrive on controversy, mystery and problems of evidence;

Geography

Pupils who are gifted in geography are likely to:

understand concepts clearly so that they can apply this understanding to new situations in order to make interpretations, develop hypotheses, reach conclusions and explore solutions they understand geographical ideas and theories, and apply them to real situations;

communicate effectively using both the written and spoken word, they communicate knowledge, ideas and understanding in ways that are appropriate to the task and audience (for example, writing formal letters and reports, producing brochures representing particular groups). They learn subject-specific vocabulary, use it accurately and are able to define words;

reason, argue and think logically, showing ability to manipulate abstract symbols and recognise patterns and sequences they use and apply mathematical principles (such as area, shape, spatial distribution) and formulae to solve

geographical tasks and problems. They identify their own geographical questions and establish sequences of investigation. They understand, and are able to explain, complex processes and interrelationships (for example, within and between physical and human environments;

enjoy using graphs, charts, maps, diagrams and other visual methods to present information

be confident and contribute effectively when taking part in less formal teaching situations they take part readily in role-play situations or simulations and enjoy contributing to outdoor fieldwork;

have a wide-ranging general knowledge about the world, they have good knowledge of where places are in the world and of topical issues;

be able to transfer knowledge from one subject to another they transfer their knowledge of physics, for example, to understanding climate. Or they transfer knowledge of the industrial revolution from history to help explain the location of industry in the UK;

be creative and original in their thinking suggesting solutions to a problem If faced with the problem of congested roads, they might suggest taxing cars more heavily, improving public transport or changing land use patterns, rather than building bigger roads.

Art and Design

Pupils who are talented in art and design are likely to:

think and express themselves in creative, original ways

have a strong desire to create in a visual form

push the boundaries of normal processes, they take risks without knowing what the outcome will be; they change ideas to take into account new influences or outcomes

show an interest in the art and design of the world

use materials, tools and techniques skilfully and learn new approaches easily, they are keen to extend their technical abilities and sometimes get frustrated when other skills do not develop at the same time

explore ideas, and sources on their own and collaboratively, with a sense of purpose and meaning

critically evaluate visual work and other information, they apply ideas to their own work in innovative ways

exploit the characteristics of materials and processes, they use materials and processes in creative, practical and

inventive ways; they explore alternatives and respond to new possibilities and meanings

understand that ideas and meanings in their own and others' work can be interpreted in different ways

ICT

Pupils who are gifted in ICT are likely to:

demonstrate ICT capability significantly above that expected for their age, for example, key stage 2 pupils may be comfortable meeting the demands of the key stage 3 curriculum

learn and apply new ICT techniques quickly, for example, pupils use shortcut keys for routine tasks effectively and appropriately; they quickly apply techniques for integrating applications such as mail merge and databases

use initiative to exploit the potential of more advanced features of ICT tools, for example, pupils investigate the HTML source code of a website and apply features such as counters or frames to their own web designs

transfer and apply ICT skills and techniques confidently in new contexts, for example, having learned about spreadsheet modelling in a mathematical context, they recognise the potential of applying a similar model in a science investigation

explore independently beyond the given breadth of an ICT topic, for example, they decide independently to validate information they have found from a website; having learned control procedures for a simple traffic light model, they extend their procedure to include control of a pedestrian crossing

initiate ideas and solve problems, use ICT effectively and creatively, develop systems that meet personal needs and interests, for example, they create an interactive fan club website that sends out a monthly newsletter to electronic subscribers (either working on their own, or collaboratively with peers)

PE

Pupils who are talented in PE are likely to show many or all of the following characteristics in their performance and approach to PE, sport and dance.

Effective performance

They may:

be able to reflect on processes and outcomes in order to improve performance, understanding the close and changing relationship between skill, fitness and the tactics or composition of their performance

be creative, original and adaptable, responding quickly to new challenges and situations, and often finding new and innovative solutions to them.

Body skilfulness and awareness

They may:

have a high degree of control and coordination of their bodies

show strong awareness of their body in space

combine movements fluently, precisely and accurately in a range of contexts and activities.

Some pupils may have unusual abilities in specific aspects of the programme of study or areas of activity, such as:

evaluating and improving performance through leadership

acquiring, developing and performing advanced skills and techniques

specific strengths in general areas, such as games activities or dance activities.

Some pupils perform at high levels in sport or dance in the community, for example basketball, high jump, jazz dance or sailing. In some cases, these pupils' performance may be too specific to be easily related to the national curriculum level descriptions for PE.

RE

Pupils who are gifted in RE are likely to:

make sense of, and draw meaning from, religious symbols, metaphors, texts and practices;

be sensitive to, or aware of, the numinous or the mystery of life, and have a feeling for how these are explored and expressed;

understand, apply and transfer ideas and concepts across topics in RE and into other religious and cultural contexts.

Giftedness in RE is not the same as being spiritually gifted.

14. Characteristics of Intelligences in Non-Curricular Terms

'All human abilities and talents are to be cherished and nourished'

- Effective provision for Able and Talented Children Barry Teare 1997

Interpersonal

- is trusted with other children's secrets and problems
- is comfortable in the presence of strangers
- prefers group activities to individual ones
- has at least three close friends
- is willing to help other children with their work
- may take part in activities which help the community
- can explain why other children behave as they do
- generally affirms rather than contradicts the views of others
- communicates verbally and facially

Intrapersonal

- deeply reflective and will ask searching questions
- worries about 'unknown' events
- demonstrates intensity when reading

- shows genuine concern about events in the news
- desires justice and fairness
- prefers working alone
- strong belief systems
- emotions may override logic
- has some difficulty in communicating own ideas effectively
- becomes easily frustrated and may want to 'give up'

Leadership

- organises group tasks and designates jobs
- takes on important tasks themselves
- clarifies parameters of a task with the teacher
- will see a task through to completion
- other children show a reliance on them
- peers will nominate them as leaders or captains
- has a high level of self-esteem
- communicates forthrightly with a confident tone
- prone to mistakes due to the risks they are prepared to take
- prefer to be actively engaged in a practical task than to listen or read

Organisational

- meticulous in preparation to work - titles, dates, underlines etc.
- quality of writing is the best that they are capable of
- arithmetic work is carefully spaced
- personal space is invariably tidy
- usually properly equipped for P.E. swimming and games lessons (within confines of family budget)
- remember important home/school tasks
- demonstrate an ordered approach to tasks
- often slower than others to complete a task
- show a willingness to tidy up areas of the classroom
- suggest to the teacher classroom tasks which need attention
- make good monitors for 'persistent jobs'

Practical

- demonstrates enthusiasm in design technology work
- handles tools well and makes good models
- can foresee pitfalls in practical tasks
- enjoys practical science and spatial mathematics
- will attempt to fix computers which have malfunctioned
- reads books of a pictorial and non-fictional type
- enjoys doing jigsaw and similar practical puzzles
- displays interest in shape space and measures but not in computation
- writing and presentation skills may be underdeveloped
- preferred learning styles are kinaesthetic/visual with very little aural

Both curricular and non- curricular intelligences will be identified on an individual class

APPENDIX 2

Provision

It is envisaged that the majority of children identified, as being MAT will benefit from a suitably differentiated curriculum within the normal class setting. Such activities will be identified as a matter of course in teachers' weekly planning. Severely gifted children (described as the top 1 to 2% of the national population) may require an IEP.

Provision may include:

- planning work from a higher level within the National Curriculum and 'Strategies'
- open-ended whole-class situations where MAT pupils can achieve at their own level
- differentiated homework tasks
- mentoring by a similarly-talented or appropriately-skilled adult
- special competitions
- observation of visiting specialists e.g. poets, actors, artists
- involvement in special projects, requiring their own talents
- allocating responsibilities that makes use of their special talents

APPENDIX 3

Needs of the MAT pupil

- opportunity to work at an increased pace
- less practise at tasks
- less detailed instruction
- more independence of study
- a reduced number of steps in a process
- open-ended situations
- abstract tasks
- the need to fail
- a wide variety of opportunities
- creative opportunities
- to be treated as a child whatever the intellectual level reached
- to have a balance of work and play
- contact with teachers and peers
- challenging questioning
- the opportunity to take risks in an organised way
- to develop high

