

AQUINAS Church of England Education Trust

"Life - Transforming - Learning"

Policy Title:	More Able and Talented
Responsibility:	More Able Leader
Review Body:	Head of School and Executive Head
Date:	September 2017
Review:	September 2019

Purpose

The academies in the Aquinas Church of England Education Trust (the 'Trust') are committed to providing an education which meets the needs of all learners and as such see provision for more able is integral to quality first teaching. We aim to provide challenge for all learners which stretches and excites them. The academies encourage effective effort and intellectual growth within environments which also stimulate and celebrate excellence. We want all our learners to aim for the highest academic standards and make best possible progress. We seek out and recognise innate talent, allowing pupils to develop this through practice and a wide range of opportunities. We encourage creativity, independence and self-management.

Academically more able learners are described as "those who have abilities in one or more academic subjects such as mathematics or English." As such academically more able learners will perform above national expectations in English or mathematics with more able learners performing well in all or some of their other subjects. The academies nurture and develop talent and provide opportunities through the timetabled and extended curriculum to discover, extend, enrich and use individual talent. Intelligences are cultivated through learning and are not fixed traits.

The purpose of this policy is to provide an overview of the principles and practices of our individual academies. Through high quality provision, which reflects the needs of more able pupils, the academies are able to improve learning opportunities for all pupils. Teaching and learning in our academies promotes effort and achievement but also celebrates the excitement of excellence.

Common Characteristics

Research has identified characteristics which may be evident in some more able pupils. A pupil may have one, none or many of these characteristics. The characteristics themselves do not imply that a pupil is more able. When planning a curriculum and learning opportunities it is important that teachers are aware that these characteristics may exist.

- Pupils often enjoy a creative and sometimes more cross curricular approach to teaching and learning.
- They often have a passionate interest in a particular area, for example a specific period of history or aspect of science.
- They can be more acutely aware of their progress and rapidly become despondent if they start to fall behind their peers.
- They may have less emotional maturity, despite being academically more able.
- They have more diverse learning preferences and approaches and therefore need a wider variety of teaching strategies.

- They often find it difficult to fit in and work with their peers.
- They might only do the minimum amount of work, if not sufficiently academically stretched; they need to be 'pushed to deeper thinking'.
- They can have a disparity between their cognitive ability and their written outcomes as they can become impatient with the process of writing;
- They may feel reluctant to display their ability or talent.

Expectations for Teaching

Through Quality First Teaching, teachers in the academies are able to personalise teaching to meet the varying needs of all pupils. Planning includes sharp objectives, clear success criteria and effective monitoring. The teachers demand high levels of pupil interaction, involvement and engagement with their learning. The teachers will use effective questioning, modelling and explanation to support learning. They will make regular use of encouragement and authentic praise to engage and motivate pupils. There is an expectation that pupils will accept responsibility for their own learning and learn to work independently. Teachers will liaise with parents to support the efforts, aspirations and progress of the pupils. Teachers will provide precise and effective feedback so that pupils are able to make rapid progress and gain a greater depth of understanding in their work. Teaching is further enhanced by the commitment to extend pupils who have an interest and ability to take their studies further or to develop talent.

- Teachers and those supporting learning will have a secure subject knowledge and how this relates to other areas of the curriculum;
- Teachers will have an excellent understanding of progression within their subject, particularly in relation to achievement at the higher levels;
- Teaching will include opportunities for creativity;
- There will be a clear focus on higher order thinking and extension of subject vocabulary;
- Pupils will be given opportunities to develop collaborative working skills with adults and peers that can be transferred back into the classroom;
- Teaching will foster independence with opportunities for pupils to lead and make choices;
- Pupils will have opportunities to plan and complete extended, in-depth writing;
- Pupils will have opportunities to take risks, to explore, to reflect on ideas and make useful mistakes;
- Teaching will develop questioning skills and curiosity.

Curriculum Provision for Academically More Able Pupils

Curriculum provision includes the timetabled lessons and the extended curriculum. The individual academies design a curriculum which meets the needs of all pupils but also has additional opportunities for more able pupils. A curriculum for the academically more able includes classroom expectations which are of the highest possible standard. Differentiation is a feature of all lessons at all levels. The extended curriculum includes a wide variety of opportunities which may develop from the timetabled curriculum or which draws on personal interest or which develops talent. The extended curriculum programme provides rich opportunities for talents that might otherwise remain hidden – particularly where the activities are not covered as part of the timetabled curriculum. The curriculum provision reflects the needs and interests of the individual academy communities. Where it is beneficial to the pupils, the academies work collaboratively to enhance their provision, provide opportunities for more able pupils to work with others and draw from best practice.

Differentiation

Differentiation is an important feature of all teaching across the Trust. Regardless of age, ability or setting arrangements, differentiation will be planned for and evident within lessons. Pupils need a wide variety of experiences to meet their needs and as such differentiation can be used in different ways to provide this. Types of differentiation include: outcome; task; process; personalisation; choice and self-direction.

When differentiating by **outcome** there must be clearly planned strategies to provide appropriate challenge which may include:

- A clear link to challenging pupils for next steps;
- Opportunities for pupils to take ownership of their learning with awareness of personal targets;
- Clear learning objectives and success criteria for different abilities: must have...; even better if...; star task...;
- Class or year group related, non-negotiables: 'we always....' (e.g. start sentences with capital letters);
- Use of differentiated success criteria – with extra challenge points for every group;
- Opportunities for pupil-teacher dialogue through conferencing.

Differentiation by **task** must be carefully planned so as not to include artificial or repetitive tasks and not to create a 'glass ceiling' for learning:

- Teachers will look to see how learning objectives can be met, setting a main task, then presenting additional challenge (or support where needed);
- They will be flexible with opportunities for challenge to include pupils with different strengths and confidence areas (i.e. not restricting challenge to established groups);
- They will allow pupils to choose their level of challenge, including training them to seek challenge as part of an 'effective pupil' mantra;
- They will encourage pupils to pose their own questions – challenging their knowledge and leading to deeper research;
- More able pupils may be asked to begin from a different starting point/angle than the main task;
- Challenge can be linked to adult support level, i.e. levels of independent work, or guidance.

Differentiation by **process** reflects the style of teaching and the variety of methods used to support learning. This is often evident through effective pupil talk and high quality questioning. The lesson may provide time for reflection or periods of silent concentrated individual writing. Differentiation by **personalisation** can be evident in a variety of formats: it may be evident through the marking and response. There may be additional challenges which are achieved by the pupil within the lesson or there may be a separate programme of study followed for a given period of time. The personalisation may include utilisation of particular learning styles to accelerate progress. Personalisation may also be seen through provision, including small group and one to one tutoring. Teaching assistants or other adults can be used to support learning as tutors but there are important conditions:

- A close collegiate understanding will exist between teacher and tutor;
- Other adults can be used to support the more able groups working independently while class teaching continues;
- The class teacher and other adults should have an ethos of 'team teaching';
- Other adults must be fully involved in providing challenging feedback and further questioning – endorsing their professional relationship to the teacher.

Differentiation through **choice and self-direction** is evident in all good EYFS learning environments. Pupils can become deskilled in this through a tendency to be compliant and follow classroom routines. Where

teachers plan for independence and self-directed learning it is possible for pupils to achieve more than they may have considered possible. The effectiveness of this approach is affected by the degree to which this can be supported and the relationship between adult and child.

Learning Environment

The quality of the learning environment is an important feature of provision for all pupils. Displays should have a clear purpose which promotes learning and attitudes to learning. The atmosphere in the classrooms and around the academy supports learning and personal development. Facilities such as high quality libraries will be accessible to pupils. The learning environment will enable children to:

- Experience failure or difficulty in a nurturing environment;
- Experience higher order thinking and questioning skills;
- Experience displays which enable self-direction and independent thinking, as well as celebrating their achievements;
- Experience a range of challenging investigations.

Identification of More Able Pupils and Monitoring Progress

The progress of all pupils is tracked throughout the year by class teachers, subject leaders, phase leaders and senior leaders within each of the academies. This progress is monitored by the Management Board and Executive Board within the Trust. The progress of more able pupils is tracked separately in order to ensure that pupils arriving at the academy as 'academically more able' are able to make at least expected progress (and, in very many cases, far stronger than expected progress). The Trust uses an agreed assessment tool to standardise the information held on each pupil. Where an academically more able pupil is at risk of not achieving potential this will be communicated to the learner and parent with appropriate intervention put in place. This can include: working with parents, mentoring, additional support from teachers and in some cases counselling or external support.

Identification and Development of Talent

The Trust recognises that all children regardless of academic ability have God given talents. Many of these talents can be identified and nurtured within an educational environment. Opportunities can be created within the curriculum, through extra-curricular clubs and through leadership or community opportunities. Academies are committed to the identification of talent and to provision which is consistent and well-planned, allowing talent to be fostered. The Trust seeks out resources and activities to stimulate this talent. Events are organised to provide opportunities for pupils to meet others from different academies within the Trust and to work with them or compete against them at events.

Celebrating Excellence

Academies in the Trust focus daily on the efforts made by the pupils and the progress they make. Where effort leads to excellent outcomes this is recognised and celebrated. This may include: achievement assemblies; certificates of achievement; home contact; meetings with senior leaders or prize-giving events. Successes are also often displayed separately on the academy or Trust website, through newsletters and on display screens within the academies.

6th form Provision

Opportunities for 6th form include a careers academy and the Extended Project Qualification (EPQ). Students are given leadership and mentoring roles, they engage in volunteering and have opportunities to showcase talent. All students are given the opportunity to take part in a programme designed to prepare them for the nature of the study of their preferred degree subject. Many students take advantage of the opportunity to undertake university interview practice with specialist staff and experts. Advice is given to students and their parents in relation to: Interviews; personal statements and suitable preparatory work. Students have opportunities to visit universities and participate in conferences. Visiting speakers regularly visit the academy as a part of a programme for raising aspirations and students are given additional help and advice when making Oxbridge or medical applications. Students have opportunities to attend bespoke events at the colleges.

Evaluation of Provision

Each academy has an appointed senior leader who takes responsibility for the monitoring and evaluation of provision for and performance of more able pupils. The Trust oversees the provision and enhances it through the SSSC committee so that pupils in all academies benefit from the good practice which exists across the Trust. Through membership of NACE, academies are encouraged to work towards the NACE Challenge Award and as such will begin to evaluate against these standards. Each subject leader is responsible for evaluating the effectiveness within subject. Student voice, lesson observation, quality assurance and work sampling to evaluate teaching and learning provision in the academy is routine. Appropriate action points are integrated into the academies’ improvement plans and the Trust’s development plan.

Roles and Responsibilities

All staff working within the classroom and all academy leaders are responsible for provision, progress and welfare of more able and talented pupils. Each academy has a more able and talented leader who has an ongoing responsibility for more able and talented provision:

- To write, review and update academy policy in line with Trust Policy;
- To track performance of pupils identified as high ability;
- To monitor planning and assessment to make sure that it meets the needs of more able pupils;
- To provide professional development for staff when required;
- To quality assure the learning environment and resources;
- To oversee the development of suitable extra-curricular activities for the pupils;
- To engage with the Trust network to develop across Trust opportunities;
- To work with outside providers to enhance provision.

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Signed:

Role:

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Signed:

Role:



Resources and Activities to Stimulate and Challenge More Able Pupils

Membership

All academies in the Trust have membership of **NACE** (National Association for Able Children in Education) which supports teachers to provide excellent teaching and learning for more able and talented pupils.

<http://www.nace.co.uk/>

IGGY is a part of the University of Warwick and is a no fee global educational social network designed for more able 13-18 year olds.

<https://www.iggy.net>

Assessment

Rising Stars assessments are used as a part of the Trust's Assessment and Tracking provision

<http://www.risingstars-uk.com/>

Mathematics Resources/Activities

Apex problem solving tasks

<http://education.cambridge.org/as/subject/mathematics/apex-maths-uk-edition>

Brain Academy (Rising Stars)

<http://www.risingstars-uk.com/series/brain-academy>

N Rich (university of Cambridge)

<http://nrich.maths.org>

Mathletics

<http://www.mathletics.co.uk>

Science Resources/Activities

BBC Focus Magazine

Art and Design Resources/Activities

National Gallery 'Take One Picture' project

<http://www.takeonepicture.org>

Clubs in Academies

Chislehurst's chess club teaches chess to pupils aged 6 upwards and the club is a member of the Delancey UK Chess Challenge

Trust-wide Activities

Aquinas Poet Laureate

Aquinas RE Day

Aquinas Reporters

Competitions

NACE photography competition

NACE poetry competition

Royal Mail 'Young Writers' competition

Primary Maths Challenge:

<http://www.primarymathschallenge.org.uk>

BBC Radio 2 500 Words Competition

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p00rfvk1>

Appendix 1

Opportunities/Provision	Description
Membership	Member of NACE (National Association for Able Children in Education) which supports teachers to provide excellent teaching and learning for more able pupils. http://www.nace.co.uk/
Assessment	White Rose and Rising Stars assessments are used as a part of the school's Assessment and Tracking provision http://www.risingstars-uk.com/
Displays and provision	NRich Maths posters in KS2 classrooms Interactive NACE display in the hall Pobble 365 - http://www.pobble365.com/ Challenge area in classrooms Word of the Week Growth mindset More Able Rising Stars SATs revision 100+ - English and Maths Brain Academy for all year groups
SMSC Leadership Opportunities	Young Leaders Pupil Parliament Sports Council Head boy/Head girl Poet Laureate
Community	Monthly newsletter to parents and staff with an achievement section Visits from key figures from the local community that promotes aspiration, education and socio economic well-being i.e. doctors, vets, high ranking members of the armed forces. Charles Darwin Master Classes in art, drama, science and computing Links with Newstead Woods school - work experience
Themed Weeks	Health Week Science Week Maths Week Book week Story Telling Week RE Week
Competitions	Aquinas Poetry Slam Aquinas Maths Challenge St Olaves Maths and Science challenge day (Y5's) Aquinas Debating Competition BBC 500 words competition Poetry reading competition
Awards	Gold School games mark (awarded July 2017) Aquinas poetry winners (2017) Weekly achievement assemblies - in school awards and awards received out of school