





Supporting Gifted and Talented Children

Author / staff lead: Mr R Jenkins (National Award for SEN 2014)

Abstract: This policy sets out Lent Rise School's commitment to and methods for supporting children who are gifted or talented in a specific subject.

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Approved by:	Mrs J Watson Headteacher	
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Criteria for Identification of Pupils with Special Educational Needs - Gifted and Talented

Aims

Lent Rise endeavours to promote the highest quality of education for all pupils to achieve their potential. In focusing on the needs of the gifted and talented, we recognise that these pupils will need special consideration in order to raise their achievement. This will include assessment, provision and evaluation.

In promoting this policy, Lent Rise School recognises that:

Every pupil, equally, should be offered the opportunity to develop his or her talents and abilities to the full.

Able pupils have particular educational needs which must be met in order to realise their potential. This demands that realistically high expectations are made of them and that an environment, in which their best efforts are recognised and valued, is created.

Dealing with the Gifted and Talented Child

How do we define the “Gifted and Talented” children?

Glossary of Terms

- Exceptionally Able - Intelligence or creative power or other natural ability of tendency that would be nationally recognised. (eg on the county or national team)
- Gifted - The top 5% of age related intellectual or academic ability within the school.
- Talented - The top 5% of age related practical or creative power or other natural ability of tendency within the school.
- Dual or Multiple Exceptionalities (DME) - A child with a disability or other special educational need or additional educational need, that is also gifted, talented, exceptionally able or genius in another area. (eg an autistic child with an exceptional calculating ability)
- More able - children who have the potential to or who are working above age related expectations in academic or practical subject areas within the school.

What does gifted and talented mean for Lent Rise School?

The Qualifications and Curriculum Authority defines gifted and talented as: “Gifted and talented pupils are those that well exceed the expectations for their age group, either in all subjects or just one. The gifted and talented are a diverse group and their range of attainment will be varied, some do well in statutory national curriculum tests or national qualifications. However, being gifted and talented covers much more than the ability to succeed in tests and examinations. Therefore, it is impossible to set one way of identifying gifted and talented pupils.”

‘Gifted’ generally refers to the top 5% of the school population in academic subjects and ‘talented’ to the top 5% in other subjects.

‘More able’ pupils refers to the expected performance of children within a particular year group that are working above average. Every class is differentiated to meet the needs of all children including a ‘more able’ group.

This ‘more able’ group will include the one or two pupils who are identified as ‘gifted’ or ‘talented’ or more rarely ‘exceptionally able’ or ‘genius’.

Identification

There is a wide range of identification strategies available to assist schools. It is important to note that no single process should be used in isolation. The identification process needs to be ongoing. In the case of children with dual or multiple exceptionalities the class teacher should liaise closely with the inclusion manager as assessments may need to be tailored to meet the specific needs of the child.

Identification is usually made by:

- Teacher nomination
- Reports from previous schools
- Test results/teacher assessments
- Pupil’s work
- Checklists of characteristics - generic and subject-specific
- Parental information
- Peer/self nomination
- Information provided by external agencies (eg sports organisations, music tutors etc)

Assessment Methods

- Teacher observation
- Benchmark tests/assessments - end of key stage tests, optional SATs, NFER etc
- Cognitive Abilities Tests
- In-house subject tests or assessments

- Response to increased challenge
- Provision of opportunity
- Response from external agency

Teacher Nomination/Classroom Observation

It is reasonable to expect teachers to know their pupils' strength and weaknesses. Research shows that their knowledge is more reliable than the use of a standardised test alone in establishing those who are gifted and talented. In addition, having decided upon the ability of the pupils in their charge, they are then in a position to arrange provision accordingly. **Therefore, teachers should be the main tools in identification**, particularly when used in concert with screening tests.

N.B. If a test fails to identify those thought by the teacher to be able then this should lead to further investigation of those individuals rather than the rejection of the teacher's view.

Similarly, tests can help raise the awareness of teachers about pupils who they may not have recognised, perhaps because of some kind of masking behaviour.

Many classes have other adults (Teaching Assistants) present for part of the school day. Their observations may be helpful in this element of assessment.

In addition, ongoing, formative assessments are pursued throughout a pupil's school career to reflect a longitudinal view of ability, accepting that a situation may change.

Furthermore, it is recognised that not all gifted and talented pupils do well in formal assessment procedures. Some pupils are able but have specific learning difficulties. In such circumstances, professionals beyond the school offer support in identifying ability. (See Other Professionals Section G)

Teacher Assessment

If teacher assessment at any given moment of time shows that any child's needs are not being met by normal ability grouping systems or through differentiated work within a class, then the child may be referred to Mr Jenkins who will then inform the appropriate subject Co-ordinator of that child's specific needs.

Checklists

Checklists focus on groups of common attributes that able pupils share. It has already been stated that they are not universally agreed, nor are they seen to be ever present. Nevertheless, they provide a means for raising the awareness of teachers and others about what to look for. If a pupil measures up on a number of these attributes, then he/she is worthy of further, more detailed investigation.

Checklists can:

- Contain positive and negative characteristics;
- Be used over time;
- Be employed easily in the classroom to aid observation;
- Be used in support of curriculum planning.

It should be remembered that these are not standardised procedures that can reliably screen all pupils but can act as a starting point to identification (Appendix 1).

By Provision

Teachers are aware of assessment procedures that allow identification within the classroom. This can involve pupils being offered a challenging exercise. From their observations of pupils undertaking this exercise, teachers can then identify pupils whose performance indicates they are gifted and talented.

When funding allows, we employ an extra member of staff to extend the gifted and talented and gifted and talented child in small groups to allow children, through extension work to achieve their full potential.

Tests

There are many useful tests, including:

- Screening tests for a whole year group or individual tests for specific pupils;
- Norm or criterion referenced tests;
- Subject specific or general tests of all-round ability.
- SATs results/Chiltern tests

If these show a child to be well in advance of his/her peers then this child may be referred to Mr Jenkins.

(A possible guideline may be 18 months to 2 years variance between score shown and chronological age in certain curriculum subjects).

Most tests are regarded as having rigour and validity. However, testing alone fails to allow for the difference amongst gifted and talented pupils. It is quite possible for gifted and talented pupils to do badly on tests because they think laterally, work too slowly or deliberately wish to avoid identification. It is recognised that test may disadvantage specific groups, for example, pupils from a different cultural background or pupils for whom English is an additional language.

Discussions with the school's link Educational Psychologist can identify appropriate tests for individual pupils. (See Other Professionals section G)

There is no perfect test. Hence schools would be wrong to rely on this as the sole means of identification. However, testing will significantly add to the information about pupils gained from other sources. Test results, which do not match teacher expectations, should be explored further.

Peer/Self Nomination

Involving pupils in their learning has become a major feature of many schools and classrooms. Alongside this, pupils are encouraged to work collaboratively on a number of ventures, particularly those that can help to reveal outstanding ability such as problem solving, decision making and leadership.

Furthermore, pupil self-assessment linked to records of achievement has brought teachers and pupils into a much more dynamic process of evaluation.

As a result, pupils are now more aware of their own abilities and those of their peers and should be invited to contribute their observations - at Lent Rise this is done at the end of every term.

Parental Nomination

This is particularly relevant in relation to young children.

Parents have a view about their child's ability. They see the child perform in a unique setting that is not available to the school. Furthermore, most parents would wish to share this information. Many parents would welcome the opportunity to work in partnership with schools with regard to their child's education. In the interests of the child schools should seek this information.

Because of this, the school has adopted a pre-school entry profile and has also introduced a form of baseline assessment soon after entry into the school.

Pupil Records and Work

These are central to teacher assessment and provision. Pupil records and representative samples of work are an important aspect of monitoring individual progress and are particularly important at transition. The system of pupil profiles should be used as a monitoring device for teachers and any noticeable changes referred to Mr Jenkins and the appropriate subject co-ordinator, immediately.

Other Professionals

Advice is provided by the County's own Educational Psychology Service or by professionals working as independent consultants when needed.

The Underachievement of Gifted and Talented Pupils

Definition

Underachievement

Underachievement is the discrepancy between the pupil's achievement at school and the perceived ability of the child; that is, the child achieves significantly less well than others had expected.

Gifted and Talented pupils are sometimes thought to be prone to underachievement because of their emotional responses to the recognition of their ability. This is linked to the reaction of others and the subsequent educational experiences they are offered. As a result, pupils may unknowingly or deliberately avoid identification.

David George (1995) identifies three characteristics linked with underachievement:

- Low self esteem;
- Academic avoidance behaviour;
- Poor study skills, poor peer acceptance and lack of concentration.

He also explains that underachievement can be fostered by:

- Inflexibility in schools;
- A stress on external evaluation;
- A perceived lack of genuine respect;
- A competitive social climate;
- The dominance of criticism.
- An unrewarding curriculum;
- A lack of opportunity to communicate what they have learnt;
- Work that is too easy or lacking in purpose.

To correct this, Lent Rise endeavours to create a climate in which excellence is applauded. Success is valued in everyone and by everyone.

Catering for the Gifted and Talented Child

The education we offer to the gifted and talented child needs to be broader and more intense to develop their potential to the full. If this is not provided for these children they could be categorised as deprived and it is therefore important to recognise that these children have special educational needs. Teaching content, strategies and resources aimed at the average child are a handicap to the gifted and talented child as:

- a) They may not challenge.
- b) If teacher approval is for the set task ... why do more?

It is sufficient in the initial stages at Lent Rise School to identify the learning/intellectual needs of the gifted and talented child although we do acknowledge creativity and personality as relevant to the development of the gifted and talented child.

How can we provide for the gifted and talented child?

In mixed ability classes, extension and enrichment work is provided for the gifted and talented through differentiation and higher teacher expectation.

- a) Material which allows a deeper or more detailed study of the work being done.
- b) Provision for individuals or further group work which may extend the activity or perhaps a different activity.

Many enrichment activities are available and the list is currently being compiled. Extension work may allow these children to move through curriculum work at a faster rate.

Acceleration would allow the child to move onto a higher level more quickly than his/her peers, however, care must be taken that the child has the maturity to cope with this.

In order to support differentiation even further and to extend the gifted and talented pupil we have developed personalised learning materials which will be appropriate to the taught curriculum at Lent Rise School.

Mathematics - Numeracy

A rich variety of mathematical materials are available in the school. The children are divided into ability groups through all year groups, thus we can more successfully meet the needs of the gifted and talented child.

The following should be encouraged:

- 1) Maths communication - correct use of mathematical vocabulary.
- 2) Open ended tasks and investigations/problem solving.
- 3) Tasks which allow the use of practical equipment.
- 4) Children should be allowed to decide further initiatives for themselves.
- 5) Mental mathematics - speed of calculation.
- 6) The use of Teaching Assistant time with small groups (ability grouped) - where funding allows.
- 7) Extended work through differentiated classwork, homework and parental support.

English - Literacy

English is taught following the Literacy Hour format and a great deal has been invested in purchasing a rich variety of materials for each year group along with extension activities for the gifted and talented. The children are divided again into ability groups through all years, meaning that the class teachers can more successfully meet the needs of the gifted and talented child.

The following should be encouraged:

- 1) Good vocabulary/communication skills.
- 2) Independent working - concentrating on accuracy and speed.
- 3) Read and write with confidence - fluency and understanding.
- 4) To have fluent and legible handwriting.
- 5) To plan, draft, revise and edit their own writing.
- 6) To be interested in books/read with enjoyment.
- 7) To develop their powers of imagination, inventiveness and critical awareness.

Science

Strategies for teachers in the design of activities and classroom practice.

The focus for teachers should include:

Developing ideas by concentrating on:

- Solving problems;
- Understanding systems, e.g. Human body;
- Understanding scale and organisation, e.g. Particles;
- Developing the concept of energy;
- Developing mathematical skills.

When using concept enrichment:

- Whenever possible stress the practical applications of science;
- Emphasise the science behind technological developments;
- Introduce the consideration of economics or ethics into problems;
- Ask pupils to give reasons for decisions;
- Develop skills in evaluation.

Developing communication skills:

- Encourage the use of different sources;
- Make readability part of the challenge;
- Encourage pupil to pupil discussion;
- Foster a range of reporting styles.
- Encourage reporting to a variety of audiences.

Using group work to develop the more able requires:

- Individual objectives related to whole group outcome;
- Clearly defined roles for all pupils in the group;
- Whole group rewards for success.

Other Areas

In all other subject areas, the teacher in charge of the class will, through differentiation, cater for the needs of the gifted and talented children.

Extra Curricular Activities

The school believes in providing facilities for meeting pupil's needs beyond the planned school day and therefore provides school clubs that cater for the needs of all children including the gifted and talented. Examples of this are sports clubs (Football, Athletics, Netball) and art clubs (Art, Sewing), as well as computer I.T. club. If necessary local sports clubs would be notified of gifted and talented children.

The Co-ordinator for Gifted and Talented Pupils

The Co-ordinator acts as a point of contact for staff in the school and interested parties beyond the school. This ensures that good practice is disseminated and that the school's response can be monitored and evaluated.

Any child identified by the class teacher should inform the Co-ordinator who will then work closely with the class teacher and appropriate Subject Co-ordinator.

Subject Co-ordinators

Whilst the co-ordinator can raise awareness across the whole school about the significant issues and produce a shared response at that level, the subject co-ordinators can ensure effective provision on a day-to-day basis in their areas of responsibility.

The Governors

Detailed progress data for G&T pupils regularly discussed with governors.

Continuing Professional Development

- Regular training for Co-ordinators and Governor
- Appropriate in-service training for all staff
- Involvement in partnership co-ordinator meetings and training initiatives

Continuity and Progression

- Information on pupils is provided on transfer between classes
- Information on pupils is provided on transfer between schools

Out of School Activities

This policy applies to school run out of school clubs.

Planning for Gifted and Talented Pupils

Needed:

- Differentiation of classroom work to meet the needs and abilities of all pupils in the group by varying activities or differing outcomes.
- Extension work for going deeper into the concepts of the topic.
- Enrichment of the curriculum using different contexts and requiring different skills.
- Acceleration by allowing some pupils to complete aspects of the curriculum and move on to new areas before others.

In practice:

- Clear progressive, learning objectives in the schemes of work.
- Clear learning outcomes in the schemes of work.
- Share targets with pupils.
- Relate planning to outcomes. (Additional planning boxes for G & T)
- Relate any marking to outcomes and targets.
- Develop the range of teaching and learning strategies suggested in the schemes of work.
- Talk about 'how' to teacher, not 'what' to teach.
- Build in opportunities to talk to pupils about 'how to learn'.

Questioning

- "Tell me about..."
- "I don't understand ... explain it to me in another way."
- "Why do you think...?"
- "How does...?"
- "If we... how would it...?"
- "Can you explain...?"
- "Imagine if...?"

It is important to encourage pupils to ask questions. Debate and discussion are high order skills to be encouraged in able pupils.

APPENDIX 1

Checklist

To assist teachers to identify the gifted and talented child we would use Laycock's guide (Laycock 1957).

Gifted or Talented Children: A Teacher's Checklist

Gifted and Talented children are likely to show the following characteristics:

1. Possess superior powers of reasoning, of dealing with abstractions, of generalising from specific facts, of understanding means, and of seeing into relationships.
2. Have great intellectual curiosity.
3. Learn easily and readily.*
4. Have a wide range of interests.
5. Have a broad attention span that enables them to concentrate on, and persevere in, solving problems and pursuing interests.
6. Are superior in the quantity and quality of vocabulary as compared with children of their own age.
7. Have ability to do effective work independently.
8. Have learned to read early (often well before school age).
9. Exhibit keen powers of observation.
10. Show initiative and originality in intellectual work.
11. Show alertness and quick response to new ideas.
12. Are able to memorise quickly.
13. Have great interest in the nature of man and the universe (problems of origins and destiny, etc.)
14. Possess unusual imagination.
15. Follow complex directions easily.
16. Are rapid readers.*
17. Have several hobbies.*
18. Have reading interests which cover a wide range of subjects.*
19. Make frequent and effective use of the library.*
20. Are superior in mathematics, particularly in problem solving.*

****According to Laycock a child showing most characteristics on the checklist, but not those starred, is likely to be a gifted child who is underachieving educationally.***

A second checklist is given by Frieda Painter.

According to Painter the chief traits included in teachers' checklists in order to aid them identify gifted and more able children are as follows:

1. Advanced use of language.
2. Superior reasoning ability.
3. Rapid thought processes.
4. Strong imagination.
5. Exceptional memory.
6. Keen observation.
7. Possession of unusual powers of concentration.
8. Asks numerous questions.
9. Makes unusual and original suggestions.
10. Good at problem solving.
11. Reads widely
12. Impatient with routine work.

This list is very similar to the 20 point list of Laycock but lends itself better, I feel, to use in the classroom. The above 12 point checklist could be easily made into a five point scaled profile from poor to exceptional.

Profiles could be completed for children in a class.

The profiles produced can then be easily compared with each other. Those for children with exceptional ability could then be isolated.

Care must be given to children who do not reveal their true potential. The teacher is the most important "means of identification" through his/her knowledge of the child.