



Highly Able Children Policy

This policy is inclusive of all pupils in the school including those in the Early Years Foundation Stage

Reviewed: January 2025

Reviewed by: Caroline Scriven

Please also refer to the SEND Policy.

STATEMENT OF INTENT

At Moulsford Preparatory School, we believe in developing all of our pupils so that they realise their greatest potential, whatever their ability. As well as our excellent provision for those with Special Educational Needs, we also provide first-rate opportunities for those who are especially able. We maintain a register of all those who have exceptional aptitudes or skills in any capacity: academic, sporting, creative or otherwise.

Teachers plan lessons that extend and stretch the most able in the classroom. Where appropriate, students are offered the opportunity to attend events for highly able students around the country.

As part of our responsibility to satisfy the needs of every child, we must look to extend children who are particularly able in whatever field.

DEFINITION

The Highly Able are a diverse group and people's opinions will vary as to whether someone should be labelled as such. It is important to remember that being highly able covers much more than the ability to succeed in tests and examinations. For example, highly able pupils may demonstrate leadership qualities, high-level practical skills or a capacity for creative thought.

It is important to recognise that not all highly able pupils are obvious achievers. Many actually underachieve - their potential is masked by factors such as frustration, low self-esteem and lack of challenge. To enable these children and young people to fulfil their potential, it is vital to give everyone the opportunity to excel.

IDENTIFICATION

Recognising and providing solutions for individuals has to be carried out by each school in its own way. We feel it is important at Moulsford that staff recognise the exceptional nature of Highly Able students before they begin to identify individuals to be added to the register. The current list has been prepared after teacher recommendations.

Teacher assessment and judgement will be supported by the following:

- (1) Discussion of pupils with colleagues;
- (2) Discussion with the child

- (3) Consultation with parents/ carers (on an as needs basis)
- (4) Ongoing assessment using open-ended/ differentiated tasks
- (5) Careful record-keeping and tracking of progress in core subjects
- (6) Use of formal assessment

Testing of individual pupils will be carried out if appropriate. Information will be gathered over a period of time rather than a 'snapshot' of the pupil. Identification of a highly able pupil should be reported to the coordinator who will enter the child's name on the register for Highly Able.

We understand the importance of establishing what prior knowledge, understanding and skills pupils have so as to avoid unnecessary repetition of work.

We are alert for the 'bright but lazy' pupil who could achieve excellent results if motivated and challenged. We are aware of assuming that highly able pupils are easier to teach than other pupils.

DEVELOPING AN EFFECTIVE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

Like all pupils, the highly able need frequent opportunities to apply their skills and understanding, and to develop their knowledge, within a secure and flexible learning environment. The learning culture at Moultsford will include:

- (1) Valuing pupils' own interests and learning styles;
- (2) Encouraging independence and autonomy, and support pupils in using their initiative;
- (3) Encouraging pupils to be open to ideas and initiatives presented by others;
- (4) Encouraging connections across subjects or aspects of the learning programme;
- (5) Linking learning to wider applications
- (6) Encouraging the use of a variety of resources, ideas, methods and tasks
- (7) Involving pupils in working in a range of settings and contexts- as individuals, in pairs, in groups, as a class, cross- year and outside of school.
- (8) Encouraging pupils to reflect on the process of their own learning and to understand the factors that help them to make progress

OPPORTUNITIES OUTSIDE THE NORMAL CURRICULUM

We as a school recognise that as with those of lower ability, it is important that the highly able children get the opportunity to work together outside of the standard classroom environment. One of the ways we have done this is through the provision of the Moultsford Enrichment Programme (MEP) which although designed with the highly able in mind, it is also open to all children across the entire range of year groups. A key part of the MEP is The Moultsford Super Curriculum. This encourages children to participate in activities beyond those in the classroom and enables them to follow passions and interests of their choosing through a guided choice of activities and tasks to further stimulate learning. A Google Classroom is set-up for pupils to showcase, discuss and share their work.

Other ways in which the staff meet the needs of this group of children are:

Lunchtime lectures from staff members looking at areas outside of the curriculum, UKMT Junior Maths and Team Challenge, Maths Club, Book club, DT & Art invitation only groups, Languages drop-in, Humanities drop-in, music trips to senior schools to work alongside pupils of a similar ability, Science Club activity, Taskmaster activity, Puzzle Games activity, Demosthenes, climate action poster competition, European day of languages competition, organisation of mini-tours to take pupils away to be challenged on the sports field, computer programming course, early morning puzzles and games, encouragement of outside of school competitions across all subjects.

RECOGNISING THE NEEDS OF A HIGHLY ABLE CHILD

Highly able children are usually aware of their talent and are sometimes afraid to voice their opinion because they don't have similar ideas to everyone else. They are also nervous about being labelled as 'too clever' or 'a show off'. Through small group activities with open ended questions, we are aiming to identify the children early and celebrate interesting and creative use of thought. It is not our intention to regularly take children out of the classroom to undertake activities but there are times where it can be deemed to be appropriate such as during afternoon reading or morning registration.

Before proper identification of a child's talent has occurred they will be used to getting everything right and finding things very easy. We recognise that it is important that we give children the opportunity to get things wrong or find things more difficult by challenging them at an appropriate level. Staff will use appropriate testing to ascertain a child's level. Whilst it is important that we challenge children through extension work, it is also essential that children are given investigative work that will broaden their understanding of the subject in question.

We are aware that there are children at Moulsoford who might have an academic profile that points to them potentially being a highly able student but they are not showing evidence of this in the classroom. We offer pastoral support on a one to one basis in order to minimise any barriers to learning. The staff will be aware of this in their planning and these students are encouraged to take up the activities on offer through the enrichment and stretch & challenge programme.

PROVISION FOR POTENTIAL SCHOLARS

Entrance Scholarships - Academic and All-rounder Preparation for Year 7 and 8 Scholars

Identification

In most cases potential scholars should spend two years in the scholarship form to receive the necessary preparation. It is vital that the top Year 7 class, which is likely to contain a high proportion of potential scholars, are taught in a way which takes cognisance of this fact. Their programmes of study in examinable subjects should be part of a "scholarship continuum" carefully planned by Heads of Department to ensure that scholarship candidates have covered each syllabus (without the need for extra tuition) and have been appropriately prepared for the examinations. The Form Teacher of the top Year 7 form should oversee the academic welfare of the pupils and take particular responsibility for ensuring that Form Time is used for intellectual enrichment as far as possible and that suitable scholarly activities are recommended, where appropriate, to parents for the holidays. (See below for the role of the Form Heads of Year 7 and 8 scholars.)

Early identification of potential scholars is important. There should be a strong indication of potential by the time a pupil leaves the Year 5. Pupils new to the school in Year 6 who show promise must be monitored carefully. Subject teachers and tutors must be alert to such potential.

Both scholarship forms will be homogeneous groups with many pupils inevitably displaying greater strength in some subjects than in others. Departments must be prepared in appropriate instances to accommodate pupils who may be less strong in their subject but who shine in others.

Indicators

- All pupils (Year 2 onwards) are tested each year (BASE, CEM, MidYIS) in reading, spelling, non-verbal, Maths and cognitive ability. Reading age and spelling age considerably in advance of chronological age, allied to or the equivalent to a standardised score of 130+, are indicators of a potential scholar.
- Reports from previous schools, parental comment and observation of characteristic behaviour can also be used.

Composition of Year 7 and 8 Scholars

Most pupils aiming at an academic scholarship to a Public School will move through the scholarship forms in Year 7 and 8. Pupils aiming at Winchester Entrance will also be included in these forms. Under special circumstances a pupil might join the Year 8 scholars from a CE group or conversely move to a CE group at the end of the Year 7.

Balance of Studies for Scholars

Moulsford offers considerable breadth and richness of curriculum and it is not our policy to compromise this by overloading teaching time in the examinable subjects.

Nevertheless, it is important that some subjects (notably English, Maths and Science) are sufficiently provided for to enable the necessary preparation to take place and programmes of study to be covered. To this end the curriculum followed in the scholarship form is slightly modified from that followed in the CE forms.

It is very important that, in addition to the extension provided in the classroom, scholars are given an enriched extra-curricular programme.

There will be one booked activity per week for scholarship children for the purpose of discussion and consideration of current affairs (and the like) under the tutelage of either the Form Head or another suitable member of staff, or indeed a visiting speaker.

Other opportunities for enrichment include:

- Form Time will also be an occasion for enrichment (spelling, meaning of words, general-knowledge facts etc).
- A wide range of reading material is available as a discussion/reference resource
- Trips and visits to cultural centres for Arts/drama and music enrichment

- A programme of lectures/talks /debates targeting all scholarship pupils
- Enrichment Google Classroom - forum

The 'programme of enrichment' must ensure that children are in a position to tackle a General Paper.

Role of the Form Heads of Scholars

The Form Head has a very important academic and pastoral role in the lives of scholars.

- To oversee the academic welfare of their charges and are responsible, along with the Assistant Head Academic (AH-A), for the effective delivery of the academic programme.
- To be responsible also for the delivery of the 'programme of enrichment' for scholars (see above).
- To make recommendations to parents with regard to suitable (scholarly) holiday activities for their children.
- To be responsible for preparing their charges for interviews at their public school; 'mock' interviews.
- To meet regularly with the AH-A to coordinate and oversee the scholars.

Role of the Lead for Stretch and Challenge

- To be responsible for the delivery of the 'programme of enrichment' across the school (see above)
- To maintain the Highly Able Register
- To liaise with staff in order to develop and maintain an effective learning environment