

Queen's College, London

More Able Pupils Policy



*Due for review during
Michaelmas Term 2023*

1 Aim

We are committed to providing an environment, which encourages all pupils at the College to maximise their potential and this clearly includes pupils who display some form of giftedness or talent. This policy lays out the principles of the provision that the College offers for pupils identified as Gifted and/or Talented ('More able') and should be read alongside departmental handbooks which provide subject-specific guidance. It should also be noted that a curriculum designed for pupils identified as Gifted and/or Talented is not exclusive but provides rich learning opportunities for all pupils.

2 Definition

More able children are those who have one or more abilities developed to a level significantly ahead of their year group (or with the potential to develop these abilities). Gifted children have a great thirst for knowledge and this need should be recognised as early as possible and their talents developed. Talented pupils are those which have specific skills or vocations in particular areas, both within and beyond the taught curriculum. These pupils need specific nurturing if their talents are to fully develop.

3 Identification of more able pupils

The College identifies gifted pupils in a number of ways:

1. Through baseline assessment results, in particular those pupils who have scored over 127 in their (standardised) MidYIS results. This information is available on the SchoolBase school management system and is also collated on the Firefly
2. The Academic Scholarship programme, which is based on achievement in entrance examinations or other tests
3. Teacher recommendation where pupils are observed to be flourishing in their learning in a specific area. Identification of this type may be followed up with assessment from the Learning Support Department
4. Analysis of Academic Tracking information (carried out by the Director of Academic Progress, Deputy Head Academic, Assistant Head Teaching and Learning, HoDs, HoYs, HoSs and individual teaching staff)

Talented pupils are identified in the following ways:

1. Feeder school recommendation
2. Recommendation from individual teachers (e.g., Music teachers and peripatetic Music teachers, PE teachers, Drama teachers and Art teachers)

3. Recommendation from teachers running societies and clubs and other enrichment activities, such as competitions (e.g., Debating Society, ESB awards)

The College recognises that it is easy to destroy the self-confidence of any child and this is particularly so when they are more able. Their experiences with their teachers, their peers and their parents are critical, and it is always important to look for indicators which suggest that a difficult, unhappy or bored child has hidden talent.

4 Characteristics of more able pupils

Gifted pupils may display some of these behaviours:

- Unusual alertness
- Long attention span
- Inquisitive
- Asks challenging questions
- Keen sense of observation
- Sharp or quirky sense of humour
- Excellent memory
- Intensity
- Work at a level 2 or 3 years ahead of peers
- Preference for older companions
- Abstract reasoning
- Requests a change to the task set
- Manipulates information
- Is highly self-critical
- Uses superior vocabulary and complex sentences
- Processes complex ideas quickly
- Superior reasoning ability
- Divergent thinker – looks for the unusual
- Writing untidy – unwilling to record
- Has excellent reasoning skills
- Fanatical about an interest or hobby
- Finds socialising with peers difficult
- Vivid imagination
- May appear disrespectful
- Challenges accepted theories

Talented pupils tend to show exceptional skills, for example in the playing of a musical instrument, sports, or performance. These skills are identifiable by those teachers expert in these disciplines.

5 Provision for more able pupils

The College ensures that opportunities for extension and enrichment are built into departmental schemes of work and that departmental handbooks have a reference to more able pupils. This should state what provision should be made within that subject area. We aim to:

- Maintain an ethos where it is OK to be bright or show exceptional skill
- Encourage all pupils to be reflective, independent learners and develop their talents
- Recognise achievement at a high level (both within the classroom and also through academic prizes and Show Principal awards)
- Provide a wide range of extra-curricular activities and clubs
- Always provide work and other learning opportunities at an appropriate level
- Provide opportunities for all pupils to work with like-minded peers

The Head of Academic Enrichment has oversight of an enrichment programme for academic scholars. This includes extra-curricular trips, scholarly holiday work (e.g. a research project on a subject of their own choosing), a 'showcase' event and an annual review meeting with the Principal. Some scholars also complete the PQ programme (during Year 9). The list of scholars is regularly updated to reflect the fact that pupils may develop academically at a different pace.

Departments and teachers in charge of societies, clubs and competitions, encourage those pupils identified with specific talents to strive for excellence by leading by example (e.g., coming from a background where they represented sport at an international level or exhibiting their own artwork in public displays) and offering opportunities for pupils to explore their interests.

Types of Provision:

Classroom differentiation

- Teachers have high expectations.

- Tasks are designed to take account of levels of existing knowledge, skills and understanding
- There are planned extension opportunities or open-ended tasks
- There are tasks which encourage assimilation of ideas and ways of thinking across the curriculum
- There is access to higher tier assessment papers.
- Small group work where appropriate
- Grouping by ability in some subjects
- Differentiated homework
- Schemes of work that address the needs of more able pupils

College-based provision

- School clubs and societies
- Enrichment opportunities
- Opportunities for performance and exhibition of work

Out of College provision

- National schemes/competitions/festivals

6 Staff guidance:

The following provide helpful, practical guidance for staff:

The needs of the most able learners

- Opportunity to work at an increased pace
- Starting points that meet their level of knowledge
- Less practice at tasks
- Less explanation of instructions
- Opportunities to work with others of similar ability
- Challenging tasks
- Challenge to the point of failure
- Development of good study skills
- Development of thinking skills and critical thinking
- More independence of study
- Access to library and IT
- Open ended situations
- Abstract tasks
- The right to fail
- A wide variety of opportunities for experiment and application

- Creative opportunities
- Individual programmes that develop their intellect
- Greater depth not accelerated pace
- Opportunity to take risks
- Real applications for their learning
- Mentoring
- Reinforcement that giftedness is valued
- Protection from bullying or name calling
- Opportunities to experience challenges outside school, eg NAGTY/Work Placements/Courses

Ten teaching strategies for very able pupils

1. Give a starting point for the work that takes account of ability. For example, if the class task is to work through 20 questions, able pupils may start at a question that begins to challenge them.
2. Allow able pupils to jump steps needed by the majority. It can seem punitive if they are made to complete the same work as everyone else.
3. Give space for pupils to experiment so that an original way of working is not discouraged.
4. Create as many open-ended situations as possible. This enables able pupils to give individual responses. These may be very different from those of the other pupils.
5. Cut short the amount of practice on a particular skill or process if the gifted pupil masters it quickly. Provide interesting research or experiment to extend the pupil in the time gained.
6. Allow able pupils to work independently, perhaps on different or extended tasks; eg a challenging project on a novel that they have read ahead of the class.
7. Use differentiated homework to give identified pupils more challenging targets.
8. Set tasks requiring the high order thinking skills (eg Bloom) of Synthesis and Evaluation.
9. Group able pupils together for some aspects of the learning; set challenging tasks for the group.
10. Place one very able pupil in each group giving them a leadership role or responsibility.

As noted above, the provision for those pupils identified as talented is organised at an individual level with relevant subjects/curriculum areas where staff have specific expertise. For more information on this provision, see Departmental Handbooks.