

RED ROSE SCHOOL GIFTED & TALENTED POLICY

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Sec3 Chapter

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Gifted & Talented Co-ordinator: Mrs Gill Makinson

References: Until DFE provide guidance, we will use the references below:

- ✓ DCSF Identifying gifted and talented learners – getting started (Revised May 2008)
- ✓ Lancashire Education Authority
- ✓ The National Strategies Gifted and Talented Education 2008: Helping to find and support children with dual or multiple exceptionalities

WHAT IS DUAL OR MULTIPLE EXCEPTIONALITY (DME)?

The term DME is used to describe a group of educationally vulnerable pupils whose profiles are often underrepresented on schools' registers for gifted and talented learners. DME pupils are those who belong, characteristically, to both the special educational needs (SEN) and gifted and talented groups. In many such cases only one of either the gifts and talents or the special educational needs is recognised. For example, a pupil who has a specific learning difficulty in literacy may receive extra support in phonics but not have the opportunity to express a special ability in science.

For pupils with DME to make appropriate progress, it is important to focus on what pupils can do. In many instances it is the features of SEN that are dominant and other gifts, talents or exceptional abilities may be hidden or partially hidden. Consequently, DME pupils are at greater risk of marginalization and stereotyping.

Often it is hard to assess what children's abilities might be as they do not respond to the more commonly-employed assessment measures or tests. All pupils benefit from a range of opportunities to demonstrate their abilities, including pupils in the DME category. Identification is not an end in itself and should be clearly linked to provision and review of practice and access to help maximise the potential of this group of pupils.

RATIONALE

We believe that all pupils are entitled to receive the support and challenge necessary to help them to develop their full potential. The needs of able, gifted and talented pupils are acknowledged as part of our overall inclusion policy. We recognise the importance of identifying a wide range of abilities and talents, and of providing opportunities to nurture them. In addition we are committed to developing pupils' social and emotional skills as essential elements in the development of the whole person.

DEFINITION

Gifted and talented (G&T) 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).

In England the term 'gifted' refers to those pupils who are capable of excelling in academic subjects such as English or History. 'Talented' refers to those pupils who may excel in areas requiring visio-spatial skills or practical abilities, such as in games and PE, drama, or art.

Gifted children are those capable of exceptional performance representing around 0.5% of the population nationally.

There is an expectation nationally that the most academically able 5% of pupils from Y7 upwards will be registered with the National Academy for Gifted & Talented Youth.

AIMS

- ✓ To use a broad range of qualitative and quantitative data to identify our gifted and talented pupils.
- ✓ To recognise those pupils who may have the potential but currently underachieve.
- ✓ To ensure that all staff receive appropriate support and training in identifying and providing for most able pupils.
- ✓ To provide support and challenge in the classroom, within an ethos of high expectations.
- ✓ To ensure that where necessary individuals receive academic or pastoral support to overcome identified barriers to learning.
- ✓ To build on existing systems of monitoring and evaluation to track the progress of these pupils.
- ✓ To work with parents to help pupils achieve their potential and to be ambitious.
- ✓ To provide a range of additional opportunities to develop the experiences of our most able.

OBJECTIVES

- ✓ Have an agreed process for identifying gifted and talented pupils
- ✓ Ensure that all staff understand this and use it
- ✓ Keep an accurate record of gifted and talented pupils
- ✓ Review the gifted and talented cohort regularly
- ✓ Self-evaluate and update the school's process as necessary

IDENTIFICATION

It is important to remember that the pupils we are trying to identify will be those who have the potential to perform at a level which places them above their peers. ***This should not be confused with exceptional performance.*** We are not seeking the next Johnny Wilkinson, although we may find him or her! It is also important to recognise that learning to play an instrument, or attending sports lessons out of school does not necessarily indicate particular talent. It may simply indicate that the child or the parents are enthusiastic.

GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS OF GIFTED, TALENTED AND MORE ABLE PUPILS

See Annex A.

HOW CAN PUPILS BE IDENTIFIED

Creating the conditions for learning in which there are opportunities for pupils with gifts and talents to demonstrate their high ability is part of the skill of a good teacher. Identification is critical to personalising the learning experience.

Identification of gifted and talented pupils should be a continuous, whole-school process. We should ensure that the identification process is fair, transparent, and flexible so that it does not discriminate against particular groups. With all of our pupils having learning difficulties, our identification strategy will in the main make use qualitative assessment, including prior attainment and rate of progress so pupils are continually identified both within the school year and on a year by year basis.

The key principles in the identification of gifted and talented pupils are that:

- ✓ Emphasis should be on providing an appropriate, challenging and supportive environment rather than on labelling any particular child;
- ✓ There should be open communication between educators, pupils and parents/carers as part of the identification process - parents know their children best and should be engaged as partners in their child's learning;

- ✓ Parents/carers should be made aware that being on the gifted and talented register does not automatically guarantee academic success;
- ✓ Identification is a continuous process. Some pupils will be easy to identify at a very early age, while some will emerge later;
- ✓ Identification should be systemised within the school so that it is continuous, rather than a battery of specific tests at a set time of year;
- ✓ We need to be particularly vigilant for the 'hidden gifted' particularly for those with learning difficulties. Some of our pupils learning difficulties may be masking their higher ability and talent.
- ✓ Identification should be based on a portfolio approach, utilising a range of both qualitative, quantitative and value-added measures;
- ✓ The identified group should broadly represent the school's population;
- ✓ Teachers should be continually 'talent spotting'.
- ✓ Behaviours indicating higher ability, giftedness and talent may not be readily observable, for a number of reasons. In some classrooms, pupils may not have had sufficient opportunity to demonstrate their ability. In a tightly constrained classroom pupils may not shine.
- ✓ Additionally, pupils may hide their ability in order to 'fit in' with their peer group or they may underachieve for other reasons.

RECOGNISING IDENTIFYING G&T DME PUPILS

We recognize that applying generic checklists to pupils with DME can be problematic as actual behaviours may be very different from those described in the lists as being typical of the ability in question.

Quantitative Assessment – Educational Psychologist Tests

Most tests that effectively identify people's abilities in the terms of an Intelligence Quotient (IQ) have to be administered by qualified educational or clinical psychologists. Such tests are recommended for all children where DME are suspected. Even if the child is ultimately shown not to have a particularly high ability, there is still very valuable information to be gleaned about how we can understand and then dismantle the barriers to a child's potential achievement.

Qualitative Assessment

There are some specific issues related to testing pupils with additional needs that should form a general guide for good practice.

- ✓ Changing the order of test items, interspersing easy aspects among more difficult ones to help maintain the pupil's motivation. This differs from the traditional technique of starting with easy questions and increasing difficulty.
- ✓ Allowing non-standard responses, such as speaking rather than writing, or pointing rather than speaking. (Children with autism, for example, can react adversely to being asked to indicate an answer in a way to which they are not accustomed.)
- ✓ Finding alternatives if a pupil is not able to respond to speech. Receiving instructions can also be difficult for some pupils.
- ✓ Ensuring the environment in which the test takes place is recognisable to the pupil and non-threatening.
- ✓ Discussing preferences with the pupil beforehand where this is appropriate.
- ✓ Taking account of the pupil's timing needs – typically tests are timed, but pupils with learning problems may have a processing delay or an attention deficit and these could interfere with their true response to a question. Timing should be avoided in these cases.
- ✓ Recording reasons for apparent 'failure' of a question. For example, it should be noted when a lack of response relates to a characteristic that is associated with the additional need, but is irrelevant to the particular construct being measured.
- ✓ Explaining the test as thoroughly as possible.

Nebraska Starry Night Protocol

Identifying the abilities of pupils with DME may require observation of particular skills. The Nebraska Starry Night Protocol provides a framework for this approach. This protocol is different from many of the other measures for identifying abilities. Not only does it have unusual items that transcend many usual measures, but the layout of the recording sheet is designed to encourage a record of the incidence of observed behaviours or even a description. This provides quite detailed information and is much closer to evidence than tick lists.

Creativity tests

Departing from the traditional pencil and paper tests and allowing for different kinds of responses can sometimes open up more creative measures of ability. Since they are often rather subjective and difficult to grade, these tests have less recognised validity than the IQ measures already described and should not be used to replace professional diagnostic testing. However, some of these more unusual approaches can allow for interesting responses and may provide a useful alternative for a pupil not able to respond to the standard pattern.

There are designed tests that measure elements of creativity such as the fluency, flexibility and originality of ideas, or the inventiveness of an approach to a problem and some have

marking schedules and are available to administer in groups (for examples see the work of Ellis Paul Torrance in the 1960s and that of Klaus Urban in the 1980s).

Other examples include interesting problems and puzzles that require lateral thinking and ingenious suggestions (such as those designed by Edward de Bono and Nigel Blagg). These are designed to help develop 'thinking skills', but can be harnessed to allow able pupils an opportunity to express their ideas without needing particular conventionally-required knowledge for problem solving.

These 'creative testing tasks' can be linked to subject areas, such as: getting pupils to make use of metaphor and analogy in their communications; to use empathy in adopting the perspective of characters in history; to identify their own investigations in science and mathematics, for example.

Peer and family nominations

One of the most obvious sources of information about children's abilities is that which comes from family and friends. Because they see that person in a wide range of settings and under many different circumstances, their knowledge is vital.

Useful information can be gathered from peers, both in or outside the school. Extracurricular staff (such as youth leaders, music teachers, etc.) should be considered allies in the group collating evidence to support a claim that a child has DME. We know that change of context can alleviate or negate the difficulty, allowing pupils to express themselves in a freer fashion.

Specialist identification

There are some subtle links and differences between certain indicators of high ability and other concerns such as high-functioning ASD or ADHD. Many children with ASD are highly able and gifted in particular areas. In particular, there is a tendency for talents that require high levels of order and structure balanced by low levels of social interaction. These are often rules-based, such as music, chess, art, architecture, mathematics, or individual sports.

Knowledge of these characteristics can lead to some confusion. An example would be a pupil who is very interested in one narrow topic who could be demonstrating little more than the fruits of intense reading and thinking about this area. A child with AS could display the same characteristic, but with the added issue that due to their difficulty in reading social cues they talk endlessly about this area without taking heed of the listener's responses. The difference is subtle and misdiagnosis is relatively common.

However, it is important to recognise that whilst obsessiveness about a focused area may not be a demonstration of a gift, it does demonstrate the pupil's ability to learn and apply themselves.

THE ROLE OF THE G&T CO-ORDINATOR

The key role of the G&T Co-ordinator is to act as a champion for these pupils, ensuring their needs are recognised and met throughout the school

Key tasks include:

- ✓ identifying the professional development needs of the staff
- ✓ ensuring that agreement is reached on who these pupils are and how they should be identified
- ✓ working with Subject Leaders to ensure that pupils are given appropriate support and challenge
- ✓ working with pupils to identify their learning needs and potential barriers to achieving success
- ✓ working with support staff to help to overcome such barriers
- ✓ providing additional experiences eg subjects beyond the curriculum, clubs, visits etc
- ✓ in conjunction with senior management, producing policy and action plans
- ✓ monitoring the provision and evaluating its impact for these pupils

TEACHING & LEARNING

Gifted pupils have diverse needs and there is no one "catch-all" approach to teaching and learning. It is clear, however, that appropriate progress will not be made without structured guidance and support. Strategies adopted should attempt to match pupils' education with their abilities and learning needs rather than with their chronological age. The main focus of effort and development, should be to improve provision for gifted pupils in day-to-day teaching and learning.

Enhanced teaching and learning approaches suited to the needs of gifted pupils can be developed on a whole-school, generic basis supported by subject-specific developments built into schemes of work.

Ideally, gifted pupils will experience a mixture of acceleration, enrichment and extension activities.

Acceleration: moving through the curriculum at a faster rate than other pupils;

Enrichment: broadening study by including elements outside of the National Curriculum;

Extension: studying the standard curriculum in more depth; increasing complexity and challenge.

Teaching and learning is central to the issue of meeting the needs of gifted and talented pupils. Differentiation is not about providing these children with more of the same, but of giving them the opportunity to use the skills and knowledge in other contexts. Good provision will help to develop creative and critical thinking, problem solving and evaluation. It will offer open ended tasks and real contexts. The development of questioning skills and reasoning is important. It is important to ensure that able pupils are taught the skills, but they need to spend less time consolidating the work. Equally they require structure and support. Opportunities to work on tasks in more depth is crucial. Although accelerating pupils through the key stages may appear to be appropriate, a child's social and emotional development are key issues in determining whether they should be placed in classes with older children.

The Role of Class/Subject Teachers

Subject Leaders have a specific role in ensuring that the curriculum provides opportunities for gifted and talented pupils to demonstrate and develop their abilities.

It is important to consider what skills, attitudes and abilities constitute the highest levels of achievement in a given subject. It is also important to recognise that exam grades should not be seen as the pinnacle of achievement if pupils are capable of more.

PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT

The G&T will be a three-way partnership between parents, the pupil and the school. The coordinator will inform parents and make them aware that their child's ability has been recognised and that the school is seeking to ensure an appropriate educational experience is available.

PASTORAL SUPPORT

It is important to avoid stereotyping able pupils as each child is an individual and some children may need more support than others.

At Red Rose School it is our aim to provide an environment in which able pupils feel secure enough to display their ability, to take risks and to fail. As part of this provision, consideration should be given to the extent to which G&T pupils have the opportunity to work with others who share their particular strengths and interests.

The school must be aware that identification as an able and talented pupil may lead to peer problems, and therefore must be open to strategies to inform the non-cohort of what the programme entails.

MONITORING AND EVALUATION

With all of our pupils having learning difficulties, our identification strategy will in the main make use qualitative assessment: for example, the impact on pupil motivation, engagement with the curriculum, attitudes to learning, overall ethos, improved skills for independent learning.

Having identified useful sources of information, it is important to use this to evaluate the impact of the policy on the quality of teaching and learning and standards of achievement for the most able. The number of extra-curricular visits is not in itself a valuable criterion of success, but any subsequent impact upon pupil motivation, understanding and attainment would be.

To inform future development, consideration ought also be given to the impact of policy implementation on teachers' and pupils' workload and whether there has been any negative impact for pupils not included in the cohort.

ANNEX A

GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS OF GIFTED, TALENTED AND MORE ABLE PUPILS - HE OR SHE MAY:

- be a good reader
- be very articulate or verbally fluent for their age
- give quick verbal responses (which can appear cheeky)
- have a wide general knowledge
- learn quickly
- be interested in topics which one might associate with an older child
- communicate well with adults - often better than with their peer group
- have a range of interests, some of which are almost obsessions
- show unusual and original responses to problem-solving activities
- prefer verbal to written activities
- be logical
- be self taught in their own interest areas
- have an ability to work things out in their head very quickly
- have a good memory that they can access easily
- be artistic
- be musical
- excel at sport
- have strong views and opinions
- have a lively and original imagination / sense of humour
- be very sensitive and aware
- focus on their own interests rather than on what is being taught
- be socially adept
- appear arrogant or socially inept
- be easily bored by what they perceive as routine tasks
- show a strong sense of leadership
- not necessarily be well-behaved or well liked by others

The following checklists are therefore offered to those who find identification is of concern. They are not exhaustive and have been designed to be accessible to non-specialists. A talented child is unlikely to display all the characteristics listed.

Music

- Enjoys singing
- Enjoys listening to any kind of music
- Can hear if a note is off key
- Can repeat a melody when it's been heard once or twice
- Has a good sense of rhythm eg taps a beat when working
- May play a musical instrument
- Struggles to keep still when hears music
- Understands that music has a pattern and "makes sense"

- Enjoys making music to express ideas

Sport

- Good sense of balance
- Seems to know instinctively how to use timing and sufficient effort for maximum effect
- Strong awareness of their body in space
- Precision and fluency in movement
- Confident
- Motivated to practise
- Can reflect on their performance
- Good co-ordination eg hits or catches a ball with ease
- Able to make effective decisions quickly in pressured situations eg to whom and when to pass the ball

Art

- Wants to use own creative ideas
- Enjoys working independently
- Perseveres to complete tasks
- Explores ways to depict ideas, feelings and meanings
- Able to translate ideas using a variety of technical skills
- Prepared to try out ideas and take a risk
- Interested in particular cultures or forms
- Enjoys learning new techniques
- Prepared to explore ideas and sources on their own
- Uses materials in inventive and creative ways
- May be able to draw accurate representations

Drama

- A sense of audience
- Strong sense of empathy eg an ability to understand how others feel and how to convey that
- Responds to activities like role play with commitment
- Confident
- Understands how to use voice, body and facial expressions to convey meaning
- Ability to interact with other “players”
- Motivated to develop ideas through practice
- Keen to participate in school plays etc
- Understands the more technical aspects of production eg where to stand on a stage

Curriculum Support

- Provision for talented pupils is based on the same general principles of providing challenge and support for all more able learners.
- Increased independence
- Meaningful choices

- Opportunities to develop new skills and to strengthen existing skills

SUPPORTING TALENTED PUPILS

- Opportunities to study experts to gain increased understanding, inspiration, aspirations and motivation
- Open ended tasks
- Opportunities to respond with originality
- Opportunities to make decisions within the work
- Increased challenge within the tasks eg the level of restrictions set
- Real purpose within the work eg opportunities to perform
- Time for reflection

Gifted and talented underachievers may tend to:

- have low self-esteem;
- be confused about their development and about why they are behaving as they are;
- manipulate their environment to make themselves feel better;
- tend towards a superior attitude to those around them; and
- find inadequacy in others, in things, in systems, to excuse their own behaviours.

Sometimes those with abilities in one or more areas of learning may also suffer from a disability or difficulty in others. This can present a considerable barrier to the achievement of potential, as well as leading to frustration and disaffection.

Developing strategies and approaches to countering underachievement should be an integral part of the school policy for gifted and talented provision. The key aspects of underachievement that need to be taken into account and considered are:

- What are the **indicators** of underachievement?
- What are the **causes** of underachievement?
- What are some ways of **countering** underachievement?
- Are there potential causes due to **dual or multiple exceptionalities**?