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School	G & T SL/ HT	HT	September 2013	Sept 2016

## Fairfields Primary School

### Able Pupil Policy

This policy should be read in conjunction with the school's policy for Special Educational Needs and Equal Opportunities.

#### **Aims:**

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the child states that "Education should develop each child's personality and talents to the full..." (Article 29)

To that end we aim

- To assist each and every child to develop his or her special talents within all subjects and aspects of curriculum
- To develop in each child a social awareness and an ability to relate to others in the school.
- To raise aspiration for all pupils and to have high expectations of achievement for all children
- To encourage children to question and argue rationally, to develop enquiring minds, to apply themselves to relevant tasks and to incorporate intellectual challenge through the quality, rather than the quantity of work
- To recognise each child as an individual, to develop self-discipline and help them to realise their true potential
- To provide self-initiated and self directed learning strategies that will encourage able children to develop their knowledge, skills, understanding and learning opportunities
- To provide a range of extension material that will meet the demand for enrichment within the curriculum
- To appoint a member of staff to lead and co-ordinate work relating to the able child.

#### **Definitions:**

The DfES uses the term "gifted" to describe children at the upper end of the spectrum of academic ability and "talented" to denote those with special ability in sport or the arts, with a recommendation that 5% - 10% of children should be thus designated.

Whereas we recognise that we are unlikely to encounter many pupils who we would wish to categorise as truly "gifted" - though we do not exclude the possibility that we will encounter some - we firmly believe that a number of our pupils show enhanced academic capability and still more demonstrate talent in specific skill areas.

In keeping with the school's philosophy of inclusion, we have adopted a system based on Howard Gardner's model of multiple intelligences ("Frames of Mind", Howard Gardner 1984) which proposes that there are different kinds of intelligence, each of which becomes evident (either singularly or in concert) in different social contexts. Consequently, we recognise each of the following as valid fields within which children might demonstrate enhanced capability.

- Linguistic skills - reading, writing, speaking, listening, factual recall;
- Mathematical skills - number manipulation, logical and sequential processes;
- Naturalist skills - hierarchical ordering, awareness of natural world;
- Visual & spatial skills - observation, artistic representation;
- Musical skills - musical appreciation, singing, instrumental;
- Physical skills - fine & gross motor skills, sports, creativity;
- Social skills - relationships, leadership;
- Personal skills - self-awareness, emotional intelligence.

We believe that Gardner's model encompasses a full spectrum of abilities, thus widening access to the "gifted and talented" cohort to a broader range of children. By choosing to use such a model, and employing the term "more able" to apply to all those who demonstrate enhanced capability, we hope to encourage all children to value their own particular gifts and to appreciate those of their peers. Our aim is to help children discover "something they are good at" in order to build their self esteem, bolster their confidence and raise their aspirations.

### **Identification:**

We recognise to offer all children the 'same' opportunity is not the same as offering 'equality' of opportunity. Therefore we need to identify what individual children need so that they can reach for the highest level of personal achievement. In order to identify this rich diversity of abilities, it is essential to adopt a variety of methods.

- Tests are rule-of-thumb indicators in some instances (e.g. linguistic and mathematical skills) but we realise the limitations of testing as an accurate indicator of ability. Tests may not pick up children who are under-achieving or who lack motivation: they may not give an accurate indication of ability in children who have not been furnished with opportunity to develop innate skills (or who have not responded positively to a particular teaching style).
- Evidence from pupil work or performance. This may include work that has been completed out of class (during lunchtime or after-school clubs) or at home: some pupils produce their best work away from the distraction of the classroom - though suitable safeguards need to be taken to ensure that it is actually the pupil's work that is presented.
- Observation by teaching staff, classroom assistants, club leaders, etc.
- Parents are welcome to nominate children for inclusion on the "gifted and talented" register.
- Children are encouraged to recognise and value the abilities of their peers. This is done within daily "circle time" and the sessions provide an opportunity for classes to look back on the activities of the previous week, to assess the level of their understanding and to evaluate the process of learning. The sessions can also be used to review the contribution of individuals and groups within the class and to inform nomination for the "gifted and talented" register.
- The school actively participates in activities organised by various external partners aimed at developing the abilities of variously talented children. These activities are sometimes aimed at small groups of children with specific skills and provide an opportunity to identify and extend the provision for specific skill areas.

Although there may appear to be a proliferation of methods for identifying "gifted and talented" pupils, this is seen as a strength rather than a weakness in that it encourages all partners in children's education to be "on the lookout for excellence" thus promoting a positive school ethos that is geared towards success.

**Provision:****Classroom –**

Class teachers adopt a range of strategies to ensure that pupils of all abilities are set tasks that offer sufficient challenge. These include the following practical strategies:

- Setting differentiated tasks during the “warm up” part of numeracy lessons (usually reserved for oral work and mental calculation). When a class is divided into 3 or 4 sub-sets, quick-fire questions at different levels can be set to each group in turn - with pupils being encouraged to proffer answers to questions at their own level and higher levels. Occasional “brain-bafflers” can be posed to the more able group(s) which they grapple with whilst other groups are set a series of quick-fire questions. (This can even form the basis of a competitive approach - where the lower ability groups are challenged to answer as many oral/mental questions as they can before the more able group solve their “brain-baffler”.)
- Conducting a whole-class lesson followed by differentiated tasks. Although teachers are aware of the need for pupils to practise a newly-learned skill or process, they also realise that it can be counter-productive to insist on repetitive practice where it is apparent that a pupil has grasped a particular process or concept and effective use will be made of Assessment for learning both before and during lessons.
- Dividing the class into two (or more) groups for the main teaching activity. One group can be engaged in a specific activity (such as solving a series of problems, drafting a piece of written work, reading through a passage searching for verbs, etc.) whilst the other group is directly taught by the class teacher. (Groups can then be swapped over for the next lesson - or for the second half of the session.)
- Classroom support staff provide invaluable assistance working with small groups of pupils in the classroom context or withdrawn from the class. This arrangement enables pupils who grasp concepts quickly to engage in extension activities that embed recently-learned skills whilst developing their capacity to apply these in a more demanding context.
- Setting incidental challenges (that arise from the topic being taught) during the main teaching activity, particularly for more able pupils. These extension challenges may be taken from a higher level of the syllabus.
- Designing and setting extension activities that require more advanced skills to complete. These are available to all pupils once earlier tasks have been completed. Such activities provide opportunity for experimentation and development of a theme. Where these activities require extended investigation, pupils may be released from other lessons in order to complete them, or encouraged to complete them at home - which will encourage independent learning and enquiry. (Completion of these activities is often rewarded with merits, special mention, certificates, etc.)

**Other:**

Able children will also have opportunities to demonstrate their talents in a range of activities both in and out of school, recent examples of which include:

- Joining the orchestra once a certain level of ability has been attained
- Auditioning for solo roles in the Primary Schools Music Concert
- Taking on dance roles during performances
- Representing the school in sports competitions
- Attending workshops for able pupils organised by local secondary schools and colleges (eg science/maths)
- Working with a well known author/illustrator to complete a mural in the local library

## **Role of Able Pupils Co-ordinator (ABCo)**

- Ensure that provision for able pupils is provided across the whole curriculum including Physical activities and the creative arts eg through differentiation and extension activities (which may be provided out of school)
- Maintain Register of able pupils which is updated at least annually for the start of each academic year and inform parents and teachers of able pupils who are on the register
- Monitor progress of able pupils
- Support staff with providing appropriate challenge for able pupils
- Ensure the policy for able pupils is implemented
- Ensure that CPD includes relevant aspects of able pupils provision
- To ensure that the budget allocation for able pupils is spent appropriately across the breadth of the curriculum
- Liaise with governors and report on the provision for able pupils annually
- To develop links with other agencies to provide opportunities