

Whale Hill Primary School



"Continuous improvement towards the very best imaginable."



Gifted and Talented Policy

Updated April 2020

1. Aims

Our school aims state that we endeavour to:

- Develop each child's full potential in all areas; whether academic, artistic, physical or social.
- Celebrate children's particular talents and actively encourage achievement.

In the light of these aims we are clearly committed to providing an environment which encourages all children to maximise their potential and this includes 'more able' or 'Gifted and Talented' children.

2. Definition of 'Gifted and Talented'

There are many definitions of 'Gifted and Talented'.

The National Association for Able Children in Education (NACE) states:

'The DfE and Ofsted define the more able in terms of those whose progress significantly exceeds age related expectations. However, NACE looks beyond actual progress to include those who may be underachieving or whose skills and knowledge may extend beyond the school's measures of progress and curriculum. Exceptionally able pupils are those who have the capacity to achieve or perform at the very highest levels.'

The Department for Children, Schools and Families (2007), now Department for Education, defined specifically categorised Gifted and Talented as follows:

- 'Gifted' learners are those who have abilities in one or more subjects in the statutory curriculum other than art and design, music and PE;
- 'Talented' learners are those who have abilities in art and design, music, PE or performing arts such as dance and drama.

The term 'Gifted and Talented' is not to be understood as referring to the most able children in the national population. The term should be seen as relative and refers to the top 5% to 10% of any school, regardless of the ability profile of pupils at the school.

More recently, The Department for Education (2013) stated the requirement in the updated National Curriculum that 'teachers set high expectations for every pupil' and 'plan stretching work for pupils whose attainment is significantly above the expected standard'.

Definitions of specific terms used:

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 (for example, working at 'Greater Depth' level in accordance with the new National Curriculum).

Gifted: The top 5-10% of age related intellectual or academic ability within the school (core subjects).

Talented - The top 5-10% of age related practical or creative power, or other natural ability or tendency within the school (foundation subjects).

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. (E.g. An autistic child with an exceptional calculating ability)

It is important to be aware that more able children can:

- be good 'all-rounders',
- be high achievers in one area,
- be of high ability but with low motivation,
- be very capable of reasoning and verbalising but have poor recording skills,
- be very able with a short attention span,
- be very able with poor social skills,
- be keen to disguise their abilities,
- be underachieving.

3. Identification

We employ a number of methods of identification of the more able child:

- **Teacher nomination**

Teachers are best placed to identify more able children as they have a range of skills which enable them to do this (research shows teachers are about 83% reliable in their judgements).

Judgements will be based on analysis of information from nursery schools, previous teachers, interaction with children, parents and professionals, on-going assessment, careful record keeping, collation of evidence and a range of formal and informal tests (e.g. optional SATs, SATs, reading tests, aptitude tests).

- **Tests and assessments**

Testing is only one tool used for identification as it tests for particular abilities. However, both summative and diagnostic, general and subject specific, they can be used to support other methods of identification.

Success criteria developed for each subject can enable professionals to better identify more able/Gifted and Talented children, and plan opportunities for these children to be challenged.

- **Parental nomination**

Whale Hill Primary School is committed to developing and maintaining good communication with parents in order to develop trust and to more thoroughly meet children's educational and social needs. The opinion of parents about their children is highly valued and will be taken into consideration but will also not be the sole method of identification. All parents consider their child to be special and believe that he or she is displaying exceptional ability but the school often recognises that ability to be similar to that displayed by many other children.

Whale Hill Primary School is committed to developing and maintaining good communication with parents in order to develop trust and to more thoroughly meet children's educational and social needs. This communication is key with more able children as motivation and aspiration are heavily influenced by home life. As The Children's University (2016) states: 'Children can only aspire to what they know exists'.

- Peer nomination
Children are usually very quick to recognise ability in others and so it is part of our inclusive philosophy to listen to the views of children about children when they are offered.
- Ongoing Monitoring and Observation
Although not a formal method of identification, monitoring of children and everyday observations are useful tools. The more that teachers are monitoring and observing children in a variety of subjects and activities, the more likely it is that more able children will be identified early and, therefore, provision can be arranged to suitably challenge and extend.
- Provision
By building challenge into our provision across the whole school (not just curriculum areas) more able children are likely to be identified. This is a concept highlighted in the National Curriculum, in particular 'Mastery' in Maths and English.

4. Strategies and Provision

Whole School Level

Opportunities for extension and enrichment are built into all aspect of our school provision. We aim to:

- create an ethos where it is 'Alright to be bright'.
- encourage all children to become independent learners.
- be aware of the effects of ethnicity, bilingualism, gender and social circumstances on learning and high achievement,
- hold high expectations,
- use a variety of whole school strategies including:
 - planning for and allowing children to work alongside different year groups (for example, the Read Write Inc. spelling scheme).
 - giving children opportunities to be part of various working parties such as the school council.
 - recognising achievement (teacher praise and awards).
 - participation in projects, events and programmes planned both within and from outside of school.
 - recognition and challenge of more able children within intervention provision.
 - setting up a Gifted and Talented register for the core subjects of Maths, English and Science and also in the Foundation subjects.
 - Using success criteria for all subjects to identify more able/Gifted and Talented children and plan opportunities in these subjects for these children to be challenged.

Classroom Level

We understand and acknowledge the importance of establishing what prior knowledge, understanding and skills children have so as to avoid unnecessary repetition of work which could demotivate more able children.

We try to raise the profile of achievement whilst at the same time recognising that peer pressure can often make children feel the need to conform to the culture of under-achievement (House of Commons Education Committee, 2014).

We are alert to the more able children, who may be underachieving, and try to look for ways to motivate and encourage this group.

Finally, we endeavour not to slip into assumptions that more able children are easier to teach than other children.

The following strategies are employed where appropriate:

- varied and flexible groupings, sometimes allowing able children to work together, sometimes allowing them to take specific roles in mixed-ability groups.
- differentiation by task (including differentiated homework)
- differentiation by outcome
- setting individual targets
- use of higher order questioning and thinking skills such as reasoning and problem solving.
- provision of challenging activities across the whole curriculum.
- encouraging **all** children to become independent learners by:
 - organising their own work,
 - carrying out unaided tasks which stretch their capabilities,
 - making choices about their work,
 - developing the ability to evaluate their own work and become self-critical.

5. Extra-Curricular Activities

These are highly valued for the Gifted and Talented children and include:

- Club activities - music, sports, dance and languages among others.
- Day and residential visits.
- The use of specialists e.g. teachers from other schools (through the Aspire Learning Partnership), visiting artists and authors, instrument teachers.
- Opportunities for involvement in school productions, including through Music, Drama, Computing and Art.
- A broad, creative curriculum, with opportunities for children to thrive.

Opportunities and Changes for 2019/2020

- Whale Hill Primary School is a member of the NACE and Potential Plus (formerly NAGC) and will seek to take advantage of training events and opportunities for children.
- Year 6 Gifted children will be taking part in Brilliant Club which helps them to work alongside other professionals from places such as Durham University.
- The school have previously taken part in the Childnet Digital Leader Programme. Due to the cost that this incurs, new Digital Leaders will continue be trained in-school covering the same topics as were included in the Childnet programme (without, of course, the Childnet-affiliated prefix). This involves a group of Year 6 children who are more able in English, Maths and Computing.
- A range of clubs and interventions will be implemented by year group teams and monitored throughout the year.
- In past years, there have been a number of events and activities run and scheduled by Inspire2Learn. As of this academic year, there have been changes which mean most of the provision is no longer available to schools. We aim to find other ways in which to provide opportunities for our more able children both inside and outside of school.
- In past years, Whale Hill was part of the Aspire Learning Partnership. It was the intention that good practice and teaching strategies be shared with other schools within Redcar and

Cleveland. From September 2019, the school has undergone academy conversion and it is intended that good practice will increasingly be shared within the trust.

- The Gifted and Talented register will include children that are recognised as G&T and also, from last year, children that are to be monitored as able and potentially G&T. It is hoped that this will encourage teachers to identify able children early and implement challenges without the worry of committing to classifying children as Gifted or Talented too early, especially in Lower and Middle School.

Role of the Gifted and Talented Leader

- Monitor agreed policy.
- Develop expertise, through training and research, and share this in school.
- Purchase appropriate resources.
- Work alongside subject leaders to monitor assessment and provision.
- Seek out opportunities for Gifted and Talented Children.
- Monitor provision across school.

Policy updated in April 2020 by John Frost

References:

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