



# Educating More Able Children: A Guide for Parents and Carers

'For I can do everything through Christ, who gives me strength.' Philippians 4:13

## **My child has been identified as 'More Able,' but what does that mean?**

Saint Cecilia's Church of England School is fully committed to the equality of opportunity for all pupils. Every pupil, of whatever ability, has the right to be challenged and encouraged to develop to their full potential. It is therefore important that the needs of the 'More Able' learners are met to ensure they continue to be challenged and make progress. Through raising expectations, challenge and attainment of the More Able pupils, we will raise the achievement of all pupils.

### **Definitions**

#### **Gifted**

Gifted is the term used to identify pupils at subject level. These pupils demonstrate a strong ability or interest within the subject area, and will be identified by department staff, using department specific criteria. These groups are changeable.

#### **More Able**

More Able is the term used to define learners who are identified at school level as pupils who are more able relative to their peers in their own year group. These pupils will have been identified by a number of subject areas and will have higher Key Stage 2 scores or higher GCSE scores. These pupils have the potential or capacity for high attainment. Roughly 10% of the year group will be identified as More Able. These pupils are identified in Year 7 and in Year 12. This group is changeable.

#### **Exceptionally Able**

Pupils whose abilities exceed the More Able are known as Exceptionally Able, as compared to their peers nationally. This can include pupils who have as yet unrealised potential for exceptional ability. These pupils require additional support and challenge beyond the enrichment and extension within the normal curriculum. Exceptionally Able pupils are identified where they have an average of 117 across their Key Stage 2 scores or average APS at GCSE of 8.75 and above.

## **What are we doing for your child?**

There are three key areas of support for More Able pupils at Saint Cecilia's— the quality of teaching and learning in class, educational opportunities provided beyond the classroom, and attention to the social and emotional welfare of the child.

### **In the everyday classroom**

At Saint Cecilia's, we have tasks and activities to "extend" or "enrich" your child's learning. Quality first teaching is a fundamental concept at Saint Cecilia's, and most of the provision occurs in the classroom through carefully planned teaching. Teachers provide challenging,

stretching and engaging learning opportunities for all learners, and differentiate 'downwards', through effective scaffolding of the task.

Pupils complete a 'Pupil Passport' on identification as More Able, and this is shared with all staff so that they are aware of each pupil's individual needs. This enables all pupils to be sufficiently challenged but given the necessary support to access the task where necessary.

All pupils are given a variety of activities that engage and develop their thinking skills. Teachers use in depth, quality discussion, coupled with carefully planned and timed questioning, to challenge pupils' perceptions and further their understanding. Questioning focuses on using higher order thinking skills as described in Bloom's taxonomy. Specifically, for More Able pupils, teachers use a range of techniques to provide pupils with additional challenge, including targeted provision, independent tasks, grouping of pupils, roles within groups and acceleration to harder topics as appropriate to the topic and the pupil's individual needs. More Able pupils are allowed to move on quickly to more challenging activities, to help develop higher order thinking and problem-solving skills.

Teachers consider a pupil's prior understanding and knowledge, to effectively provide for the More Able learners, with the aim to broaden, deepen and link learning.

#### Beyond the classroom

We offer an abundance of extra-curricular activities for More Able learners. We have an 'Enrichment Programme' that includes a wide variety of activities, including teacher lectures/workshops, masterclasses, competitions, and university visits.

We will also signpost to additional external workshops, lectures, courses that may be of interest to More Able pupils.

#### Social and emotional support

We are sensitive to the social and emotional needs of children and have well-developed support systems in place, but sometimes More Able learners need particular types of support and attention. This may take many forms, including mentoring, having a trusted adult or external agency support.

Support is also provided for careers and well-being through the structures in place. Well-being sessions, aimed at dealing with exam stress, anxiety and effectively managing and organising time, are included as part of our Enrichment Programme.

## What can you do at home?

The biggest contribution a parent can make to their child's education is to be interested in and appreciate what they are doing, know what they are interested in, and support them in what they do.

Gentle encouragement, interested questioning, concern when you feel there is a problem, and a habit of showing curiosity about the world yourself are all especially important. Talking with and listening to your child are among the most crucial factors in the development of language.

Specifically, you could:

- 1) Play Scrabble or Boggle together and make it into a tournament. You could make this harder by only using words related to a theme – e.g. a hobby or a sport.
- 2) Invent 10 new uses for a household item. Alternatively improve the design of something in common use, such as a waste bin.
- 3) Involve your child in real-life consumer issues by writing a letter or email to manufacturers or service providers, complaining about or endorsing products or making suggestions and designing improvements to products. Discuss advertisements for obvious and hidden messages and create a new, perhaps more truthful, jingle.
- 4) Investigate and enrich the family identify. Speak to an older family member about life 50 years ago. Research the family history together, visiting the local records office and places associated with your family. Design/make a family crest depicting the family history.
- 5) Have a discussion as a family on current news events. Encourage your child to form their opinion and debate with you. Ask your child to try to persuade you to a different opinion.
- 6) Listen to different types of music (e.g. jazz, opera, classical, reggae, soul) and discuss the mood, style, musical features. How are the musical styles different?
- 7) Discuss a favourite TV programme and plan two new plots/sub-plots for the characters. Discuss the plausibility of current plots and how they could be improved.
- 8) Invent a new sport together. Make up appropriate rules, uniforms, equipment and run a tournament together.
- 9) Examine local newspapers for local problems and plan logical solutions. Write letters to the editor over matters of concern or interest.
- 10) Learn a craft, such as crochet or knitting.
- 11) Condense a film, book or TV programme into four sentences (or four words). Whose version is best?
- 12) Devise and set up a home weather station for recording conditions. Set up a database to record and plot the information.
- 13) Examine advice and plan ways to make the house more environmentally friendly. Design systems for conserving water and/or energy.
- 14) Read the same book together and hold your own little book group as a family.
- 15) Download a 'best book' list and choose some books to read together.
- 16) Learn together about particular plants, vegetables or herbs. Plan a garden or bed together including a new garden layout, a timetable for planting etc. Tend the area as a family project.

- 17) Plan simple chemical experiments and discuss the chemical components in household items and food.
- 18) Solve crossword puzzles, anagrams, riddles, acrostics, Sudoku, and other number puzzles together, then construct your own for others to solve.
- 19) Learn and play strategy games such as chess, backgammon, Go etc.
- 20) Visit the many free exhibitions, museums and galleries in London. Plan the trip together, including how you will get up there, and your route around the museum/gallery.

Another helpful document:

[https://cdn.ymaws.com/www.nace.co.uk/resource/collection/6A5FDA2B-BB50-469C-A969-5AE29D2BD6D1/NACE Essentials Parents and Carers.pdf](https://cdn.ymaws.com/www.nace.co.uk/resource/collection/6A5FDA2B-BB50-469C-A969-5AE29D2BD6D1/NACE_Essentials_Parents_and_Carers.pdf)