

St Michael's Primary School



Highly Able Pupils Policy

Written: February 2025

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RATIONALE

St Michael's Primary School Vision:

St. Michael's Primary is a Catholic school in which all the pupils are made aware of their Christian responsibilities to each other and to the larger community. Our aim is to establish and foster a community of faith and learning in an environment characterised by mutual respect and gospel values with a focus on the five core values of Resilience, Respect, Faith, Success and Kindness, agreed by pupils, parents and staff.

Staff in Scottish schools are expected to support learners in a way that takes account of wellbeing, inclusion, equity and fairness (Education Scotland, online). This has become known as Universal Support and should be available for every Scottish student. Legislative and curricular framework in Scotland provides a strong structure for meeting the needs of highly able learners. Alongside this, the staged intervention process adopted in Education Authorities allows schools to consider the needs of this group of learners in the same way as any other group of pupils requiring additional support.

In St Michael's Primary School we recognise that children are individuals with unique personalities, skills and abilities. We provide teaching which makes learning challenging, engaging and investigative to achieve greater breadth and depth of understanding and enables children to reach their full potential.

We also recognise that within our school there are a number of children whose performance or potential is significantly greater than that of their peers. Therefore, we have the responsibility to meet the needs of these children and this policy outlines the identification procedures and provision made. It is accompanied by guidance for staff on strategies to meet the needs of the Highly Able Pupils.

AIMS

In St. Michael's Primary we will strive:

-  To develop in our children the attributes, knowledge and skills that they will need to flourish in life, learning and work, now and in the future.
-  For each child to have a strong sense of pride in themselves, their school and to be active contributors in the wider community.
-  To engage children in high quality learning and teaching which is fun, interactive, motivating and offers real life experiences.

- ✚ To prepare staff for their role in achieving these aims, by committing to their welfare, Christian beliefs and to providing high quality professional development.
- ✚ To create a safe, happy and inclusive environment where everyone is valued, respected, fairly treated and successes are celebrated.
- ✚ To nurture and develop positive relationships by encouraging active involvement and effective communication with parents and the community.

DEFINITION

There is no statutory definition or single term to describe 'particularly able or talented' students in Scotland. Scotland's National Improvement Hub describes 'highly able learners' as those who are working, or have the potential to work, ahead of other learners their own age. They may be working, or have potential to work, at the higher level across the whole curriculum or in one or more curricular area.

IDENTIFICATION

Children who demonstrate these described levels of performance or potential may be identified using a range of methods:

- ✚ Teacher assessment/observations
- ✚ Teacher identification using an awareness raising checklist of characteristics (see appendices)
- ✚ Assessment results (periodic/standardised)
- ✚ Possession of one or more of the higher order characteristics (such as critical thinking and problem solving)
- ✚ Information from parents
- ✚ Information from previous teacher/school or another professional e.g. sports coach, peripatetic music teacher

Those children identified will be highlighted at Self Evaluation/Forward Planning Meetings to agree appropriate differentiation and challenge.
Pupils will also be identified on Tracking & Monitoring documents.

PROVISION

In the Classroom

St Michael's Primary School, every child has access to high quality learning & teaching through which differentiation (matching teaching and learning to the relevant needs and abilities of pupils) will ensure that all pupils have access to a relevant and appropriate curriculum. This may take the form of extension (providing challenges

which go more deeply into a topic) or enrichment (providing other activities which run alongside the normal curriculum and go more broadly into specific areas of study). Teachers use a range of flexible learning and teaching strategies to keep the highly able children interested and provide them with challenge, such as higher order thinking skills (MTV), differing questioning techniques, problem solving and independent learning. This is supported by group/individual target setting and appropriate grouping arrangements. We aim to create an ethos where pupils feel good about achieving excellence and both achievement and effort are celebrated. Pupils are encouraged to become independent leaders of their own learning and given opportunities to apply their knowledge and understanding in more in-depth, complex, cross-curricular and multi-modal methods.

Outside the Classroom

We aim to provide activities that will enrich and extend the experiences of our highly able pupils. We consult the SNAP (Scottish Network for Able Pupils) Programme that hosts a wide range of exciting and challenging activities to inspire and develop the skills of our highly able pupils. We also provide a varied programme of specialist teachers, after school clubs, visiting experts and curriculum events.

Highly able pupils are entitled to a curriculum and a style of teaching which allows them to continue, and indeed accelerate, their area of strength. This is underpinned by the following key principles:

- ✚ Rigour and depth in subject matter - Highly able learners should have the opportunity to access a wider curriculum to a greater depth and have the chance to explore it for themselves,
- ✚ Open-endedness - closed questions and tasks kill the level of challenge. Highly able learners should be given the tasks that do not have a clear limit or predetermined outcome. This can apply to homework too,
- ✚ Problem-solving - Highly able learners are often excited and enthused by problem solving, working out things for themselves rather than being told them,
- ✚ Creativity - allow children the chance to choose (and justify this choice) how they respond to a task or to have tasks that demand a high degree of creativity,
- ✚ Celebrating intellectual curiosity - Classrooms should all celebrate highly able pupils and teachers should not be shy in acknowledging, nurturing and celebrating excellence,
- ✚ Co-construction and independence - Highly able learners should have the opportunity to shape and review their own learning and be given the responsibility to be leaders of their own learning. This is done through consistent, appropriate use of our Learning Logs.

It is believed that all pupils will in fact benefit from adherence to these principles and that over time more pupils will have the opportunity to be considered to be highly able as a consequence.

TRANSFER & TRANSITION

Effective recording and communication systems between each year group, across and within Key Stages, will ensure that as far as possible teachers are aware (at the start of each year) of:

- ✚ Attainment and progress
- ✚ Potential and interests of all learners
- ✚ Skills that have been mastered
- ✚ Those identified as highly able
- ✚ Preferred learning styles

MONITORING

The highly able provision will be monitored using the following methods:

- ✚ All teachers are involved in identifying highly able children
- ✚ All teachers will assess the progress of pupils through normal classroom practice and the on-going, periodic and standardised suite of assessment used in the school
- ✚ A robust system of tracking & monitoring of highly able pupils is done by the SLT/Cluster Support Teacher to ensure that the whole school curriculum meets the needs of the identified pupils
- ✚ The SLT in partnership with the class teacher will analyse and collate the results of standardised assessments, which provide valuable information for future planning
- ✚ A robust system of Quality Assurance, including classroom observations and the monitoring of pupil work, will ensure the correct provision for the highly able pupils in our school
- ✚ SLT/Cluster Support Teacher will identify areas for development and intervene accordingly

ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES

Class Teachers are ultimately responsible for the progress and attainment of all their pupils.

Class Teachers will:

- ✚ take steps to identify highly able pupils using the methods identified in this policy
- ✚ assess the progress of the highly able pupils through normal classroom and whole school assessment cycles
- ✚ plan and implement appropriate provision
- ✚ record strategies used in Self Evaluation/Forward Planning Meetings
- ✚ deploy support staff effectively and ensure they are familiar with the strategies and techniques that they may use when working with the highly able
- ✚ review provision regularly

The SLT/Cluster Support Teacher will:

- ✚ ensure all staff involved with identified children know of their particular needs
- ✚ update colleagues on best practice or new initiatives as they arise and to meet staff CLPL needs
- ✚ monitor the progress made by the children
- ✚ ensure that provision for the highly able is reflected in scrutiny and moderation activity, pupil voice, lesson observations, pupil work sampling and Self Evaluation/Forward Planning Meetings.

WORKING IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS

The school actively promotes a culture of a school-parent partnership in order to enable each child to reach their full potential. Parents are warmly welcomed to speak to their child's Class Teacher, the Cluster Support Teacher or SLT throughout the school year to discuss any matter.

Further information can be sought through accessing the following websites:

[Highly able pupils | Learning environment | Specific support needs | Additional support | Parentzone Scotland | Parentzone Scotland](#)

<https://www.gla.ac.uk/research/az/ablepupils/>