

Blue Gate Fields Junior School

Provision for the most able or talented pupils



All pupils at Blue Gate Fields Junior School are entitled to a structured, balanced and challenging curriculum that is suited to their needs and their aspirations. Providing enriching learning experiences for all our pupils is vital and this includes provision for the most able. We believe that the development of provision for our talented and most able, and exceptionally able pupils will improve provision for pupils of all abilities.

Aims

We aim to:

- Recognise and support the abilities, personal qualities and talents of all pupils;
- Promote a sense of enjoyment and excitement in learning and a culture of high expectations for all pupils;
- Ensure that all children receive an education appropriate to their abilities;
- Provide challenge for all, including the most able, employing a range of teaching methods which encourage pupils to take responsibility for their own learning;
- Develop a recognition and awareness of talented and most able pupils and their individual strengths;
- Ensure that all teachers share responsibility for the monitoring of pupils, including the most able;
- Recognise under-achievement and seek to remove barriers to learning;
- Provide opportunities for all pupils to develop their strengths through high quality extra-curricular activities and curriculum enrichment, including specific provision for gifted, talented and able pupils;
- Consider the personal, social and emotional needs of all pupils, including those of our most able;
- Work in partnership with parents to maximise the opportunities for pupils to reach their potential;
- Celebrate the achievements of all pupils.

We use definitions suggested by **The National Association for Able Children in Education**.

<https://www.nace.co.uk/blogpost/1764156/367215/More-able-learners-key-terminology-and-definitions>

More able / most able / highly able

Due to their inherently similar meanings, it is easiest if the terms more able, most able and highly able are defined in the same way or encompassed within one “more able” definition which includes the following elements:

- Learners who have the **potential or capacity** for high attainment;
- Learners who **demonstrate high levels of performance** in an academic area;
- Learners who are more able **relative to their peers** in their own year group, class and school/college;
- Ability in all areas of the curriculum **or** in a specific subject/curriculum area, including the arts and physical activities.

Each of these elements is vital if the definition of “more able” is to be clear and encompass the breadth and flexibility needed to ensure outstanding provision.

Exceptionally able

The abilities and needs of the exceptionally able *exceed* those of the more able.

Within any definition of the exceptionally able it is important to:

- Distinguish between these and other more able learners in two ways: (1) By the use of the qualifying adjective “extremely”; (2) By the comparison with peers in *all* schools/across the entire population, as opposed to those within each particular school.
- Include reference to learners who have as yet unrealised potential for exceptional ability.
- Describe the needs of these pupils as going beyond those of students already deemed to require opportunities for enrichment and extension in the normal curriculum.
- Explain that exceptional ability may comprise both quantitative and qualitative aspects, but will certainly include high abstract reasoning ability and complexity of thinking.

In many schools the terms “gifted” and “exceptionally able” are used interchangeably as they share meaning and can be defined similarly. However, “exceptionally able” may be an easier term to understand, helping to define what is meant more clearly. It is also a much less controversial and emotive descriptor.

Underachieving more able learners

In attempting to arrive at a useful definition for underachieving more able learners, schools should consider including the following criteria:

- Learners whose prior attainment demonstrates high levels of ability, but whose current performance fails to demonstrate this. Underachievement may be the result of barriers to pupils’ learning, including socio-economic factors, SEMH needs, language and communication issues, etc.
- Learners whose contributions, responses and learning behaviours suggest that they are more able, although this is not reflected in their written work or assessments. This may include those learners with “dual” or “multiple exceptionality”.
- Those who haven’t yet been identified due to too narrow a curriculum or limited learning opportunities. These are potentially more able learners.

The Education Endowment Foundation’s (EEF's) teaching and learning toolkit includes a section on the impact of ability grouping.

The organisation’s website says that high attaining pupils benefit from different types of grouping, including pull-out or accelerated classes or promotion. It refers to research which shows that these pupils can achieve between three and 12 months’ additional learning on the back of these strategies.

All pupils benefit from:	Pupils within the ability group will benefit from:	A small number of exceptionally able pupils may receive:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High quality teaching and learning opportunities • Low threshold, high ceiling class / home learning tasks • A Growth Mindset school ethos • Breakfast Club • Responsive, small-step teaching • Range of questioning styles, including open-ended differentiated questions targeted at specific pupils • Opportunities for choice within a task, including the level of work or the method of recording where appropriate; differentiated homework • Flexible ability grouping arrangements • Opportunities to contribute to and lead parts of lessons e.g. plenaries, demonstrating understanding and sharing success • Author visits and workshops • Structured opportunities for scaffolded talk • Feedback strategies which encourage deeper thinking and an understanding of continuous improvement • Enrichment opportunities within the curriculum: <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Shakespeare performances</i></p>	<p>Focused sessions with the class teacher School planned and focused enrichment activities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>The Tower Hamlets Creative Writing Competition for the more able Year 5 Literacy group</i> • <i>More able Year 6 pupils visit LSE to learn more about university life</i> • <i>Debating opportunities</i> • <i>More able Year 6 literacy group visit the Royal Academy for Art/Literacy visit</i> • <i>Chess Club</i> • <i>Arts Council</i> • <i>CAME trained mathematics teachers</i> • <i>Teachers who are able to teach lessons with outstanding outcomes</i> 	<p>School planned and focused enrichment activities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Targeted Book Groups • Library group visit a bookshop to select and purchase books for the school library (as Covid restrictions allow) • Allocated time with music teachers • Opportunities to attend local / regional workshops & events with pupils of similar ability • Tower Hamlets Book Award review group • Tower Hamlets Creative Writing award with pupils participating across Key Stages • Opportunities to attend District trials and participate in borough wide sports events <p>Signposting for parents & pupils to access appropriate support</p>

<p><i>Aspiration Day</i> <i>Science Week</i> <i>Educational visits and visitors</i> <i>Drama experiences with a performance storyteller</i> <i>Cultural experiences</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Opportunities to take on positions of responsibility and leadership <p><i>School Counsellor</i> <i>Classroom monitors</i> <i>Young Sports Leaders</i> <i>Anti-bullying ambassadors</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enrichment opportunities beyond the curriculum e.g. specific extra-curricular provision <p><i>Sports clubs, after-school clubs</i></p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support to apply for St Paul's Girls' School • Opportunity to attend St Paul's Girls' School summer school • Guidance from Sports teacher to access sporting activities at borough level <p>Enrichment opportunities beyond the curriculum e.g. specific extra-curricular provision</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>'Stingrays' sports club for the most able sports people</i> • <i>Trips and competitions</i> • <i>LA support</i> <p>One to one coaching to extend learning in a specific area</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Extensions for higher level thinking</i>
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Impact:

From the beginning of the school day, before lessons begin, the Breakfast club offers a relaxed, social time where children and families can enjoy a healthy start to the day. Breakfast clubs boost primary pupils' progress in reading, writing and mathematics by two months, research from the Educational Endowment Fund (EEF) suggests. We know that a healthy breakfast improves our pupils' behaviour and concentration, which then benefits all pupils when lessons begin, including those who did not attend the club.

During lessons all pupils are exposed to high levels of expectation regardless of the ability group they are taught in. Teachers teach with low-threshold, high ceiling learning opportunities which enable all pupils, including the most able, to extend their learning. Learning conversations

with teachers are purposeful, learning focused and tailored to individual need. Opportunities to explore, extend thinking and learning are continually provided. Talk is taught – children are provided with talk scaffolds which become progressively more sophisticated as they move through the school. Small-step learning, responsive to the learning needs of the children, along with many opportunities for feedback ensure lessons are providing our most-able pupils with a challenging learning environment.

The enrichment of the curriculum is for all pupils, with the most able offered specific opportunities in Literacy, Maths and the Arts. Our most able pupils enjoy the experience of collaboration with other, like-minded individuals of different ages and backgrounds. These opportunities are eye-opening, inspiring and aspirational.

Our library and the librarian have a huge impact in channeling the love of literature that many of our most able pupils show. This love of literature is a springboard into secondary and higher education. We have established a link with St Paul's Girls' School and gained a record of success in identifying gifted pupils that have been accepted into the school. We actively encourage parents of potential future students to allow their daughters to attend the Summer School.

The impact of our artists in residence is evident in the learning environment with pottery, drawing and painting, collage and design and technology on show throughout the school. Through a love of art and the arts, our more able children make links with the wider curriculum which are enriching and deepening of understanding. Pupils are identified and encouraged by those with an expert eye for encouraging particular talent.

In sport, the impact of provision for more our most able pupils is seen in the expanding opportunities to display and practice exceptional talent. Our pupils play for district and borough teams and will be targeted for future sporting success as they transition to secondary education. We use our funding to impact on the opportunities more able pupils have to access a wide range of sports. The school has a Gold Healthy Schools Award.

The school day ends with After School Clubs providing space and coaching for all pupils, and particularly the most talented, to practice sporting skills.