



Gifted and Talented Policy

St Brendans BNS

This policy document should be read in conjunction with the Assessment, Positive Behaviour, Special Educational Needs and Equal Opportunities policies.

Rationale

At St Brendans BNS we strive to build each child's self esteem and to enable them to experience success through reaching their potential in all aspects of learning. Our approach is inclusive, recognising the talents of all rather than the few. This policy document is used to inform parents, board of management and other interested parties about the provision made within the school to cater for the gifted and talented pupils.

Definition of Gifted and Talented

- Gifted children are those that rank in the top 2% of their peer group in terms of academic ability. The school recognises that this can change from one year to the next.
- Gifted children are those who demonstrate an understanding above the average of their peers within their class in one or more academic areas. However when test results and teacher assessments do not tally, children may still be identified as more able but underachieving in terms of the tests.
- Talented children display an above average ability in a specific skill in sports or the arts.
- The School recognises that some pupils may be Twice Exceptional, that is, be gifted but also have a learning difficulty. In this situation, the school will liaise closely with parents in ensuring appropriate support for such pupils within the context of the St Brendans BNS Learning Support programme and this policy.

Aims

- To ensure that children continue to develop their potential irrespective of race, gender, culture, religion or ability.
- To provide all pupils with activities, both in the classroom and outside that are challenging and take into consideration the different learning styles of the children.
- To provide additional activities for those children identified as gifted or talented.

Setting high expectations for all children and staff

We use teaching and learning strategies which provide high levels of challenge alongside structured guidance. As a school we are committed to providing high quality staff training and to utilise this in our teaching and classroom management.

Providing a broad and balanced curriculum

We aim to make learning exciting and challenging, building on what our learners already know. Children with special abilities are identified and supported across the whole curriculum.

Ensuring gifted and talented children receive equal opportunities to develop their learning and receive equal access to support

We promote assessment for learning and have clear systems to identify gifted and talented children. It is the class teacher's responsibility to provide appropriate learning opportunities for gifted and talented children and the Principal's responsibility to maintain the register.

Aims

The aim of this policy is to ensure a consistent approach to the identification of and support of gifted and talented children at our school. We will do this through:

- an agreed definition of the terms gifted and talented
- an identification of these children as soon as possible
- using a range of criteria to help us with identification
- meeting pupil's needs with a range of strategies for teaching and learning
- working in partnership with parents
- constantly evaluating the provision we make for gifted and talented children in our classrooms and throughout school

Definition of the Gifted and Talented Child

We do recognise that some children are gifted and talented. The agreed definition of gifted and talented is:

Gifted - this refers to pupils with ability in academic subjects eg Literacy and Numeracy

Talented - this refers to pupils with ability in Art, Music, PE or in sport or creative art

NB Some pupils will fall into both categories as will some subjects eg ICT, Science (this can be practical and academic).

Pupils who are gifted and talented are those who achieve or who have the potential to achieve at a level significantly in advance of their year group at our school.

Children may be gifted in one area of learning, but may be average in others.

The term 'gifted' implies a comparison between an individual child's ability and that of the cohort in which they work. A child is considered to be gifted and talented when they are insufficiently challenged by activities planned for the higher ability group of children in the class. A child may be seen to be insufficiently challenged if they complete activities well before other pupils or do not

engage in activities with interest and concentration but understand the activity well when questioned by the teacher.

In addition to the generally above average children in each class or those who shine in one or two academic subjects, gifted and talented children may demonstrate:

- Creativity
- Musical talent
- Artistic talent
- Physical talent
- Dramatic talent
- Leadership talent
- Organisational skills
- Good interpersonal skills
- Analytical ability
- Good social skills

Strategies for Identifying Gifted and Talented Children

In order for gifted and talented children to make best progress, their abilities must be recognised. We adopt broad and flexible identification strategies which are realistic, manageable, achievable and regularly reviewed.

A starting point is to identify those children who are not challenged by the curriculum which meets the needs of most of their peers.

Identification by teachers - it is part of general classroom practice for teachers to assess the ability of all children through observation, marking work and informal assessments. Through these ongoing mechanisms, teachers are readily able to identify pupils who are gifted and talented. Teachers are aware that a child's ability may change from year to year and class to class and are careful to assess all children without undue reference to previous achievement. They are also careful to give no undue bias in their identification to a child's ethnicity or family background.

Use of databases - Pupil tracking data is used to identify children who are achieving well above their age expected levels in English and Mathematics.

Results of tests and formal assessments - testing forms an integral part of the school's cycle of planning, teaching, assessment and monitoring. Test results are used to analyse children's attainment against their peers and against standardised or national expectations, such as Reading age or Curriculum levels. A child may be deemed 'gifted and talented' if their results are significantly higher than the rest of their cohort, however testing alone is not sufficient to identify children of exceptional ability.

External experts - there may be occasions when teachers need a 'second opinion' or a more detailed analysis to decide if a child is gifted and talented. This may be particularly appropriate for children whose special needs may hide their true ability, for example, the poor behaviour of a child with emotional difficulties, children with autistic spectrum disorders, or a physical disability such as visual or hearing impairment. In such cases the Principal is responsible for organising support from appropriate professionals such as Educational Psychologist or hearing impaired support service.

Parents - parents will sometimes be able to draw attention to specific skills and talents which their child does not demonstrate in the school situation. St Brendans BNS welcomes and values parental views . The Parent teacher meetings, parental involvement in school life, comments on homework diaries/communication journal and the parent/child questionnaires are all mechanisms by which parents may be able to contribute to the identification of a gifted and talented child.

Children - the school is developing strategies to involve children in assessing their own learning and setting their own targets. For example, the newly introduced plenary in Numeracy and Literacy lessons and evaluating their work independently or with peers, gives children opportunities to comment on their strengths and areas of development and raises their own self awareness whilst providing the teacher with useful information.

The Register of Gifted and Talented Children

When the school has identified a pupil as gifted and talented it has a duty to ensure that appropriate provision is made for them. One mechanism for ensuring this is through the register for gifted and talented children. The Principal is responsible for working with teachers each term to enter up-to-date information about children and their special abilities onto the register. It is appropriate that the register is 'fluid'. Parents should be kept informed of their child's talents and skills and support given, although it is not necessary to use the term 'register' as this can present difficulties if the flexible nature of the register is not appreciated. We also have a duty to listen to, and act upon, parents concerns if they feel their child's needs are not being met.

It is important to note that during their school career, children may move onto and off the register as their learning accelerates or plateaus. Such decisions are made using the strategies outlined and giving consideration to ways in which a pupil exhibits the characteristics of a gifted and talented learner.

The register is kept in the Principal's office. It is confidential to teaching staff, teaching support staff and members of the inspection teams when appropriate.

Teaching and Learning Strategies Which Support Gifted and Talented Children

Teachers are responsible for the majority of provision for gifted and talented children. Many of the strategies needed to support gifted and talented children are similar to those needed to support all

children's learning. Creating a stimulating and positive learning environment is a vital element in supporting more able pupils.

In order to promote successful learning experiences, teachers must:

- Recognise that children, even young children are capable of excellence and provide a climate which expects this
- Recognise that everyone, including the most gifted and talented, need opportunities to relax and have fun.
- Provide firm but sensitive discipline. Gifted and talented children are often sensitive but can also be very challenging and unwilling to conform.
- Recognise that gifted and talented children need and respond to praise like all other children. However they tend to recognise when praise is unwarranted and inappropriate praise will devalue it.
- Have a secure classroom environment in which children feel they are able to display their ability.
- Ensure that a good relationship between home and school exists.
- Be aware that even the most gifted and talented will experience some failure and teach strategies to deal with this.
- Appreciate that children have strengths and weaknesses and need someone who adopts a pastoral role and understands this.
- Make space to provide appropriate, considered responses to searching questions.
- Allow exceptional children to be recognised as individuals with special needs but within the normal classroom environment.
- Appropriate use of target setting.
- Use LS and Resource teachers time and expertise effectively to benefit all children.

In addition, there are a number of teaching strategies which are particularly effective in supporting gifted and talented children:

Grouping - in the course of ordinary class work children are often organised to work in flexible ability groupings. It may also be appropriate for gifted and talented children to withdraw from class to work in a different group. Where appropriate, intervention groups will be identified and will be monitored by the Principal.

Questioning - the language used by teachers and the approach they adopt when communicating with gifted and talented pupils are both significant factors in determining the progress made by these children. The most useful type of questions are those which are open and probing, encouraging pupils to think more deeply or to make links or connections as they process information. It is also important that pupils be given the opportunity to develop their own questioning skills as a strategy for directing and extending their own learning.

Differentiation - teachers plan for different ability levels in a variety of ways. Teachers are aware that they must give opportunities to work and progress rapidly through the elementary stages of a topic in order to apply and extend learning for the gifted and talented child. This should be identified in planning. Gifted and talented children are offered activities which enable them to work independently, to make choices and to develop skills in investigation and research. They are also given activities based on co-operative learning - this enables them to explain their thinking to one another, thus clarifying their own thinking and making transitions into new levels of learning. Gifted and talented children may be offered differentiated activities in a variety of ways including:

- being given tasks at a higher level than the rest of the class
- being given different amounts of time to complete a task
- being given different learning objectives to achieve within an open-ended activity being followed by the whole class
- being given different resources to complete the task
- being asked to design their own learning activity
- being given more challenging targets

Organisation

Through good classroom management teachers identify times when they work alongside gifted and talented children. It is not expected that more able children always undertake independent learning activities whilst the teacher works with the main body of the class. Teachers may use a variety of techniques including vocal problem solving to give children good models to follow or analytical discussions which help children understand the learning processes they are using.

School Clubs/Out of School Clubs

Gifted and talented children may be encouraged to join these if appropriate and, as with all children, their success in these groups should be celebrated.

The Role of the Principal in relation to Gifted and Talented Children

The role of includes the following responsibilities:

- to work in consultation with teaching staff to draw up/review a whole school policy for supporting gifted and talented children
- to ensure that identification procedures are in place throughout the school and that they are used to maintain a register of gifted and talented pupils
- placing children on the register, although class teachers may nominate and must provide evidence
- to inform parents of provision for their gifted and talented child
- to ascertain the professional development needs of staff and feed this information into school development planning

- to assist subject co-ordinators as they revise subject policies to take account of the needs of gifted and talented children
- to ensure appropriate records are kept and liaison takes place as gifted and talented pupils move to other schools
- to keep abreast of national and local initiatives for supporting gifted and talented children through personal research and attendance at co-ordinator network meetings
- to promote extra-curricular activities and involvement in wider community projects in order to offer challenging learning situations to the more able
- to advise the governing body on the school's work in supporting gifted and talented children
- a duty to listen to, and to act upon, parents concerns if they feel their child's needs are not being met

The Role of the Parent

Parents need to recognise that they have a duty to support their able child by:

- telling the school about their child's talents and abilities beyond the classroom
- asking teachers for advice when needed
- encouraging their child to take part in worthwhile and varied activities and experiences
- being aware that their child will need a variety of skills and experiences to fulfil his/her potential

Monitoring Provision

The Principal must take steps to monitor the provision and check that the provision is effective.

Monitoring provision includes:

- collecting information about the number of children on the register
- collecting information about the range of abilities and talents represented on the register
- collecting information about the strategies used to support more able children
- Tracking progress in Literacy & Numeracy

Success Criteria

Evaluating the success of the policy includes:

working with LS/ Resource and class teachers to evaluate the quality and range of activities planned for gifted and talented children

working with LS/ Resource and class teachers to evaluate the range and quality of work produced by gifted and talented children

working with LS/ Resource and class teachers to evaluate the organisational methods and teaching strategies used for gifted and talented children

working with teachers to evaluate the impact of any staff training on the quality of teaching and learning and to plan future training