



The Linden Academy – More Able Children Policy

Introduction

The Linden Academy (TLA) is committed to ensuring that **all** pupils achieve their full potential; by providing them with the educational opportunities, experiences and support that they need (in conjunction with social, moral, spiritual and cultural guidance) to ensure success in their work, relationships and role within the wider community.

TLA acknowledges that more able children are a distinct learner group, with specific educational needs and attributes which must be catered for. More able children should be provided challenge in the form of open ended investigations and problem solving activities, enabling them to access the National Curriculum at a greater depth and ultimately leading to the development of ‘Mastery’ within one or more academic areas.

Challenge should be provided within lessons, at a pace suitable for their ability, and progress tracked to ensure academically more able children are working in excess of the expected achievement levels for their age group.

Aims of the More Able Children Policy

- To raise the achievement and aspirations of all pupils by challenging and supporting the most able pupils and pushing the boundaries of what is possible
- To define what ‘More Able Children’ means within The Linden Academy
- To set out how more able children are identified, with an aim of identifying 5-10% of children who reflect the cultural and ethnical diversity of our community
- To ensure that the more able learner group is properly monitored
- To further encourage a school ethos for achievement and celebration of success across the curriculum
- To recognise the academic, social and emotional needs of more able pupils
- To support pupils, parents and teachers in achieving the full potential of more able pupils

Defining More Able Children

This policy replaces an earlier document named the ‘Gifted and Talented Development Programme’.

Gifted and Talented is a term no longer used by the Department for Education, and has been replaced by ‘academically more able children’ in its guidance documents. These are defined as, “... those who entered the Key Stage (KS) above national expectations in English or mathematics”.¹

The Linden Academy includes children, “who have, **or have the potential**, for exceptional abilities within one or more areas of the curriculum”, within its definition of more able children. This ensures that children who are new to the country, are talented in other areas of the curriculum, or have unrealised potential, are included and fully catered for within the academy.

¹ Developing Quality Tuition, effective practice in schools – academically more able DfE publications 2011



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Identifying More Able Children

Schools are expected to identify 5-10% of children as more able.

The systems used for identifying more able children should be non-discriminatory and include currently underachieving children with the potential to become more able.

Children can be identified as more able in the following ways:

- Use of Target Tracker assessment data, SATs, EYFS profiles, or other formative or summative assessments
- analysis of pupil's work
- information from parents and outside agencies (music school, sports coaches, etc.)
- teacher observation of social or leadership skills
- observations or advice of subject leaders
- discussion with Senior Leaders, including Pupil Progress meetings
- information received from previous academic settings

More able children often display some or many of the following characteristics:

- quick and accurate thinking
- systematic and logical approach to problem solving
- creative thinkers
- ability to use learning gained within a range of contexts and apply it to new situations or problems
- outstanding leadership skills
- determination and diligence
- high levels of empathy
- high levels of creativity
- makes sound judgments
- enthusiasm and curiosity in a particular subject or aspect of the curriculum

It should be noted that more able children may not be notable achievers; potential can be masked by frustration, lack of engagement or challenge, low self-esteem, Special Educational Needs or Disability, or low parental or teacher expectations.

Pupils who are identified as more able are named on TLAs Groups of Learners report as 'Shooting Stars'. The Groups of Learners data driven reports are reviewed half termly and distributed to all teaching staff within the academy.

Provision for More Able Pupils

Whole School Ethos

At The Linden Academy excellence is celebrated, both within the classroom during lessons and at key stage presentations each week (see Rewards Policy). Our Enrichment activities are designed to encourage all children to aspire, feel good about their achievements and develop self-esteem.

More able children should be actively encouraged to participate in a range of extra-curricular activities; including afterschool clubs, the academy productions and talent evenings, sports



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teams and charity fund raising events. More able children should be encouraged to pursue roles within school including house captains and the School Council.

The academy will develop enrichment activities, such as enterprise projects and workshops - independently or in collaboration with other local schools, including those with Key Stage 3 pupils - to stretch, engage and motivate pupils.

A designated member of Senior Leadership Team is to work with other academies within The Shared Learning Trust to develop and embed good practice within TLA. The designated member of staff will be responsible for monitoring data related to the academically more able learner group and working with subject leads to provide professional development for teaching staff in this area.

Within Lessons

- Within Key Stage 2, children are taught Maths and Literacy in classes, within which we have specific ability groups, facilitating the challenge of our more able children.
- Teachers are to make good use of problem solving, open ended and challenge resources (NCETM, Nrich, Testbase etc.) as advised by subject leaders within their planning.
- Cross curricular links are fostered using a topic or theme based series of lessons, to encourage the use of maths, science and literacy skills across the curriculum and enable greater depth learning.
- Encouraging independent learning by giving more able children the opportunity to organise and make choices about their work.
- Children should be encouraged to follow their own lines of interest within the topic where possible; including homework such as the Brain Builder projects where children can research and present information in a variety of formats.
- Lessons are to be planned with 4 levels of differentiation, including activities specifically for the more able learner group. Teachers should be aware of previous learning and attainment to avoid repetition which can be demotivating.
- Activities, where possible, should include problem solving, independent research and application within new contexts. Children falling within this learner group are noted on planning for core lessons.
- Lesson plans include key questions aimed at stimulating higher thinking through analysis, evaluation and interpretation of information.
- All children are encouraged to evaluate and improve their work using their success criteria. Teachers will facilitate this by planning lessons to teach and apply these skills.
- Individual targets set and reviewed half termly, when attainment data is shared with pupils about their progress.
- Timely and accurate feedback, including 'Next Steps' questioning in core subjects, as set out in our Marking Policy.

Parental Support and Home Learning

- Weekly homework is differentiated for ability groups
- Holiday project work encourages research and gives children an opportunity to explore their areas of interest and share their findings with their class.
- Parents and carers will be informed that their child is included in the more able learner group through parents' evenings and reports.



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- Children's targets and weekly test results are recorded in learning diaries for parents to access.
- Parents and carers work with the academy to identify areas of talent and / or ability.
- TLA to communicate to parents how they might support children at home, for example during Maths and Literacy Workshops or entering competitions promoted by the school such as the Radio 2 500 words for young writers.

Evaluation and Monitoring

- The nominated lead person and Head of school will be responsible for implementing the policy, and ensuring that
 - Data is collected and analysed half termly in all subject areas with reference to the children named as more able (Shooting Stars) on TLA's learner group data
 - Pupil Progress meeting notes relating to more able learners is shared and reviewed amongst SLT and class teachers as appropriate
 - Teachers and support staff are supported in providing sufficient challenge and interest for more able children in lessons through Professional Development training.
 - The policy is reviewed and where necessary adapted to reflect the needs of TLA and its pupils.
 - Liaising with a nominated member of the School Governors (Elizabeth Badu) to review and monitor provision for more able children.
 - Working with other academies within The Shared Learning Trust share and develop good practice.
 - Working with the SLT to ensure that more able learners are a focus point within lesson observations, learning walks, work and planning scrutinies.
 - Identify and provide resources for class teachers to facilitate projects and workshops for more able children within the academy and across the academy trust.

The Policy should be reviewed annually asking:

- Are the children identified as Shooting Stars achieving greater depth learning and their full potential?
- What evidence does the academy have to support this view?
- What is happening inside classrooms and around the school to promote progress among more able learners?
- How is this evidenced within work books, planning and observations?
- Are teachers confident in the ways they are supporting more able children? What could be done to increase confidence amongst teaching staff?
- Are more able children actively involved within leadership roles at TLA? What more could be done to achieve this?