



# More Able and Talented Policy

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Aquinas Church of England Education Trust





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# More Able and Talented

## Overview

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## Statement of Intent

**AQUINAS Church of England Education Trust** (the Trust) is committed to providing an education which meets the needs of all pupils and as such sees provision for more able as integral to quality first teaching. We aim to provide challenge for all pupils which stretches and excites them. The academies encourage effective effort and intellectual growth within environments which also stimulate and celebrate excellence. We want all our pupils to aim for the highest academic standards and make best progress. We seek out and recognise innate talent, allowing pupils to develop this through practice and a wide range of opportunities. We encourage creativity, independence, and self-management.

Academically more able pupils are recognised as those who have abilities in one or more academic subject such as mathematics or English. As such academically more able pupils will perform above national expectations in English or mathematics whilst performing well in all or some of their other subjects. Academies nurture and develop talent and provide opportunities through the timetabled and extended curriculum to discover, extend, enrich, and use individual talent. Intelligences are cultivated through learning and are not fixed traits.

The purpose of this policy is to provide an overview of the principles and practices of our academies. Through high quality provision, which reflects the needs of more able pupils, the academies can improve learning opportunities for all pupils. Teaching and learning in our academies promote effort and achievement but also celebrates the excitement of excellence.



## 1. Legal framework

**[UPDATED]** This policy has due regard to all relevant legislation and statutory guidance including, but not limited to, the following:

- Equality Act 2010
- DfE (2020) 'Secondary accountability measures'
- DfE (2015) 'Special educational needs and disability code of practice: 0 to 25 years'
- **[UPDATED]** DfE and STA (Standards and Testing Agency) (2022) 'School reports on pupil performance: guide for headteachers'
- DfE (2021) 'School teachers' pay and conditions document 2021 and guidance on school teachers' pay and conditions' (STPCD)

This policy operates in conjunction with the following academy policies:

- Behaviour
- Curriculum
- Equality
- Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)
- Teaching, Learning and Assessment

## 2. Roles and responsibilities

All staff working within the classroom and all leaders are responsible for provision, progress, and welfare of more able and talented pupils. Each academy has a more able and talented leader who has an ongoing responsibility for more able and talented provision alongside the headteacher and senior leadership team to:

- Track performance of pupils identified as high ability.
- Monitor planning and assessment to make sure that it meets the needs of more able pupils.
- Provide professional development for staff when required
- Quality assures the learning environment and resources.
- Oversee the development of suitable extra-curricular activities for the pupils.
- Engage with the Trust to develop opportunities.
- Work with outside providers to enhance provision.

## 3. Common characteristics

Research has identified characteristics which may be evident in some more able pupils. A pupil may have one, none or many of these characteristics. The characteristics themselves do not imply that a pupil is more able. When planning a curriculum and learning opportunities it is important that teachers are aware that these characteristics may exist:

- Pupils often enjoy a creative and sometimes more cross curricular approach to teaching and learning.



- They often have a passionate interest in a particular area, for example a specific period of history or aspect of science.
- They can be more acutely aware of their progress and rapidly become despondent if they start to fall behind their peers.
- They may have less emotional maturity, despite being academically more able.
- They have more diverse learning preferences and approaches and therefore need a wider variety of teaching strategies.
- They sometimes find it difficult to fit in and work with their peers.
- They might only do the minimum amount of work, if not sufficiently academically stretched; they need to be ‘pushed to deeper thinking.’
- They can have a disparity between their cognitive ability and their written outcomes as they can become impatient with the process of writing.
- They may feel reluctant to display their ability or talent.

#### **4. Provision for academically more able pupils**

In the Trust, academies are committed to quality first teaching which means the learning needs of all pupils are addressed through precise planning, teaching, and assessment. More able and talented pupils have a daily learning experience which allows them to extend and deepen their learning. They have opportunities to take risks, to explore innovative ideas and to lead their own learning.

Curriculum provision includes the timetabled lessons and the extended curriculum. Academies design a curriculum which meets the needs of all pupils but also has additional opportunities for more able pupils. A curriculum for the more able includes classroom expectations which are of the highest possible standard. Adaptation is a feature of all lessons at all levels. The extended curriculum includes a wide variety of opportunities which may develop from the timetabled curriculum, or which draws on personal interest, or which develops talent.

The extended curriculum programme provides rich opportunities for talents that might otherwise remain hidden – particularly where the activities are not covered as part of the timetabled curriculum. The curriculum provision reflects the needs and interests of the individual academy communities. Where it is beneficial to the pupils, academies work collaboratively to enhance their provision, provide opportunities for more able pupils to work with others and draw from best practice.

#### **5. Learning environment**

The quality of the learning environment is an important feature of provision for all pupils. Displays should have a clear purpose which promote learning and attitudes to learning. The atmosphere in classrooms and around the academy supports learning and personal development. Facilities such as high-quality libraries will be accessible to pupils. The learning environment will enable children to:



- Experience failure or difficulty in a nurturing environment.
- Experience higher order thinking and questioning skills.
- Experience displays which enable self-direction and independent thinking, as well as celebrating their achievements.
- Experience a range of challenging investigations.

## **6. Identification and monitoring of progress**

**[UPDATED]** The progress of all pupils is tracked throughout the year by class teachers, subject leaders, phase leaders and senior leaders within each academy. Progress is monitored by Education Directors and Education Scrutiny Committee in the Trust. The progress of more able pupils is tracked separately to ensure pupils arriving at an academy as 'academically more able' can make at least expected progress (and, in very many cases, far stronger than expected progress). The Trust uses an agreed assessment tool to standardise the information held on each pupil. Where an academically more able pupil is at risk of not achieving potential, this will be communicated to the pupil and/or parent with appropriate intervention put in place. This can include working with parents, mentoring, additional support from teachers and in some cases counselling or external support.

## **7. Identification and development of talent**

The Trust recognises all children regardless of academic ability have God given talents. Many of these talents can be identified and nurtured within an educational environment. Opportunities can be created within the curriculum through extra-curricular clubs and through leadership or community opportunities. Academies are committed to the identification of talent and to provision, which is consistent and well-planned, allowing talent to be fostered. The Trust seeks out resources and activities to stimulate this talent. Events are organised within the Trust to provide opportunities for pupils to meet others from different academies and to work with or compete against them.

## **8. Celebrating excellence**

Academies focus daily on the efforts made by pupils and the progress they make. Where effort leads to excellent outcomes this is recognised and celebrated. This may include achievement assemblies; certificates of achievement; home contact; meetings with senior leaders or prize-giving events. Successes are often displayed on the academy or Trust website, through newsletters and on display screens within the academies.

## **9. Sixth-form provision**

Opportunities for sixth form include leadership and mentoring roles, they engage in volunteering and have opportunities to highlight talent. All students are given the opportunity to take part in a programme designed to prepare them for the nature of study for their preferred degree subject. Many students take advantage of the opportunity to undertake university interview practice with specialist staff and experts. Advice is given to



students and their parents in relation to interviews, personal statements, and suitable preparatory work. Students have opportunities to visit universities and participate in conferences. Visiting speakers regularly visit academies as a part of a programme for raising aspirations and students are given additional help and advice when making Oxbridge or medical applications. Students have opportunities to attend bespoke events at universities or colleges.

## **10. Evaluation of provision**

**[UPDATED]** Each academy has a named leader who takes responsibility for the evaluation of provision and performance of more able pupils. Each subject leader is responsible for evaluating the effectiveness within subject. Student voice, lesson observation, quality assurance and work sampling to evaluate teaching and learning in the academy is routine. Appropriate action points are integrated into improvement plans.

## **11. Monitoring and review**

**[UPDATED]** This policy is reviewed on a **biennial** basis by the **Education Scrutiny Committee** and **Chief Executive**. Monitoring is conducted through the Trust's programme of quality assurance and that undertaken by the individual Academy. Changes to this policy are communicated to relevant stakeholders.

The next scheduled review date for this policy is **January 2025**.