
Most Able Policy

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Principles and Practice

"There are two ways to interpret the phrase 'stretch and challenge'. On the one hand, it relates to whole-class teaching and the importance of stretching and challenging every pupil's thinking. On the other, it relates to individuals and the importance of pushing the thinking of the most able pupils. Both interpretations are equally valid and essential components of great teaching".

Mike Gershon

At Paxman Academy we aim to have high expectations of all students all of the time, by encouraging and supporting the learning of all students. At the same time, we also believe that students with particular abilities and talents must be recognised and supported to be stretched – intellectually, emotionally, aesthetically, socially and physically. Our ambition is to provide a challenging and stimulating learning environment for all, which offers the opportunities for students to shine and develop an enthusiasm for learning. The best provision for our more able and talented students and their peers is one that challenges them and extends their thinking, knowledge and skills. Many of the ways of extending the thinking and learning of our more able learners constitute good practice for all students, when pitched at the appropriate level of challenge and, therefore, will impact on raising standards overall.

This policy aims to achieve a whole school approach where achieving at a high level is an expectation and not an exception. We achieve this through:

- Appropriate **identification** of students with particular abilities.
- Developing **pedagogy** that challenges the most able.
- Procedures for **monitoring** and regularly **evaluating** the provision for the most able.
- Information and **guidance for all staff** to support the most able.

Identification

Currently, Ofsted uses the term 'More Able' in primary schools and 'Most Able' in secondary schools. The DfE refers to 'higher attainers' as well as 'most able'. Both the DfE and Ofsted define the most able in terms of those whose progress significantly exceeds age related expectations. Guidance from the National Association for Able Children in Education (NACE) is that the number of more able learners in a class or school will vary. The cohort should be reviewed and updated regularly, especially in schools with high mobility and at key transition points.

The definition of 'More Able' that we use is as follows: More able learners are identified at the beginning of each key stage. The top 5% of students in terms of ability at the beginning of a key stage. So, more able learners is a generic term for the cohort, which can be further subdivided. A Talented learner will show marked aptitude in any curriculum area. This could include:

- creative (e.g. aspects of science, design and technology, creative writing)
- artistic (e.g. art, music, drama)
- practical (e.g. technological and 'hands-on'), vocational
- physical (e.g. sports, dance, movement)
- social (e.g. personal and interpersonal, leadership qualities)

Pedagogy

We aim to use challenge as our key driving force for teaching the most able. Students will be given work that makes them struggle, in conjunction with the highest expectations of them, we will be able to move them beyond what they know and can do.

NACE encourages schools to develop their own practice based on the following strategies:

- Rich questioning
- Higher order and abstract thinking (e.g. handling ambiguity and paradox)
- Problem solving and enquiry

- Development of advanced language skills, to include accuracy, precision and fluency
Independent work and self-study
- Development of metacognition
- Transfer of knowledge across disciplines
- Provision of leadership opportunities
- Curriculum enrichment
- Different subject areas will deploy different and additional approaches according to age and stage.

At Paxman Academy we aim to teach challenging lessons by:

- Planning lessons that are challenging for all.
- Knowing who our top performers are and aiming to provide opportunities for them to perform in the zone of proximal development.
- Teaching to the top and enabling students to identify powerful knowledge in each subject area.
- Setting high expectations and make students aware that we are doing so.
- Encourage and use formal oracy in lessons.
- Modelling examples of excellence.
- Using effective questioning to probe students understanding and to stretch them further.
- Providing accurate and appropriate feedback that is challenging.
- Implementing and encouraging a growth mindset.

Professional development

The school is committed to extending and developing teachers' skills in provision for more able students. The school CPD programme focuses on aspects of research led pedagogy in order to enhance provision. This includes facilitating:

- CPD sessions which provide a forum for sharing and disseminating good practice including strategies for challenging the more able
- Whole school INSET sessions that respond to particular aspects of pedagogy

Enrichment

At Paxman Academy we aim to provide a wide variety of extra-curricular clubs and activities, allowing for both enrichment and extension e.g. sports teams, music, debating, young reporters, STEM, drama clubs and opportunities for performance are organised. Enrichment activities provide opportunities for students to work with others who have similar interests and abilities.

Pastoral guidance and student welfare

Our pastoral structure is organised to ensure all students are supported. Our Pastoral manager, Head of Year, form tutors and teachers all monitor progress of students in their care and encourage the personal, emotional, social, moral, political and spiritual development of the individual. Support for more able learners should include:

- Monitoring Student Planners
- Setting short, medium and long term targets and goals
- Encouraging participation in after-school clubs and the use of the library
- Parent Consultation Evening
- Parent contact