

# AQUINAS Church of England Education Trust

## "Life - Transforming - Learning"

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| Policy Title:   | More Able and Talented       |
| Responsibility: | Primary Education Director   |
| Review Body:    | Education Scrutiny Committee |
| Date:           | September 2020               |
| Review:         | September 2022               |

### **Purpose**

The academies in the Aquinas Church of England Education Trust (the ‘Trust’) are committed to providing an education which meets the needs of all learners and as such see provision for more able is integral to quality first teaching. We aim to provide challenge for all learners 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 learners to aim for the highest academic standards and make best possible 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 learners are described as “those who have abilities in one or more academic subjects such as mathematics or English.” As such academically more able learners will perform above national expectations in English or mathematics with more able learners performing well in all or some of their other subjects. The 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 individual academies. Through high quality provision, which reflects the needs of more able pupils, the academies are able to improve learning opportunities for all pupils. Teaching and learning in our academies promotes effort and achievement but also celebrates the excitement of excellence.

### **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.

### **Provision for Academically More Able Pupils**

In the Trust, academies are committed to Quality First teaching which means that the learning needs of all pupils are addressed through precise planning, teaching and assessment. More and exceptionally 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 new ideas and to lead their own learning (See Teaching, Learning and Assessment policy)

Curriculum provision includes the timetabled lessons and the extended curriculum. The individual academies design a curriculum which meets the needs of all pupils but also has additional opportunities for more able pupils. A curriculum for the academically more able includes classroom expectations which are of the highest possible standard. Differentiation 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, the academies work collaboratively to enhance their provision, provide opportunities for more able pupils to work with others and draw from best practice.

### **Learning Environment**

The quality of the learning environment is an important feature of provision for all pupils. Displays should have a clear purpose which promotes learning and attitudes to learning. The atmosphere in the 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.

## **Identification of More Able Pupils and Monitoring Progress**

The progress of all pupils is tracked throughout the year by class teachers, subject leaders, phase leaders and senior leaders within each of the academies. This progress is monitored by the Management Board and Executive Board within the Trust. The progress of more able pupils is tracked separately in order to ensure that pupils arriving at the academy as 'academically more able' are able to 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 learner and 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.

## **Identification and Development of Talent**

The Trust recognises that 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 to provide opportunities for pupils to meet others from different academies within the Trust and to work with them or compete against them at events.

## **Celebrating Excellence**

Academies in the Trust focus daily on the efforts made by the 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 also often displayed separately on the academy or Trust website, through newsletters and on display screens within the academies.

## **6<sup>th</sup> form Provision**

Opportunities for 6<sup>th</sup> form include a careers academy and the Extended Project Qualification (EPQ). Students are given leadership and mentoring roles, they engage in volunteering and have opportunities to showcase talent. All students are given the opportunity to take part in a programme designed to prepare them for the nature of the study of 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 the academy 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 the colleges.

## Evaluation of Provision

Each academy has an appointed senior leader who takes responsibility for the monitoring and evaluation of provision for and performance of more able pupils. The Trust oversees the provision and enhances it through the Education Scrutiny Committee so that pupils in all academies benefit from the good practice which exists across the Trust. Through membership of NACE, academies are encouraged to use the NACE Challenge Framework and as such will begin to evaluate against these standards. 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 provision in the academy is routine. Appropriate action points are integrated into the academies' improvement plans and the Trust's development plan.

## Roles and Responsibilities

All staff working within the classroom and all academy 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 review and update Trust Policy as a member of the Trust's more able network.
- To write and update their academy's specific appendix to the policy.
- To track performance of pupils identified as high ability;
- To monitor planning and assessment to make sure that it meets the needs of more able pupils;
- To provide professional development for staff when required;
- To quality assure the learning environment and resources;
- To oversee the development of suitable extra-curricular activities for the pupils;
- To engage with the Trust network to develop across Trust opportunities;
- To work with outside providers to enhance provision.

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## **Useful References**

### **Membership**

All academies in the Trust have membership of **NACE** (National Association for Able Children in Education) which supports teachers to provide excellent teaching and learning for more able and talented pupils.

<http://www.nace.co.uk/>

**IGGY** is a part of the University of Warwick and is a no fee global educational social network designed for more able 13-18 year olds.

<https://www.iggy.net>

### **Assessment**

Rising Stars assessments are used as a part of the Trust's Assessment and Tracking provision

<http://www.risingstars-uk.com/>

### **Mathematics Resources/Activities**

Apex problem solving tasks

<http://education.cambridge.org/as/subject/mathematics/apex-maths-uk-edition>

Brain Academy (Rising Stars)

<http://www.risingstars-uk.com/series/brain-academy>

N Rich (university of Cambridge)

<http://nrich.maths.org>

Mathletics

<http://www.mathletics.co.uk>

### **Science Resources/Activities**

BBC Focus Magazine

### **Art and Design Resources/Activities**

National Gallery 'Take One Picture' project

<http://www.takeonepicture.org>

### **Trust-wide Activities**

TUSWDK

Darwin Day

Aquinas Chamber Choir

Aquinas Debate

Aquinas Poetry Slam

Aquinas Cross-country

Aquinas Football Tournament

Aquinas Science Quiz

Aquinas Art Day

Aquinas Maths Challenge

### **Competitions**

NACE photography competition

NACE poetry competition

Royal Mail 'Young Writers' competition

Primary Maths Challenge:

<http://www.primarymathschallenge.org.uk>

BBC Radio 2 500 Words Competition

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p00rfvk1>

Primary Maths Challenge