

Herries Prep School

Most Able Policy



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Rationale and Aims

Herries believes that all pupils have the right to achieve at the highest level of which they are capable. We believe that we should identify those pupils who are particularly able or who have a specific talent.

When the school has identified these pupils, we believe that they need to be given the opportunity to excel and to be challenged so that, with the appropriate help from teachers and parents, they may enjoy striving towards and succeeding in reaching their potential.

We believe that the whole school community benefits from the skills and abilities of these pupils. All pupils can potentially raise their attainment by working with our most able pupils, whilst teachers, pupils and parents alike can take inspiration from and pride in the achievements of these individuals.

Definitions

We define most able children as those pupils with outstanding ability, who perform or show the potential for performing at remarkably high levels of accomplishment when compared with others of their age and experience.

Within the school environment, our most able pupils are those individuals who have the potential to achieve considerably above the national average in English, Mathematics, Science, Computing, Humanities, French and/or PSHEE.

Our talented pupils are those children who excel in PE, Drama, Music, Art & Design, Design & Technology, Leadership and/or Social Skills.

Herries also recognises that there may be some pupils who have the potential to achieve at a higher level in one or more of the above areas but who may also appear on our SEND register for a specific or non-specific learning difficulty. These pupils may need additional support to ensure that they reach their full potential.

There may also be able pupils who are underachieving due to factors such as lack of motivation, social and emotional issues or other personal/family circumstances. Teachers should be aware of the possible existence of these pupils.

Identification of our Most Able Pupils at Herries

It is generally considered that around 5-10% of the population are considered most able and/or talented, although this figure may vary considerably from school to school.

The standardised tests and National Curriculum based assessments carried out by the school show that in many areas, the majority of Herries pupils achieve above the national average.

All teachers are expected to identify any pupils they feel are most able and/or talented, using their professional judgement based on classroom observation, discussions with pupils and work scrutiny, within the definitions above. Teachers' professional judgement is crucial in the identification of these pupils and is likely to be the deciding factor in placing a pupil on our register.

Teachers should be aware that a particularly able or talented pupil may:

- be a good all-rounder;

- be a high achiever in one specific area of his/her learning;
- be an excellent/advanced reader who shows an understanding beyond his/her chronological age;
- be articulate or verbally fluent;
- give quick, intelligent verbal responses;
- possess an extensive general knowledge;
- retain/recall information with ease, which enables him/her to show rapid learning;
- show a mature interest in topics outside of the curriculum;
- communicate on an adult level, perhaps avoiding their own peer group;
- have a range of interests, some of which border on obsession;
- respond in an unusual or original way to problem-solving activities;
- possess a high ability but have poor writing skills;
- prefer verbal to written activities;
- be a particularly logical thinker;
- show greater independence in developing areas of interest;
- have strong, well considered views and opinions;
- have a lively and original imagination and/or sense of humour;
- be very sensitive and show a greater awareness of others;
- be of high ability but with low motivation;
- focus on their own interests rather than on what is being taught;
- be particularly socially adept or inept or possibly appear arrogant;
- be very able with limited interpersonal skills;
- be very able with a short attention span;
- be easily bored by what they perceive as routine tasks;
- show a strong sense of leadership;
- not necessarily be well behaved or be well liked by others;
- be on the SEND register.

Teachers recognise that pupils can be more able and/or talented in a particular area even if they find other subjects challenging.

Talented pupils may also be identified by their pastoral carers and/or by their extra-curricular activity providers.

Assessment Timeline

In addition to professional judgement, staff will also use formal assessments in curriculum areas (standardised and non-standardised) alongside cognitive ability tests (standardised) to identify our most able pupils. These assessments are tracked to enable staff to monitor attainment and progress.

Provision for our Most Able and Talented Pupils in the Classroom Pupils at Herries are taught in small classes to enable teachers and teaching assistants to offer as much individual support as possible to our pupils. Teachers are expected to prepare activities which meet the needs of all learners in the class or group. Work may be differentiated using a variety of strategies. Medium Term Plans should either detail the nature of differentiated activities for our most able and talented pupils or they should include a differentiation code to demonstrate how provision has been made for learners with specific needs (please refer to 2a Curriculum Policy). Children may also work in pairs or small groups which may be ability based. These groupings should remain flexible as children progress at different rates.

Teachers should be aware of all pupils' strengths and have high expectations. Strategies

should be in place to ensure that our most able and talented pupils are challenged and enthused by their classroom work. This may be by grouping or in the form of project work, choices, extension work, differentiated tasks or open-ended activities which allow pupils to work at different levels and in stimulating ways.

The attainment of all pupils in KS1 and KS2 is tracked on subject-based spreadsheets, from which targets linked to KS1, KS2 and KS3 may be set and monitored.

Additional School Based Enrichment

Enrichment/performance opportunities such as externally provided Maths, Literacy and Drama workshops or Maths and Art competitions allow pupils to use their skills in ways that are rewarding to both themselves as individuals and to the school, as a whole (please refer to individual Subject Handbooks).

Subject specific, off-timetable days (e.g. STEAM) or focus weeks (e.g. Herries Literature Festival) also offer our most able pupils a chance to further extend their learning beyond the statutory requirements of the curriculum. Opportunities to sing in the choir, learn a musical instrument and take part in LAMDA lessons and school performances are many and varied.

Opportunities for our Most Able and Talented Pupils from External Providers

The school takes part in external programmes, offering the opportunity for our most able pupils to develop their potential. We invite external providers to enrich our curriculum both during the main school day and extended day. The school also encourages and celebrates pupils' participation in competitions at county, national and international level.

Staff Training

Staff are encouraged to attend courses where appropriate and the school provides relevant INSET in areas such as Critical Thinking.

Pastoral Care of our Most Able and Talented Pupils

Herries promotes an environment in which pupils feel confident in themselves and take pride in their ability. Others may need reassurance that their skills are valued and celebrated, even if they themselves feel self-conscious or do not enjoy being different to other children.

The school recognises that the identification of a pupil may lead to peer problems and therefore is open to the possibility that support strategies may be required under these circumstances. We offer a programme of lunchtime nurture groups and individual emotional literacy sessions to pupils who would benefit from this type of support.

Our anti-bullying policy sets out strategies for managing a situation where a pupil is bullied for standing out.

Appendix A - Identification of and Provision for our Most Able and Talented Pupils

English

At Herries, we recognise and celebrate individual differences in our pupils and then systematically plan and develop a challenging English curriculum which will offer appropriate challenges to all, including the most able pupils.

Pupils who are Most Able in English are likely to show some, or all of the following characteristics:

- Creative flair
- Writing or talking in imaginative and coherent ways and elaborating on and

- organising content to an extent that is exceptional for their age
- Awareness of language
- Using a wide vocabulary and enjoying working with words
- Showing a special awareness of features such as rhyme, intonation or accent in spoken language, and the grammatical organisation of written texts
- Using research skills effectively to synthesise information
- enjoying reading at a higher level, engaging and interpreting texts which are beyond expectations for their age
- Communicative skills
- having the ability to keep the attention of an audience by exploiting the dramatic or humorous potential of ideas or situations in imaginative ways
- taking a guiding role in helping a group to achieve its shared goals, while showing sensitivity to the participation of others
- grasping the essence of particular styles and adapting them to their own purposes
- expressing ideas succinctly and elegantly, in ways that reflect an appreciation of the knowledge and interests of specific audiences
- Arguing and reasoning
- Justifying opinions convincingly, using questions and other forms of enquiry to elicit information and taking up or challenging others' points of view
- Stamina and perseverance
- Consistently producing work that is substantial and obviously the product of sustained, well-directed effort

There are three main types of curriculum provision for our most able pupils:

Enrichment: Enrichment consists of planned intervention on behalf of a pupil or pupils, in order to broaden their knowledge and understanding beyond the usual parameters of a subject or topic. Enrichment will usually occur through the use of additional resources or learning opportunities, it may consist of classroom exercises or be a more open-ended project type piece of work.

Extension: Extension is used for most able pupils when they are encouraged to use higher order thinking skills, work practices and response skills than might normally be expected from pupils of their age. An example of such an approach would see most able pupils challenged through the use of greater degrees of independent and self-directed learning.

Acceleration: Acceleration is when a pupil is moved to work with older pupils, or when the work of older pupils is taken and used in a class of younger pupils.

Mathematics

Pupils show their special ability in Mathematics in a range of ways and at varying points in their development. Pupils who are most able in Mathematics are likely to:

- learn and understand mathematical ideas quickly;
- work systematically and accurately;
- be more analytical;
- think logically and see mathematical relationships;
- make connections between the concepts they have learned;
- identify patterns easily;
- apply their knowledge to new or unfamiliar contexts;
- communicate their reasoning and justify their methods;

- ask questions that show clear understanding of, and curiosity about, mathematics;
- take a creative approach to solving mathematical problems;
- sustain their concentration throughout longer tasks and persist in seeking solutions;
- be more adept at posing their own questions and pursuing lines of enquiry.

Pupils who are most able in Mathematics perform at levels that are unusually advanced for their age. Sometimes our most able pupils reject obvious methods and answers as too easy and opt for something more obscure. In these cases, formal testing alone is insufficient as a basis for identification and so the use of problem solving, and lateral thinking problems is used to aid the identification of these most able pupils. Teachers should provide enrichment and extension activities and to observe pupil responses to challenging activities.

Provision is made for pupils who are most able in Mathematics in the following ways:

- Extension materials are provided in lessons to ensure that our most able children are challenged once they have mastered the basics of a new topic.
- It may be decided that a pupil would benefit from an enhanced or special programme of work to run in parallel with the curriculum topics.
- In some cases, and where practicable, pupils may attend lessons with children in a higher year group.
- STEAM days are organised where pupils are given the opportunity to be challenged in their Mathematical ability.
- Pupils are entered into local and national Mathematics competitions.

Science

Our most able children in Science are identified when they consistently achieve well above the National Curriculum expectations for their age. The process is ongoing and begins when the child joins our school. We monitor each child by assessing:

- the ideas they put forward and the knowledge they display during class and individual pupil-teacher discussions;
- their understanding of the nature of evidence;
- their creativity in planning enquiry-based learning;
- how they decide to obtain and present their evidence;
- how they evaluate evidence;
- how they choose to take their own learning forward.

Provision for our most able pupils in Science is made by:

- providing common experiences and practical opportunities which allow children to respond at their own level and drive their own learning experience;
- setting individual challenges within a practical activity to target and extend our most able pupils;
- individual discussion with pupils at an appropriate level of complexity;
- opportunities to complete open-ended holiday homework project ideas which encourage children to continue their class-based learning and demonstrate a greater depth of understanding;
- involvement in our in-house Science/STEAM Days which offer critical thinking opportunities to extend and enrich learning beyond the National Curriculum and ISEB Syllabus.

Computing

Our most able pupils in Computing at Herries are identified and provided for when pupils:

- demonstrate computing capability significantly above that expected;
- quickly become confident and competent in the use of newly introduced software, hardware and techniques;
- independently explore additional facilities within software and use their initiative to exploit the potential of more advanced features of ICT tools;
- transfer and apply Computing skills and techniques confidently in new contexts;
- explore independently beyond the given breadth of a Computing topic;
- understand when it is/is not appropriate to use ICT, or a particular piece of software;
- identify limits in the software and find ways around them;
- handle multi-step sequences with ease;
- strive for elegant solutions and methods rather than those which simply work and can appreciate the same;
- are able to explain their own work, their procedures or processes clearly to others;
- recognise why a problem has occurred and offer a solution;
- know a number of ways to achieve a particular result and choose the best under the particular circumstances.

History

A most able pupil would demonstrate advanced knowledge and recall. They would be expected to be able to evaluate sources and analyse evidence to a higher level. A most able pupil would, therefore, be identified as one who could see the value in all sources and could compare and relate evidence on a given topic. They would be given opportunities to raise questions, research and discuss their ideas, present/express their learning in depth and in detail and, ultimately, to have provided an analytical response to a question.

Geography

Our most able pupils are identified as those individuals who grasp the main concepts in the syllabus quickly and have the desire to go beyond this in terms of knowledge and skills. For example, a pupil who is most able would be able to use higher level map work skills to draw conclusions about settlements and aspects of Physical Geography. They would have a quick recall of knowledge and be able to consider all viewpoints on a Human Geography topic. They would be encouraged to ask new questions to drive their own learning forward and to express themselves in depth and in detail. Provision for our most able geographers is achieved through flexible, open-ended tasks where opportunities for extension can be incorporated into the main topic work activities.

Art and Design

Our talented pupils may show some or all of the following:

- A very natural drawing style, reflecting strong observational skills
- A mature/sophisticated approach to exploring ideas
- They may be particularly creative with use of materials and media
- They may become completely absorbed in tasks and want to take them beyond what has been asked
- They may show a particular skill with one media or technique
- They show great enjoyment of the subject

Provision:

- Work is extended, for example through additional tasks related to a project and through self-evaluation
- Pupils may be asked to consider additional influences or relate their work to bigger concepts
- Pupils are encouraged to improve their skills with techniques and media beyond what is expected of their contemporaries
- Staff create opportunities for pupils to share their skills and interest with the class, individuals and the whole school
- Pupils are encouraged to enter local and national competitions

Design and Technology

Our talented pupils may show some or all of the following:

- A natural ability to design, make, test and refine products
- A mature/sophisticated approach to developing original ideas
- They may be particularly adept with use of materials, tools and media
- They may become completely absorbed in tasks and want to take them beyond what has been asked
- They may show particular skill in applying technological knowledge and have advanced understanding of complex principles and construction technique
- They may show greater enjoyment of the subject

Provision:

- Work is extended, for example through additional tasks related to a project and through self-evaluation
- Pupils may be asked to consider additional influences or relate their work to bigger concepts
- Pupils are encouraged to improve their skills with techniques and media beyond what is expected of their contemporaries
- Staff create opportunities for pupils to share their skills and interest with the class, individuals and the whole school
- Pupils are encouraged to enter local and national competitions

Modern Foreign Languages

Our most able pupils may show some or all of the following:

- A good memory
- Curiosity about meanings of words and phrases
- Use of a range of strategies to learn
- Very good pronunciation
- Use of linguistic clues to infer meaning
- Good concentration and perseverance
- Independence and risk-taking
- Willingness and ability to be creative with language
- Intuitive feel and flair for the language
- Good listening skills
- Attention to detail and a keenness to produce accurate language
- A real interest in the language and culture

Provision:

We offer opportunities for the children to be creative and encourage independent learning.

- Pupils are encouraged to use language websites

- We use a variety of teaching methods and learning opportunities to enable staff to stretch the most able pupils

Music

Our talented pupils in Music are identified through their practical ability and their attitude to the subject.

In practical terms they may show some or all of the following:

- An ability to respond emotionally to sounds
- An ability to hear music 'in their head'
- A sensitivity to melody, tones, rhythms and patterns
- A mature/sophisticated approach to exploring ideas
- A strong musical memory
- An ability to play with musical patterns and compose their own ideas
- They may show exceptional ability in the subject e.g. in voice or another instrument or at the theory of music

Provision:

- Children are encouraged to learn one or more instruments
- Work is extended, for example through additional tasks related to a project
- Children are encouraged to improve their skills with techniques and media beyond what is expected of their contemporaries
- Opportunities are provided for them to share their skills and interest with the class, individuals and the whole school through concerts and performances
- Children are given opportunities to take music examinations through their peripatetic teachers
- Concert visits and participation in local Music Festivals as well as music clubs

Drama

Our talented pupils in Drama are identified through their practical ability and their attitude to the subject.

In practical terms they may show some or all of the following:

- High levels of personal, social and emotional intelligence
- An interest in language, literature and cultural learning
- An ability to use their voices and bodies convincingly and naturally to convey a wide range of characters and emotions

Provision:

- Drama lessons are part of the curriculum in Years 1 - 6.
- Extra-curricular LAMDA lessons are offered
- LAMDA examinations in Speech and Drama are offered as an option
- Opportunities to perform as part of the academic curriculum through assemblies and school plays
- Regular theatre and concert visits
- Visits and workshops from outside theatre companies and other artists
- Information about local youth theatres and events for families at the local theatre
- Participation in local competitions

Our most able pupils in PSHEE may demonstrate social and emotional intelligences beyond the expectation for the age and stage. They may experience a level of empathy which enables them to gain a greater understanding of the life experience of others and contribute to lessons in a way which benefits the whole group. They should be given opportunities to lead discussions and share their understanding of topics and raise further pertinent questions. Staff should be aware that an empathetic child may be vulnerable to emotional responses which are difficult to manage and require a sensitive response.

The PSHEE curriculum helps all our pupils to appreciate each other as individuals and to understand that all talents are to be celebrated. PSHEE also gives the opportunity for pupils to develop their leadership skills and some pupils may excel in this area. For example, when we have held elections in school, Year 6 pupils have been given the opportunity to form political parties, lobby groups and to campaign individually for a Year 6 Role of Responsibility, giving great opportunity for pupils with leadership and organisational talents.

Our most able pupils may not always be the most articulate with the spoken word. By having an opportunity to talk about their skill (which perhaps happens outside of school where nobody else knows about it), more able children gain the recognition that helps give them the confidence to progress at a rapid rate.

P.E. and Games

Our talented pupils in P.E. and Games are identified as having the capacity to excel physically, socially, cognitively and in creative ability in this area of the curriculum.

Physically, pupils may:

- use their body with precision, control and fluency in a wide variety of physically challenging situations;
- display high levels of competence within the specific demands of the sport (i.e. speed, power, endurance, strength, efficiency etc);
- respond to and adapt to a demanding workload without being overcome by fatigue;
- translate training and technical skills into personal performance;
- demonstrate appropriate levels of dynamic and static flexibility;
- show robustness of the body to provide resistance to injury.

Socially, pupils may:

- communicate with others with confidence in a range of ways;
- nurture and manage relationships with a strong support network;
- display flexible leadership skills to meet the demands in any given environment;
- develop a two-way performance-based relationship with their teacher/coach.

Cognitively, pupils may:

- learn and feel new skills and apply them in different contexts;
- make the effective decisions at the right time in pressure situations;
- identify and be aware of incoming information in the field of play very quickly;
- develop and draw on a rich bank of knowledge and information presented in the past;
- analyse the strengths and weaknesses of their own performance in and after training and competition.

Creatively, pupils may:

- consider multiple solutions in preparation for performance;
- perform creatively under pressure in the field of play;

- explore innovative solutions to advance performance on a year-to-year basis.

Provision:

- Extension tasks within lessons and the creation of more challenging environments to stretch more able pupils.
- A variety of sporting extra-curricular activities are delivered to enable our most able pupils the opportunity to develop skills further through game play and extension tasks.
- Fixtures are used as a way of challenging the more able in a competitive environment against similar standard opposition.