

SHEFFORD LOWER SCHOOL

Expert Learner (Most Able) Policy



Written by	Adopted by staff	Ratified by governors	Review date
Polly Ross (Deputy Head)	November 2021	November 2021	October 2024

1. At Shefford Lower School, we are keen to provide opportunities to students that will help them reach their maximum potential. All of our students are entitled to a curriculum that will enable them to flourish, not only academically, but socially and to be the best version of themselves they can be.

2. Aims

- a. Our aim at Shefford Lower School is to ensure that all our Most Able (known as expert learners) students are identified early and supported as they progress through the school, acknowledging that attainment in external assessments is not the sole indicator of ability and potential. We want our expert learners to:
 - i. achieve academic outcomes at the highest possible level;
 - ii. have access to a differentiated, stimulating curriculum and learning environment appropriate to their academic potential;
 - iii. feel encouraged and valued so that they can achieve their full potential;
 - iv. be stimulated and challenged in each and every lesson;
 - v. gain increasing independence and confidence in their learning as they move through the school;
 - vi. Develop skills and values such as leadership, resilience and enquiry skills;
 - vii. Be given additional opportunities to develop further skills by working at a high level with other more able pupils;
 - viii. Develop life skills to enable them to be equipped to deal with life post-16, whether in Higher Education, in training or at work.

3. Definition and Identification of Expert Learners:

- a. We acknowledge that there is no definition for Most Able (known in this policy as expert learners) by Ofsted or the DfE: *“Schools should develop their own methods of identifying and assessing these pupils”* (DfE) and so we have a number of identification processes that ensure all students with emerging potential are highlighted and included in any extra or different provision. An expert learner register is maintained and reviewed half termly by the Deputy Headteacher in collaboration with key stage leaders and teachers. We grow our Most Able cohort throughout their schooling, acknowledging and celebrating their potential. Our cohort of most able pupils are known as ‘Expert Learners’.
- b. We have two categories of Expert Learners:
 - i. Those identified based on summative outcomes as **high prior attainers** across core subjects (Early Years Good Level of Development outcomes using the ‘*exceeding*’ category, Phonics screening outcomes (scores of 38 or above), KS1 SATS results (Scores of 110 or above). This approach reflects DfE guidance that *“Many schools are taking a scaled score of 110 or above in reading and maths as a benchmark for being ‘more able’ and have been assessed in writing as ‘working at a greater depth within the expected standard”*. These are known throughout the school as the ‘official’ Expert Learners learners and are clearly identified as such within the class green folders and on the Expert Learners register;
 - ii. In addition, Cognitive Screening Scores are analysed in Year 1 and those with a mean of 116+ and whose Reading Age is above birth age are also added to the Expert Learner register;
 - iii. There are further trawls for ‘later developing’ able students via the school’s half termly pupil progress meetings through teacher recommendation; where a student is mentioned in 3 core subject areas as showing high ability, they too join the cohort of Expert Learners;
 - iv. A second category of students with great potential for success are also termed Creative Expert Learners and are added to the cohort at key points based on a variety of information. These pupils show ability not necessarily linked to academic achievements within core curriculum subjects / tests.

- c. The KS1 Leader identifies '**Potential Leaders**' in summer term of year 2. These are students who may not do well in tests but who show great leadership potential as they move into KS2. These children are added to the register under '*leadership*'.
- d. Subject Leader recommendation; Subject leaders (non-core subjects) will identify potentially talented children (e.g. in music, art, dance, drama, DT) and these children will be added to the register for that particular subject. In this way, we enable these talents to be nurtured and encouraged. We will also gather information from external agencies e.g. music service.

4. School Responsibilities:

- a. The Curriculum Leader, Subject Leaders and Key Stage Leaders will ensure that all deliverers of their subject adhere to this policy.
- b. **The Expert Learner Leader (currently the Deputy Head teacher):**
 - i. Will monitor and review standards and attainment of expert learners across the curriculum to ensure they are working to their ability;
 - ii. Should track progress data after each half termly collection to identify underperformance and arrange support, where necessary;
 - iii. Should support teachers, Key Stage leaders and subject leaders in the identification of expert learners and creative expert learners;
 - iv. Should liaise with SLT and Curriculum Leaders to ensure effective and progressive strategies are being implemented and underachieving students are supported;
 - v. Will ensure that the expert learners are encouraged and provided with enriching additional opportunities throughout the year such as challenge afternoons and enriching visits;
 - vi. Be aware of the specific social and emotional needs of expert learners and work with Poplar staff, family support worker and SENCo to ensure appropriate support is in place;
 - vii. Will provide mentoring opportunities to a group of expert learners throughout their schooling to explicitly track, nurture and inspire them to aim high;
 - viii. Will meet Expert learners termly to gain feedback and suggestions for Teaching and Learning improvements specific to their needs.
- c. **Teaching and learning in the Classroom:**
 - i. We recognise that what happens in the classroom, in every lesson, on every day lies at the heart of the provision for expert learning, and that this is **the direct responsibility of every class teacher**. Classrooms should be places where learners are inspired, encouraged and challenged to question, speculate and hypothesise. The challenge for teachers is to make every lesson motivating and engaging, and to ensure that every child is stretched, using different teaching styles, lesson structures and resources as appropriate. Classroom teachers are accountable for the attainment and progress of all pupils in their class including the expert learners. They will regularly monitor the progress of their pupils and are responsible for ensuring that provision, support and challenge meet the needs of their most-able learners. They review the pupils who are on the register half-termly and make alterations to their teaching for these pupils as necessary.
 - ii. To provide appropriately for our most able children, our teachers will provide a curriculum that:
 - 1. is broad and available to all learners at an appropriate depth;
 - 2. includes opportunities for open-ended and problem-solving activities;
 - 3. stretches the most able children and allows them to show what they can do;
 - 4. provides breadth and a range of learning experiences that build independence and resilience
 - iii. In our day to day teaching, we will:
 - 1. provide opportunities for problem-solving, hypothesising and developing thinking skills;
 - 2. use a range of teaching and learning strategies;
 - 3. have high expectations of all pupils;
 - 4. provide rigorous, precise and constructive feedback to pupils on their work building reliance;
 - 5. use groupings flexibly and creatively to allow the highest possible outcomes for all learners;
 - 6. use appropriate resources to stretch and challenge able pupils such as rich texts;
 - 7. encourage pupils to take risks, to play with ideas and to regard all answers, whether right or wrong, as productive opportunities for learning;

8. encourage children to become independent learners and take responsibility for their own learning; Deploy specialist teachers, who ensure a wide range of high quality opportunities in both music and sport within the curriculum;
9. Demonstrate excellent subject knowledge across the curriculum and ask challenging questions in our teaching;
10. Provide pastoral care and support from the class teacher and other members of staff through the P.S.H.E curriculum, circle time and spontaneously as a specific need arises;
11. liaise with parents as appropriate, on how they can best support their child's learning.

5. Expert Learning and Extra Curricular Activities

- a. Shefford Lower School run a variety of extra-curricular activities to help to support and develop our Expert Learners. If you would like to find out more about the activities available, please contact the relevant Curriculum Leader. We have specialist teachers in Music and PE who ensure a wide range of high quality opportunities in both music and sport.

6. The wider community

- a. We encourage participation in local events and competitions and enter local and National competitions. We will encourage the use of parental expertise in nurturing skills and talents. We will maintain excellent communications with our parents and will inform parents of appropriate events within the community. We will encourage members of the community to speak to children about their work and expertise such as authors.

7. Monitoring and Evaluation

- a. Classroom teachers, Key Stage leaders and SLT will use pupil tracking data, to identify pupils who do not make expected progress and evaluate the success of strategies implemented to support pupils in their learning. Expert Learner pupils are discussed at pupil progress meetings half-termy. The Expert Learning coordinator will maintain a whole school record for most-able learners and will monitor and evaluate overall provision within school. The Expert Learner link governor will meet with the Expert Learner coordinator termly to discuss outcomes and provision for most able pupils.

8. Suggestions for Parents / Carers in supporting your able child

- a. Puzzles, crosswords, logic games, word games, card games and board games all help to develop thinking skills while encouraging social interaction.
- b. Encourage your child to ask questions about a variety of topics and respond as honestly as possible but admit if you do not have the answer.
- c. Encourage free time through physical exercise or activities.
- d. Encourage wider reading.

9. For teachers and School Leaders:

- a. Information on Most Able and OFSTED from Potential Plus: [OFSTED and Most Able](#);
- b. NACE [National Association for Able Children in Education](#);
- c. NRich – a [maths website for able children](#);
- d. Blooms Taxonomy; [Centre for Teaching](#);
- e. Elongating Learning: by [Mike Gehrson](#);
- f. Potential Plus: [support for schools](#);
- g. The [Institutional Quality Standards](#) provide detailed guidance on what effective G&T practice looks like and how it links to school self-evaluation;
- h. More able pupils in Maths: [Raising the Bar](#);
- i. Research report on interventions: [Interventions for the Most Able](#);
- j. DFE report on the Most Able Students: [Most Able](#);
- k. Teachers may be interested in finding out more about more challenging questions using the [Benjamin Bloom](#) model;

- I. Effective provision for Gifted and Talented Pupils from dept for Children, Schools and Families: [Effective Provision](#).

10. For governors

- a. National Strategies Guidance: [Guidance for preventing underachievement](#)
- b. [Governornet](#) is a comprehensive site for all aspects of governance

11. For parents and carers

- a. Educating gifted children; [Mensa](#) which includes [advice for parents](#)
- b. Potential Plus: [Supporting Children with high Learning Potential](#)
- c. The [National Association for Gifted Children](#) provides a range of information including the characteristics of gifted children and also offers organised activities outside school.
- d. Parents may be interested in knowing how the [English Model](#) for gifted education focuses on integration within a general education policy for school and students.