

40 benchmarks for high-quality provision for more able learners and challenge for all

The National Association for Able Children in Education (NACE) is an independent charity working with schools, education leaders and practitioners to improve provision for more able learners. We believe that through a focus on meeting the needs of more able learners, and embedding an ethos and culture of high expectations for all, schools can ensure all young people have opportunities to flourish.

To mark NACE's 40th anniversary, we are sharing 40 benchmarks for all schools to work towards. These benchmarks are based on our eight **core principles** and draw on effective leadership and practice from across our network of member schools.

Core principle #1

The education of more able learners is a whole-school endeavour which should be embraced by school leaders at all levels.

Benchmark 1: The school's vision reflects its focus on the more able and challenge for all.

Benchmark 2: All staff and governors understand why a focus on the more able and challenge is important and can articulate this.

Benchmark 3: All leaders ensure that a focus on the more able and challenge is a key aspect of their monitoring and evaluation systems and processes.

Benchmark 4: Plans for all levels of school improvement include a focus on the more able and challenge.

Benchmark 5: There is a nominated lead and governor for more able and challenge provision.

Have you seen...?



Core principle #2

Addressing the needs of more able learners can raise achievement for a much wider group of learners in a school by increasing challenge for all.

Benchmark 6: Through effective CPD, all staff understand the varied needs of the more able, including academic and emotional support.

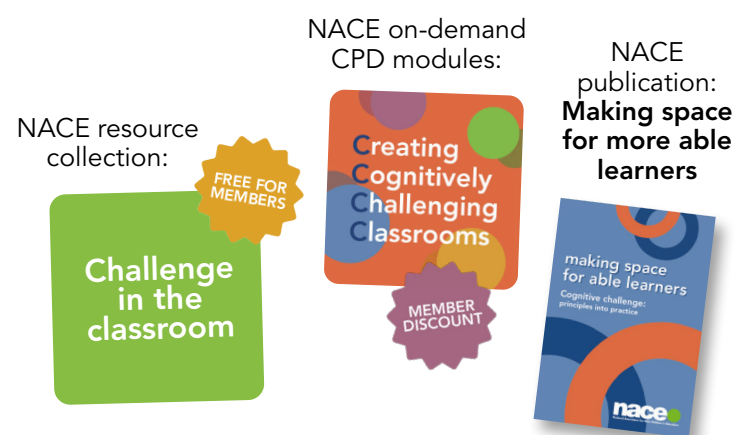
Benchmark 7: All staff understand and can articulate what cognitive challenge is, and how it manifests in the classroom and across the whole school.

Benchmark 8: All teachers know who their more able learners are, and planning for challenge starts with these learners.

Benchmark 9: All staff understand how to provide effective challenge in the classroom for all learners through a 'teaching to the top' ethos and approach.

Benchmark 10: Teachers act on effective pedagogical guidance to ensure challenge for all, so that challenge permeates from the start to the end of every lesson.

Have you seen...?



Core principle #3

Providing for more able learners is about creating a curriculum which gives opportunities for all children to flourish.

Benchmark 11: Rationale and intent statements for the school's overarching curriculum and individual subject curricula articulate high expectations and challenge for all.

Benchmark 12: The curriculum has been designed to provide opportunities for rich knowledge, skills and cultural capital to be accrued, resulting in deep learning and arrival at ambitious end-points.

Benchmark 13: There is a whole-school, planned approach to ensuring more able learners have regular access to resources that challenge them, including demanding texts that develop rich vocabulary, including subject-specific vocabulary.

Benchmark 14: The school has a strategic approach to ensuring more able learners are offered rich and sophisticated problems before acceleration through new content. Exceptionally able learners have their curriculum adapted appropriately.

Benchmark 15: Curriculum enrichment and access to extracurricular activities provide a broad and rich range of opportunities for all learners to further develop their abilities and interests.

Have you seen...?



Core principle #4

Considering the needs of more able disadvantaged learners is crucial to ensuring an inclusive and fair curriculum.

Benchmark 16: The curriculum provides the knowledge, skills and cultural capital for disadvantaged learners to succeed in life.

Benchmark 17: Teachers know who their more able disadvantaged learners are, understand their individual needs, and have developed effective strategies to address these.

Benchmark 18: The progress and attainment of more able learners who are disadvantaged are tracked closely and any underperformance is swiftly addressed.

Benchmark 19: Leaders ensure there are interventions for disadvantaged more able learners, delivered appropriately to take full account of their identified needs.

Benchmark 20: Commitment to high achievement for the most academically able disadvantaged learners is embedded into school life, including having access to a range of enrichment and extracurricular opportunities which they are supported to access.

Have you seen...?



Core principle #5

Ability can be revealed across a range of specific domains, or more generally, and not only in traditional academic subjects.

Benchmark 21: The school has developed a rich range of approaches to the identification of more able learners. These have been developed collaboratively, go beyond the use of outcomes data alone, and are in place across the curriculum.

Benchmark 22: All staff understand the school's systems to effectively identify the more able, exceptionally able, and those with multiple exceptionalities across the school.

Benchmark 23: The school values all abilities equally and this is reflected in case studies from across and beyond the curriculum.

Benchmark 24: The quality of education provided across the school encourages latent ability to come to light and be developed.

Benchmark 25: Systems are in place to support and encourage the identification of abilities beyond the school environment.

Have you seen...?

NACE resource collection:



Core principle #6

An ethos and culture of high expectations and aspirations is integral to any school providing for more able learners.

Benchmark 26: The school's vision and core values reflect a culture of high expectations, no limits on learning, and challenge for all.

Benchmark 27: Aspirational targets are set and tracked for all learners. Any underperformance is swiftly addressed.

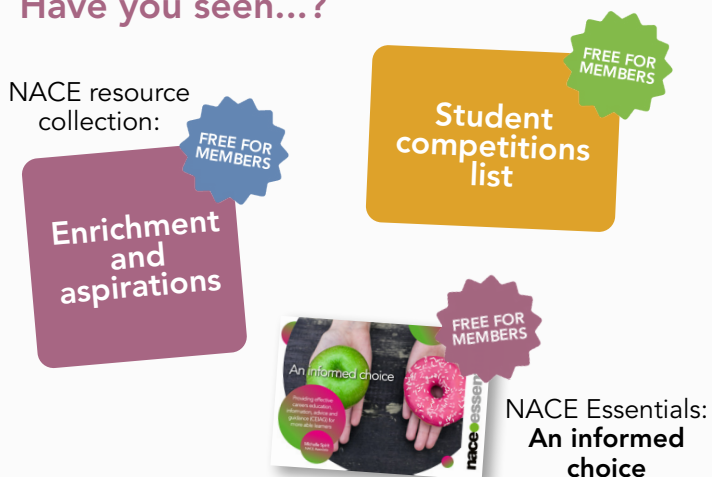
Benchmark 28: All staff and stakeholders are aspirational for all learners in terms of their academic achievement, cultural and social capital, and personal development.

Benchmark 29: The school provides a range of rich opportunities to increase learners' aspirations in terms of future learning and careers.

Benchmark 30: More able learners have opportunities to lead learning, experience leadership opportunities, and make a positive contribution to the school and the community.

Have you seen...?

NACE resource collection:



Core principle #7

Teachers are central to providing challenging and enriching education, and their professional development is paramount.

Benchmark 31: CPD systematically seeks to maximise knowledge and understanding of provision for more able learners and challenge for all, meaning teachers can articulate the main teaching approaches that allow more able learners to flourish.

Benchmark 32: More able- and challenge-focused CPD is based on analysis of need, is evidence-based, and leads to enhanced learner outcomes.

Benchmark 33: Provision for more able learners is part of the induction programme for new staff.

Benchmark 34: Teaching assistants, mentors and one-to-one tutors receive appropriate training and development to ensure they can support more able learners effectively.

Benchmark 35: A culture of openly celebrating and sharing best practice around more able and challenge provision permeates the school.

Have you seen...?

NACE Essentials:
Getting started with more able



Core principle #8

Ability is a fluid concept: it can be developed through challenge, opportunity and self-belief.

Benchmark 36: Learners are explicitly taught about 'desirable difficulty' and encouraged to take risks with their learning. Those with perfectionistic tendencies are supported in this.

Benchmark 37: Learners embrace difficulty and can effectively evaluate the levels of challenge they experience.

Benchmark 38: Staff do not 'steal the struggle' from learners. They understand how to appropriately scaffold learning to ensure challenge for all.

Benchmark 39: Parents and carers are supported to understand the needs of more able learners and the importance of cognitive challenge and growth mindset approaches.

Benchmark 40: The school is outward-facing and proactive in developing a range of partnerships to create innovative opportunities for learning and progression.

Have you seen...?

Perfectionism
research and resources



NACE membership

NACE supports all types of school, across all phases and contexts and at all stages in developing provision for more able learners. This includes schools for which challenge provision is an identified area for improvement, as well as schools with an established track record in this area which are seeking to go further. Membership covers all staff in the school, providing access to our online resources, webinars, networking opportunities and more.

nace.co.uk/membership

NACE Challenge Development Programme

Exclusively open to NACE member schools, the NACE Challenge Development Programme provides a full package of support for schools which are uncompromising in their ambition to ensure more able learners achieve their potential, in the context of challenge for all. It is founded on the NACE Challenge Framework, a well-established tool for whole-school review and improvement, with accompanying resources and additional bespoke support available.

nace.co.uk/challenge

nace
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