

# School policy for more able learners

Guidance to create or update your school policy for more able learners

## Aims and rationale

Start with an introductory statement, setting out the importance of effective provision for more able learners, in the context of challenge for all. Outline how this relates to the overall aims and ethos of your school, as well as other school policies (e.g. teaching and learning, inclusion).

## Definitions

What terminology will you use, and what do you mean by it? For information about the terminology used by NACE, visit the *Identification and transition* section of our members' website.

## Leadership

This part of your policy should outline arrangements for leadership on provision for more able learners at your school, including:

- Designated lead teacher or coordinator
- Governor with a focus on more able learners
- Steering group involving school leaders, teachers, support staff, learners and parents

Explain what responsibilities each group or individual holds.

## Identification

This section should outline your school's approach to identifying and understanding the abilities of learners. Criteria to consider include:

- Nomination by staff, parents or peers
- Self-nomination
- Transition information
- Teacher observation and assessment
- Data and learner tracking processes
- Checklists of characteristics
- Subject-specific criteria
- Identification through classroom provision

This part of the policy should also address arrangements for identifying any underrepresented groups or learners who are at risk of underachieving.

## Curriculum, teaching and learning

Explain how your school's curriculum, teaching and learning provide sufficient challenge for all learners. Points to consider include:

- Broad and creative curriculum
- General ethos – embracing challenge, high expectations, deeper learning
- Learning groupings
- Setting, acceleration, fast-track groups, early entry for exams (where appropriate)
- Planning for more able learners, including assessment for learning (AfL) processes
- Effective use of support staff to challenge and support more able learners
- Effective use of classroom, library and online resources

- Differentiation in the classroom, including differentiated questioning, higher-order thinking skills, open-ended tasks
- Activities involving research/study skills, problem-solving, decision-making, analysis, synthesis, creative thinking, speculation and evaluation
- Purposeful talk about learning

For additional guidance, visit the *Curriculum, teaching and support* section of our members' website.

## Tracking and assessment

Explain how you will track and assess more able learners, including:

- Teacher assessment
- Use of tests e.g. cognitive abilities tests (CATs)
- Regular tracking of performance of individuals and sub-groups
- Comparison with local and national outcomes
- Learner profiles and portfolios
- Arrangements for receiving information or passing it on at transfer and transition

## Enrichment

How do enrichment activities at your school provide opportunities for learners to reveal and develop their abilities? Areas to consider include:

- Planning and monitoring of enrichment activities, including clubs, societies, activity days, master classes, day and residential visits, visiting specialists, weekend activities, summer schools
- Opportunities for problem-solving, decision-making, analysis, synthesis creative thinking, speculation, evaluation and research
- Collaboration with other schools, external organisations, governors and other individuals with appropriate expertise
- Opportunities for learners to engage with "real life" scenarios
- Use of local resources such as libraries, art, drama or theatre groups
- Opportunities to take part in performances, sports activities, community and other projects
- Participation in national schemes, competitions and festivals

## Personal, social and emotional support

Your school policy should outline support for specific challenges that can be experienced by more able learners, such as pressure to perform. Areas to consider include:

- Ethos of provision for emotional, social, intellectual development and self-esteem
- Provision for personalised learning
- Pastoral support from class teacher, form tutor or coordinator
- Mentoring, coaching and peer support, e.g. buddy scheme
- Learner voice – feedback, one-to-one discussion, questionnaires, representation on school council
- Partnership with parents and carers

## Exceptionally able learners

Although not all schools will have learners who are exceptionally able, your policy should include a statement which demonstrates how you would meet the needs of an exceptionally able young person.

For guidance in this area, consult the *NACE Essentials* guide on this topic, available via our members' site.

## Partnership with parents/carers

Explain how the school works with parents and carers to meet the needs of more able learners, including information about how parents and carers can support children identified as more able.

## Professional development

Outline arrangements for the professional development of all staff relating to high-quality teaching and learning for more able learners. This could include:

- Attendance at relevant courses and training days
- Guidance from external specialists, consultants, guest speakers and trainers
- Liaison with specialist organisations
- Opportunities to share good practice internally, and with other schools

## Policy review and development

Conclude your policy by detailing arrangements for monitoring the quality of provision and outcomes for more able learners. Points to consider include:

- Alignment with the school improvement or development plan
- Focused monitoring of the quality of teaching for more able learners
- Date for annual or regular review
- Criteria for assessing the impact of the policy
- Information about who holds responsibility for policy development, review and evaluation

Once your policy is complete, ensure that it is shared with all staff members, and published on your school website.

## Additional support for your school

This sample resource is taken from the online resource library available to all members of the National Association for Able Children in Education (NACE). NACE members also benefit from free online training and member meetups, discounted CPD and school consultancy services, and access to the NACE Challenge Development Programme.

For more information and to join NACE:

- Visit [www.nace.co.uk](http://www.nace.co.uk)
- Email [info@nace.co.uk](mailto:info@nace.co.uk)
- Call 01235 425000