

School policy for more able learners

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



Alongside this document, you may find it useful to watch our recorded webinar [How to update your school's more able policy](#) (member login required).

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).



About NACE: [Core principles](#)

Blog post: [Why focus on more able learners?](#)

Definitions

What terminology will you use, and what do you mean by it? Terminology and definitions will vary between schools; ensure that you have an explicit, shared understanding of key terms and that this is clearly set out in your policy.



Blog post: [More able learners: key terminology and definitions](#)

Identification

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

- Nomination by staff, parents or peers;
- Self-nomination;
- Transition information;
- Teacher observation and assessment;
- Data and pupil 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 individual learners who are at risk of, or are currently, underachieving.



Blog post: [Identifying more able learners: beyond the numbers](#)

Webinar: [Identification and transition](#) (member login required)

NACE Essentials: [Breaking down barriers to achievement](#) (member login required)

Guidance: [Identification characteristics – general and subject-specific](#) (member login required)

Tracking and assessment

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

- Teacher assessment;
- Use of tests e.g. cognitive ability 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.



NACE Essentials: [D is for data](#)
(member login required)

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.



NACE Essentials: [Leading for more able](#) (member login required)

Collection: [Leadership resources](#)
(member login required)

Curriculum, teaching and learning

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

- Ethos and culture – embracing challenge, high expectations, deeper learning;
- Curriculum organisation and design – including consideration of advanced and complex content;
- Design and management of cognitively challenging learning opportunities – including use of targeted provision, instructional models, development of self-regulation and metacognition, grouping and acceleration (where appropriate);
- Rich and extended talk and cognitive discourse – including questioning, modelling and dialogic teaching;
- Effective use of support staff to challenge and support more able learners;
- Effective use of classroom, library and digital resources and approaches.



Report: [Cognitive challenge: principles into practice](#)

Audit tool: [NACE Quality of Education Curriculum Audit Tool®](#)
(included in NACE membership/
available for purchase)

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.



NACE Essentials: [Supporting exceptionally able learners](#)
(member login required)

Enrichment

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

- Opportunities for problem-solving, decision-making, analysis, synthesis, creative thinking, speculation, evaluation and research;
- Planning and monitoring of enrichment activities, including clubs, societies, activity days, masterclasses, day and residential visits, visiting specialists, weekend activities, summer schools;
- 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 participate in performances, sports activities, community and other projects;
- Participation in national schemes, competitions and festivals.



Practical resources: [Enrichment review and planning](#) (member login required)

Partnership with parents and 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.



NACE Essentials: [Guidance for parents and carers](#) (member login required)

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.



NACE Essentials: [Mindset for success](#) (member login required)

Webinar: [Mindset theory for the more able](#) (member login required)

Practical resources: [Individual education plans \(IEPs\) guidance and template](#) (member login required)

Free resource: [Student questionnaire: digital learning review](#)

Research: [Perfectionism and more able learners](#) – for updates on NACE’s work in this area in partnership with York St John University.

Professional development

Outline arrangements for the professional development of all staff relating to high-quality teaching and learning and holistic support 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.



Support available from NACE includes:

- **NACE R&D Hubs, member meetups** and **webinars** – networking, peer support and CPD (free for NACE members)
- NACE Essentials: **Getting started with more able** (member login required) – guidance to support new and early career teachers in your school
- **Courses** – expert training for those leading on more able and for all practitioners, including on-demand modules (discounts and exclusive options available for NACE members)
- **Bespoke CPD** – tailored to your school; available for live online or onsite delivery (discount for NACE members)
- **Coaching and mentoring** – 1-2-1 support for school leaders and practitioners at all career stages (discount for NACE members)

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.



For additional support in developing, implementing and evaluating your school policy for more able learners, take a look at our **consultancy and school audit services**, including “Ask NACE” **1-2-1 support calls**.

Not yet a NACE member?

Membership starts from just £105 +VAT per year, covering all staff in your school and offering access to our full online resource library, live and recorded webinars, exclusive networking and CPD opportunities, and more...

Read more at www.nace.co.uk/membership or contact membership@nace.co.uk to discuss how we could best support you and your school.