



Policy for Challenge and the More Able

Date of issue	Review date	Date ratified by Governing Body	
	Print name	Signature	Date
Head Teacher			
On behalf of Governing Body	Mr Chris Lloyd		May 2025

Aims and Rationale

At Holybrook, we recognise the importance of effective provision to provide challenge for all pupils. This policy aims to codify what we know works for our pupils in order to challenge pupils in context, including – but not limited to - more able pupils. The Challenge and More Able policy has links to the teaching and learning policy, quality first teaching and inclusion as many of the strategies overlap. Part of our ethos and mantra towards challenge is we want to make this desirable for pupils, which is reflected in our whole school definition for what a challenge is.

Definitions

Our staff have worked together to create this definition of a challenge:

'A challenge is a call to use and apply skills and knowledge to a new/different context or a deeper level – requiring the redirection of cognitive assets.'

The rationale behind this is the fundamental role cognitive load plays in defining a challenging activity and the need for a struggle or cognitive wobble. There are different ways to approach a challenge – moving learning into a different context or adding complexity.

Challenge is contextual and we use the following definitions to define groups of pupils:

Term	Definition
More Able (MoA)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Pupils who have the potential or capacity for high attainment• Pupils who demonstrate high levels of performance in an academic area• Pupils who are more able, relative to their peers in their own year group, class and school Ability in all areas of the curriculum or in a specific subject/curriculum area, including the arts and physical activities
Higher Attaining (HA)	Pupils who are highly able and have shown high levels of attainment: the top 10% of performers.
Exceptionally Able (EA)	Learners who demonstrate or have the potential to demonstrate extremely high levels of ability compared to their peers across the entire population: the top 2% nationally for one or more academic and talent areas – someone considered a 'genius'.

The term 'More Able' is also an umbrella term that includes higher attaining and exceptionally able pupils as sub-demographics.

Identification

One of the school's partners to develop challenge is NACE (The National Association for Able Children in Education). We use their guidance to identify pupils who may be More Able.

We use [NACE's 'Identifying More Able Learners: General characteristics'](#) document as initial guidance on identification of pupils who may be More Able. This is followed by subject-specific criteria that works in addition to this guidance. In subjects where more clarity is needed, the school has developed subject-specific guidance based on NACE's.

Tracking and Assessment

All pupils at Holybrook have their attainment and progress tracked using our INSIGHT assessment system. This is teacher assessment – taking into account assessment information from various sources (such as classroom performance, retrieval practice responses, more formal 'tests' and homework. Each term, teachers assess where pupils are in relation to age-related expectations for that year group. They assess pupils as either beginning, developing, expected or greater depth. Pupils working below their year group expectations are tracked on the year group skills and knowledge they are working at.

There are subject-specific assessment activities that feed into teacher assessment. These include:

- Retrieval practice activities
- NTS reading assessments
- Little Wandle reading assessments
- White Rose maths end of unit assessments
- Outcome projects at the end of units
- Presentations and showcasing activities – for example, creating a museum for parents/carers

Leadership

The designated co-ordinator for leading on Challenge and the More Able is Paul Wallis, Assistant Headteacher. Their role is:

Acting as an advocate for more able learners by:

- Leading the development of the school’s vision for more able and challenge;
- Leading and managing school policy to support their education;
- Leading and supporting others in their accurate identification and tracking of progress.
- Identifying, disseminating and developing good practice.
- Providing support and professional learning opportunities for colleagues.
- Monitoring and evaluating more able and challenge provision.

Named person on the Governing Body for Challenge/More Able: Dawn Thompson.

Exceptionally Able Learners

Holybrook Primary uses the following definition for Exceptionally Able learners:

Learners who demonstrate or have the potential to demonstrate extremely high levels of ability compared to their peers across the entire population: the top 2% nationally for one or more academic and talent areas – someone considered a ‘genius’.

We act on a case-by-case basis and consider the following actions to manage Exceptionally Able Learners’ journey through school:

Aspect of School	Actions
Ethos and Culture	Work on acceptance of difference, celebration of high achievement, high aspirations
Policy, organisation, systems, structures	Flexible timetable arrangements, curriculum and groupings, transition arrangements, communication systems between home and school
Professional development/recruitment	Staff specialisms, staff CPD on adaptations to lessons,
Information, advice and guidance	Personalised and appropriate to ability, access to higher education advice, exposure to high-level careers
Support mentoring	Focused on socio-economic needs, expert mentoring/tutoring, involvement of pastoral team
Networks/partners	Other schools, higher education institutes, subject-specific partners e.g Anne Frank Trust/STEM etc
Resources	Teaching/learning resource; online sources; appropriate reading age materials

Partnerships with Parents/Carers

We engage with parents and carers through regular communication, providing guidance on how they can support their child’s learning at home. There are three, formal parents’ evenings throughout the school year, which are the main

support and a written report at the end of the school year. In addition to these communications, the school has a guide for parents/carers of More Able pupils.

Curriculum, teaching and learning

We have developed a curriculum that has our children at its centre. We have worked together to identify **4 drivers** which must lie at the heart of our curriculum design and delivery, to build upon our pupils' strengths and experiences and address any deficits, including social disadvantage. Each curriculum theme is developed by initially considering these drivers.

- **Fresh Experiences:** it is vital that we provide learning opportunities that take our pupils beyond Ravenscliffe – both physically and in terms of their imaginations - as our children have rarely travelled beyond the estate or experienced educational workshops/visitors in school. These 'fresh experiences' are aimed at developing semantic rather than purely episodic memory.
- **Equality and Diversity:** understanding, appreciating and celebrating difference, particularly cultural as this is an area that our community has, in the past, struggled with; making sure everyone's rights and needs are understood and addressed; everyone is given the same opportunities
- **Our Place in the World:** Where does Bradford sit in relation to the whole country? the world?; sustainability and ecology, preserving the future, global citizenship; democracy, responsibilities to the city / UK / world; understanding Bradford's significance in history/now.
- **Possibilities:** it is vital that our children's minds are opened to the possibilities that exist for them in terms of, for example, careers, job opportunities and travel. In this way they will become more aspirational as will their parents.

These drivers affect the methodology we use in delivering our curriculum as well as the subject content.

- Through Chris Quigley's Essentials Curriculum, we use the National Curriculum Programmes of Study as our minimum core content.
- Each teacher has been actively involved in planning the curriculum for every subject from the Foundation Stage to Year 6, carefully considering what is being taught, in what order and why?
- Key, **subject specific concepts/disciplinary knowledge, substantive knowledge and skills** are repeated throughout each year and across each milestone to ensure that subject specific knowledge and skills are strong
- We ensure our curriculum is balanced through the provision of bespoke curriculum offers to support children's wider development e.g. Nurture sessions; social skills groups; precision teaching; and through new experiences linked to each curriculum theme
- Holybrook Curriculum themes work towards an outcome that allows pupils to apply their learning, pursue the questions they want to find out more about and lead their own learning

Curriculum leaders show understanding of important concepts related to curriculum design, such as knowledge progression and sequencing of concepts

- Using the National Curriculum through Chris Quigley's Essentials as a basis for our curriculum content, we have explored recent cognitive theory such as Ebbinghaus' Forgetting Curve; Cognitive Load Theory; Retrieval Practice and Semantic Memory and applied this to our curriculum design.
- This has resulted in a curriculum where **key concepts/disciplinary knowledge, substantive knowledge and skills are carefully sequenced and, in the case of disciplinary knowledge, continually repeated** to ensure appropriate and effective cognitive load, retrieval practice and the development of pupils' semantic memory. Over time, children's understanding of these key concepts and skills is reinforced, deepened and broadened.

Holybrook's curriculum has been designed to ensure that there is real thinking behind **what** is being taught, **when?** As teachers and subject leaders we have to be able to articulate **why** we are teaching **what** we are teaching **when** we are teaching it.

- Our core strategies for the promotion of challenge across all lessons and learning experiences are:
- Directing questions appropriate to cognitive load – using pupil information and Blooms' Taxonomy
- Display challenge questions on lesson slides to promote deeper thinking

- Learning environments that explicitly promote a culture of taking on challenges, 'it's okay to fail' and a growth mindset

Enrichment

We offer a range of enrichment activities, including:

- **Clubs and leadership roles**
- **Day and residential visits.**
- **Collaboration with subject-specific external organisations.**

Personal, social and emotional support

We provide support for the unique challenges faced by more able learners, including:

- Pastoral support and mentoring. This is reviewed termly and pastoral support directed on a needs basis.
- Opportunities for learner voice through feedback and representation. Any pupil can self-refer to the pastoral team using our Chatterbox system. Subject leaders feedback pupil voice and listening campaign findings to SLT and act upon this information.

Professional development

We ensure all staff receive ongoing professional development to support high-quality teaching and learning for more able learners. This is identified on our annual CPD overview and carefully takes into account the [DfE's CPD Standards](#) and the [EEF's guidance on CPD](#).

Policy Review and Development

This policy will be reviewed every two years to ensure it remains effective and aligned with our school improvement plan.