

Provision for more able and talented pupils

Southwark Governors Association

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Ofsted: More Able Pupils 2016

‘How well the brightest children are doing will usually be among the very first questions an inspector asks the school leadership team at the start of the visit. This is because inspectors know that if provision for this group is good, it is likely that other groups of pupils are also being well served.

Conversely, if the most able pupils are not being stretched, that will alert inspectors to the possibility that things may be going wrong elsewhere.’

Ofsted: Quotes from school Inspection Reports

‘Work set by teachers is not always challenging enough, especially for the most able. Pupils are not given sufficient opportunities to apply their learning in a range of situations.’

‘Expectations of what pupils can achieve are too low. Targets are too modest and more able pupils, in particular, are not challenged enough to make faster progress.’

‘Some teaching does not take sufficient account of the different abilities within the class. For example, the most able pupils sometimes ‘mark time’ rather than moving rapidly on to more challenging work.’

‘What is most depressing is that the brightest children from disadvantaged backgrounds are the most likely not to achieve their full potential.’

Schools doing well by their able pupils

1. Leadership determined to improve standards for all
2. High expectations among students, their families and teachers
3. Early identification
4. Flexible curriculum, expert teaching, formative assessment
5. Tight checks on progress
6. Effective training and co-operative practice
7. Effective transition arrangements

Ofsted : The most able students

1 Leadership determined to improve standards for all (including the more able).

- Is this reflected in the school development plan?
- Is it reflected in school policies eg. Teaching and Learning Policy and Assessment Policy?
- Is there a More Able Pupils policy?
- Does school analysis of data include a close scrutiny of the progress and attainment of more able pupils?
- Does use of pupil premium spending include provision for more able?

2. High expectations among students, their families and teachers.

- Do lesson observations/conversations with pupils reflect this?
- Is there anything to indicate that some students may be coasting?
- Has any thing been done to support parents to have *appropriately* high aspirations for their child?
- How do pupils respond to challenge? Do they relish it and see it as a learning opportunity, or do they see it as a threat? Are they resilient?

3 Early Identification

- How are pupils identified? Is it over reliant on the use of data? What other methods are used?
- Can you be sure that able underachievers are being identified?
- Are pupils identified in all subject areas?
- What about 'Exceptionally Able' pupils?
- What happens once they have been identified?

4 Flexible curriculum Expert teaching,

- Are teachers differentiating ('personalising') lessons successfully?
- How challenging is questioning?
- Are the children asking questions?
- How does the school define 'Greater Depth' and are pupils being given sufficient opportunity to work at greater depth?

Do all of the above apply to all subject areas?

Formative assessment

- Does formative assessment ensure that learning is moved on, by providing *specific* feedback and through the setting of further challenges?
- Are the most able being given an appropriate level of challenge?

5. Tight checks on progress

6. Effective training and co-operative practice

7. Effective transition arrangements

- Is there a named governor with responsibility for More Able Provision?
- Is progress of the more able discussed regularly, and compared with that of other groups?
- What training have teachers and other staff received to help them to ensure that their more able pupils (indeed all pupils) are being challenged?
- Do transition structures between all Key Stages provide teachers with the detailed information they need?

There is some confusion, and conflicting advice, about the meaning of 'greater depth' and the difference between this and 'mastery'.

- Has your school unpicked this?
- How does your school define 'Greater Depth'?
- Can staff articulate the difference between 'Mastery' and 'Greater Depth'?

Greater Depth

Teaching for greater depth requires the promoting of the exploring of relationships, and the encouraging and developing of curiosity, as much as it does the teaching of knowledge and skills.

Working at greater depth requires of pupils the following:

- The application of learning in less obvious contexts
- A consistent and creative application of understanding in complex situations
- The ability to explain their understanding to others
- A willingness and ability to challenge content and thinking, and to test viewpoints
- The ability to use reasoning and deduction
- Resilience, and a willingness to take risks

Mastery

- Pupils:
- Can explain their responses using relevant language
- Show a good application of learning.
- Are beginning to apply understanding in different contexts