PRINCE'S MEAD

PRINCE'S MEAD SCHOOL

POLICY FOR PUPILS WITH SPECIAL TALENTS AND ABILITIES

This document is a statement of the aims, principles and strategies for addressing the needs of all the pupils with Special Talents and Abilities at Prince's Mead School. This policy was reviewed by the staff during the Autumn Term 2012 and agreed by the Head and the full Governing Body during the Spring Term 2013. The policy will be reviewed during the Autumn Term 2015.

INTRODUCTION

At Prince's Mead we recognise that all pupils are individuals with their own strengths and weaknesses, talents and abilities. Within this range of individuality there are pupils who are more able intellectually than others, and pupils who are particularly talented in certain specific areas of ability.

We consider that every child has the right to be included in a broad, balanced and relevant curriculum; each pupil is entitled to have the opportunity to be involved in appropriate education which challenges, motivates and rewards them so that they can fulfil their individual potential.

We firmly believe that the provision for pupils with special talents and abilities is an integral part of teaching and learning and as such involves all staff in every lesson that is taught at Prince's Mead. Some further extension and enrichment opportunities for pupils with special talents and abilities will be provided through extra-curricular activities.

It is our aim to find some special talent or ability in each pupil and to bring this out through opportunity, encouragement and experiences.

Definitions

The main areas of recognised ability can be regarded as:

- artistic and creative
- intellectual
- physical
- practical
- social

Characteristics

The following characteristics are often displayed by our children with special talents and abilities:

- the ability to think quickly
- the ability to understand complex instructions
- they become absorbed in tasks
- they show invention and imagination and have a desire to move beyond the obvious
- they ask searching questions
- they make perceptive and original comments
- they demonstrate persistence and perfectionism
- they welcome problem solving tasks and have the ability to reason logically

There is a checklist of generic characteristics which may help in identifying children in class (Appendix 1).

Identification Procedures

The following sources of information are used to identify such pupils:

- teacher observation and assessment
- testing: CATs (Years 3-6), NFER progress in Maths & English (Years 1 & 2), Vernon Spelling (Years 2-6), GRIII Reading Test (Years 2-6)
- checklist of characteristics
- examples of outstanding work and insights from pupils
- background knowledge from past teachers and parents

Aims

Having identified these pupils we aim to provide:

- entitlement to appropriate education for each individual
- the opportunity to work at higher cognitive levels
- the opportunity to develop specific skills or talents
- the opportunity to experience a broader and richer curriculum
- support and care for the whole child, both socially and intellectually

Action Monitoring and Review

In order to monitor things at the higher end of the scale, we keep an informal working 'list' of these pupils – it is not a 'programme'. The working list is organic and often changes from term to term. It is a list for the teaching staff to use to inform their lesson planning to ensure that all children are being challenged and motivated at their required level and given ample opportunity to progress with their learning. The list is reviewed and updated on a regular basis according to various criteria, including; formal summative assessment data (e.g. CATs tests which record scores of over 127), examples of pupil's work and classroom-based teacher observations.

Provision

The following strategies are applied as appropriate:

- clear differentiation in lessons and homework, providing extension and enrichment activities
- working with others of similar ability
- specialist curriculum days
- teaching higher level thinking skills
- providing advice and guidance to parents as necessary in both social and academic contexts
- school clubs
- out-of-class musical and sporting tuition/coaching
- use of Assessment for Learning techniques (see Appendix 2) to ensure that at every level, the learner is supported effectively, ensuring that pupils are supported to be able to evaluate their own work critically, and the work of others
- the use of higher order questioning (see Appendix 4)
- encouraging risk-taking, investigation and curiosity
- negotiating clear and meaningful targets
- encouraging children to become actively involved in their learning experiences, taking responsibility and setting reasonable standards for themselves and making them feel good about their achievements
- provide training and encouraging good practice with regard to decision making
- provide training in problem solving
- provide varied and flexible grouping within a year group

Underachievement

We do not expect these pupils to achieve consistently at the highest level all the time and we recognise that with very few exceptions, all pupils have strengths and weaknesses that need consideration and support.

However, underachievement is a problem if potential or anticipated achievement is well below expected levels. All teachers are continually on the look out for any of the following indicators of underachievement:

- excuses or blaming others for problems
- disorganisation
- lack of interest in school
- too much socialising or in contrast, loneliness
- declining performance after initial success
- lack of motivated engagement (sometimes children will become immersed in learning of their choice such as reading continuously or escaping to computers rather than tackling school assignments)
- peer pressure or bullying
- frustration with their own performance
- an undiagnosed physical or medical difficulty eg poor sight or hearing
- antagonistic feelings toward school
- a preference for oral expression frustrated by the need to produce written work
- poor social skills

We believe that the situation of any underachiever is redeemable.

Balancing Provision

At Prince's Mead we do our utmost to ensure that all pupils receive a balanced curriculum and the extra provision is available in certain areas as is necessary.

All pupils have opportunities for a wide range of physical activities and experiences. Outside the normal games/coaching lessons and matches there are many opportunities for different sports and experiences through the off-site trips (Marwell Activity Centre, Mill-on-the-Brue, Bushcraft, Isle of Wight water sports), the Wednesday afternoon games programme, the Carousel programme, the Year 6 Enterprise Project and extra-curricular clubs such as Pilates many of which cater for the pupils who do not excel in traditional sports. Many of these opportunities also include team-building exercises.

Any bullying issues are treated extremely seriously; Prince's Mead has an effective and well-established system to ensure that all aspects of bullying are monitored.

Emotional and social development issues are dealt with by the form tutor, predominantly through PSHE lessons but also as required.

All the pupils are able to make a contribution to the school community through House Prayers, Friday Prayers, the House system, Buddy system, merit and courtesy badges and all school activities. Achievements are highlighted and praised in whatever discipline at both a low level (individually or within the class room), or at a higher public level in assemblies. Head's Commendations are awarded to pupils for outstanding achievement; they are announced in Friday Prayers and the pupil is rewarded with an extra three merit points for his/her house.

It is not assumed that merely because a pupil is achieving success, the enjoyment of their education is total. All form tutors, with the support from other members of staff monitor closely the happiness of all the children under their care.

The Role of the Special Talents and Abilities Co-ordinator

to plan, improve and measure the provision and outcomes for pupils with special talents and abilities

to be an advocate for the needs and aspirations of all talented pupils and to raise awareness of these among teaching colleagues

to monitor the implementation of the agreed policy

to compile and keep up to date the working list of such pupils

to develop effective classroom practice within the context of the school of the personalised education of all the pupils and to be the model of effective classroom practice for colleagues

to identify needs for training among teaching staff and ensure provision of appropriate professional development

with others, identify and resolve underachievement among pupils together with the Head of Learning Support

to source the necessary expertise within the school or from outside agencies wherever the resources of achieving school improvement or influencing effective classroom teaching are not directly available

to support and monitor curriculum planning that ensures differentiated provision

to purchase, organise and evaluate resources to facilitate the development of talented children

The Role of the Heads of Department

to advise colleagues of suitable strategies for extending the pupils with special talents and abilities in their subject

to purchase, disseminate and evaluate appropriate resources

to assist colleagues with planning for differentiation

to monitor provision as appropriate in their subject

The Role of the Class Teacher

to identify the pupils with special talents and abilities in their class

to set appropriate targets in their class

to ensure appropriate provision through differentiated provision and assessment

to use appropriate resources to challenge pupils with special talents and abilities in their class

to communicate appropriately to parents and any relevant agency on the progress of individual pupils

to monitor the performance, achievements and well-being of such children

APPENDIX 1

Characteristics of the Pupils with Special Talents and Abilities

Name: …… Date: ……

Generic Characteristics	Demonstrated by the Pupil
Thinks quickly and accurately	
Appreciates word play and puns	
Works systematically	
Intense focus	
Generates creative working solutions, transferring skills	
Works flexibly, processing unfamiliar information and applying knowledge, experience and insight to unfamiliar situations	
Communicates their thoughts and ideas well	
Shows determination, diligence and sustained interest in uncovering patterns	
Achieves, or shows the potential to achieve, in a broad range of contexts	
Can express themselves in particularly creative ways	
Shows great sensitivity or the ability to empathise	
Demonstrates particular physical dexterity or skill	
Makes sound judgements	
Is an outstanding leader or team member	
Fast and efficient learner of new concepts	
Is fascinated by, or passionate about, a particular area or facet of knowledge	
Shows high levels of attainment – across a range of different subjects, within a particular subject, or in a particular aspect of study	
Demonstrates high levels of fluency and originality in their conversation	
Demonstrates the successful application of research skills and research methodology	
Actively enjoys reading and responding to a range of texts at an advanced level	
Uses a wide vocabulary and enjoys working with words	

Views social and philosophical issues from a range of perspectives	
Possesses a creative and productive mind	
Will explore a range of strategies to solve problems	
Is naturally curious when working with numbers and investigating problems	
Jumps to seeing solutions quickly without needing to try a range of options or follow the steps or explanation before doing so	
Looks beyond the question in order to hypothesise and explain	
Works flexibly and establishes their own strategies	
Prefers independent learning	
Imaginative/creative	
Quick to finish a set task (to a high standard)	
Overconfident at times	
Bored easily/dislikes repetition of tasks	
Keen to take responsibility/ownership of learning	
Able and willing to lead their classmates	
Particularly articulate	
Seen to disengage or opt out in order to seem 'normal'	
Willing and able to challenge their teacher	
Socially (im)mature – some may be more able to converse with their teacher than their peers, some may prefer books and/or computers to people!	

APPENDIX 2

The Principles of Assessment for Learning

Learning must start from where the learner is.

The teacher must encourage the pupil and listen to a range of responses and then help the children to talk through inconsistencies and to respond to challenges; the interventions of the teacher should be tailored to meet the learning needs that are evident.

Pupils must be active in the process of learning.

They need to construct their ideas from the many experiences they have gained both in and out of school. Learning has to be done *by* the pupil, not *for* them. Children have to close the gap between what they don't know and what they want to know and they need to be taught the skills which enable them to do this.

Children must understand the purpose of the learning both in the short term and the long term.

They need to have a detailed understanding of what counts as 'good quality work'; they must also have an idea of where they stand in relation to this goal and ultimately take responsibility for their own learning. Peer and self assessment promote both active involvement and practice in making judgement about the quality of work – both their own and that of their peers.

When children are talking about their learning, they should use specific and precise vocabulary.

'Talking the talk' should be supported by teacher mediation and should build on the words used by a child and their peers. Through talking, children provide valuable evidence to enable the teacher to diagnose where they are in their learning. Activities should be planned that encourage children to talk.

Feedback should focus on the strengths and weaknesses of the particular piece of work.

Emphasis should be placed on what could be done to improve the work. Feedback should be positive and encourage all children, whatever their past achievements, that they can do better by trying and that they can learn from their past mistakes.

APPENDIX 3

Useful Websites

English: www.nc.uk.net/gt/english/resources.htm

Mathematics: www.nrich.maths.org.uk

Science: www.kidsource.com/education/science.html

APPENDIX 4

Higher-order Questioning

Higher-order questioning is required to develop critical and creative thinking.

Examples of higher-order questioning could include:

What kind of person thought up the number seven?

"To develop their curiosity about the history and development of number ask your pupils to think about the numbers they see around them every day, such as telephone numbers, house numbers, numbers as price and weight in shops. Invite them to choose a number they particularly like and draw a picture of the person who they think would have been the very first person to use that particular number. This in turn should prompt an awareness of the need and application of number."

John Senior 'A fear of number', Gifted & Talented Update, October 2007)

Higher order questions present the learner with no easy option or single neat answer.

This type of question offers a challenge with regard to thinking that is as difficult as the pupil's ability and enthusiasm allow.

Answers are determined by the pupil in that he or she has to make a series of justifiable decisions, research options and draw conclusions that may in turn be the basis for further questions. '*How many beans make five*?' is not a higher-order question; asking how we would measure quantities if we did not have number is.

A good question results in at least one more question that adds to our understanding of what is known and what remains to be known.

APPENDIX 5

Bloom's Taxonomy

Benjamin Bloom (1913-1999), an educational psychologist, classified levels of intellectual behaviour in learning. His taxonomy contains three overlapping domains: the cognitive, psychomotor and affective. Within the cognitive domain, Bloom identifies six levels:

- knowledge
- comprehension
- application
- analysis
- synthesis
- evaluation

Lower level thinking skills:

Comprehension and Knowledge. These are regarded as necessary for operational work such as reviewing a topic, but do not assist when the learner needs to apply these skills to other areas of learning.

Middle order thinking skills:

Application. Learners can apply information and knowledge they have acquired to other areas of understanding.

Higher order thinking skills:

Analysis, Synthesis and Evaluation. These are the tools that will allow learners to become independent learners who can self-direct and, in addition, support the learner to approach new situations with confidence.

Critical Thinking Skills

Critical thinking involves logical thinking and reasoning including skills such as:

- making comparisons
- mapping
- classification

- cause and effect relationships
- using deductive reasoning
- making and using analogies
- sequencing
- patterning
- forecasting and visualising
- hypothesising
- planning and projecting
- using inductive reasoning

Creative Thinking Skills

Creative thinking involves creating or working in an innovative way. It involves:

- flexibility of thinking
- stimulating originality
- seeing new and sometimes unlikely relationships
- brainstorming
- elaboration of concepts
- modification of existing concepts and processes
- associative thinking
- working and using rich imagery
- applying metaphorical thinking
- innovative fluency
- attributing possibilities
- divergence in thinking

APPENDIX 6

Bloom's Taxonomy

1. Remember (Knowledge) **Shallow processing: drawing out factual answers, testing recall and recognition**		
Verbs	**Questions**	**Instructional Strategies**
Choose	Who?	Highlighting
Describe	Where?	Rehearsal
Define	Which one?	Memorising
Identify	What?	Mnemomics
Label	How?	
List	What is the best one?	
Locate	Why?	
Match	How much?	
Memorise	When?	
Name	What does it mean	
Omit		
Recite		
Recognise		
Select		
State		

2. Understand - Translating, interpreting, extrapolating		
Verbs	**Questions**	**Instructional Strategies**
Classify	State in your own words	Key examples
Defend	Which are facts?	Emphasize connections
Demonstrate	What does this mean?	Elaborate concepts
Distinguish	Is this the same as…?	Summarize
Explain	Give an example	Paraphrase
Express	Select the best definition	Explain
Extend	Condense this paragraph	State the rule
Give an example	What would happen if?	Why does this example?
Illustrate	State in one word	Concept maps

Indicate	Explain what is happening	Flow charts
Interrelate	What part doesn't fit	Pro/con grids
Interpret	Explain what is meant	Metaphors
Infer	What expectations are there	Rubrics
Judge	Read the graph/table	Heuristics
Match	What are they saying?	
Paraphrase	This represents…	
Represent	What seems to be…?	
Restate	Is it valid that….?	
Rewrite	What seems likely?	
Select	Show in a graph/table	
Show	Which statements support?	
Summarise	What restrictions would you add?	
Tell		
Translate		

3. Apply

Knowing when to apply, how to apply.

Recognizing patterns of transfer to situations that are new, unfamiliar or have a new slant for pupils

Verbs	Questions	Instructional Strategies
Apply	Predict what would happen if	Modelling
Choose	Choose the best statements that apply	Cognitive apprenticeships
Dramatise	Judge the effects	'Mindful' (not routine) practice
Explain	What would result?	Part or whole sequencing
Generalise	Tell me what would happen	Authentic situations
Judge	Tell me how/when/where/why	'Coached' practice
Organise	Tell me how much change there would be	Case studies
Paint	Identify the results of	Simulations
Prepare		Algorithms
Produce		
Select		
Show		
Sketch		
Solve		
Use		

4. Analyse - Breaking down into parts		
Verbs	**Questions**	**Instructional Strategies**
Analyse	What is the function of?	Models of thinking
Categorise	What is fact or opinion?	Challenging assumptions
Classify	What assumptions?	Retrospective analysis
Compare	What statement is relevant?	Reflection through journaling
Differentiate	What motive is there?	Debates
Distinguish	What conclusions?	Discussions
Identify	What does the author believe?	Collaborating learning activities
Infer	What does the author assume?	Decision-making situations
Point out	Make a distinction between	
Select	State the point of view of..	
Subdivide	What is the premise?	
Survey	What ideas apply?	
	What ideas justify the conclusion?	
	What is the relationship between?	
	The least essential statements are…	
	What is the main idea/theme?	
	What inconsistencies?	
	What literary form is used?	
	What persuasive technique?	
	Implicit in the statement is…..	

5. Evaluate - According to some set of criteria and state why		
Verbs	**Questions**	**Instructional Strategies**
Appraise	What consistencies/inconsistencies appear?	Challenging assumptions
Judge	Which is more important/moral/better?	Journaling
Criticise	Which is more logical/valid/appropriate?	Debates
Defend	Find the errors	Discussions
Compare		Decision-making situations
		Collaborating activities

6. Create - Combining elements into a pattern not clearly there before		
Verbs	**Questions**	**Instructional Strategies**
Choose	How would you test?	Modelling
Combine	Propose an alternative	Challenging assumptions
Compose	Solve the following	Reflection through journaling
Construct	How else would you?	Debates
Create	State a rule	Discussion
Design		Collaborating activities
Develop		Design
Do		Decision-making situations
Formulate		
Hypothesise		
Invent		
Make		
Make up		
Originate		
Organise		
Plan		
Produce		
Role play		
Tell		