

THE MOUNT SCHOOL ABLE GIFTED AND TALENTED POLICY

2026-2027

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This policy sets out how The Mount identifies and supports children with advanced attainment, exceptional ability or particular talents. It applies across the School and its EYFS provision, with approaches adapted to children's ages and development. Its purpose is to secure appropriate challenge, progress, participation and wellbeing through everyday teaching and suitable enrichment.

1 Purpose and values

The Mount is committed to inclusive education in which every child's learning, achievements, interests and wellbeing matter. We seek to know children well, recognise strengths and potential, and help them develop as whole people. Advanced attainment in one area does not mean that a child's development is equally advanced in every area.

Identification is used to improve provision. Children do not need to be on a register before receiving challenge, and enrichment opportunities should help staff recognise emerging potential as well as develop established strengths.

2 Policy framework and related policies

This policy supports the Curriculum Policy and the Independent School Standards requirements to take account of pupils' ages, aptitudes and needs, provide opportunities for all pupils to learn and make progress, and evaluate pupil performance. EYFS provision follows the current statutory framework and applicable assessment arrangements.

It should be read with the SEND; Equal Opportunities and Equality; Safeguarding and Child Protection; Behaviour; Anti-Bullying; RSE and PSHE; Online Safety; Acceptable Use of Technology; Educational Visits and School Journeys; Health and Safety; Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions; First Aid; Administration of Medication; Allergy Safety; Admissions; Attendance; Complaints; and Data Protection, Privacy and Records Management policies. Staff must also follow the Staff Handbook, Code of Conduct and applicable safer recruitment and EYFS procedures.

These policies govern their respective procedures. This policy does not create an alternative safeguarding, medical, complaints or data protection route.

3 Aims

- Identify advanced attainment and potential using a range of evidence, including strengths that may be masked by barriers to learning.
- Provide ambitious teaching that deepens understanding, develops skills and sustains progress.
- Offer suitable opportunities to pursue intellectual, creative, physical and other interests.
- Consider social and emotional development alongside attainment and performance.
- Involve children and parents or carers in planning and review.
- Support staff knowledge, continuity between classes and effective preparation for the next stage.

4 Definitions and identification principles

Able describes children who achieve, or show the potential to achieve, above the usual expectations for their age or stage in one or more areas. Gifted describes exceptionally advanced academic understanding, reasoning or learning potential. Talented describes exceptional aptitude or performance in areas such as music, art, drama, design, physical education or sport. These are educational planning terms, not diagnoses or fixed identities.

Strength may be specific to one subject or activity, or evident across several areas. Staff consider age-related or subject expectations where appropriate, the child's prior experience and development, and evidence over time. Comparison with a small year group alone is insufficient.

There is no fixed percentage or quota for identification. Identification and support are determined by evidence and need; children are not ranked publicly or required to compete for a label.

5 Equality SEND and barriers to recognition

Staff must actively consider children whose abilities may be less visible because of SEND, disability, English as an additional language, disadvantage, medical needs, attendance, interrupted learning or safeguarding circumstances. Identification must not depend on family income, access to private tuition, confidence, compliant behaviour or polished written work.

A child may have exceptional strengths and SEND at the same time. Advanced ability must not obscure a learning difficulty, and a learning difficulty must not obscure advanced ability. The class teacher and SENDCO coordinate appropriate challenge with the graduated Assess–Plan–Do–Review approach, One Page Profiles, support plans and reasonable adjustments where relevant.

Staff use accessible opportunities for children to demonstrate understanding, including practical work, discussion, visual responses and suitable assistive technology. Decisions about statutory or standardised assessment arrangements must follow the applicable assessment rules. Support and adjustments are not withdrawn because a child is identified under this policy.

6 Identification and professional judgement

Class teachers, subject teachers and EYFS practitioners consider observations, discussion, work samples, assessment information, rates of learning and progress, and information from children, parents, previous settings and relevant specialists. Standardised scores or performance awards can contribute evidence but do not determine identification alone.

Staff look for depth of understanding, unusual connections, original ideas, rapid learning, thoughtful questions, creative expression, sustained interest or exceptional skill. A child need not display every characteristic. Quietness, slower writing, uneven attainment or frustration do not rule out advanced potential.

Teachers discuss evidence with the relevant subject leader and Headteacher or delegated lead. Decisions, reasons and provision are recorded proportionately. Where evidence is emerging, teachers provide suitable challenge and review the response rather than waiting for certainty. Appendix A provides subject prompts.

7 EYFS

In Kindergarten, identification is exploratory and developmentally sensitive. Practitioners build a picture through everyday interactions and observation of play, language, movement, problem solving, creativity and interests across different contexts. Parents' knowledge of the child is an important part of this picture.

Provision includes rich language, stories, open ended resources, sustained shared thinking, exploration, imaginative play and opportunities to investigate ideas in greater depth. A child's advanced interest in letters, number or another area must not displace a balanced curriculum, play, relationships, rest or physical development.

Assessment must be proportionate and must not require excessive evidence collection or repeated testing. At the end of Kindergarten, the statutory EYFS Profile uses the expected and emerging judgements; this policy does not introduce an additional statutory gifted or exceeding category. Teachers share information about particular strengths and next steps alongside the statutory outcomes when children move to Form I.

8 Register and review arrangements

The SENDCO is responsible for ensuring that a confidential Able, Gifted and Talented register is maintained, with day-to-day maintenance delegated where appropriate. It records the area of strength or potential, supporting evidence, provision, relevant

barriers or adjustments, staff responsibility and review date. It remains distinct from the SEND register, although a child may appear on both.

Teachers review identified pupils' provision and progress at least termly within the School's pupil progress arrangements and sooner where needs change. The register is checked at each review and formally reviewed at least annually. Parents and children are involved as appropriate to age and circumstances.

A review may confirm identification, change the area recorded or conclude that separate identification is no longer useful. Reasons are recorded and explained sensitively. Removal from the register is not a sanction and does not end the child's entitlement to challenge or required adjustments. A fall in attainment prompts consideration of barriers and support before a change in identification.

9 Classroom provision and curriculum challenge

High-quality teaching is the main provision. Teachers use assessment of prior learning to plan ambitious, appropriately sequenced work. Challenge should deepen knowledge, reasoning, creativity and application; simply giving more of the same work is insufficient.

Approaches may include demanding questions, investigation, richer texts and vocabulary, comparison of explanations, unfamiliar problems, debate, independent research, creative production and opportunities to justify or refine ideas. Teachers check that essential knowledge is secure and avoid unnecessary repetition where mastery is demonstrated.

Grouping is flexible and reviewed. Independent work has a clear learning purpose and suitable guidance; children must not routinely be used as unpaid teaching assistants or left without teaching because they learn quickly. Homework extension is purposeful and proportionate, with attention to access, workload and family circumstances.

Teaching plans identify relevant challenge and teachers evaluate its impact. Moving to older-year content or acceleration is considered individually by the SENDCO and Headteacher with teachers, parents and the child where appropriate. Any exceptional arrangement requires evidence, a clear educational rationale, attention to social and emotional development, continuity and a recorded review date.

10 Talent enrichment and external opportunities

Subject teachers plan appropriate challenge for children with particular talents, including creative and physical skills. Clubs, performances, competitions, workshops, visitors and educational visits may extend learning, according to the opportunities available. The policy does not guarantee particular clubs, specialist tuition or external placements.

Staff encourage participation sensitively, listen to the child's interests and consider cost, transport, equipment, disability, language and other barriers. Participation patterns are reviewed where concerns suggest that opportunities are not accessible. A family's inability to fund an additional activity must not determine identification or access to appropriate classroom challenge.

External coaching, mentoring, tuition, online activities and visits arranged by the School require the usual approval, safeguarding checks, supervision, risk assessment and medical planning. Communication must use approved channels and professional boundaries apply. Teachers remain responsible for evaluating the child's learning and wellbeing.

11 Wellbeing, behaviour and safeguarding

Children should feel able to make mistakes, seek help and enjoy learning without pressure to perform constantly. Staff attend to anxiety, perfectionism, workload, fatigue, friendship difficulties and reluctance to participate. They do not assume that these difficulties are inevitable features of advanced ability.

Behaviour is considered in context. Staff review the suitability of challenge and any unmet needs while following the Behaviour, SEND and Anti-Bullying policies. Advanced attainment does not justify harmful conduct. Children are supported to respect others, cooperate and contribute without being expected to take on responsibilities beyond their development.

Safeguarding concerns must be reported immediately to the DSL or DDSL, with a prompt accurate record on the approved safeguarding system. A system entry does not replace direct reporting or urgent action. If a child is in immediate danger, staff take protective action and contact emergency services or children's social care as required, without waiting for the DSL. Concerns about an adult follow the separate reporting route in the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy; concerns about the Headteacher go to the Director / Proprietor.

Advanced vocabulary, maturity in a subject or sporting achievement must never lead staff to assume that a child can recognise or manage adult risks. Online research and digital enrichment use age-appropriate resources and the School's filtering, monitoring, acceptable use and data protection arrangements.

12 Partnership and concerns

Teachers discuss strengths, proposed provision, progress and wellbeing with parents and carers, using clear examples and avoiding promises about future examination results, scholarships or careers. Children's views are sought through conversation, play or another accessible method.

Parents may share achievements and interests beyond School or ask for a review through the class teacher. Staff consider this information alongside other evidence. A concern about identification or provision is discussed with the teacher and, where necessary, the SENDCO or Headteacher; unresolved complaints follow the Complaints Policy. Safeguarding action is never delayed by that process.

13 Transition and continuity

Teachers share relevant strengths, evidence of learning, effective challenge, interests, barriers, support and agreed next steps when children move between rooms, classes or subject groups. Receiving staff review this information and avoid unnecessary repetition or assuming that an earlier label remains accurate without current evidence.

On transfer to another setting, relevant educational information is shared securely through the School's transition and data protection arrangements. SEND and healthcare plans are coordinated where applicable. Safeguarding records are transferred separately through DSL procedures.

14 Responsibilities and staff development

The Director / Proprietor approves the policy and oversees effective implementation. The Headteacher leads the approach, ensures register and review arrangements are in place, allocates responsibilities and reviews the quality and accessibility of provision.

All teachers remain responsible for pupils' teaching, progress and wellbeing. Subject leaders support identification and curriculum challenge in their areas. EYFS teachers ensure developmental appropriateness and continuity. The SENDCO advises where SEND or disability overlaps; the DSL and DDSL lead safeguarding action.

Staff development will address recognising potential, adaptive teaching, subject-specific challenge, inclusive assessment and wellbeing. Leaders use professional dialogue, planning and work review, pupil feedback and assessment evidence to identify training and resource needs.

15 Records and confidentiality

Records must be accurate, proportionate and clear about evidence, professional judgement, decisions and actions. Staff use School approved systems, including Compass where configured for the relevant record, rather than personal accounts or unofficial lists. Information is available to staff who need it to teach, support or safeguard the child, with access controlled according to role.

Register and educational records are managed under the Data Protection, Privacy and Records Management Policy, privacy notices and approved retention schedule. They are not published as rankings. Information shared with an external provider is limited to what is necessary and lawful. Publicity about children's achievements follows the School's image and publicity arrangements.

16 Monitoring and policy review

The Headteacher and relevant leaders evaluate whether children receive appropriate challenge and make progress from their starting points. Evidence includes work, assessment, pupil discussion, participation, wellbeing, parent feedback and the implementation of agreed provision. A register entry or attendance at a club is not sufficient evidence of impact.

Leaders review patterns in identification and participation for overlooked potential or barriers, and record actions, responsible staff and review dates. The Director / Proprietor receives proportionate assurance about provision and improvements. This policy is reviewed annually and sooner following significant changes in requirements, School provision or evidence from monitoring.

Appendix A Identification and challenge prompts

These prompts support professional discussion. They are examples, not a checklist, score or diagnostic test. Consider opportunities to learn and demonstrate skill, and look at evidence across time and contexts.

Area	Possible evidence	Suitable challenge
Language and literature	Insight into meaning, unusual vocabulary, strong storytelling or perceptive interpretation.	Compare interpretations, examine an author's choices, debate ideas and write for different audiences.
Mathematics	Rapid recognition of patterns, flexible strategies, generalisation or sustained reasoning.	Explain why a method works, test conjectures and solve unfamiliar problems in several ways.
Science and computing	Thoughtful hypotheses, understanding of systems, precise observation or original solutions.	Design and evaluate investigations, model systems, debug and justify choices.
Humanities and languages	Connections across places or periods, evaluation of evidence, or rapid understanding of language patterns.	Compare sources and viewpoints, explore causation and apply language in new contexts.
Art design music and drama	Original expression, sensitivity to form or sound, technical skill or perceptive response.	Develop and refine a piece, explore techniques and explain creative decisions.
Physical education and sport	Advanced control, tactical understanding, coordination or rapid skill development.	Refine technique and decisions through suitable coaching, practice and safe competition.
Nursery and EYFS	Rich imaginative play, surprising connections, sustained exploration or advanced skill in a particular area.	Extend play through questions, conversation, open-ended materials and new experiences.

Children may show strengths through non-verbal, practical or alternative communication. Leadership and social insight can also inform planning. None of these indicators removes the need to consider the child's wider development and support needs.

Appendix B Provision and termly review record

Use these fields within the approved pupil record or a proportionate planning document. Avoid duplicating an existing SEND or pupil progress plan where the same information can be clearly linked.

Field	Record
Child name class or room and review date	
Area of strength or potential and evidence	
Child and parent or carer views	
Relevant barriers SEND healthcare needs or adjustments	
Learning outcomes and planned challenge	
Enrichment or additional provision where relevant	
Responsible staff and review date	
Impact on progress participation independence and wellbeing	
Decision and reasons including register changes	
Next actions responsible staff and next review	