

# **Educating the More Able**



**A Guide for Parents  
and Carers**

# **Contents**

<b>Introduction</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>What do we mean by a 'more able' learner?</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>How do you know if you have a 'more able' child?</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Why ability is not enough</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>What can I do to support my child?</b>	<b>7</b>

## Introduction

As parents/carers, you have a lasting impact on the lives of your children. You can have the greatest influence on their achievement and success through providing early experiences, which encourage your children to enjoy and develop their learning. By exposing your children to new experiences, by engaging with them through talk and discussion, by giving them encouragement and support, parents enhance their children's ability to think creatively and critically, and stimulate their curiosity about the world.

Parental support is one of the most important factors in a child's success in school. Children whose parents are interested and involved in their education – for example, by supporting their learning at home and working with the school – do better academically and socially. This is true for all children, but parents/carers sometimes find it difficult to know how to best support a child who has high ability. What you can do, however, makes a big difference. Being the parent or carer of a more able child can be both a delight and a challenge. In some cases that challenge can last well into adolescence, when peer pressure, personal identity crises and an exceptional intellect or precocious talent can lead to tensions and conflict. Living with an able child can raise many questions for parents and the rest of the family. A parent's responses to a child's exceptional needs will, to a large extent, depend on your values, your own experiences of education, and what you believe about your own abilities. Nevertheless, it is important as parents and carers to think through your response, in order to support your child to develop and express their ability, to find balance, emotional harmony and personal fulfilment.



## What do we mean by a 'more able' learner?

More able learners are those who will typically excel in relation to expectations for their age group. The DfE and OFSTED define the more able in terms of those whose progress significantly exceeds age-related expectations.

However, the More Able are a diverse group and their range of attainment will be varied. Some do well in statutory national curriculum tests or national qualifications; however, being 'more able' covers much more than the ability to succeed in tests and examinations.

Learners that are more able comprise around 10% of the Lady Bankes population. At LBJ we identify the More Able students in all subjects. The group is reviewed and updated regularly especially at key transition points.



## **How do you know if you have a 'more able' child?**

What are some common signs of advanced development in young children? The following characteristics (taken from a number of research reviews) are not necessarily proof of high ability, but they may alert parents and carers to the need to enquire further. An able child may:

- Be a good reader;
- Be very articulate or verbally fluent for his/her age;
- Give quick verbal responses (which can appear cheeky);
- Have a wide general knowledge;
- Learn quickly;
- Be interested in topics which one might associate with an older child;
- Communicate well with adults – often better than with their peer group;
- Have a range of interests, some of which are almost obsessions;
- Show unusual and original responses to problem-solving activities;
- Prefer oral to written activities;
- Be logical;
- Be self-taught in his/her own interest areas;
- Have an ability to work things out in his/her head very quickly;
- Have a good memory;
- Be artistic and/or musical;
- Excel at sport;
- Have strong views and opinions;
- Have a lively and original imagination/sense of humour;
- Be very sensitive and aware;
- Focus on his/her own interests rather than on what is being taught;
- Be socially adept;
- Appear arrogant or socially inept;
- Be easily bored by what they perceive as routine tasks;
- Show a strong sense of leadership.

## Why ability is not enough



Success in school and in life is not down to ability alone. Likewise, personal fulfilment and professional success are rarely due to one factor alone. We know that self-confidence and self-belief, determination, willingness to work hard and personal motivation are very important.

Opportunities to find out what you are good at, to know what future opportunities are open to you, and the encouragement and support of others are also vital. Parents and carers can provide some, if not all, of these. Success emerges from a combination of the following:

- Opportunity;
- Ability in specific areas;
- General intellectual ability;
- Positive external factors, e.g. family, school;
- Persistence;
- Self-esteem and self-belief.

## What can I do to support my child?

1. Encourage them to see reading as part of everyday life. Build in time for them to read for pleasure every day, join the library, use bug club etc.
2. Talk to your child about what they are interested in and find books related to this. Use the internet to find book recommendations. Here are some websites to start with:  
<https://www.theguardian.com/books/booksforchildrenandteenagers>  
<https://www.books4people.co.uk/>  
<https://carnegiegreenaway.org.uk/>  
<https://www.goodreads.com/>
3. Encourage them to join extra-curricular clubs.
4. Supporting your child is about providing opportunities for your child to flourish. Build in time for them to read, debate, dance, act and compete across as many diverse pursuits as they can.
5. Encourage them to adopt a growth mindset. For more able learners the notion that effort and persistence are just as important as talent is crucial when it comes to achieving pretty much anything in life. Remind them that 'FAIL' can often mean First Attempt In Learning! 'Change your words... change your mindset.'



6. Encourage them to be inquisitive

At LBJ we believe in equipping our young people with powerful knowledge that enables them to understand the world and change it for the better. At LBJ, we allow children the opportunity to experience workshops, go on trips, have opportunities outside the curriculum that enhance and add to school life.

Change your words...

Change your mindset!

