



Alsager School

An Achieving School - A Caring Community

## HAL POLICY 2019

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at the Pupil Progress Committee meeting  
on 13<sup>th</sup> February 2019  
and subsequently approved and adopted on the same date.

Chair of Committee: Mr Andrew Bennett

Signature:

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ANDREW BENNETT

Date:

13<sup>th</sup> February 2019

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## ALSAGER SCHOOL HIGHER ABILITY LEARNERS' POLICY

### Alsager School's definition of higher ability learners is:

- ❖ Ability developed to a level significantly ahead of their year group (within Alsager School) or with the potential to develop this ability
- ❖ A strong interest in pursuing learning in the subject area
- ❖ An ability and desire to work and think independently and creatively in the subject area

### Identification of higher ability learners

Identification of higher ability learners is a continuous, whole-school process. Alsager School ensures that the identification process is fair, transparent, and flexible so that it does not discriminate against particular groups. Our identification strategy makes use of both quantitative and qualitative assessment, including prior attainment and rate of progress so pupils are continually identified both within the school year and on a year by year basis. Our 'higher ability learners' list runs for one academic year and is then subject to review to evaluate and update the pupils who have been selected. Being nominated for the list is recognition of achievements and progress made so far but is not necessarily a guarantee that the pupil will remain on the list throughout their time at school as relative ability does change over time. We would expect to see high levels of application and progress for each pupil who has been nominated for being on the higher ability list.

In order to obtain the best results in identifying our higher ability learners' cohort we use a wide range of information:

- a) Quantitative data including available test data and results of in-class/teacher assessment;
- b) Qualitative information, including staff assessment and nomination, pupil, peer and parent/carer nomination and scrutiny of pupils' work;
- c) Rate of progress including value-added data and reference to prior attainment/achievement.

The key principles in the identification of higher ability learners are that:

- Emphasis should be on providing an appropriate, challenging and supportive environment rather than on labeling any particular child;
- There should be open communication between staff, pupils and parents/carers as part of the identification process - parents know their children best and should be engaged as partners in their child's learning;
- Parents/carers should be made aware that being on the higher ability learner register does not automatically guarantee academic success and identification in one year does not automatically mean that they will remain on the register for the rest of their time in school;
- Identification is a continuous process. Some pupils will be easy to identify at a very early age, while some will emerge later;

- Every member of staff has a responsibility for the higher ability learners in his/her class(es)
- Identification should be systemised within the school so that it is continuous, rather than a battery of specific tests at a set time of year;
- Staff need to be particularly vigilant for the 'hidden higher ability learner' or under-represented groups, such as underachievers, those for whom English is not their first language, those with learning or physical disabilities or those from different cultural or socio-economic groups;
- Identification should be based on a portfolio approach, utilising a range of both qualitative, quantitative and value-added measures;
- The identified group should broadly represent the school's population;
- Teachers should be continually 'talent spotting'.

Behaviours indicating higher ability may not be readily observable, for a number of reasons. In some classrooms, pupils may not have had sufficient opportunity to demonstrate their ability. In a tightly constrained classroom pupils may not shine.

Additionally, pupils may hide their ability in order to 'fit in' with their peer group or they may underachieve for other reasons. Some pupils have learning difficulties which can mask their higher ability and talent.

### **Supporting higher ability learners**

As a school we aim to:

- Recognise the individual abilities of all of our pupils
- Ensure that pupils are able to progress according to their ability rather than their age or phase, through opportunities for increased breadth, depth and pace in their learning
- Encourage higher ability pupils to work both collaboratively with others, both within and beyond the school
- Provide opportunities for students to use their abilities to benefit other students and the wider community

### **How will we achieve these aims?**

At a whole school level:

- Ongoing professional development and support to teachers in developing classroom practice will be provided
- Progress of higher ability learners will be monitored through use of assessment data, and feedback from staff and parent/carers
- Provision for higher ability learners will be monitored through faculty self reviews, termly higher ability learner pupil forums and regular learning walks;
- Parent/pupil workshops will be held as part of our school-home partnership.

**At subject level:**

- Curriculum leaders will provide opportunities at meetings to discuss progress of pupils and to share good practice
- Curriculum leaders will regularly review their provision for higher ability learners through self-review;
- Curriculum leaders will continually monitor the achievement and progress of higher ability learners through assessment data, effort grades and work scrutiny.

**At subject teacher level:**

- Subject teachers will provide suitable learning activities to help them identify higher ability learners
- Subject teachers will provide opportunities for higher ability learners to experience greater depth, breadth and pace in their learning
- Subject teachers will provide pupils with opportunities for pupils to explore areas of interest through independent study and collaborative work with others with similar abilities and interests;
- Subject teachers will closely monitor the progress of higher ability learners to ensure they continue to make progress in line with their ability;
- Subject teachers will provide each pupil with an individual action plan to support their learning.