High Achievers Policy

At Southfield Primary School we aim to provide a curriculum that is appropriate to the needs and abilities of all of our pupils no matter their ability. We plan our teaching and learning in such a way that we enable each child to aspire to the highest level of personal achievement. It is our belief that ‘a rising tide lifts all ships’ and to this end, selected strategies, techniques and skills are taught to all pupils regardless of academic attainment or potential. These include developing a ‘Growth Mindset’ approach with all pupils, focused questioning at a greater depth, and a range of creative opportunities.

Definition
Recently there has been a move away from the term ‘Gifted and Talented’, with the idea that there is more ‘room at the top’ and we need to raise aspirations for those with potential to become the highest attainers. The report ‘Educating the Highly Able’ produced by the Sutton Trust in July 2012 recommends ‘the confusing and catch-all construct “gifted and talented” be abandoned’, and suggests the focus should be on those capable of excellence in school subjects, which the report terms, ‘highly able’. Potential Plus (formerly National Association for Gifted Children) prefers the phrase ‘high learning potential’. The DfE now use the term ‘Academically More Able Pupils’ (as of Spring 2012) describing those who have abilities in one or more academic subjects, such as mathematics or English.

Regardless of the terminology, it is our duty to assess our pupils thoroughly, know them as individuals, recognise the qualities of perseverance and motivation, and support them to achieve to the very best of their abilities.

Aims
This policy is written to assist the higher achievers to achieve their potential and provide equal opportunity for all. Our concern is for the whole child and his/her spiritual, emotional, social, physical and intellectual development.

At Southfield we aim to:
  o Identify the higher achievers as early as possible
  o Develop a Growth Mindset ethos across the school
  o Provide a suitable and challenging curriculum for the higher achievers within the classroom
  o Give encouragement and opportunities to develop and extend skills and talents
  o Enhance staff awareness of the needs of the higher achievers through continuous professional development
- Provide extra-curricular activities which provide enrichment in different areas of the curriculum
- Celebrate children's achievements outside of school

**Identification**
We use a range of strategies to identify the higher achievers. The identification process is ongoing, and begins when the child joins our school.

- In the Early Years, each child's pre-school record gives details of achievements and interests in particular areas. Information from baseline assessments carried out by class teachers within the first half term gives information about the developing skills across several areas of learning. Therefore we can identify children who are likely to be higher achievers.
- Across the school, discussions also take place with parents and carers to enable us to gain further information about a child's ability in particular areas.
- Throughout all key stages, class teachers and support staff act as 'talent spotters', recognising outstanding achievements as and when they begin to emerge. Staff use prior attainment and current performance to identify children using our rigorous system for tracking academic progress.
- The children undertake national tests at the end of Years 2 and 6. Teachers also make regular assessments of each child's progress in all subjects of the National Curriculum. We compare the information from these assessments with a range of National and Local Authority data, in order to ensure that each child is making appropriate progress according to their age and prior attainment.

**Characteristics of higher achievers**
High achieving pupils are a diverse group and the range of attainment and achievement will be varied. They are more likely than most pupils to:

- Think quickly and accurately
- Work systematically
- Generate creative working solutions
- Work flexibly, processing unfamiliar information and applying knowledge, experience and insight to unfamiliar situations
- Communicate their thoughts and ideas well
- Be determined, diligent, resilient and interested in uncovering patterns
- Achieve, or show potential, in a wide range of contexts
- Be outstanding leaders or team members
- Be fascinated by, or passionate about, a particular subject or aspect of the curriculum
- Demonstrate high levels of attainment across a range of subjects or within a particular subject or aspect(s) of work
- Able to demonstrate a high level of mastery in order to work with the curriculum objectives taught

It is important to recognise that not all most able pupils are achieving as well as they could. Many actually under achieve – their potential is masked by factors such as frustration, low self-esteem, Special Educational Needs, lack of challenge and low expectations. At Southfield we are committed to ensuring that the provision for our higher achievers is a priority.
**The role of the Class Teacher**
- Identify higher achievers as early as possible in their time at our school
- Plan appropriate differentiation to allow higher achievers to challenge and extend themselves through enrichment, extension, opportunities for investigative learning or through the use of higher order thinking and questioning skills, setting tasks that deepen their knowledge, understanding and skills, providing the pupils with the opportunity for leadership
- Be aware that the more able are particularly susceptible to developing a fixed mindset and recognise the importance of nurturing a growth mindset in all pupils
- Promote resilience through encouraging pupils to stretch themselves in areas where they are less confident so that they take risks, experience setbacks and have opportunities to deal with failure appropriately so that they achieve highly
- Assess and monitor the ongoing progress of high achieving pupils ensuring they are being sufficiently challenged

**The Role of the Senior Leadership Team/Inclusion Manager**
- Support staff in the identification of the higher achievers
- Monitor provision for pupils through lesson observation, lesson drop-ins, pupil voice and data analysis
- Keep up-to-date with current research and disseminate as appropriate
- Ensure staff receive appropriate CPD
- Draw parent’s and pupil’s attention to relevant and stimulating extra-curricular events and activities within reach of our catchment area
- Develop partnership work with local secondary schools

**Monitoring**
The effectiveness of this policy will be monitored, evaluated and reviewed regularly by the school’s Senior Leadership Team, eg. through regular pupil progress meetings, book scrutinies, lesson observations and teacher appraisal.