

York Steiner School

Able, Gifted and Talented Pupils

INTRODUCTION

York Steiner School aims to nurture each child in becoming a well-rounded individual. In aiming to achieve a balance, we strive to give each child the foundation for reaching their full potential throughout their education and later life and to this end we recognise all children as being gifted and talented in some way.

We strive to respect the individuality of each pupil and to learn to appreciate their strengths, approaches to learning, attitudes and behaviours, as well as appreciating those aspects of life which may present a challenge to them.

It is usual that our class teachers take a group of children at the age of 6 and remain with this class for the following 8 years. Accompanying the children on this remarkable journey brings a deep understanding of the wide range of gifts and abilities which the children may bring and enables the class teacher to help them to develop, through a holistic approach to teaching and learning.

We cultivate a deep respect for the abilities and challenges faced by all the children in a range of areas, including:

- Academic ability
- Practical ability
- Creativity
- Artistic ability
- Physical and sporting ability
- Emotional intelligence
- Leadership qualities
- Empathy, compassion and support for others

Within the context of a whole class certain children will stand out as “able, gifted or talented” in one or more of these areas, and as such, may benefit from help to develop and balance their talents.

- Able children have the capacity for, or demonstrate high levels of performance in, an academic area. The category also includes those children who display outstanding leadership and/or social skills.
- Gifted children have an innate ability in a particular area, presenting a natural outstanding aptitude or competence for exceptional performance.
- Talented children show high levels of achievement in a non-academic area, eg art, music, sport or the performing arts.

Able, gifted and talented children should be identified by their ability and potential, rather than their achievement. It is essential to use a varied approach to teaching in order to fully engage the interest of all pupils, and to motivate them to use all their abilities to reach their full potential.

At York Steiner School we allow our lessons to 'breathe in and out' with varied activities and approaches to learning which are intended to meet the needs of all types of learners, including able, gifted and talented children. Whole class teaching, small group work, pair work and individual work rotate through the lessons, enabling able, gifted and talented children to develop academically and creatively, emotionally and socially. Teachers guide able, gifted and talented children into stimulating roles within the classroom to enable them to feel motivated and fulfilled by tasks. Kinaesthetic, artistic, creative and practical tasks as well as academic teaching allows learning to reach all children, including the able, gifted and talented.

There are three ways of meeting the needs of able, gifted and talented children.

- Extension work is given to children in order to increase the challenge of the presented work and to help them develop more critical thinking and reasoning skills. This may include, eg some analytic questions following a piece of descriptive writing about history, or some lateral thinking exercises to extend a pupil's understanding of a mathematical concept.
- Enrichment work is given to deepen or broaden a child's understanding of a subject. This is a routine feature of project-based work as each child can then be individually encouraged to undertake the quality and quantity of research as is necessary to give enough challenge and develop their understanding. This can also be eg in art, a child may be allowed to try to use different media to widen their experience beyond the rest of the class.
- Acceleration, which is where a child would be given work intended for older classes, is not practised at York Steiner School, with the exception of the development of reading. The content of the Steiner Waldorf curriculum meets the emotional, spiritual and psychological developmental needs of the children at each age and stage. The gradual maturation of the child is nurtured and confirmed by this content, which builds the child's self-confidence and understanding of the world around them. To accelerate learning in this way, would disrupt this process and could cause confusion and become de-motivating in the longer term. It could also undermine the social cohesion of the class.

There are many opportunities within school for able, gifted and talented children to develop and demonstrate their talents.

- We have end of term festivals at Christmas, Easter and in the summer. Here, the children perform and demonstrate some of the learning which has taken place. This is an opportunity for able, gifted and talented children to demonstrate their abilities.

- We have two music concerts each year. Here any child is welcome to play their instrument or sing before an audience and display their talents.
- Each class performs a play during the year. These move from choral speaking presentations of fairy tales in Class 1, through to full performances of plays by eg Shakespeare, Chaucer, Brecht in Class 8.
- Our school council enables children to participate in the management of the school, taking suggestions and carrying out projects. This is a great forum for some of our able, gifted and talented children to develop their leadership and political skills.
- We have an annual sports day where the children are able to participate in a number of sporting activities. In Class 5 the children attend 'The Olympiad' where they have the opportunity to meet, work with and compete against all other Class 5 children in the UK and some from Europe.
- We have many opportunities for able, gifted and talented children to organise events, clubs and societies for the younger children. These include:
 - Drama club
 - Board games club
 - Whole school quiz and activity afternoons for Children in Need/Red Nose Day etc
- Older children are also given the opportunity to help care for the younger children eg in the café once per week, during assemblies. This help to develop their emotional intelligence and maturity.
- Displays of handwork are given at the end of each year, showing the talents of the children in soft craft work.
- We have an outdoor week, where the children can participate in a number of land based activities. These give opportunities for able, gifted and talented children to eg devise, plan and implement improvements to the school grounds and the school allotment.

At York Steiner School, we endeavour to meet the needs of every child, approaching each as a unique individual. It is our job as teachers, to identify, nurture and develop each child's abilities, gifts and talents, to enable them to reach their full potential as a human being.

Please read this policy with reference to the policy on: SEND, Inclusion policy , English as an Additional Language and Equal Opportunities