



Saint Joseph's
CATHOLIC SCHOOL

Gifted and Talented Policy

Version 1.0 – January 2026

ST JOSEPH'S CATHOLIC SCHOOL
CHURCH ROAD
LAVERSTOCK
SALISBURY
SP1 1QY

Success Criteria:

Context/Aim: At St. Joseph's we believe that all students with Special Educational Needs should be supported to achieve their potential. This includes pupils who are Gifted and Talented in one or more subjects and skills across the school curriculum. This policy provides the guidance for supporting the needs of those students previously identified by KS2 SATs results and CAT scores but is also mindful that the policy must be thorough and inclusive. St Joseph's Gifted and Talented programme aims to encompass all children deemed to be high achieving and as such is also based on pupil progress and the professional judgment of teaching and school staff.

Monitoring Procedures:

By whom: Governors' Academic Committee	When: Biennially	How: Reports to the Governors Academic Committee
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Evaluation:

By whom: Headmaster and the Governors' Academic Committee	When: Biennially	How: SLT and the Governors to review policy
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Revision History:

Version	Approved and Ratified	Review Date	Additional Notes
1.4	January 2025	January 2027	Re-written to reflect fresh approach
1.3	March 2022	March 2024	Additional Partnerships included: St John Fisher School, SWGS, Elevate & Strategies for Success
1.2	January 2020	January 2022	None
1.1	July 2017	July 2019	Changed to Higher Attainers from G&T
1.0	May 2017	May 2018	None



Vision Statement:

With God's love and inspiration, we aspire to achieve excellence.

Vision: St. Joseph's aspires to be an exceptional, inclusive Catholic school where every individual feels a **profound sense of belonging and recognises their spiritual gifts**. In a safe, trusting, and respectful environment, everyone can thrive.

The St Joseph's family is dedicated to providing and receiving **outstanding educational opportunities, enabling each member to achieve excellent progress and outcomes** in every aspect of school life to ensure the highest level of academic results. We are committed to nurturing God-given talents and encouraging everyone to reach their full potential, fostering spiritual and moral character development.

National Policies and guidance/courses referred to and incorporated into SJCS Policy:

Document/Course Title:	Document/Course Date:
Ofsted Education Inspection Framework	November 2025
NPQSL Project: Raising Attainment of Higher Attainer Learner at SJCS	Academic Year 2019-20
Educational Excellence Everywhere: Department for Education	March 2016
The most able students: an update on progress: Ofsted	March 2015
SEND Code of Practice	2014
Equality Act	2010

Other SJCS Policies that relate to this Policy:

Accessibility Plan
Behaviour Policy
Child Protection Policy
Curriculum Policy
Equality and Diversity Policy
Exams Policy
Safeguarding Policy



Gifted and Talented Policy

Rationale

We believe that each pupil should have the opportunity to enjoy and achieve their full potential, and we provide appropriate learning experiences for pupils of all abilities. This policy provides guidance as to how we will meet the needs of our most able pupils by meeting the following objectives:

- To identify our Gifted and Talented pupils
- To ensure staff are able to identify the Gifted and Talented pupils in their class
- To offer pupils identified as Gifted and/or Talented in each year group placed in a scholar stream so rapid and sustained progress can be achieved (mixed ability teaching will remain in GCSE option subjects)
- To address the needs of our most Gifted and Talented pupils through providing support and teaching which makes their learning challenging, stimulating and enables them to reach their full potential
- To provide enrichment activities to develop structured learning opportunities beyond the classroom
- To develop independent learning and to support self-reliance and motivation
- Ensure awareness of Hinterland Tasks and Booklets in each subject, available to all, on the school website and embedded in the curriculum
- To raise aspirations of Gifted and Talented students
- To liaise with the parents of Gifted and Talented students to ensure awareness and support
- To actively engage in action research with staff about the most effective ways of stretching and developing the Gifted and Talented students within our school community

Gifted and Talented at St. Joseph's

At St Joseph's we recognise our duty to support students with diverse SEND. As part of that duty, we recognise students with a potential for high academic and athletic achievements – our Gifted and Talented.



Our Gifted and Talented policy focuses on a holistic approach rooted in Catholic values, including academic stretch, co-curricular enrichment, and spiritual development. It aims to support and challenge students who demonstrate high potential or achievement in academic, creative, and athletic fields and support their additional needs in lessons.

We have high expectations for all students and expect them to be challenged in all lessons. We recognise however that students who are gifted and talented can have specific needs. They are often curious, critical and analytical in their approach and will regularly seek to go beyond the core learning achieved during lesson time, needing extra teacher engagement. Gifted and talented students are often inspired to undertake their own research and read widely, challenging themselves to develop new skills, needing teacher support. They will make links within and across the curriculum and are likely to pursue a hobby or hobbies to a high degree of expertise, needing teacher recognition.

What does Gifted and Talented mean?

'Gifted and talented' describes children with the ability or potential to develop significantly ahead of their peers:

- 'gifted' learners are those with abilities in one or more academic subjects, such as maths or English.
- 'talented' learners are those who have practical skills in areas such as sport, music, design or creative and performing arts.

Skills and attributes such as leadership, decision-making and organisation may also be taken into account when recognising gifted and talented students.

Gifted and talented specific skills:

- They will be able to self-regulate and self-direct their own learning to a significant degree, identifying areas of weakness and implementing strategies to rectify this, developing learning techniques such as research and extended writing skills to allow them to explore topics in greater depth.
- They will be able to clearly articulate considered opinions on a range of academic topics and engage in lively, thoughtful debate.
- They will appreciate the opinions of others, adopting a mature and empathetic approach to their work with others.
- They will regularly pursue their own learning for learning's sake, without the need for close teacher-direction, whether this is through an academic or creative talent.



Identifying Gifted and Talented students

Students are initially identified as Potential High Achievers in Year 7 based upon their FFT bands. This means that they are identified as high achievers relative to their national cohort, representing the top third of KS2 results.

Heads of departments may also nominate students who demonstrate exceptional skills in a particular area, such as arts, music or sport, also playing a key role in identifying students who are new to the school and arriving without KS2 data as a result of living abroad or previous school absence.

Gifted and Talented students are reassessed in Year 10, using progress report data and other assessment tools in combination with FFT scores.

Importance of recognising ability

High ability can be combined with a lack of self-confidence and self-esteem. By recognising gifted and talented students across all subjects we aim to promote their confidence in their own abilities and themselves through recognition.

Many who are talented in the creative and physical subjects may not recognise that their talents are as important as those who succeed in traditional academic subjects. By placing both groups as equal, we aim to promote the value of these subjects and the confidence and leadership skills of those achieving across the whole curriculum.

Whole school classroom provision and beyond

At St. Joseph's, we have a scholar stream for higher ability students, mixed classes and nurture groups setting within KS3 subjects to support students with differing abilities. Core subjects continue to be streamed throughout KS4. We are aware however that even in such groups there will be a spread of ability and cultural capital amongst students. We therefore use mixed groups in enrichment lessons as a positive way of offering opportunities for students of differing abilities to work together. Gifted and talented young people enjoy and benefit from working with others of like ability, and this should be part of a child's entitlement, our mixed ability groups provide opportunities for late developers and learners with potential to progress to the higher levels. Mixed classes also help gifted and talented students to develop patience and understanding with those less academically gifted or less talented than themselves. Sometimes, working with a less able student helps to clarify thinking and find a clear way to explain a concept; being in the role of 'tutor' or 'coach' can also be very good for self-esteem.

Within all lessons we employ a variety of strategies to support gifted and talented students:



- Teachers use "**stretch and challenge**" techniques to deepen knowledge and encourage higher order thinking during lessons.
- **Higher-order questioning:** Students are engaged with challenging questions that push them to analyse, evaluate, and create, rather than just recall information.
- **Extracurricular challenges:** Outside of lesson time, these students benefit from a range of extra-curricular activities such as Hinterland tasks (provided to all students), clubs, visits, interactive robotic workshops, listening to and questioning guest speakers and other enrichment activities. These not only provide extra opportunities for students but also valuable time with teaching staff to discuss the subject in a more informal and relaxed way.

STEM

DSTL Young Coders

Students interested in STEM subjects are offered a variety of lunchtime and after school activities to develop their understanding of the subjects and skills, as well as to encourage their love of learning.

DSTL Young Coders provides students with the opportunity to try hands on robotics and programming guided by industry professionals in the Government's Defence, Science and Technology Laboratory. Students in KS3 and KS4 can learn new coding skills and problem solving through programming to build experience. It also provides students with a launchpad to careers in STEM, teaching them the following skills:

- development of Python and other coding which supports the school's curriculum
- careers in gaming and game development
- Speaking to and learning from experienced coders and scientists
- Problem solving in fun and unique scenarios
- Supporting evidence for eventual college and university applications

DSTL Robot Dogs

The Defence, Science and Technology Laboratory provide St Joseph's with a workshop on robotics, developing our Gifted and Talented student's understanding of this developing and increasingly relevant technological area. Students are selected on the basis of the completion of Sparx Science homework and work with industry experts to operate and understand robotic dogs which are increasingly used in defence systems.

UK Maths Team Challenge

Gifted and Talented students from years 9 and 10 are encouraged to enter the UKMT competition. A 60-minute, 25 multiple choice Challenge, it encourages mathematical reasoning, precision of thought and fluency to make students think. The problems on the



Intermediate Maths Challenge are designed to make students push their understanding of the subject and the skills involved, challenging those with more experience.

Students thrive on facing a challenge against other schools, resulting in success for St Josephs in 2025.

Scholars programme – Brilliant Club

Students who are identified as being Gifted and Talented in five or more subjects are invited to join the Scholars Programme. At St. Josephs we engage with the Brilliant Club which gives the opportunity for our scholars to work with PhD students through a series of weekly one-hour tutorials. Students are supported to create an extended piece of academic research which is graded using university style mark schemes. The term long programme culminates in a visit to a Russell Group university and a programme graduation ceremony. [Data](#) from the Higher Education Access Tracker (HEAT) shows that students who engage with the programme are 27 percentage points more likely to achieve a 9-5 in maths and English GCSE than students who scored similarly in KS2 at their schools. UCAS also show that Year 12 students who have previously completed the programme are more likely to apply to a competitive university than students from similar backgrounds.

Enrichment

It is vitally important that we support our students in understanding the world around them. Students arrive at the school from a variety of backgrounds and with a range of different experiences. We believe it is important that we build on those experiences so that students are able to aim high and realise the opportunities that are available to them. Through our clubs and societies we bring in a range of speakers to enhance students' experience of the world. Recent past speakers have included a chef from South Korea explaining the impact of the Korean War on culture and cuisine, representatives of the military including an RAF Test Pilot and Group Captain.

Students are encouraged to extend their cultural capital through 'Tasting history' sessions where they try foods from different historical periods – Great Depression or Elizabethan England for example. There are also opportunities to try tasks to bring their learning to life – creating letters sealed with wax, making medieval style lavender pillows and producing stained glass windows.

Within STEM, students have joined sessions held by the Defence Science and Technology Laboratory featuring robot dogs to inspire students in STEM subjects and demonstrate how advanced technology is used in real-world defence and research settings.

Gifted and Talented students are regularly involved with the local community, for example visiting local care homes as part of KS3 History club or through the Chaplaincy Team's visits to local primary schools, the Foodbank and St. Osmund's Church.



Students are also encouraged to build links and a pen pal programme has been introduced where students can connect with members of other clubs in other schools under the supervision of teachers.

As part of our engagement with the wider community, the PE department has led our talented athletes in advanced training sessions and invited external coaches for specialist sports. Talented students are linked with local clubs, county teams, or national governing bodies to support progression and talent identification and pupils into higher-level school, regional, or national competitions.

Careers and the future

At St Joseph's we collaborate with local employers, universities and other establishments in order to raise aspirations and broaden horizons.

There is a comprehensive careers and work experience programme aimed at raising aspirations and ambitions including:

- CV preparation led by local employers (local MPs, DSTL, NHS to name a few)
- Mock interview day with a range of employers
- Work experience placements
- External talks from a range of employers

We also have established good working relationships with Bath Spa University (for our disadvantaged learners) and also The University of Southampton for our 'Brilliant Club'.

Roles & Responsibilities

The Deputy Head teacher working with the teacher with responsibility for G&T learners has overall responsibility for:

- Ensuring that the policy is implemented
- Liaising with parents on G&T events and issues
- Supporting departments in planning for their G&T learners
- Ensuring information about G&T learners is available from CATs data and Primary Data
- Keeping the Governing Body informed about the progress of G&T learners
- Ensuring that our G&T learners receive the stretch and challenge they need in lessons to aid their progress

Heads of Department and class teachers are responsible for:

- Identification of G&T Pupils –working in collaboration with
- Deputy Headteacher and teacher with responsibility for G&T pupils
- Reviewing provision in MTPs and LTPs for G&T learners
- Using strategies to aid pupils identified as G&T learners
- Researching, planning, and executing experiences that will benefit the pupils



- Monitor the progress of pupils identified as G&T learners at department meetings and after Assessment Points, in order to ensure rapid progress is made
- Support teachers in ensuring all G&T pupils achieve and attain at St Joseph's.

Ensuring equity

A school's gifted and talented population should be broadly representative of the whole school intake, in terms of gender, ethnicity and socio-economic background. However, some young people can 'slip through the net' and particular groups have been identified as more at risk, for example young people:

- from low socio-economic groups.
- from BME groups with a record of underperformance (including Black African, Black Caribbean, Pakistani, Bangladeshi, mixed heritage).
- who need support to learn English as an additional language (EAL).
- who are poor attenders, with low aspirations and/or motivation.
- with medical conditions.
- who act as carers in the home.
- from families under stress.
- who are at risk of disaffection and exclusion.
- in public care or who belong to traveller families.
- who have a mismatch between their cognitive ability and their basic skills.

We believe that direct intervention is particularly critical for these students because their abilities may only be visible to others when the appropriate opportunities are provided. Young people may have a certain predisposition to excel in one or more areas, but only demonstrate and develop those predispositions, or 'potential' if they are encouraged to do so. At St. Joseph's, our focus is creating the right opportunities, with support and encouragement, to help the student to develop a desire to learn and the resilience to fulfil their potential.

Peer mentoring

A group of high performing students who demonstrate both academic potential and the maturity to support a younger peer are to be identified in KS4. These students are then led by staff to provide a mentoring service to gifted and talented students in KS3, matched by teaching staff.

The mentoring programme, delivered during morning tutor time for one term, is structured around the following themes:

- Goal setting
- Building resilience



- Developing problem solving skills
- Interaction with peers

The process will not only benefit the younger students but also challenges the coaches to plan ahead, communicate clearly, and adapt their approach to meet the needs of others. Peer mentoring may be partnered as a result of subject specialism or general academic ability.

Debating Society/Catenian Public Speaking

There is a strong correlation between language skills, in particular vocabulary, and academic outcomes across the curriculum. Spencer et al found that a student's 'vocabulary at age 13 strongly predicts both English and maths at GCSE – in English and maths more strongly than pupils' socio-economic background'. A learning environment that is rich in talk provides greater opportunities to develop vocabulary through incidental learning and through explicit instruction. Beyond this, when students have the opportunity to grapple with ideas through talk, it can embed learning, uncover misconceptions and develop metacognition.

A school debating society will embed Catholic Social Teaching through the debating of key issues including, for example, end of life care, abortion, social and environmental responsibility and the role of reparations in modern society. Run as a combined initiative between the History and English departments, the debating society will include both KS3 and KS4 students as part of our intent to develop mentoring and learning by example.

The Catenian Association National Public Speaking Competition invites students to speak for four minutes for a chance of winning £200 for their school's charity fund and perhaps to include their participation on their CV for university and their future employment. Each participant will receive a Certificate of Participation, and the winner and runners up will each receive a cash prize and a Certificate of Achievement. Students are to write and deliver a four-minute speech with the chance of progressing through local heats to the annual national competition.

Pastoral Support

Good pastoral support can be an important feature of provision for gifted and talented students. Academic ability can sometimes be far in advance of emotional and social maturity and young people may need support in managing peer relationships so that high achievement does not inadvertently alienate classmates leading to social isolation.



The explicit teaching of social skills and emotional literacy can be effective in helping able young people to understand themselves, and how others see them, and mentors (peer and adult) can contribute to the development of a rounded personality and healthy self-esteem. As a school, we identify gifted and talented students on our Daily Tracker, an internal document sent every morning to tutors which highlights specific needs and required actions within their tutor group. Tutors act as protective champions for their tutor group, providing support and following up with behavioural issues in conjunction with the pastoral and behavioural staff and the Heads of Year.

Task avoidance and poor behaviour will sometimes ensue when gifted and talented learners are bored in lessons and feel undervalued by teacher; an educational programme that excites and challenges them is often at least part of the solution. All staff are encouraged to understand how giftedness may affect students, whether this is classroom behaviours or the particular social and emotional needs of gifted and talented people. In particular, gifted students may be at a higher risk of disordered eating, perfectionism and emotional intensity, due to factors like unrealistic expectations, difficulty in social situations, and the pressure to excel. Supporting them involves fostering an open and shame-free environment, teaching coping skills and potentially interpersonal skills. At St. Joseph's we use the Thrive Programme to support our students to develop these skills, resilience strategies and self-esteem.

Parental engagement is a crucial part of supporting Gifted and Talented students. Parents are informed of their child's abilities in parents' evenings and school reports as well as teacher contact home. Students who are part of the Brilliant Club and are identified as part of our Scholars Programme will have a more formal system of engagement with parents to provide extra support and guidance.



Timetable

	Autumn Term 1	Autumn Term 2	Spring Term 1	Spring Term 2	Summer Term 1	Summer Term 2
Identification of Gifted and Talented students						
Identification of scholars group						
Pastoral support launched						
Peer mentoring programme launched						
Mentoring partnerships programme						
Public speaking programme						
Catenian competition						
Brilliant Club programme						

