

**The NACE Challenge Award : Assessor's Report
Horspath Primary School**

Summary of Strengths:

Portfolio scrutiny, interview and work samples

- A commitment to and passion for challenging all learners permeates Horspath Primary School. It underpins the ethos of the school and is accepted and believed by all and is reflected in their Teaching and Learning Policy -“ we believe that learning should be a rewarding and enjoyable experience for everyone....” and “Where all children are challenged and inspired to achieve their full potential.”
- The whole staff, effectively led by the Headteacher, SLT and Gifted and Talented Coordinator, has agreed their own vision and ensure provision for able learners is embedded as part of the philosophy of the school and reflected in classroom practice. As a consequence the comprehensive evidence presented by the school was thorough, reflective and shows continually strengthening practice.
- Achievement and success are celebrated at all levels - through regular assemblies, newsletters and on the school website, including those accomplished outside school. Pupils value the “Golden Moments” given not only for exceptional work, which is celebrated in all classes, but also for effort and perseverance.
- The school’s able gifted and talented policy is well structured, tailored by the staff to the specific needs and situation of the school, with a clear focus through rigorous self-evaluation on supporting and improving classroom provision. It links fully with the School Development Plan and the focus has been embedded in all other policy documents.
- Identification is systematic, firmly rooted on thorough analysis of data and the detailed knowledge the staff have of all pupils. Parents are encouraged to share information about prowess in activities followed outside the school day.
- The school tracking system is consistently used to monitor the progress of all pupils and inform the setting of aspirational and challenging targets. Extensive amounts of time are given to the rigorous analysis and discussion of pupil progress, including daily professional conversations between teachers and teaching assistants. As a result, pupils identified as being at risk of underachieving are quickly identified and set appropriate interventions.
- Equally, this close analysis of the data systematically supports continual improvements increasing pupil attainment, for example in order to raise the number of pupils who achieve Level 6 teachers use data to identify potential issues and intervene at much earlier ages.
- Flexible inter-year groups are used proactively to challenge and extend learning, for example to raise literacy levels Year 4 pupils were able to work alongside Year 5 pupils. Parents commented that teachers were “dextrous at meetings their children’s needs”; that the fluid groups ensured there was no “stigma” in being an able learner and “interventions happen in teaching time”.
- Pupils are aware of being “smart”; they are quite open about their personal strengths and recognise strengths in their classmates. They like being encouraged to take responsibility for their own learning through the use of the school Bronze – Platinum target system. The latter is used to “signpost” individuals to appropriate class targets for each lesson and the pupils know they “will never get away with choosing easy work” but are equally not pressured to join the highest ability groups if they really feel they have not mastered the previous steps, for example a Year 5 pupil was not forced to join his Year 6 peers who were moving onto exploring ‘Pi’ and circumferences, and stayed working on compound perimeters of quadrilaterals.
- Parents are supportive and appreciative of the school’s ability to stretch and challenge all children. They commented they were encouraged to share their talents from very early ages, for example “our 4 year old son was given the chance to perform in assembly”. They were confident the school had an “open door” policy and felt there had been “significant improvements” in communications with staff willing to talk through and break down “jargon” to help them understand their child’s progress.
- Curriculum Plans have support for able learners embedded within them and this is also reflected in all lesson planning. Opportunities for pupils to work independently are especially provided through

the Learning Logs which replace homework and are linked to class learning but challenge all pupils to respond or interpret the set task as creatively and imaginatively as they want within the confines of one page.

- Staff and Teaching Assistants are well trained, benefitting from a strong programme of internal Continuing Professional Development sessions, which ensure they have the skills to support and extend able learners.
- The school is part of strong local partnership of primary and secondary schools which enables it to extend the learning opportunities for its able pupils and develop and share the expertise of its staff.
- There is a wide range of “extended opportunities” available for all pupils in both academic and talent spheres. The school makes good use of external expertise in sports and music and local contacts to broaden the plethora of clubs offered. Pupils commented if there was something they wanted to do “they could just ask”. Families are encouraged to be part of the programme through the annual “Family Challenge Day.”
- Qualities of leadership and responsibility and respect for pupil voice are fostered throughout the school, especially through the School Council, Playground Buddies and the Peer Mediator programmes.
- Provision for the More Able Gifted and Talented is continually monitored, with regular reports being presented to the Governors, ensuring that the focused action plan is frequently reviewed, challenged and updated.

Where Teaching and Learning is good or better

- Pupil behaviour is exemplary and conducive to developing learning; they are engaged in lessons whether working in groups or independently; they understand themselves as learners and have exceptional work ethics.
- Lessons are well planned against high level learning outcomes, which are continually shared with pupils. Challenge for all was embedded within the lesson content and not thought of as an ‘add on’ and builds on previous learning.
- Teachers ensure good personalised flexible differentiation allows them to be reactive to pupil individual needs – amending the pace of lessons and changing their questioning – “What do you think it might say?” or “You have to think and tell me why”, thus providing opportunities for experimental learning and problem solving which allowed for risk taking and failure.
- High expectations were made clear from the outset and were acknowledged by the pupils, “I’m on fire today!” (Foundation class pupil).
- Creative opportunities sparked pupils’ enthusiasm for learning and challenged them to use their imaginations; real life learning provided chances for problem solving. For example, in Year 6 the class were engaged in working out the area of their class walls to help painters who would be decorating the room over half-term.
- Teachers make good use of ‘academic’ language, for example challenging the Foundation class to identify the number of “vertices” different 3D shapes had and Year 2/3 to guess what the word “personification” means, scaffolding the problem with “can anyone see another word inside the long word which might help?” and then “that’s good we’re getting closer” as individuals happily shared suggestions.
- Teachers and teaching assistants encourage pupils to develop their ideas through the active use of “Talk Partners” who are regularly changed to share ideas around the class.
- Teaching Assistants were used proactively and were very confident in working with groups of able learners.
- Pupils were encouraged to check their own work or their peers and assess it against targets through the use of learning ladders, or respond to teacher marking which is clearly based on identifying what has gone well and what next steps are needed.
- Learning spaces are lively and vibrant. Working Walls are used in all classes to support the development of learning, for example the Year 6 Maths Wall was referred to to remind pupils about area formulae and in Year 2/3 pupils were directed back to their Literacy Wall to remind them “What makes a good story”.
- Plenaries focused on getting the pupils to reflect on “What was the purpose of this lesson?”; “What do you know now that you didn’t know at the start of the lesson” and “Was it challenging, did your brain hurt?”
- ICT is used to engage and extend learners, encouraging them to develop independent research

skills. Flexibility was promoted in recording information and presentation of work.

Summary of Areas for Development:

Portfolio scrutiny, interview and work samples

- To broaden and strengthen the identification process by:
 - developing the role and involvement of parents
 - extending the use of external experts/coaches in identifying talent areas and
 - involving the pupils in identifying expertise in their peers
- Expanding/exploiting the use of the local school Partnership with a particular focus on:
 - Supporting exceptionally able learners and
 - Those pupils who are working at Level 6, particularly providing opportunities for them to work with a wider group of pupils working at the same level.
- To involve the parents of able pupils as role models – showcasing either their own talents or occupations to raise aspirations.
- To promote the use of ICT to stretch and challenge able learners and provide additional means of responding to work – for example through the use of video recordings, video conferencing or use of iPads etc.
- To develop the specific role of a More Able Gifted and Talented Governor to act as a critical friend/advocate for this group of pupils.

Teaching and learning

- To continue to share best practice in relation to the most able, thus ensuring consistency across teaching in all classes
- To enable pupils to be clearer about their personal progress over time towards targets.

Date Award Achieved	12 th February 2014	Assessors	Lead – Linda Prestidge Shadow – Lis Stock
Date of reassessment	February 2018	Signatures	<i>Linda Prestidge</i>