



Stretch & Challenge

Revised: January 2015

Review date: Autumn 2016



We believe that it is of paramount importance that all our pupils are stretched and challenged

As a school, it is our commitment that all pupils will be provided with the best possible learning opportunities, regardless of ability. We treat all pupils equally and understand that their educational needs differ greatly. All teaching groups and pupils present their own special challenges and range of abilities. As educators, it is our aim to provide strategies which will enable all pupils to achieve their potential as much as possible. It is easier to achieve this when teaching is linked to specific educational needs. Some pupils have a very high level of ability, understanding and creativity within a particular subject or across the curriculum. These pupils are entitled to extended stimulus and challenges. It is our intention to meet their needs as effectively as possible.

Why do we do this?

If children are pushed to achieve this will:

Inspire and motivate them Enable them to fulfil their potential Maintain their engagement

Why does it matter?

It allows us to provide a differentiated curriculum with children aiming for their best. It ensures that all students are suitably engaged in their learning and hungry for improvement. Higher expectations are for the benefit of all: "a rising tide lifts all ships".

How do we identify which pupils to stretch & challenge?

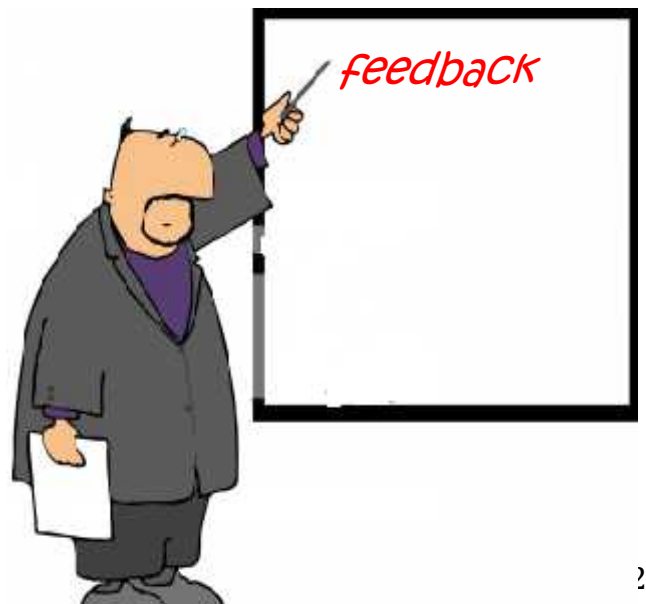
- We aim to stretch and challenge **each child** according to his/her ability but it is necessary to articulate the cohort who we identify as **most able**.
- In each Year Group OUR criteria for “**Most Able**” is based on **KS2 data**. OFSTED describe them as pupils who attain **Level 5** at KS2 in **BOTH** English & Maths. The **MINIMUM** expectation for any child with Level 5 in E&M is **B+** at GCSE. Any pupil who attains Level 5.3 or better in E&M is expected to attain either **A or A***.
- In due course, when levels are phased out, we will use different criteria to identify “most able” pupils.
- We do not label our “**Most Able**” as “Gifted & Talented”. Therefore we do not inform parents that their child has been “identified as Gifted or Talented”. We do not believe that the labelling of students as “Gifted” contributes to maximising academic achievement.

Practically, what happens?

- Pupils are placed in ability bands after a few weeks of Year 7.
- These bands are under constant review. When appropriate, pupils are moved into a higher or lower band.
- Work is differentiated but teachers are instructed to “**teach to the top**”; this encourages pupils to be ambitious and stretch themselves.
- Teachers adopt an EVERY lesson counts attitude.

What happens in lessons?

- Teachers ask open ended questions and where necessary set open ended tasks
- Pupils are encouraged to develop higher order thinking skills (HOTS)
- Pupils are encouraged and given responsibility as leaders & facilitators
- Teachers help pupils to develop skills which critique their own and others work
- Pupils are encouraged to have a go and not fear mistakes
- Teachers give expert guidance on what exemplar (eg A*) answers/responses look like; this approach is adopted for pupils across all groups
- Pupils literacy skills are constantly tested orally, in writing and with reading
- Teachers use specific techniques such as “SOLO” (Structure of Observed Learning Outcomes)
- Teachers ‘flip the classroom’ so that pupils prepare work at home and arrive to lessons ready to apply their knowledge; this ensures no time is wasted
- Pupils are encouraged to experiment
- Feedback on pupils work makes it clear how to improve including next steps
- Teachers make time in lessons to give this feedback



What this looks like in a lesson

This hierarchy shows how there is increased challenge for pupils in lessons and series of lessons

Judge the value of alternatives	=	Evaluate
Put together knowledge as a new whole	=	Synthesise
Break down knowledge to find meaning	=	Analyse
Use this understanding in a new way	=	Apply
Show understanding (explain)	=	Comprehend
Recall information	=	Know



How else do we Stretch and Challenge our students?

At Cardinal Allen we firmly believe that the best way to provide for all of our pupils is through differentiation in lessons. However, we also actively seek out extra-curricular activities to stretch our most able students. Examples of activities may include the following:

Lectures; Stretch & Challenge Activities; Trips & Visits; Workshops; Competitions; Clubs; Additional Lessons

How could you help as a parent?

We place great value on the hard work that parents do to support the learning of students outside of school. The role of parent/guardian is vital to the success of children. Most parents and guardians are committed to encouraging their children as much as possible. Much of the additional stimulus for stretch & challenge does not have to have a solely academic focus. Consider a trip to a concert, a play or a film; a visit to a museum, an art gallery, a science exhibition or some other place of interest; time together browsing in a bookshop, a library or on the Internet. Take talented pupils to sports events, to shows. As most parents know, it is vital to get the balance right. Young people should be challenged to raise their expectation but nothing is worth damaging the relationship between parents and children. There are, then, many things that parents can do to help stretch their children. Some examples include:

- Reading a newspaper such as The Times, The Guardian or The Telegraph
- Day trips – museums, theatres, sports events
- Listening to the radio (news and documentaries)
- Extra-curricular clubs, trips and visits
- **Promoting reading** (try and encourage a variety of sources and more challenging texts)
- Discussing current affairs
- Using online web resources
- And always remember - Encouragement not Punishment!

Learning clues which we look out for in children

- they question readily
- they are persistent, resourceful, self-directed
- they think divergently
- they synthesise
- they have a good vocabulary and be verbally fluent
- they analyse
- they show creativity and imagination
- they have a wide range of hobbies and interests or be obsessive about one
- they engage with complexity
- they work independently when interested and challenged
- they perceive patterns
- they grasp new ideas rapidly
- they take risks
- they are sceptical
- they make links
- they have a good sense of humour
- they show high levels of sensitivity and empathy
- they find it comfortable and challenging to communicate with adults