



Values Education' is about understanding what is important to us individually, within our families and as a whole school community.

Highly Skilled Learners Policy

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Where possible we offer translation or explanation of written communication. Please contact the school office if you require forms/paperwork in any other format.

The register will be reviewed termly during staff meetings.

Introduction

We believe at Silsoe VC Lower School that we should provide for children of all abilities. Children deserve an education that challenges and motivates them to achieve their full potential and become independent learners. We endeavour to help pupils develop their skills and abilities intellectually, physically, socially, artistically and creatively.

All pupils should be given opportunities to achieve the outcomes that are key to well-being in childhood and later life. All pupils should be entitled to opportunities, which enable them to maximise their potential, achieve success in their work and relationships, and encourage them to value their own and others' achievements.

The curriculum and organisation of the school must allow each pupil to learn at a pace that is appropriate for them and Highly Skilled Pupils should be given the opportunity to study subjects to a greater depth using their curriculum knowledge to solve problems and investigate possibilities. We call this 'mastery'.

This document outlines our practise for working with the Highly Skilled Pupils and illustrates our commitment to them. We believe that every teacher has an equal responsibility for identifying and supporting these children.

Our school will employ a variety of teaching and learning strategies and continue to review schemes of work to ensure that they are sufficiently challenging for the Highly Skilled pupils. We will utilise systems to track pupils' progress to take account of social and pastoral concerns as well as academic progress. We will also endeavour to identify skills observed outside of the classroom such as in social or personal contexts so that we are considering the children in a holistic way when identifying the highly skilled learners.

Definitions

Highly skilled learners are those who have exceptional leadership and social skills and/or are exceeding in one or more subject(s) in the statutory school curriculum.

Our Vision

Our vision in Silsoe VC Lower School is to develop and nurture the skills and understanding of all children through opportunities which challenge, inspire and maximise their potential both in school, and in the wider community where appropriate. We aim for all children to be aspirational and have high expectations for their futures. We believe inquiry and curiosity are defining features of the human

condition and should be nurtured by any education system. Silsoe VC Lower School is committed to developing self-aware, self-confident and independent individuals, who can solve problems, persevere and manage change. The involvement of parents and young people in a partnership to support learning is crucial in determining educational outcomes. The inclusion in this partnership of other relevant services, agencies and organisations expands the opportunities and experiences of the highly skilled young person. It is crucial to devise an effective identification policy that caters for both highly skilled individuals and those with potential to be highly skilled.

Aims of the Highly Skilled Learner Policy

At Silsoe VC Lower School, we have the following aims:

- I. To create a robust strategy that effectively identifies approximately 5-10% of pupils as highly skilled, independent learners and which reflects the cultural and ethnic diversity of our community.
- II. To provide all learners with an education matched to their individual learning needs.
- III. To encourage in our school, an ethos that ensures that we focus on effective teaching and learning.
- IV. To develop depth and breadth of opportunity which recognises the specific social and emotional needs of Highly Skilled Learners.
- V. To provide an environment for the development of the whole child: intellectual, spiritual, moral, physical, personal and social.

Identification

Our identification of pupils as Highly Skilled is a judgement, which applies only to the current context and level of performance of the pupil. This means that a child may be showing ability in a particular area at a particular time. We identify 5-10% of our pupils as being highly skilled and log these on the Highly Skilled Register. It may arise that a child is identified in the top 5-10% in our school but transfer to a different school no longer falls into that band of ability and is therefore no longer on the school's Highly Skilled Register.

At Silsoe VC Lower School, we use the following methods of identification and assessments;

- Observations of how children learn
- Analysis of pupils' work
- Teacher assessments
- Statutory assessments, optional test results and other summative assessments

- Pupils' rates of progress as indicated by pupil tracking information
- Information from other members of staff
- Information from parents
- Information from external agencies e.g. music service; sports providers
- Discussions with the child
- Teacher observations of social and leadership skills
- Pupils' resilience of challenging and feedback (including emotional resilience)

Characteristics to be aware of:

Highly Skilled learners are a diverse group and their range of attainment will be varied. They are more likely than most pupils to:

- Think quickly and accurately or think differently
- 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 and interested in uncovering patterns
- Achieve, or show potential, in a wide range of contexts
- Be particularly creative
- Show great sensitivity or empathy
- Demonstrate particular physical dexterity or skill
- Make sound judgements
- 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
- Are able to use high level of mastery in order to work with the curriculum objectives taught

It is important to recognise that not all highly skilled pupils are obvious achievers. Many actually underachieve – their potential is masked by factors such as frustration, low self-esteem, Special Educational Needs, lack of challenge, and low teacher/parent expectations. To enable these pupils to fulfil their potential, it is vital to give everyone in the school the opportunity to excel. As a school, we recognise that we need to be alert to any groups of pupils who may be underachieving and to assess the potential ability of these pupils. We are also aware of the need to ensure that particular groups are not under-represented.

Teaching and Learning

We recognise that what happens in the classroom, in every lesson, on every day lies at the heart of the provision for Highly Skilled Learners, and that this is the direct

responsibility of every class teacher. Classrooms should be places where learners are inspired, encouraged and challenged to question, speculate and hypothesize. The challenge for teachers is to make every lesson motivating and engaging, and to ensure that every child is stretched, using different learning styles as appropriate.

At Silsoe VC Lower School, we also recognise that 'Personalised Learning' lies at the heart of good provision for all children and tailor the education we provide to ensure that every pupil reaches their full potential. This means taking a highly structured and responsive approach to each child's learning, in order that s/he is able to progress, achieve and participate. For example, we shape our teaching around the different ways children learn by acknowledging their different learning styles and including visual, auditory and kinaesthetic learning in every lesson. It also means that we strengthen the link between learning and teaching by engaging pupils – and their parents – as partners in learning.

To provide appropriately for our highly skilled learners, our teachers will provide a curriculum that:

- is broad and available to all learners
- includes opportunities for open-ended and problem-solving activities
- stretches the highly skilled children and allows them to show what they can do
- provides breadth and range of learning experiences
- develops a range of learning styles
- does not limit learning
- promotes a growth mind-set

We aim to:

- encourage all pupils to become independent learners and discerning questioners by: - organising their own work - carrying out unaided tasks which stretch their capabilities - making choices about their work - developing the ability to evaluate their own work and so become self-critical
- provide a wide range of resources to accommodate the needs of able pupils
- offer opportunities for the able pupils to work independently or with older pupils of the same ability
- celebrate achievement
- involve pupils in decision-making, for example as members of the school council
- encourage pupils to carry out extra research work
- encourage pupils to participate in out of the classroom activities
- ensure that provision of Highly Skilled Learners is embedded in all aspects of school life
- support the effective transition of Highly Skilled Learners to the next stage of education
- promote celebration of achievements by asking parents to inform the school if their child has an out-of-school award etc.

- use a mastery curriculum. Mastery is how a child can apply much of the curriculum as a whole in more in-depth and complex, cross-objective, multi-modal methods.
- provide a whole range of extra-curricular activities for all pupils and endeavour to provide activities that enable Highly Skilled Learners to extend and challenge their skills.

Through effective planning, assessment, record-keeping and liaison with children's previous teachers we aim to:

- provide problem solving and investigation activities to develop reasoning, questioning and thinking skills.
- identify appropriate objectives and have explicit activities identified in planning across the whole curriculum for Highly Skilled Learners
- analyse attainment data, including performance criteria in PE and the creative arts in order to identify those pupils who have the potential to reach high levels of performance
- establish what the children have done previously in order to prevent repetition
- provide challenges through high-quality tasks for enrichment and extension □
- differentiate appropriately and plan work so that there is extension material for the able children

In our day to day teaching, we will:

- a) provide opportunities for problem-solving, hypothesizing and developing thinking skills
- b) use a range of teaching and learning strategies
- c) have high expectations of all pupils
- d) provide rigorous and constructive feedback to pupils on their work and encourage self-improvement and willingness to develop
- e) use groupings flexibly
- f) use appropriate resources to stretch and challenge able pupils
- g) encourage pupils to take risks, to play with ideas and to regard all answers, whether right or wrong, as productive opportunities for learning
- h) encourage children to become resilient, independent learners who take responsibility for their own learning and who persevere with work that challenges them

Roles and Responsibilities

Role of the Governors

The Pupils and Curriculum Committee is responsible for Highly Skilled Learners and will liaise with the Coordinator, Head Teacher and Senior Management Team to monitor the implementation of the policy.

Role of the Head Teacher

The Head Teacher will monitor teaching, learning and provision to ensure that:

- the curriculum meets the needs of individual learners, including those who are more able
- highly skilled learners achieve in line with their potential
- sufficient resources, support, training and status are provided to the Highly Skilled Co-ordinator
- there is a whole school commitment to, and support for, highly skilled learners
- there is a school policy for Highly Skilled Learners that provides a clear framework for subject policies or guidelines
- that the register of Highly Skilled Learners is updated bi-annually following pupil progress meetings and in line with the requirements of the school census return form

Role of the Co-ordinator

The Co-ordinator will:

- ensure that the policy is put into practice and is regularly reviewed
- keep up-to-date with current developments and advice on supporting highly skilled learners
- support and challenge subject leaders to meet the needs of highly skilled learners
- support individual teachers to identify highly skilled learners in their class
- support individual teachers in meeting the needs of their children,

Role of the Class Teacher

Every class teacher will:

- assist in the identification of highly skilled learners within their class
- ensure that the needs of the highly skilled learners are identified within lesson planning and met in the delivery of lessons

Role of the Pupil

We believe that children should be involved in articulating what helps them to be effective learners and provide them with opportunities to:

- develop the language to discuss the process and progress of their learning
- self and peer assess
- raise their awareness of their own preferred learning styles
- provide feedback on the quality of the learning process
- participate in setting targets for learning including how they will evaluate the outcomes.

Liaison with Parents

We believe it is essential to work closely with parents to support the development of every child. In particular, we will:

- notify staff of any special achievements out of school by sharing sporting certificates, writing rainbows and houses to share out of school achievements
- liaise with parents about how they might support their children outside school e.g. involvement in activities suggested by the school (Maths Adventurers)

Monitoring and Evaluation

The Head Teacher and senior leadership team are responsible for monitoring the implementation of the policy, in particular, that:

- the policy is reviewed regularly
- the register is reviewed at least termly
- the achievement of every pupil, including those who are highly skilled, is reviewed termly

Monitoring will also involve:

- all teachers identifying able children termly as a whole school process
- all teachers assessing the progress of pupils through normal classroom practice and whole school half-termly assessment updates
- individual subject managers ensuring that the whole school curriculum meets the needs of the highly skilled learners
- lesson observations across the curriculum will ensure the correct provision for the highly skilled learners in our school