

Dr Radcliffe's CofE Primary School: Approach to Providing Challenge for All Pupils, Including Higher Attainers

Our Vision

At Dr Radcliffe's CofE Primary School, we believe that every child deserves to be challenged appropriately so they can reach their full potential. Our curriculum is designed to meet the needs of all learners, ensuring that every pupil – regardless of their starting point – experiences high-quality teaching that stretches their thinking and deepens their understanding.

1. Identifying Higher Attainers

Our Approach

We use a range of methods to identify high and low-ability pupils, choosing approaches that are right for our school's context. We recognise that prior attainment data is useful, but we don't rely on it alone, as it may not show the whole picture. Pupils might be underachieving because of various factors, such as low self-esteem, unmet SEN, or home background and parental influence.

Methods We Use

Assessment Data

- We start by looking at assessment data – including SATs results and other summative assessments – to identify pupils who have exceeded the targets they've been set.
- We analyse performance across all subjects, not just core areas

Teacher Assessment

- We trust our teachers to follow our school's internal assessment procedures. They know whether pupils are grasping the skills we want them to know by the end of the lesson/term/year, as set out in our curriculum plan.
- Our teachers use day-to-day formative assessments, such as question and answer sessions, discussions with pupils, and scanning through pupils' books.

Parent and Carer Input

- We use parent-teacher meetings to get to know pupils better. Teachers find out more about pupils' backgrounds or particular needs at such meetings, which helps them identify pupils who might be underachieving because of external factors.

- We welcome parent nominations and observations about their child's abilities at home

Classroom Observations

- Teachers observe pupils' curiosity, questioning, problem-solving abilities, and creativity
- We look for characteristics such as:
 - Rapid grasp of new concepts
 - Ability to make connections across learning
 - Independent thinking and original ideas
 - Persistence with challenging tasks

Who We Identify

Ofsted inspectors will generally focus on the highest 20% and lowest 20% of attainers (excluding pupils with SEN). However, this doesn't stop us from identifying more than 20% if we have more pupils who fit into these categories – our curriculum should meet the needs of all pupils and we should support every pupil's progress.

2. How We Provide Challenge

Universal Quality First Teaching

Every lesson includes challenge for all pupils through:

High Expectations

- We set ambitious learning objectives for all pupils
- We use questioning that requires pupils to think deeply, explain their reasoning, and justify their answers
- We model high-quality work and expect pupils to meet these standards

Adaptive Teaching

- Teachers plan lessons with challenge built in from the start, not as an 'add-on'
- We use open-ended tasks that allow pupils to demonstrate deeper understanding
- We provide choice in how pupils demonstrate their learning (e.g., different methods, formats, or levels of complexity)

Depth Over Acceleration

- Rather than moving pupils onto next year's curriculum, we deepen their understanding of age-appropriate content
- We use Bloom's Taxonomy to ensure higher-order thinking skills (analysis, evaluation, creation) are embedded The Key Leaders
- Pupils explore concepts in greater depth, making connections across subjects and applying knowledge in new contexts

Differentiation Strategies

In the Classroom:

- **Tiered activities:** Same learning objective, different levels of challenge
- **Open-ended tasks:** Allowing pupils to take their learning as far as they can
- **Reasoning and problem-solving:** Regular opportunities to apply knowledge in unfamiliar situations
- **Collaborative learning:** Pairing higher attainers with peers for peer teaching (which deepens their own understanding) and group challenges
- **Independent research projects:** Opportunities to pursue areas of interest in depth

Across the Curriculum:

- **English:** Extended writing tasks, complex texts, creative writing with sophisticated vocabulary and structure
- **Maths:** Multi-step problems, reasoning challenges, investigations, and real-world applications
- **Science:** Designing and conducting experiments, analysing data, making predictions
- **Foundation subjects:** Leadership roles in projects, research tasks, creative challenges

Enrichment Opportunities

We make sure that all pupils have equal access to and participate in interesting and relevant extra-curricular activities.

Our enrichment programme includes:

- Subject-specific clubs (e.g., maths challenge club, creative writing, science investigators)

- Competitions and challenges (both internal and external)
- Leadership opportunities (e.g., school council, eco council, class responsibility, peer mentoring)
- Visits and visitors that broaden horizons and inspire curiosity
- Access to specialist teaching or workshops in areas such as music, art, sport, and STEM

Making enrichment inclusive: We consider what barriers pupils may have for not attending trips or clubs, and we work to reduce or remove these barriers. This includes considering SEN, physical disability, SEMH needs, financial barriers, EAL, gender inclusivity, and transport/childcare issues.

3. Monitoring and Tracking Progress

Assessment

- We track the progress of higher attainers termly through our assessment system
- Teachers review whether pupils are making expected or better-than-expected progress
- We use both formative (ongoing) and summative (end of unit/term) assessments

Pupil Progress Meetings

- Teachers discuss higher attainers in termly pupil progress meetings with senior leaders
- We review the challenge being provided and adjust provision as needed
- We identify any pupils who may need additional stretch or support

Book Scrutiny and Learning Walks

- Senior leaders regularly review the work of higher attainers to ensure appropriate challenge
 - We look for evidence of depth, reasoning, and application of skills
 - Feedback to teachers includes specific guidance on stretching higher attainers
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4. Communication with Parents and Carers

How We Keep Parents Informed

- **Parent-teacher meetings:** We discuss your child's progress and how we're challenging them
- **Reports:** We include specific information about challenge and next steps
- **Open-door policy:** Parents can arrange meetings to discuss their child's needs at any time

How Parents Can Support at Home

We provide guidance to parents on:

- Asking open-ended questions that encourage deeper thinking
- Providing access to challenging books, puzzles, and activities
- Encouraging curiosity and independent research
- Celebrating effort and persistence, not just achievement

Responding to Parent Requests

When a parent asks about provision for their child:

1. We acknowledge their request and thank them for their engagement
2. We explain how we currently identify and support higher attainers
3. We arrange a meeting to discuss their child specifically, including:
 - Current assessment data and teacher observations
 - What challenge is already in place
 - What additional provision might be appropriate

5. Staff Development

Training and Support

- All staff receive training on adaptive teaching and differentiation
- We share best practice through staff meetings and peer observations
- Subject leaders provide guidance on deepening learning in their areas
- Teachers have access to resources and planning materials that support challenge

Collaborative Planning

- Teachers plan together to share ideas for challenging activities, their phase lead offers support and guidance
 - We use our curriculum planning time to ensure progression and depth across year groups
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6. Roles and Responsibilities

Class Teachers:

- Identify higher attainers through ongoing assessment and observation
- Plan lessons with appropriate challenge for all pupils
- Provide feedback that moves learning forward
- Communicate with parents about their child's progress

Subject Leaders:

- Ensure curriculum plans include opportunities for depth and challenge
- Provide resources and guidance to support teachers
- Monitor provision through book scrutiny and learning walks
- Lead staff training in their subject area

Senior Leadership Team:

- Monitor the progress of higher attainers across the school
- Ensure teachers have the resources and support they need
- Review and update this approach regularly
- Report to governors on provision and outcomes

Governors:

- Hold leaders to account for outcomes of all groups, including higher attainers
 - Ensure the curriculum meets the needs of all pupils
 - Monitor the school's approach through data and visits
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7. Review and Evaluation

How We Know Our Approach is Working

- Higher attainers make at least expected progress, with many exceeding expectations
- Pupils are engaged, curious, and enthusiastic about their learning
- The gap between higher attainers and other pupils is appropriate and not widening unnecessarily
- We can confidently explain to Ofsted how we've identified groups of pupils, and more importantly, what we're doing to support those pupils (e.g., adapting our curriculum plan and lessons, using differentiation).

Annual Review

We review this approach annually to ensure it continues to meet the needs of our pupils. This includes:

- Analysis of assessment data and progress
 - Feedback from staff, pupils, and parents
 - Review of enrichment uptake and impact
 - Updates based on current educational research and best practice
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Appendix: Example Characteristics of Higher Attainers

While every child is unique, higher attainers may demonstrate some of these characteristics:

Cognitive:

- Quick grasp of new concepts
- Excellent memory and recall
- Ability to make connections across different areas of learning
- Strong reasoning and problem-solving skills
- Preference for complex tasks

Creative:

- Original and imaginative ideas
- Ability to think divergently (multiple solutions to problems)
- Enjoyment of creative challenges

Social/Emotional:

- High levels of curiosity and questioning
- Persistence with difficult tasks
- Preference for working independently or with similarly able peers
- Strong sense of justice or perfectionism

Note: Not all higher attainers will show all these characteristics, and some may have additional needs (such as SEN) that mask their abilities. We take a holistic approach to identification.

This approach will be reviewed annually and updated as needed to reflect best practice and the needs of our pupils.

Date of next review: May 2027