


Shelton Junior School



Higher Learning Potential (HLP) Policy

<p>Headteacher Approval</p>  <p>Name: Mr Jon Bacon Date: 14/05/2026</p>	<p>Governor Approval</p> <p>DELEGATED TO HEADTEACHER</p>	<p>Shelton Junior School</p> <p><i>Higher Learning Potential (HLP) Policy</i></p> <hr/> <p>Last Reviewed: May 2026 Review date: May 2027</p>
---	---	---

Introduction

Shelton Junior School is committed to maximising the potential of all our pupils. This includes pupils identified as having **higher learning potential** (HLP), whom we recognise to have particular needs if they are to achieve success, both academically, socially and emotionally. Our policy of maximising the potential of these pupils is understood and supported at all levels in the school, including with governors, teaching and non-teaching staff, as well as pupils and parents. It fits in well with our school philosophy of inclusion.

Definition

The terminology relating to this group of learners is varied and changing so is often open to debate. The term “gifted and talented” to describe this group of students is no longer used by the DfE, however it remains a widely and commonly recognised term to identify students who display higher than average academic performance. In 2011, the DfE produced guidance which refers to ‘academically more able pupils’ as a group:

[Supporting pupils who are academically more able - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](http://www.gov.uk)

At Shelton Junior School, we have chosen to use the term **higher learning potential** (HLP) to replace **gifted and talented** or **academically more able** to refer to this group of students because it allows for a broader and more inclusive definition. We have adopted the following definition based on guidance from Potential Plus (formerly known as the National Association for Gifted Children (NAGC)):

- children who are significantly exceeding expectations for their year group academically
- children who have talents in humanities, sports, the arts or other areas which are significantly above expectations for their age
- children who have the potential to achieve above expectations, but who, for whatever reason, are not yet demonstrating this

Aims and Objectives

Through this policy, we aim to make sure that:

- we recognise the different needs of our pupils with HLP, including those who are achieving highly, who coast; are underachieving; have special educational needs, which may be hidden or masked by their ability; those from disadvantaged backgrounds; and those from ethnic minorities
- every pupil with HLP receives an appropriate education to meet their needs
- we provide appropriate opportunities to firstly identify, and then stretch, challenge and nurture the skills and talents of our pupils with HLP
- we recognise the social and emotional needs of our pupils with HLP and support them as part of our policy. These could include poor risk-taking skills and perfectionism
- we have a school environment which positively supports our pupils with HLP, actively encouraging questioning and challenge as well as creativity and developing higher order thinking skills.

Identification of children with higher learning potential

Currently there is little guidance from the Department for Education (DfE) about who should be identified and how.

At Shelton, we identify our pupils with higher learning potential in two broad ways:

1. Using evidence of achievement significantly above that expected of a child their age
We do this in the following ways:
 - through termly attainment tests
 - through tracking data
 - identification by class teachers as a result of demonstration in the classroom or observation of their work
 - through information provided from home about an out of school activity (e.g. music grades) or work done at home

2. Through observation of common characteristics exhibited by children with higher learning potential
 - Learns rapidly
 - Extensive vocabulary
 - Excellent memory
 - Reasons well
 - Strong curiosity
 - Compassion for others
 - Vivid imagination
 - Perseverant in interests
 - Long attention span
 - Concern with justice, fairness
 - Sensitive
 - High energy level
 - Perfectionist
 - Questions authority
 - Avid reader

(Characteristics compiled by Dr Linda Silverman, Gifted Development Center, Denver, USA)

We recognise that some children will not be immediately recognisable as having higher learning potential, but that when they are challenged and enthused in an appropriate way their talents and areas of strength are more likely to become apparent.

These children may fall into vulnerable groups including-

- Those attracting Pupil Premium
- Pupils identified as disadvantaged
- Minority ethnic groups
- Pupils with English as an additional language
- SEN pupils

- Learners with medical conditions and disabilities
- Those in public care

Characteristics of such children may include

- Poor test performance
- Attainment at or below expectations
- Incomplete or poor work
- Superior comprehension when interested
- Gaps between oral and written work
- Avoidance of new activities
- Evidence of low self esteem

(Characteristics compiled by Potential Plus UK)

Provision

Whilst every pupil will benefit from many of these strategies, it is proven that they are essential for pupils with higher learning potential. Our provision can include:

- adjusted content or expected outcomes within and across topic / subject areas
- regular opportunities for depth and breadth in subjects
- tasks and questioning to promote higher order thinking skills
- opportunities for practice that is based on rich and sophisticated problem solving
- opportunities for collaboration within class, across classes in the same year, across year groups and among schools
- opportunities to develop creative and critical thinking skills
- opportunities to question concepts to extend understanding, including following teacher feedback
- opportunities for pupils to develop self-regulation skills
- extra-curricular activities to develop deeper knowledge and understanding in areas of interest
- opportunities for external trips to develop talent
- mentoring and pastoral support
- opportunities to develop communication skills and social skills through project work or through presenting aspects of their work or interests to other students or teachers

Partnership with Parents/Carers

It is important that parents and carers are kept informed about their child's area(s) of strength and talent. This is done through regular discussion with parents, parents' evenings, annual reports and communication regarding enrichment opportunities for pupils with high learning potential.

We believe that involving parents and carers and having a positive working relationship between school and home is extremely important if the child is to maximise his or her potential.

HLP and Growth Mindset

Increasingly, educators are viewing higher learning potential in a way that's closely aligned with a growth mindset. Intelligence is seen as something that develops over time with the right kinds of motivation, opportunities to learn, and environmental supports. From this standpoint, pupils with higher learning potential are those who are exceptionally advanced in one or more domains at a certain point in their development, and who therefore need the usual school curriculum to be adapted if it's going to match their ability levels.

As such, at Shelton, we adopt a fluid approach to our view of learners with HLP. The school holds a regularly updated record of such pupils, and this is subject to change over time. The benefits of this approach include the fact that it is more inclusive – it is more likely that children who are able underachievers, have dual or multiple exceptionalities or are from disadvantaged backgrounds will be able to demonstrate their ability or potential in a wider variety of areas, both academic and non-academic