

COWLEY INTERNATIONAL COLLEGE



Educating Higher Achieving Pupils (HAP): Guide for Parents and Carers

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Introduction

As parents / carers you have a lasting impact on the lives of your children. You can have the greatest influence on their achievement and success through providing early experiences which encourage your children to enjoy and develop their learning. By exposing your children to new experiences, by engaging with them through talk and discussion, by giving them encouragement and support, parents enhance their children's ability to think creatively and critically, and stimulate their curiosity about the world. Parental support is one of the most important factors in a child's success in school. Children whose parents are interested and involved in their education – for example, by supporting their learning at home and working with the school – do better academically and socially. This is true for all children, but parents sometimes find it difficult to know how to best support a child who has a high ability. What you can do, however, makes a big difference. Being the parent or carer of a more able child can be both a delight and a challenge. In some cases that challenge can last well into adolescence, when peer pressure, personal identity crises and an exceptional intellect or precocious talent can lead to tensions and conflict. Living with an able child can raise many questions for parents and the rest of the family. A parent's responses to a child's exceptional needs will, to a large extent, depend on your values, your own experiences of education, and what you believe about your own abilities. But it is important as parents and carers to think through your response, in order to support your child to develop and express their ability, to find balance, emotional harmony and personal fulfillment – and to live as a child.

What do we mean by a “high achieving ”?

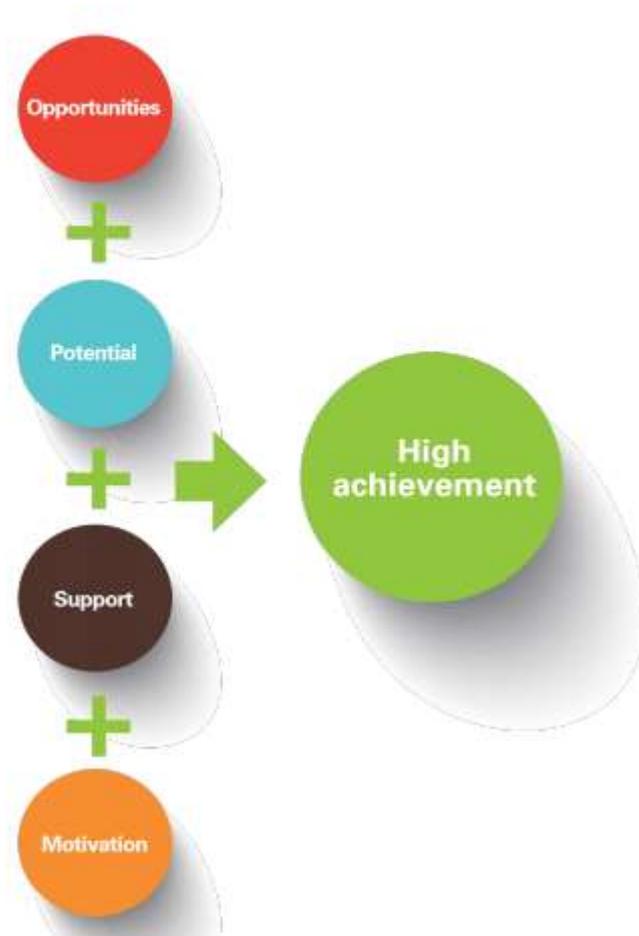
High Achieving learners are those who will typically excel in relation to expectations for their age group. The DfE and Ofsted define the more able in terms of those whose progress significantly exceeds age related expectations. However, the More Able are a diverse group and their range of attainment will be varied. Some do well in statutory national curriculum tests or national qualifications; however, being More Able covers much more than the ability to succeed in tests and examinations. More Able Learners comprise around 10% of the Cowley's population. At Cowley we identify the More Able students both pastorally and in subject's areas. The cohort is reviewed and updated regularly especially at key transition and assessment points.

How do you know if you have a “high achieving” child?

What are some common signs of advanced development in young children? The following characteristics (taken from a number of research reviews) are not necessarily proof of high ability, but they may alert parents and carers to the need to enquire further. An able child may:

- Be a good reader;
- Be very articulate or verbally fluent for his/her age;
- Give quick verbal responses (which can appear cheeky);
- Have a wide general knowledge;
- Learn quickly;
- Be interested in topics which one might associate with an older child;
- Communicate well with adults – often better than with their peer group;
- Have a range of interests, some of which are almost obsessions;
- Show unusual and original responses to problem-solving activities;
- Prefer oral to written activities;
- Be logical;
- Be self-taught in his/her own interest areas;
- Have an ability to work things out in his/her head very quickly;
- Have a good memory;
- Be artistic and/or musical;
- Excel at sport;
- Have strong views and opinions;
- Have a lively and original imagination/sense of humour;
- Be very sensitive and aware;
- Focus on his/her own interests rather than on what is being taught;
- Be socially adept;
- Appear arrogant or socially inept;
- Be easily bored by what they perceive as routine tasks;
- Show a strong sense of leadership

Why ability is not enough



Success in school and in life is not down to ability alone. Likewise, personal fulfilment and professional success are rarely due to one factor alone. We know that self-confidence and self-belief, determination, willingness to work hard and personal motivation are very important.

Opportunities to find out what you're good at, to know what future opportunities are open to you, and the encouragement and support of others are also vital. Parents and carers can provide some if not all of these. Success emerges from a constellation of:

- Opportunity
- Ability in specific areas
- General intellectual ability
- Positive external factors, e.g. family, school
- Persistence
- Self-esteem and self-belief.

What can I do to support my child? **10 Top Tips**

1. Encourage them to see reading as part of everyday life.

Build in time for them to read for pleasure every day. Talk to your child about what they are interested in and find books related to this (Including demanding/challenging books).

Use the internet to find book recommendations. Here are some websites to start with:

www.theguardian.com/books/booksforchildrenandteenagers www.bookpeople.co.uk
www.carnegiegreenaway.org.uk
www.goodreads.com

2. Encourage them to seek extracurricular clubs both in and out of college

Supporting your child is about providing opportunities for your child to flourish. Build in time for them to read, debate, dance, act and compete across as many diverse pursuits as they can. Please see our Colwey Extracurricular internet page <http://www.cowley.st-helens.sch.uk/>

3. Encourage them to adopt a growth mindset

For more able learners the notion that effort and persistence are just as important as talent when it comes to achieving pretty much anything in life. Remind them that FAIL can often mean First Attempt in Learning! "Change your words...change your mindset".



4. Encourage them to be inquisitive

At Cowley we believe in equipping our young people with powerful knowledge that enables them to understand the world and change it for the better. [Explore.net](https://explore.net) is a digital portal for 11-18 year olds run by Oxford University. The site aims to help students think deeply about issues that go beyond the school curriculum. Users can take on the site's "Big Questions", watch videos, test their knowledge, join live events and pose their own questions

See : <https://explore.org/> .

5. Utilise the local library and the internet as learning and research resources

Both platforms are the epicentre of through research papers, articles, books, journals. Although you should embrace the technology at your fingertips, visits some of the local library the northwest has on its door step.

Carers

See

<http://www.time-to-read.co.uk/>

6. Visit museums, science centres, nature reserves and art galleries

These enrichment activities teach critical thinking, empathy, and other generally important skills and dispositions. Trips help get students excited about school subjects and they can teach subject-specific content and skills. These educational visits can increase students' cultural capital vastly.

On the whole they are not costly and sometimes free of charge.

See:

<https://www.museums.co.uk/>

<https://www.sciencecentres.org.uk/>

<https://www.wildlifetrusts.org/nature-reserves>

<https://www.moneysavingexpert.com/deals/free-museums-and-art-galleries/>

7. Watch educational and current affairs programmes such as the news, wildlife/nature programmes and documentaries, and discuss them

Generally Television Can Help To Achieve The Following Objectives:

- Provide mass education opportunities.
- Stimulates learning.
- Social quality in education.
- Provide flexibility of time and space in learning.
- Reduce dependency on verbal teaching and teachers.
- Enhance quality in education.

8. Read a quality national newspaper

Reading 'Broadsheet' newspapers are seen to have a trusted reputation due to the following:

- Readership: educated people who are interested in politics, etc.
- Content: objective, factual news coverage politics, economics, foreign affairs
- Length of articles: longer articles featuring political stories with focus on the actual issue
- **Language:** more objective language more complex sentences

This will only help stretch and challenge students

Examples are as follows:

- The Daily Telegraph
- The Guardian
- The Financial Times
- The Independent
- The Times

9. Discuss homework and schoolwork

Here are 4 reasons you should get involved in your child's education though there are many more than just these:

- **Higher grades** – Students whose parents are involved in their education get better grades and have higher test scores. And the more parents are involved, the more their children seem to benefit. A study of parents highly involved in the educational process showed that their children were more likely to improve in reading and math.
- **Better behavior** – Students develop better social skills and show improved behavior when their parents are involved at school. Studies have also shown that students are less likely to skip school, less disruptive in class, and more likely to do their homework when their parents are involved.
- **Increased confidence** - When students feel supported at home and school, they develop more positive attitudes about school, have more

self-confidence, and place a higher priority on academic achievement. Children of involved parents are more likely to feel that they're accepted, included, and respected and at school.

- **Parents benefit too** - When parents become involved in their children's education, they become more comfortable in the school building, gain confidence in their parenting skills, and feel more capable of helping their children learn. Have an awareness curriculum and specific examination specifications being taught.

10. Socialise and relax in between work and learn to 'switch off'

Both Parents and students forget (especially our most able). How It is very important how 'downtime' vital is for our brain. The evidence that clearing your head is a vital element to being creative and successful is growing fast. Downtime is an opportunity for the brain to make sense of what it has recently learned and to surface fundamental unresolved tensions in our daily lives.

In my experience, there's not just one sort of downtime, there's at least three types, and we need all of them.

1. The importance of getting enough sleep (Ipad /phones)
2. The relevance of taking 'holiday time'
3. The big challenge: regular break

Most Able Resources

General Websites

- www.dyslexiaaction.org.uk
- www.khanacademy.org
- www.bbc.co.uk/education

English

- www.universalteacher.org.uk
- www.bbc.co.uk/education/subjects/zr9d7ty

Carers

Food and Nutrition

- www.nutrition.org.uk
- www.foodafactoflife.org.uk
- www.bbcgoodfood.com

French

- www.1jour1actu.com – news for teens
- www.zut.org – practice all topics in French, with different skills
- www.newsinslowfrench.com – news in slow French for listening / reading practice

Geography

- www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/
- www.geographyinthenews.rgs.org
- www.kids.nationalgeographic.com
- www.geobytes.org.uk
- www.games4geog.com
- www.globaleye.org.uk
- www.discoveringantarctica.org.uk
- www.pbs.org/wgbh/asotryit/tectonics/
- www.bgs.ac.uk
- www.volcanolive.com
- www.sln.org.uk/trentweb
- www.environment-agency.gov.uk
- www.wateraid.org.uk
- www.rainforestweb.org
- www.census.gov
- www.peopleandplanet.net
- www.demographia.com/dbx-china.htm
- www.thestudentroom.co.uk/wiki/Useful_geography_websites
- www.caterhamgeogblog.blogspot.com
- www.ordnancesurvey.co.uk – Mapping
- www.geograph.org.uk – Photo sharing linked to UK and Ireland map references
- www.geographyalltheway.com – Good geography resources website
- www.geography-map-games.com – Good test yourself games
- www.geographypages.co.uk – General geography ideas
- www.geography.learnontheinternet.co.uk – Including revision
- volcano.oregonstate.edu – Volcano World
- www.rgs.org – Royal Geographical Society
- www.geography.org.uk – Geographical Association
- www.kidsgeo.com – aimed at Key Stage 3 students

Carers

- www.s-cool.co.uk/alevel/geography.html – aimed at GCSE and ‘A’ Level
- www.geography.btinternet.co.uk – Another school website – Kay’s Geography Pages
- www.georesources.co.uk/indexalevel.htm – Revision aimed at ‘A’ Level students
- www.juicygeography.co.uk – Geography resources
- www.gatm.org.uk – Geography at the Movies – Very popular for learning ideas

Maths

- www.mymaths.co.uk
- www.corbettmaths.com
- www.nrich.maths.org/frontpage
- www.ukmt.org.uk
- www.mathschallenge.net
- www.physicsandmathstutor.com/maths-revision/

Music

- www.musictechteacher.com

Science

- www.chemguide.co.uk
- www.iop.org
- www.rsb.org.uk
- www.rsc.org.uk

Other Useful Websites to Help Support Most Able Students

www.giftltd.co.uk *GIFT* is a company providing info and extension workshops/ sessions in all subjects.

www.nagcbritain.org.uk The National Association for Gifted Children

www.nace.co.uk The National Association for Able Children in Education

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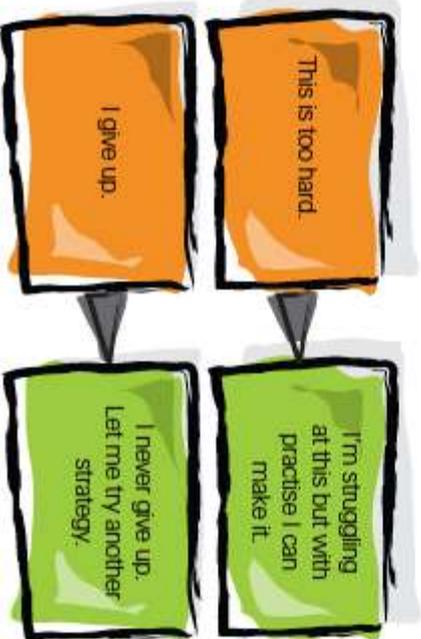
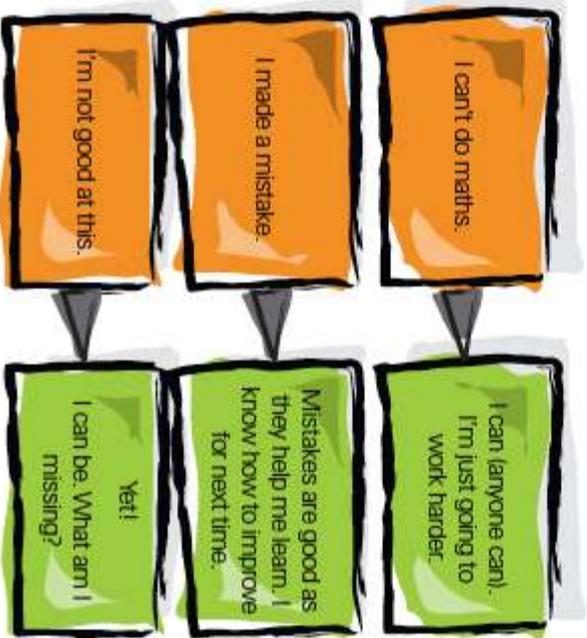
Carers

For more information please contact the Most able lead – Mr D Watkins (Assistant Head Teacher)

Danny.watkins@sthelens.org.uk

COWLEY'S MORE ABLE LEARNER COMMITMENTS

Environmental	Ethos	Expectations
<p><u>LIBRARY OF EXCELLENCE</u> We display models of what Ron Berger calls "<i>beautiful work, powerful work, important work</i>" set the standards for what we and our students aspire to achieve in school. It clarifies for them what excellence looks like and the standards we expect them to replicate.</p>	<p><u>TEACHER LANGUAGE</u> "<i>If it's not excellent, it's not finished</i>" is a great mantra for reinforcing the idea of <i>continuous improvement</i> and redrafting.</p>	<p><u>NO OPT OUT</u> We don't accept "I don't know" or a passive silence in response to questions. We allow thinking time, engage other students and return to the original student for a <i>considered response</i>.</p>
<p><u>SCALE UP</u> Students often find it motivating to be told that they are studying something <i>intrinsically difficult</i>. So, at KS3 we dip into GCSE level work; at KS4 we sample Post 16 work; at Post 16, we explore undergraduate level work.</p>	<p><u>MARK, PLAN, TEACH, REPEAT</u> We mark work promptly and formatively to support progress. We plan to support individual students' understanding and progression. We are passionate about teaching. We repeat and refine our pedagogy.</p>	<p><u>Q&A PROTOCOL</u> We encourage students to provide <i>complete</i> and <i>accurate</i> answers. We encourage them to answer using <i>full sentences</i>, using an <i>academic register and appropriate subject specific terminology</i>.</p>
<p><u>HIGH EXPECTATIONS</u> We have very high expectations of all students. We respond when support is needed and model appropriate <i>study habits</i>. Students who take control of their own learning will make greater progress.</p>	<p><u>CHALLENGE</u> In every lesson we encourage students to stay in the <i>struggle zone</i>. This does not just mean more of the same work. It is an opportunity to encourage sustained <i>higher order thinking</i> and an <i>increased tolerance of uncertainty</i>.</p>	<p><u>STRETCH IT</u> We reward "<i>good</i>" answers with <i>harder questions</i> to stretch and deepen students' thinking. We make sure our learning intentions are challenging. We plan different <i>pathways</i> for our students to <i>achieve imaginative solutions</i>.</p>
<p><u>GROWTH MIND-SET</u> "What would a student with a growth mind-set do right now?" We encourage our students to think about the choices they make, intelligence is not fixed and can be developed through <i>deliberate practice</i>.</p>	<p><u>THE TEACHER-STUDENT RELATIONSHIP</u> We know who are <i>more able students</i> are. We know what they can do well...and not well. We know how to challenge them, to keep them in the <i>struggle zone</i>.</p>	<p><u>STUDENT DATA</u> We use a wide range of student data to set appropriately <i>high expectations</i>. Data might include baseline assessments, information gleaned from individual conversations and group discussions and analysis of students' work.</p>
<p><u>CHALLENGING INTENTIONS</u> We teach to the top and prepare lessons that <i>challenge every student</i>. We create learning intentions that are motivating and challenging for all.</p>	<p><u>LOW FEAR, HIGH CHALLENGE</u> We are always enthusiastic and we provide opportunities for students to accept challenges routinely. <i>We attempt to reduce students' fear of being wrong.</i></p>	



Change your words...
Change your mindset!