St John Fisher Catholic College

More Able Policy

Date: September 2026

Adopted: September 2026

Review: October 2027

Links

Behaviour for Learning Policy

Careers Policy

Homework Policy

Marking and Feedback Policy

SEND Policy

Introduction and Aims

At St John Fisher Catholic College, we will endeavour to:

- Embed a culture of achievement and academic growth that enthuses the whole community; where everyone wants to learn and grow, and successes are celebrated at every opportunity across the school.

- Encourage a variety of teaching and learning styles that give learners more responsibility for their own learning and give teachers the opportunity to take risks in learning opportunities. Within this, we will encourage our teachers and class support staff to develop a culture of openness and opportunity for all, across subject and role boundaries, to allow our school to become an area for educational research and development.

- Deliver a broad and balanced curriculum structure that emphasises continuity and opportunities for accelerated learning according to ability and potential as well as lifelong learning opportunities. Within this, we will seek to actively provide a wide range of learning experiences for all learners to stimulate interest in subject areas and in their school life and to explain the relevance of education in everyday life.

The founding principle of comprehensive education is that all learners should be given the opportunity to achieve their full potential. For this principle to be fulfilled, we must have the highest expectations of the more able learners. At St John Fisher Catholic College, our more able learners must be challenged and supported from Year 7 to Year 13. Firstly, this means aiming for the greatest possible progress and achievement, academically. Secondly, this means ensuring that learners know what opportunities are open to them and with the support of tutoring, guidance, and encouragement, develop the confidence to make the most of these opportunities.

Identification

More able learners have an equal entitlement to teaching and a curriculum that are sufficiently ambitious to enable them to make strong progress from their starting points. Behaviours indicating that a learner may be more able may not be readily observable as learners may not have had sufficient opportunity to demonstrate their ability. Additionally, more able learners may be underachieving in comparison to their potential.

St John Fisher Catholic College does not use a fixed or permanent 'more able register'. Instead, teachers and leaders will encourage and support all learners to achieve their academic potential. Teachers and leaders identify learners requiring additional stretch and challenge through prior attainment, current assessment, classroom performance, subject-specific aptitude and professional judgement. Identification is dynamic. A learner may demonstrate particular strengths in one or more curriculum areas and this may change over time. The school recognises that high potential can co-exist with SEND, disadvantage, EAL, caring responsibilities or other barriers.

Staff must ensure that these factors, or prior underachievement, do not result in lowered expectations.

Supporting more able learners

Stretch and Challenge through the Three Teaching and Learning Pillars

The school's three Teaching and Learning pillars ensure that more able learners are routinely stretched and challenged through ambitious classroom practice:

- Learner Participation: More able learners are expected to participate actively, articulate increasingly sophisticated ideas, justify their thinking and respond to questions that demand depth, evaluation and independent thought.
- Disciplinary Thinking: More able learners are given regular opportunities to apply subject-specific skills and processes with increasing complexity, independence and precision, enabling them to think and work like subject specialists.
- Vocabulary: More able learners develop a broad and precise academic and subject-specific vocabulary, allowing them to access complex material and communicate increasingly nuanced ideas with confidence and accuracy.

Key Stage 5

Sixth Form lessons will include actions to enable learners to achieve A* and A outcomes. This includes access to academic disciplinary reading, independent academic research activities, discussions on wider issues and opportunities to challenge and debate academic perspectives.

Extra-curricular activities will also stretch and challenge Y12 and Y13 including attending subject lectures and university taster days, participating in competitions such as debate, public speaking and robotics, attending careers events and receiving careers guidance.

The school will actively promote and support learners who wish to apply to Oxbridge and Russell Group Universities and to highly competitive courses such as medicine, dentistry and veterinary medicine.

Classroom Teacher

All classroom teachers will:

- Provide learning activities to suitably challenge more able learners.
- Provide opportunities for more able learners to experience greater depth, breadth, and, where appropriate, pace in their learning.
- Provide opportunities for more able learners to improve their independent study skills and metacognitive strategies.
- Closely monitor the progress of more able learners and embedding and embed intervention where required.
- Ensure that there are suitable levels of adaptive teaching, scaffolding

and challenge in mixed ability groups.

Middle Leaders

All middle leaders will:

- Ensure that classroom teachers follow a carefully planned curriculum which is coherent, challenging, and ambitious for more able learners.
- Include enrichment opportunities within the curriculum that encourage a love and passion for the subject.
- Embed opportunities for learners to see the relevance and application of their studies in the real world of work, the local economy and local and national business.
- Monitor the progress of more able learners through formative and summative assessment data.
- Monitor the quality of teaching and learning through regular learning walks and work scrutiny.
- Provide opportunities for teachers within their faculty to share good practice.
- Provide opportunities for learners to participate in extra-curricular activities including national competitions e.g., UKMT Maths Challenge.

Senior Leaders

Senior leaders will:

- Plan ongoing continuing professional development and support for all staff to develop their classroom practice.
- Ensure that parents/carers receive termly feedback on the progress of their child, including next steps where action is required.
- Monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the curriculum for more able learners by embedding self-evaluation processes, including learning walks and work scrutiny.

- Monitor and evaluate the extra-curricular and enrichment opportunities provided to more able learners, including careers-related guidance.
- Embed assertive mentoring opportunities in Key Stage 4 and 5, ensuring that learners receive personalised guidance on support with the next steps of their education or employment.