



Respect Honesty Compassion Resilience Industry Courage

Challenging More Able Students: A Guide for Parents

Introduction

At The Market Weighton School we are committed to challenging all of our students to ensure they develop the learning habits that allow them to emerge as intellectually curious, resilient and independent lifelong learners, which is especially vital for more able learners. This guide just offers some practical tips to challenging your children at home as well as Highlighting some opportunities for challenge at TMWS.

As parents/carers you can help your child make the most of what The Market Weighton School has to offer. You 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 fulfilment – and to live as a child.

What do we mean by a “More Able learner”?

More able 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. Students who achieve the highest grades in Maths and English in their KS2 SATS (Score over 110), use of CATS (Scores over 120), reading tests, GL assessments, KS3 Teacher Assessments and other assessment records will be the initial sources of information. Apart from the use of quantitative data, we also record those students who staff feel fit the definitions of gifted and talented in a particular subject area.

Does your child have any special abilities/talents?

If you think your child has any special abilities or talents, please get in contact with Mr Savage. We will see what opportunities there are available at The Market Weighton School to help nurture them.

What can I do to support my child?

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.

1.) Read, read, read - Developing language in everyday life!

Read with your children, and to them, as often as possible, even if they are already good readers. Able children enjoy learning new words – so have a new word of the day or week at home. Puzzles, crosswords, logic games, word games, card games and board games all help to develop thinking skills and social interaction. Or try learning a whole new language together. Talk to your child about what they are interested in and find books related to this. Use the internet to find book recommendations. Here are some websites to start with: <https://www.lovereadings4kids.co.uk/>

<https://www.theguardian.com/books/booksforchildrenandteenagers>

<https://carnegiegreenaway.org.uk/> <https://www.goodreads.com/>

2.) Extra-curricular - Developing a range of skills

Encourage them to seek extracurricular clubs. 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. Extending knowledge of the world and encouraging discussion

Have a look at what The Market Weighton School has to offer on E-praise

Do not always focus on your child's obvious skills – encourage them to sample new activities. Encourage physical activity to develop coordination and general fitness. Praise and value effort and persistence, not just achievement. Sometimes the most effective support a parent can provide may be to limit the number of engagements and formal activities their child is exposed to, in order to ensure they have the space and free time in which to play, experiment and develop hobbies and interests of their own. It is also important to complement what is done at school, and not simply replicate what goes on in school

3.) Understanding the world

Talk through your day and your child's day, and encourage active family discussions. Discuss the news and introduce an interesting fact or topic of the week. Give children a broad range of experiences, e.g. visiting exhibitions, listening to music, eating different food.

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 <https://explore.org/>

At The Market Weighton School we encourage student to complete the Super Curriculum activities. Super-curricular activities are those that take the subjects students study further, beyond that which your teacher has taught them or what they've done for homework. They may go into more depth on something they picked up in the classroom or learn about a new topic altogether.

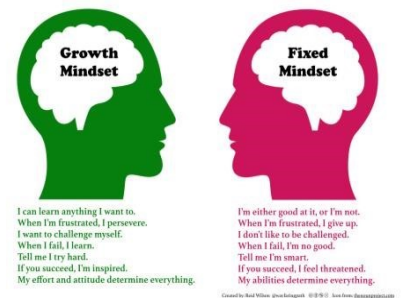
4.) Encourage them to adopt a growth mindset

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”

Simply put - In a growth mindset, people believe that their most basic abilities, character, and attributes, can be developed through sustained effort and practice. -

<https://innovation4education.wordpress.com/2017/05/09/change-your-mindset-changeyour-life/>

What Kind of Mindset Do You Have?



Further tips.

Here are some more tips and advice for parents of more able students:

- **Recognize Their Talents:**
Acknowledge your child's abilities and interests. Understand that they may have unique talents and needs.
- **Open Communication:**
Keep the lines of communication open with your child. Encourage them to share their thoughts, interests, and concerns with you.
- **Foster a Love for Learning:**
Encourage a genuine love for learning, not just for good grades. Help your child explore their interests and passions.
- **Set Realistic Expectations:**
While you should expect your child to perform well, avoid excessive pressure or unrealistic expectations. Allow them to have a balanced childhood.
- **Encourage Independence:**
Teach your child to take responsibility for their learning. This includes time management, setting goals, and seeking help when needed.
- **Provide Resources:**
Offer access to a variety of educational resources, such as books, educational websites, and extracurricular activities, to support their interests.
- **Promote Critical Thinking:**
Encourage your child to think critically and ask questions. Help them explore problems and find creative solutions.
- **Support Their Interests:**
If your child is passionate about a particular subject or hobby, provide opportunities for them to further explore and develop their skills.
- **Advocate for Appropriate Education:**
Work with your child's school to ensure they receive the appropriate level of challenge and enrichment. This may include requesting advanced coursework or curriculum modifications.
- **Balance Academics and Well-Being:**
Emphasize the importance of a balanced lifestyle. Encourage adequate sleep, physical activity, and healthy eating.
- **Celebrate Achievements:**
Recognize and celebrate your child's achievements, both big and small. This positive reinforcement can boost their confidence and motivation.

- **Seek Support and Guidance:** Connect with other parents of more able children for support and exchange of ideas. Consult with teachers and educational experts for advice on how to meet your child's needs effectively.
- **Mentorship:** Consider connecting your child with mentors or experts in their areas of interest. Mentorship can provide valuable guidance and inspiration.
- **Encourage Social Interaction:** Encourage your child to develop social skills and make friends with similar interests. Extracurricular clubs and activities can be a great way for them to connect with peers.
- **Embrace Mistakes:**
Teach your child that making mistakes is a natural part of learning and growing. Encourage them to view setbacks as opportunities for improvement
- **Stay Informed:**
Stay informed about developments in education and any changes in your child's school curriculum. This will help you advocate for their needs effectively.
- **Promote a Growth Mindset:**
Encourage your child to have a growth mindset, where they believe that their abilities and intelligence can be developed through effort and learning.
- **Be Patient:**
Remember that parenting more able children can come with challenges. Be patient and understanding as you navigate their unique needs.

Every child is different, so adapt your approach based on your child's individual strengths, interests, and preferences. Most importantly, provide a supportive and loving environment where your child can flourish and be themselves.