# JOHN SPENDLUFFE TECHNOLOGY COLLEGE

# More Able (and Talented)[1] Policy

This Policy applies to all teaching and learning support staff, pastoral staff, the senior leadership team and, as appropriate, to volunteers, instructors, and contract agency staff.

**Date written:** December 2023
**Date to be reviewed:** September 2024

[1] Formally the 'stretch and challenge policy'.

## 1. Rationale and definitions

At JSTC we aim to ensure that all students can thrive and be their best socially, mentally, and academically – educating the whole child. We also recognise that students are individuals within school and that we adapt to meet their needs.

*"Teacher expectations can affect pupil outcomes; setting goals that challenge and stretch pupils is* essential."[2]

A teacher must… 'adapt teaching to respond to the strengths and needs of all pupils'[3]

We strive to engender aspiration in students, by inspiring students through quality first teaching that embraces stretch and challenge within a school culture where our students are motivated to be their best.

***More Able (MA) – those students that have been identified as more able in one of more academic subjects.***
***Talented (T) – students that have been identified as having a talent in one or more creative subjects.***
***MA(T) – students that have been identified as being both more able and talented in one or more subjects.[4]***

## 2. Identification of the More Able (MA), Talented (T) or both (MAT)

The DFE have stated that there is no need for a formal register, or any specific definition of the 'most able' within a school setting. The DFE though does state that high prior attainers are those students that score a Key Stage 2 average of 110 or more.

JSTC use the following criteria and stakeholder to identify the more able and/or talented student:

- Key Stage 2 data (KS2) greater than 110[5] or more, based upon the DFE's definition of Higher Prior Attainers (HPA's). These students are designated as such on BROMCOM and SMID and are accessible by teaching staff via the Student Information Sheet (SIS) on BROMCOM. These are identified as MA on BROMCOM.
- Cognitive Ability Testing data (CATs) of 110 or more. These are identified as MA on BROMCOM.
- Departmental Nomination [6] – for example, through baseline testing, skills checklists, teacher observation, controlled assessment, target grades. These are identified as T on BROMCOM.
- Consideration of other stakeholder information – for example feeder school, parental/ student nomination, outside agencies etc.

If a student is identified as both a MA and T then they are identified as MAT on BROMCOM.

The MAT register is looked after by the MAT coordinator, who liaises with other stakeholders to ensure the register is up to date and accurate reflection of reality. The register is reviewed and monitored, for example following data drops. (see monitoring below).

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[2] Early Career Framework p10

[3] DFE Teacher Standards p11

[4] For the purpose of this policy students will be referred to as MA(T) students and will not differentiate between MA and T students.

[5] Secondary Accountability Measures 2023 p25

[6] See appendix 1 for characteristics of more able or talented at a subject level.

## Identification of possible MA(T) underachievers.

Due to low self-concept or other factors, students may not exhibit what we would associate with more able or talented student, but they may have potential to be so. This is especially the case for disadvantaged students. Research[7] has proven the disadvantaged students are less likely to naturally exhibit characteristics expected of the more able, and indeed underperform, but have the potential to excel given the right environment and opportunity.

We need to be mindful of the characteristic of these types of students, which include:

- Doing little work during the lesson, but complete work in the last few minutes
- Doing no revision but doing well on tests.
- Distracting tactics through boredom

## Equal Opportunities

The recognition of a MAT student is without bias, based upon gender, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, age or motivation. The term 'more able or talented' is also a relative term, is inclusive, not exclusive, and can be applied to every classroom, in every subject, in every year, regardless of the school MA(T) register.

# 3. Provision for students

## Culture of stretch and challenge – building self-concept

Self-concept, or: how a person sees themselves (self-image), how they feel about themselves (self-esteem) and how they wish they were (ideal self) is malleable. Schools have a big role to play in developing a student's self-concept, making it more positive, thus producing happier students with greater academic success.

To do this we should increase challenge and increase student self-confidence, by supporting, encouraging, ***and*** challenging them. We should not avoid challenge but use it in a positive atmosphere.

By believing in students, and believing in ourselves as a school, we can foster a positive self-concept.

Examples of how to encourage positive self-concept:

- Champion the students and their ability to take risks.
- Challenge, with support
- Foster shared responsibility for learning in the class
- Praise linked to effort towards an overall outcome.
- Fostering the sense that setbacks, difficulties, and challenges are part of the learning process.

## Stretch and Challenge (S+C) provisions.

In order that students achieve their personal best, it is necessary to provide them with stretch and challenge. This can come in many forms, by many people and in various places. Generally though to create a culture where S+C is accepted and embraced by students we should:

- Foster a warm classroom climate – the 'no put down classroom'.
- Provide students with the opportunity to make contributions and work independently.
- Focus on depth and quality, rather than quantity and breadth.
- Slowing down explanations and not over loading working memory.

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7 House of Commons: Support for More Able and Talented Children in Schools

- Scaffold and support the student in their learning and experiences.
- Give praise and feedback for improvement in a measured way (the 1:5 ratio)
- Create a climate of intellectual curiosity in the classroom.
- Take every opportunity to build cultural capital and challenge a negative habitus.
- Adapting activities to ensure the challenge is appropriate for the students.
- Model and encourage metacognition in the classroom.

It is worth noting that S+C applies to all students regardless of their prior attainment, or identification by stakeholders. It is also irrespective of setting or subject of students.

Examples of stretch and challenge include:

- Leading, guiding or teaching their peers.
- Opportunities to research and express topics.
- Open ended and rich tasks to develop metacognitive skills.
- Higher level questioning.
- Use of higher literacy resources, such as case studies or textbooks.

## Beyond the classroom.

Although the S+C for students mainly comes from the traditional curriculum, it is also beneficial to provide opportunities that extend and/or complement the curriculum. These opportunities can be academic and non-curricular in nature. Examples are listed below.

- STEM challenge days through maths, technology, science, and information technology
- Newspaper days
- Poetry and creative writing workshops
- Visits to academic institutions.
- Extra-curricular clubs – e.g. art clubs, music clubs.
- Partaking in team activities – e.g. sports teams, school performances.

## Setting/ grouping/ targets

JSTC ensures that students:

- Are placed in a set where they can be appropriately challenged and stretched to meet their full potential, based upon the climate of the classroom. This is especially important for MA(T) students that may not exhibit traditional MA(T) characteristics as this therefore may lead them to being placed in a lower ability set. This may be especially true for disadvantaged students and boys (see identification above).
- In year 7 and 8 MA students are placed in the 'R' group for all subjects except English and Maths, where they are setted and expected to be placed in set 1.
- Have appropriately challenging targets/flightpaths. This occurs through the target/flightpath setting process but is also through communication with subject leads and the MAT coordinator. Generally, it is expected the at:
    - Key Stage 3 – students will have an exceptional or advanced flightpaths.
    - Key Stage 4 – students will have target grades of 7,8 and 9 or Level 2 Distinction or Distinction*.

## 4. Monitoring and analysis

Monitoring is essential to ensure that the MA(T) students are making appropriate progress, allowing for further support to be tailored to their needs. This way, any underachievement can be acted upon as soon as possible. Monitoring overall is the responsibility of the MAT coordinator in collaboration with other stakeholders, such as HoD's, PL, parents/carers.

Monitoring takes the form of:

- Review of internal data such as forecast and progress A+A's, mock exams at both a whole cohort and departmental level.
    - This will include looking at the progress based upon prior attainment and target grades.
    - Monitoring will look at the individual students, subject level, and cohort level.
- Reviewing attitudinal data from A+A's, for example, homework, attitude to learning.
- Reviewing attendance, house points, and behaviour logs.
- Meetings between the MA(T) coordinator and HoD's/SL
- Informal staff discussion, for example class teachers and support staff.
- Line management meetings.
- Feedback from students and/or parent/carers.
- Informal lesson observation/drops in of classes that contain MAT students, for example the 'R' group in year 7 and 8.

### Interventions.

Following the monitoring interventions can take place, such as:

- Discussions with class teacher/HoD, tutor/ pastoral team or SLT.
- Information sharing with stakeholders to highlight possible interventions and support to aid the progress of MAT through appropriate S+C.
- Movement between sets if this will enable further progress of a student.
- Adaptation of classroom activities to enable further progress.

## 5. Roles and Responsibilities

### Teacher

Teachers are responsible for:

- Adapting their teaching, both in the planning stage, spontaneously in the classroom, and beyond the classroom (e.g. homework) to ensure the MA(T) students are appropriately stretched and challenged.
- Creating an atmosphere in the classroom that promotes high expectations and aspirations.
- Applying a range of questioning strategies in lesson to deepen cognition and metacognition.
- Monitoring the progress of MA(T) students in your classes and establish interventions for identified underachieving MA(T) students.
- Maintaining their CPD to enable them to meet the needs of MA(T) students.
- Encouraging an aspirational and positive attitude to learning, challenging students' mind-set so that they do not 'settle' for the minimum course requirements.

### Head of Department (HoD) / Subject Leader (SL)

HoD/ SL are responsible for:

- Leading the promotion of stretch and challenge in lessons, both in the planning and delivery, by providing exemplar, subject-specific resources.
- Ensuring provision for MA(T) is references of subject schemes of learning (SoL).
- Identification and monitoring the progress of MA(T) students in your subjects(s).

- Establishing and coordination of any department interventions for underachieving MA(T) students and the impact of any interventions.
- Identifying and providing relevant CPD for department staff where appropriate to help develop and implement key teaching strategies.
- Ensuring quality assurance and teaching and learning within their area, with respect to MA(T) students.
- Encouraging an aspirational and positive attitude to learning, challenging students' mind-set so that they do not 'settle' for the minimum course requirements.

### Pastoral Team

Pastoral Teams: leaders, support and tutors are responsible for:

- Encouraging an aspirational and positive attitude to learning, challenging students' mind-set so that they do not 'settle' for the minimum course requirements.
- Maintaining open, positive, and supportive communications with parents, carers, students, and staff
- Promotion and encouraging participation in the wider learning opportunities offered by the school.
- Modelling positivity and balance in the face of stress and pressure so that students develop resilience and a secure sense of emotional wellbeing.
- Identifying and monitor the progress of MA(T) students in your year group / tutor group.
- Liaising with HoDs / SLs to provide contextual knowledge and additional pastoral support for underachieving MA(T) students.

### Senior Leadership Team, including the MA(T) coordinator.

The SLT/ MA(T) coordinator is responsible for:

- Ensuring that this policy is adhered to for the areas that they line manage.
- Evaluating the overall impact of interventions to inform future teaching and learning practices.
- Providing relevant CPD for teaching and pastoral staff where appropriate to help develop and implement generic stretch and challenge strategies.
- Providing opportunities for teaching and pastoral staff to share effective stretch and challenge practices.
- Facilitating whole school or department interventions for underachieving MA(T) students.
- Reporting to the governing body the efficacy of provision for MA(T) students.
- Ensuring that arrangements are in place so departments can conduct assessment competently and confidently, including training and quality assurance opportunities.

### Governing Body

The Governing body is responsible for:

- Being familiar with this policy and ensuring it is adhered to by holding school leaders to account.
- Meeting with school leaders responsible for MA(T) students, including the MA(T) coordinator.
- Being familiar with statutory assessment systems as well as how the school's own system of non-statutory assessment captures the attainment and progress of all pupils.
- Monitoring that school staff are receiving the appropriate support and training to help meet the needs of MA(T) students.

## 6. Links with other policies

This MA(T) policy is linked to:

- Curriculum policy.
- Feedback policy.
- Teaching and Learning policy.
- Continuing Professional Development Policy.

**POLICY DOCUMENTS**

The following policy document was presented to the Governing Body of John Spendluffe Technology College and approved and adopted by them on the date stated.

Policy: More Able and Talented
Signed as approved on behalf of the Governing Body

Mr S Curtis, Headteacher date: December 2023

Review date: September 2024

**Appendix 1: Subject Specific Criteria for More Able and Talented students.**

**MA(T) students in Art and Design**

- Think and express themselves in creative, original ways.
- Have a strong desire to create in a visual form.
- Push the boundaries of normal processes.

Show a passionate interest in the world of art and design.

- Use materials, tools and techniques skilfully and learn new approaches easily.
- Initiate ideas and define problems.
- Critically evaluate visual work and other information.
- Exploit the characteristics of materials and processes.
- Understand that ideas and meanings in their own and others' work can be interpreted in different ways.

**MA(T) students in Design and Technology**

- Show high levels of technological understanding and application.
- Show high-quality making and precise practical skills.
- Have flashes of inspiration and highly original or innovative ideas.
- Show different ways of working or different approaches to issues.
- Are sensitive to aesthetic, social and cultural issues when designing and evaluating.
- Are capable of rigorous analysis and interpretation of products. • Get frustrated when a teacher demands that they follow a rigid design-and-make process.
- Work comfortably in contexts beyond their own experience and empathise with users' and clients' needs and wants. • Reflect on their own thinking and learning and are self-critical in a constructive manner.
- Relate novel ideas to familiar ones and use their knowledge and skill to act on them with 2D and/or 3D modelling.

**MA(T) students in English**

- Demonstrate close reading skills and attention to detail.
- Are more sensitive to the nuances of languages as they attempt to make
- meaning through their own writing, drawing on the models of texts they have read.
- Are more fluent and confident readers, possibly having read a broader range of texts (though not necessarily just fiction texts).
- Give readier, incisive critical responses, displaying more marked pleasure and involvement in language tasks than other pupils. • Are able to read with meaning, drawing on inference and deduction – "reading between the lines".
- Are able to articulate their insights by speaking more confidently and precisely about their own writing intentions, or those of other writers they have read.
- Are able to approach writing tasks more thoughtfully and make more careful preparation for them, readily considering issues such as the way in which the text type fits the purpose, and making more precise choices of language. • Are able to explain how their written work can be improved.
- Are able to make relationships between different sorts of texts already read, and chose future reading with greater purpose.
- Are able to reflect carefully on the sorts of language and linguistic engagement they are encountering, and have some insight into their own abilities.
- Are able to research, compare and synthesise information from a range of different sources, including ICT.
- Write or talk in imaginative and coherent ways.

- Create and sustain accounts and reasoned arguments.
- Justify opinions convincingly, and challenge other points of view.

**MA(T) students in Geography**

- Understand concepts clearly so that they can apply this understanding to new situations in order to make interpretations, develop hypotheses, reach conclusions and explore solutions, i.e. exhibit conceptual knowledge.
- Communicate effectively using both the written and the spoken word.
- Reason, argue and think logically, showing an ability to manipulate abstract symbols and recognise patterns and sequences.
- Enjoy using graphs, charts, maps, diagrams and other visual methods to present information.
- Are confident and contribute effectively when taking part in less formal teaching situation.
- Relate well to other people, showing an ability to lead, manage and influence others, appreciating and understanding others' views, attitudes and feelings.
- Have more highly developed value system than most pupils of their age.
- Have a wide-ranging general knowledge about the world.
- Are able to transfer knowledge from one subject matter to another.
- Are creative and original in their thinking, frequently going beyond the obvious solution to a problem.

**MA(T) students in History**

- Perform at levels of literacy that are advanced for their age.
- Show particular skill at inference and deduction when reading texts.
- Synthesise information to present a cogent summary.
- Use subject-specific vocabulary confidently.
- Follow and contribute effectively to a line of argument in discussion by making relevant contributions and substantiating points with evidence.
- Access complex source materials with growing independence.
- Have an extensive general knowledge, including a significant amount of historical knowledge.
- Develop with ease a chronological framework within which to place existing and new knowledge.
- Demonstrate a strong sense of period as a result of study.
- Grasp quickly the role of criteria in formulating and articulating a historical explanation or argument.
- Understand and apply historical concepts to their study of history.
- Are able to draw generalisations and conclusions from a range of sources and evidence.
- Appreciate that answers arrived at depend largely on the questions asked.
- Recognise how other disciplines can contribute to the study of history and draw readily on what they learn in other subjects to enhance their historical understanding.
- Are able to establish and follow a line of enquiry, identifying and using relevant information.
- Are good at reasoning and problem-solving.
- Think flexibly, creatively and imaginatively.
- Show discrimination when selecting facts and evaluating historical evidence.
- Manipulate historical evidence and information well.
- Appreciate the nature of historical enquiry.
- Question subject matter in a challenging way.
- Are intrigued by similarities and differences between different people's experiences, times and places and other features of the past.
- Thrive on controversy, mystery and problems of evidence.
- Show resourcefulness and determination when pursing a line of enquiry.

**MA(T) students in ICT**

- Show ICT capability above that expected for their age.
- Learn and applying new ICT techniques quickly.
- Use initiative to exploit the potential of more advanced feature of ICT tools.
- Transfer and apply ICT skills and techniques confidently in new contexts.
- Explore independently beyond the given breadth of an ICT topic.
- Initiate ideas and solve problems, use ICT effectively and creatively.
- Develop systems that meet personal needs and interest.

**MA(T) students in Mathematics**

- Learn and understand mathematical ideas quickly.
- Work systematically and accurately.
- Are more analytical.
- Think logically and see mathematical relationships.
- Make connections between the concepts they have learned.
- Identify patterns easily.
- Apply their knowledge to new or unfamiliar contexts.
- Communicate their reasoning and justify their methods.
- Ask questions that show clear understanding of, and curiosity about, mathematics.
- Take a creative approach to solving mathematical problems.
- Sustain their concentration throughout longer tasks and persist in seeking solutions.
- Are more adept at posing their own questions and pursuing lines of enquiry.

**MA(T) students in Modern Foreign Languages**

- Show interest in “difference” – openness and empathy to foreign cultures.
- Have a good memory.
- Have a mastery of a first language.
- Have a strong desire to put language together by themselves.
- Show creativity and imagination when using language.
- Have a natural feel and flair for languages.
- Pick up new languages and structures quickly.
- Make connections and classify words and structures to help them learn more efficiently.
- Seek solutions and ask further questions.
- Have an insight into their own learning style and preference.
- Show an intense interest in the culture features of the language being studied.
- Show curiosity about how language works.
- Exhibit the ability to extrapolate general rules from samples.
- Use technical language to discuss language.
- Show attention to detail, and are keen to produce accurate language.

**MA(T) students in Music**

- Are captivated by sound and engage fully with music.
- Select an instrument with care and are then unwilling to relinquish the instrument.
- Find it difficult not to respond physically to music.
- Memorise music quickly without any apparent effort and are able to repeat more complex rhythmical and melodic phrases given by the teacher.
- Sing and play music with a natural awareness of the musical phrase.
- Demonstrate the ability to communicate through music, for example sing with musical expression and confidence.

- Show strong preferences, single-mindedness and a sustained inner drive to make music. **High Achievers in Physical Education**
- Perform exceptionally well in one sport or to a good standard in many.
- Show good spatial awareness.
- Have skilful body management.
- Learn, understand and adopt technical aspects of a sport very quickly.
- Make correct decisions in pressure situations and adapting their technique accordingly.
- Have the ability to work independently and with initiative.

**MA(T) students in Religious Education**

- Show high levels of insights into, and discernment beyond, the obvious and the ordinary. • Make sense of, and drawing meaning from, religious symbols, metaphors, texts and practices.
- Are sensitive to, or aware of, the numinous or the mystery of life, and have a feeling for how these are explored and expressed.
- Understand, apply, and transfer ideas across topics in RE and into other religious and cultural contexts.
- Have highly-developed skills of comprehension, analysis and research.
- Have the competence to read a source and be able to select all the key points easily.
- Show quickness of understanding and depth of thought.

**MA(T) students in Science**

- Are imaginative.
- Read widely, particularly science or science fiction.
- Have scientific hobbies and/or are members of scientific clubs and societies.
- Are extremely interested in finding out more about themselves and things around them.
- Enjoy researching obscure facts and applying scientific theories, ideas and models when explaining a range of phenomena.
- Are able to sustain their interest and go beyond an obvious answer to underlie mechanisms and provide greater depth.
- Are inquisitive about how things work and why things happen.
- Ask many questions, suggesting that they are willing to hypothesise and speculate.
- Use different strategies for finding things out and are able to miss out steps when reasoning the answers to problems. • Think logically, providing plausible explanations for phenomena.
- Put forward objective arguments, using combinations of evidence and creative ideas, and question other people's conclusions.
- Decide quickly how to investigate fairly and manipulate variables.
- Consider alternative suggestions and strategies for investigations. • Analyse data or observations and spot patterns easily.
- Strive for maximum accuracy in measurements of all sorts, and take pleasure, for example, from reading gauges as accurately as possible.
- Make connections quickly between facts and concepts they have learned, using more extensive vocabulary than their peers
- Think abstractly at an earlier age than usual and understand models and use modelling to explain ideas and observations.
- Understand the concepts of reliability and validity when drawing conclusions from evidence. .
- Enjoy challenges and problem-solving, while often being self-critical.
- Enjoy talking to the teacher about new information or ideas.
- Show intense interest in one particular area of science.
- Make good use of specific subject words and vocabulary.
- Process complex information and data quickly.