



PILTON: A World of Excellence

Supporting academically able students at Pilton

Parent's guide:

- Defining able, gifted and talented
- What is on offer for my child?
- How can parents help their able children?

Inside the booklet:

- An introduction to "A,G&T"
- The "Able at Pilton" program
- Using the Website and OWL
- Supporting your able child



The “Able at Pilton” Program

How do we identify the students who will be involved in the program?

The “Able at Pilton” program is aimed at academically able students. These are identified in a range of ways:

- Primary school teacher’s recommendation
- MidYI S is an hour test taken in the first term at school. The test is designed to measure, as far as possible, ability and aptitude for learning rather than achievement. MidYI S is not an IQ Test as it is designed to provide a measure of ‘typical’ performance. The tests are comprised of Vocabulary, Maths, Non-verbal and Skills sections.
- Subject teachers’ referral. As time passes, some students will display ability in specific areas of the curriculum.

The school keeps a list of “Able, Gifted and Talented” students. This list is updated every term. Children mature at different rates and some pupils may be added to the list in years 8 or 9. Also, some able students may feel under too much pressure to perform and may benefit from being taken off the programme to reduce their stress level.

What is “Able at Pilton”?

There are three main strands to the programme:

- Learning to learn
- Public speaking and leadership
- Going to University

Pupils will have input in each of the three strands in years 7, 8 and 9. The input will be delivered in different ways. Some will be delivered through the tutorial programme where pupils will be extracted from registration. Some will be delivered in assemblies. Some will be delivered in curriculum time. There will also be opportunities to join some lunchtime and after school workshops.

What are the benefits of such a scheme?

As well as the obvious benefit of targeted input, it is an opportunity for the pupils to refine their social skills. Able students are not necessarily confident and outgoing. They sometimes benefit from nurturing. In fact, some of the most able pupils find it difficult to relate to their peers and can experience a sense of isolation. By regularly meeting up with other able pupils, they normalise their ability. They will be able to develop friendships outside of their tutor groups.



Able, Gifted and Talented

It can be very hard for schools to identify their most able students without sounding elitist. At Pilton we take the view that by celebrating the academic achievement of our most able students, we can raise the aspirations of all.

What is the difference between "Able", "Gifted" and "Talented"?

The government's current definition of a "Gifted or Talented" child is one with one or more abilities developed significantly ahead of their year group or with the potential to develop these abilities.

"Gifted" students display abilities in traditional academic subjects whilst "Talented" students display abilities in practical or artistic subjects. Traditionally, it is accepted that 10% of all students are "Gifted or Talented".

"Able" students have abilities developed ahead of their year group. They often learn faster and more readily than their peers. They can sometimes be called "More able" "Academically able" or "Bright". They constitute a further 10%.

What does that mean in practical classroom terms?

"Able, Gifted and Talented" children are likely to present themselves to teachers in one or another of three groups:

1. Those whose outstanding ability is evident and who are self motivated.
2. Children with high levels of ability who attain high levels of achievement with support from their teachers.
3. Children with high levels of ability, who do not consistently achieve at a high level and who are at risk of under achieving.

What are "Able, Gifted and Talented" students like? They can be:

- Good all-rounders
- Of high ability in one area only
- Of high ability but with low motivation
- Of good verbal ability but with poor writing skills (i.e. Dyslexia)
- Very able with a short attention span
- Very able with limited interpersonal skills
- Keen to disguise their abilities
- Identified as having "Special Educational Needs" (i.e. ASD Autistic Spectrum Disorder)



Helping your able child

NAGC: The National Association for Gifted Children is an independent charity which works with the whole family to support the child who is gifted and talented. NAGC works closely with parents who need help to cope with some of the difficulties that can come from having a very gifted child whose intellectual needs may be at odds with his / her social and emotional needs. They have produced a useful factsheet which will help you identify whether your child is gifted or bright. The factsheet can be found overleaf.

The School Run: This is a website which gives a wealth of advice on a range of topics, including Gifted and Talented. Below is an article they published entitled “8 ways to support your gifted child”.

- **Equip them to succeed** — Ensure your child has everything they need to develop their skills – whether it’s a library card, internet access, a keyboard or somewhere to work away from other siblings. You don’t have to spend a fortune.
- **Emotional support** — “Gifted children tend to be very hard on themselves so you may need to provide an extra morale boost and offer your support if they are trying very difficult things.” Professor Joan Freeman
- **Help them be understood** — “Gifted children can be misunderstood – they often learn differently, interact differently and don’t quite conform to normal behaviour,” says Julie Taplin, Deputy Chief Executive of the NAGC. “Discuss your child’s qualities and characteristics with family members, friends, other parents and teachers.”
- **Daydream time** — Allow your child to have some unstructured time each day just to think, play and daydream. It is important for creativity and having some downtime could prevent your child becoming stressed.
- **Allow them to fail** — “Gifted children need to be allowed to fail at things,” says Julie Taplin. Encourage them to take risks and attempt things that will be difficult both intellectually and physically (as long as they are in a safe environment), but help them to understand that failure helps them learn and develop their skills.
- **Get help** — Your child’s abilities may quickly outstrip your own, which can be upsetting if you feel you aren’t able to help them. Reading up and researching subjects can help – but most parents only have so much time. Extra tuition can help, as can making the most of the experts on hand at places you visit, such as museums.
- **Have a range of friendships** — Gifted children can sometimes struggle to identify with children of their own age who don’t have their abilities – but don’t assume that this will be the case with your child. Allow them time to play with all sorts of children.



Using the website and OWL

Using the website:

There is a wealth of information on our website. There are three main areas where you will find useful information:

- Departments: Each department has outlined its policy for “Able, Gifted and Talented”. There you will how able pupils are identified in the different subject areas and what opportunities are available to extend learning inside and outside the classroom.
- Gifted and Talented: Follow the drop down menu to explore our provision.
- School calendar: Have a look at the various arising opportunities.

Using OWL

OWL is “Our World of Learning”, a “Virtual Learning Environment”. As soon as your child joins the school, he / she will be issued with a password to access OWL. Click the icon “My learning” and explore the “Gifted and Talented” folder. Make sure you tell your child to visit it regularly because it is constantly updated by the various departments.

