

1. Quality of education

- 1.1. Potential Plus UK welcomes the focus on the quality of education that a student receives as highlighted throughout the Framework. Most able learners frequently have starting points that are above and beyond age-related expectations. The emphasis on the quality of their education should lead to an environment that delivers for the individual child regardless of the child's starting point. However, the Framework does present some concerns in relation to the needs of the more able.
- 1.2. In point 25 under Intent, the Framework states: *the provider has the same academic, technical or vocational ambitions for almost all learners. Where this is not practical – for example, for some learners with high levels of special educational needs and/or disabilities – their curriculum is designed to be ambitious and to meet their needs*
 - 1.2.1. Good quality education for most able learners requires suitable cognitive challenge. Without additional clarification there is a risk of interpretation that “one size fits almost all”.
 - 1.2.2. Potential Plus UK suggests that wording in point 25 Intent should read: High ambitions¹ and corresponding opportunities for challenge for all are integral to the provision. Where this is not practical – for example, for some learners with high levels of special education needs and/disabilities, and those who require even greater challenge – their curriculum is designed to be ambitious and to meet their needs
- 1.3. Under point 25 in Implementation, the Framework states: *Teachers present subject matter clearly....In doing so, they respond and adapt their teaching as necessary, without unnecessarily elaborate or differentiated approaches*
 - 1.3.1. Without clarification about the need for cognitive challenge suitable for the more able there is a danger that this recommendation points away from a *differentiated approach* and could easily be misinterpreted.
 - 1.3.2. Potential Plus UK advocates for a learning experience that is suitable for the ability and starting point of the child. We therefore suggest that wording in point 25 Implementation should read: In doing so, they respond and adapt their teaching as necessary, whilst providing appropriate support and challenge for all, without unnecessarily elaborate or differentiated approaches
 - 1.3.3. Potential Plus UK suggests that this is strengthened in point 25 Implementation: Teachers create an environment that allows the learner to focus on learning and to experience a depth of learning, regardless of their starting point. The resources and materials that teachers select....

2. Inclusion

- 2.1. One of the key principles of inspection and regulation is to gather evidence in areas such as safeguarding, equality and diversity (point 6, page 4). Potential Plus UK's experience is that inclusion must ensure that most able, most able disadvantaged and most able pupils with SEND² have a suitable, adapted learning experience. This relies on an equality of challenge in order for these pupils to develop cognitive resilience, leadership and problem-solving skills.
- 2.2. Potential Plus UK suggests that one such area for explicit inclusion is in the *Quality of education* grade descriptors. One example is point 184 Good Intent which would state: The curriculum is successfully adapted, designed or developed to be ambitious and meet the needs of most able pupils, most able disadvantaged pupils and most able pupils with SEND, developing their knowledge, skills and abilities to enhance the depth of their learning through rich and sophisticated problem-solving and complexity to ensure equality of challenge.

3. Highlighting specific learner groups

- 3.1. There is limited focus in the Framework on specific learner groups. The only reference to most able pupils is in point 154. Potential Plus UK is concerned that the reduction in focus on the needs of the most able opens up possibilities, not necessarily intended, for their needs to be ignored. The needs of this group of learners have become implicit in ‘all learners’ and this implication, together with a lack of mention of the need for challenge, could impact negatively on their quality of education.
- 3.2. Analysis by Potential Plus UK explored the status of provision for most able learners in 728 Ofsted inspections carried out in June 2018. It ascertained that over 43% of providers required change to their current provision. A further breakdown of categories where a requirement for change was indicated by inspectors showed that the vast majority of these required more challenge (67.92%) or more progress (26.73%). Our concern is that there is already a gap in provision for most able learners. Any reduction in

emphasis on learner groups or the requirement for equality of challenge is likely to impact even more negatively on their learning experiences.

3.3. Potential Plus UK advocates that the details about intent, implementation and impact for all learners should be made explicit to include the most able, most able disadvantaged and most able with SEND:

3.3.1. In point 184 under grade descriptors for Good Intent: *Leaders adopt or construct a curriculum that is ambitious and designed to give all pupils, particularly disadvantaged pupils and including pupils with SEND, the most able, disadvantaged most able, and most able with SEND, the knowledge and cultural capital they need to succeed in life. Pupils who are capable of extending and achieving beyond age-related expectations are offered sufficient challenge and support to do so. This is either the National Curriculum or a curriculum of comparable breadth and ambition.*

3.3.2. In point 184 under grade descriptors for Good Impact: *Pupils are ready for the next stage of education, employment or training. They have the knowledge and skills they need and, where relevant, they gain qualifications that allow them to go on to destinations that meet their interests and aspirations and the intention of their course of study. Pupils with SEND achieve the best possible outcomes. Pupils who are able to achieve beyond their age-related expectations have opportunities to do so. Disadvantaged most able or most able with SEND pupils are supported to achieve alongside equally able peers.*

4. Personal development

4.1. Potential Plus UK supports the focus on personal development and character, which are essential ingredients for learning and for growth. Schools should promote an education that encourages the talents and abilities of every child to flourish including the most able. The personal development of most able learners is hindered when the curriculum does not provide suitable opportunities for growth; if tasks are not challenging enough this group cannot develop resilience and self-regulation.

4.1.1. Potential Plus UK suggests that point 27 should state: *the curriculum and provider's wider work support learners to develop their character – including their resilience, confidence and independence – and help them know how to keep physically and mentally healthy. The provider offers sufficiently challenging opportunities to enable all learners to develop resilience and self-regulation.*

5. Potential Plus UK

5.1. Potential Plus UK is the working name of the National Association for Gifted Children, an independent charity established in 1967 to support the needs of most able children and young adults, regardless of background.

5.2. We help most able learners, their parents and their schools to better understand these needs so that they can thrive and excel for everyone's benefit.

5.3. We support schools through the provision of:

5.3.1. Information, advice and guidance on the educational, social and emotional needs of most able learners

5.3.2. Professional development on the identification of, and provision for, most able learners, including most able disadvantaged and most able with SEND

5.3.3. High Learning Potential³ Best Practice Award to develop and acknowledge effective identification and practice in schools

5.4. We support parents and carers through the provision of:

5.4.1. Information, advice and guidance on the educational, social and emotional needs of their most able children, including those that are disadvantaged and those with SEND

5.4.2. A programme of parental workshops, Parent Matters, delivered in schools to raise aspirations and equip parents and carers with the understanding, tools and confidence to support their most able children

5.4.3. An assessment service that provides a learning profile of a most able child, together with recommendations to support the child's educational, social and emotional development

5.4.4. Events for families to enthuse, educate and entertain

6. Further discussion

Potential Plus UK would be pleased to discuss the points raised in this response with colleagues at Ofsted. Please contact Julie Taplin, Chief Executive, julietaplin@potentialplusuk.org, tel 01908 646433

"Many schools routinely underestimate the capabilities of their students and fail to provide sufficient intellectual challenge." Prof Deborah Eyre, Room At The Top, 2011

²Dual or multiple exceptionality describes individuals who have one or more special educational needs or disabilities and who are also most able

³Potential Plus UK uses the term 'high learning potential' as an alternative to 'gifted' or 'most able'