Challenging the more able pupils.

- Both the DfE and Ofsted define more able pupils as those whose progress significantly exceeds age related expectations.
- The term ‘more able’ is currently used by Ofsted when describing pupils in a Primary setting.
- The term ‘most able’ is used when referring to secondary school pupils.
- The DfE also uses the term ‘higher attainers’.
- The Ofsted Inspection Framework places emphasis on the quality of a school’s provision and progress of the more able pupils. Current inspection reports now include a paragraph on outcomes for more able pupils.

What you need to know:

- Since a report in 2012 by the Sutton Trust (see link below) which highlighted the disparity in achievement between high ability pupils in Britain compared with other countries, there has been a big emphasis on ensuring that schools are providing high quality education to all pupils, including the more able.
- Ofsted will require a school to provide evidence of how it is making this provision.
- As a student teacher, you will be required to demonstrate in your planning and your teaching how you are stretching the more able in your class.
- Stretching the more able is HIGH PRIORITY!
- Since the ‘Gifted and Talented’ programme was scrapped in 2010, schools receive no extra funding for more able pupils and they are not required to hold a register, although individual schools may do.

What you need to do:

- Identify the more able pupils in your class (this may not necessarily be in traditionally academic subjects- it could be in drama, art, music or sport). Focus on a child’s individual strengths.
- Ensure that your more able pupils are identify in your planning- refer to the following Teachers’ Standards.
  I. **TS1**: Set high expectations which inspire, motivate and challenge pupils. **TS1b**: set goals that stretch and challenge pupils of all backgrounds, abilities and dispositions.
  II. **TS5**: have a clear understanding of the needs of all pupils, including those with special educational needs; those of high ability; those with English as an additional language; those with disabilities; and be able to use and evaluate distinctive teaching approaches to engage and support them.
- Use high order questioning to challenge the pupils. Encourage them to explain their thinking: ‘What makes you think that?’ ‘What evidence do you have for this?’ ‘Why is this so important?’ (See link below for further examples.)
- Consider the use of ‘Challenge’ booklets.
- Consider appointing ‘champions’ of particular subjects who assist with teaching part of a lesson and help with ‘tutoring’ of other children- although you will need to monitor this carefully.
- Encourage meta-cognition in children- helping them to understand how they learn promotes deeper thinking and understanding.
- Be creative- give the pupils opportunities to become involved in the creation of their learning.
Want to find out more?

- Ofsted’s Chief Inspector of Schools, Sir Michael Wilshaw, talks about the lack of stretching of the more able pupils. He refers to it as ‘too much talent going to waste’.  

- Sutton Trust Report 2012. Despite the fact that this report is now six years old, it contains useful data on how Britain compares to other countries in terms of achievement of the more able pupils, the importance of stretching our most able pupils and recommendations for how our education could support the more able:  

- National Association for Able Children in Education - this is full of interesting definitions and ideas - the ‘blog’ section and FAQ section are particularly useful:  
  [www.nace.co.uk](http://www.nace.co.uk)

- Ideas from a secondary school teacher to raise aspirations in Year 11 students. The ideas could easily be used across all age phases:  
  [www.sec-ed.co.uk/best-practice/strategies-for-stretching-your-most-able-students/](http://www.sec-ed.co.uk/best-practice/strategies-for-stretching-your-most-able-students/)

- Ideas on what it means to challenge the more able and suggestions of how to help them facilitate their own learning:  
  [www.slideshare.net/VitalClare/challenging-the-most-able?next_slideshow=1](http://www.slideshare.net/VitalClare/challenging-the-most-able?next_slideshow=1)

- Written in 2009 this web page is full of information and ideas for stretching the most able, referred to here as ‘Gifted and Talented’:  

- Bloom’s taxonomy - an important tool for teachers to focus on higher order thinking:  

- Ideas for higher order questions on TES:  
  [www.tes.com/teaching-resource/questions-to-promote-higher-order-questioning-6318145](http://www.tes.com/teaching-resource/questions-to-promote-higher-order-questioning-6318145)

Further reading:  
[50 Quick Ways to Stretch and Challenge More-Able Students: Volume 16 (Quick 50 Teaching Series)](http://example.com)

Gershon, Mr Mike