

Official School Website:  
[www.mayvillehighschool.com](http://www.mayvillehighschool.com)

[www.thegrid.org.uk/learning/gifted/parents](http://www.thegrid.org.uk/learning/gifted/parents)  
this is Hertfordshire's site, but relevant and full of information and links

[http://www.qca.org.uk/qca\\_6410.aspx](http://www.qca.org.uk/qca_6410.aspx)  
this is more for teachers, but interesting none the less

[www.nagty.ac.uk](http://www.nagty.ac.uk)  
this is the National Academy for Gifted and Talented Youth

[www.standards.dfes.gov.uk/giftedandtalented](http://www.standards.dfes.gov.uk/giftedandtalented)  
this is part of the Government's Standards Site

Notes:

Credits:  
Mr N Lawrence  
Mr N Turner

## Mayville High School

### Gifted & Talented Pupils: A Parent's Guide



How do we define Gifted & Talented pupils?

How can you help your child?

What do we do to help them?

## What do we mean by able, gifted and talented children?



In schools, various methods are being used to identify pupils as able in particular subjects.

Within the constraints of the school curriculum teachers endeavour to provide these pupils with a more demanding work schedule. This may involve studying topics in greater detail, using a greater number of skills or allowing able children to investigate slightly different areas of a subject from others. The definition 'able' has two strands: 'gifted' and 'talented'. For the purpose of this booklet the term 'able' has been used to encompass both strands. Mayville's Gifted & Talented programme works on the basis of the following distinctions:



**Gifted** is relevant to core academic subjects- Maths, English, Science and ICT, whereas **Talented** is a particular skill in creative/ performing arts and sports. If your child is talented in a particular area please focus on the relevant section of the booklet.

A child who is **gifted** and/or **talented** is one "who achieves, or has the ability to achieve, at a level significantly in advance of the peer group. This may be in all areas of the curriculum or in a limited range" (Eyre, 1999.)

- A **gifted** pupil is one who is in the top 10-15% of the Mayville pupil population who has the capacity for or demonstrates high levels of performance in an academic area. They would normally have a verbal or numerical reasoning score of 125+ in CAT tests carried out at Mayville.
- A **talented** pupil is one who is in the top 10-15% of the pupil population with a specific ability in a non-academic area.

## G&T on the Internet

There are many excellent resources to be found, and here are some that I'd recommend.

[www.thinkingclassroom.co.uk](http://www.thinkingclassroom.co.uk)  
this is Mike Fleetham's website (who has worked with Mayville teachers, parents and pupils), with a monthly Thinking Skills idea, and links to other sites.

[www.iqtest.com](http://www.iqtest.com) to take an IQ test.

[www.freewebs.com/southamptonexplorers/index.htm](http://www.freewebs.com/southamptonexplorers/index.htm)  
the local branch of the National Association for Gifted Children, they organise days out, trips, visits, social events, and help support parents

[www.nagcbrtain.org.uk](http://www.nagcbrtain.org.uk)  
the National Association for Gifted Children

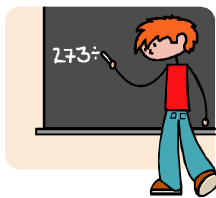
[www.youthinformation.com](http://www.youthinformation.com)  
this is a site full of information on events and support

[www.masterclasses.co.uk](http://www.masterclasses.co.uk)  
this site has details of master classes which are intended to help gifted children succeed

<http://www.thinkingeducation.co.uk/p4c.htm>  
this is a Philosophy For Children resources site, aimed more at teachers, but still excellent for thinking skills

[www2.teachernet.gov.uk/gat](http://www2.teachernet.gov.uk/gat)  
this is the DfES' site, which has resources, advice, support and answers to FAQ

Mayville Parents Web Site:  
[www.mayvilleparents.com/gifted.htm](http://www.mayvilleparents.com/gifted.htm)



University's graphics Department, Highbury College's engineering department, Bristol, Halifax, Brighton, and Ironbridge.

There is an enormous amount of information and learning available in magazines

about technological subjects which is usually presented in a youth-oriented format. There are some interesting TV programmes such as Robot Wars, Scrapheap Challenge, Grand Designs and similar programmes.

There are good CD ROMS available, but be careful to choose those that will interest your child. One of those recommended by the Technology Department is Crocodile Clips, an electronic circuit simulator.

Encourage your child to take part in any design competition based projects, both inside and outside of school- details of which can be found on the Internet.

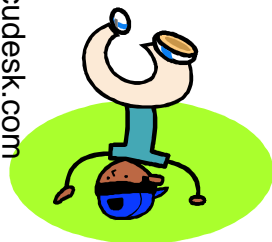
A Final Word...

Clearly, it is important that we get the balance right. Able children need time to relax and unwind. They need the space to pursue friendships, and to interact with others.

Mayville offers a wide range of clubs and after-school activities, some are specifically designed for able pupils, and others are more general. Attending these can be of great benefit to your child both academically and socially.

Remember too, that not everything suggested here will be appropriate. Children have abilities in different areas. The important thing is that they take an interest in something which fulfils and inspires them. It does not matter if it is non-academic - the world needs well-

rounded and unique individuals, not production-line achievers.



Research has shown that 80% of learning goes on outside of school hours. This is not just in formal education, as in time spent on homework.

Rather, children are constantly learning- from the things they see and hear, from the attitudes they are exposed to, and the activities in which they are involved. It is essential, therefore, that parents recognise the important role that they can play in developing their child's potential.

### Helping your able child at home- Creating the Right Environment

#### Support & Encouragement

A supportive and encouraging home background provides the ideal conditions in which young people can develop their abilities. When they have done something worthwhile, recognise that achievement, and praise them for it. When things have not gone as well as planned, help them to see the positive sides to any disappointments and focus on what can be learnt from the experience. Talk about problems, and help them see ways around them.



Children benefit from being exposed to a variety of stimulating experiences. Playing a sport, visiting the theatre, developing a hobby or travelling, all provide stimulation in different ways. Wherever possible, take children to museums, art galleries, educational institutions and other historical places where background learning may be enhanced. Various local groups or young people's organizations offer the possibility of activities and experiences which might not be suitable for your family as a whole to undertake, for example

sporting and outward bound activities. Mayville's Duke of Edinburgh Cadets enjoy a variety of activities, all are welcome to join.

In the home itself, children will benefit from stimulating material, such as books, magazines and other aids to home learning, such as encyclopaedias, charts and collections. Mayville's English department produce recommended reading lists for pupils.

Watch out for interesting documentaries and thought provoking programmes on TV as well- these are a very good way to broaden knowledge and understanding and will provide a talking point for you with your child. The Internet is another powerful tool for learning as it provides accessible and interesting information, as do many CD ROMs.

### Talk Matters

It is important to able children that their parents care about their progress at school and take an interest in their talents and abilities.

Talking to your child is one of the most straightforward ways you can show your interest. Find out what they are learning in lessons at school, and what is enjoyable. Challenge with thought provoking questions about subjects covered. At times allow them to explain to you what has been learnt and is of interest rather than asking questions. Being available to offer a hand if there is a tricky homework question will also reassure of your support and interest. Don't worry if you can't answer the problem yourself, just helping them to solve it is probably more valuable.

Helping your youngsters to set up the computer and taking them for visits to local sites and museums are



If possible, take your youngster to places of worship, for example, Mosques, Gurdwaras, churches and cathedrals. Also the internet has excellent resources such as RE Online, BBC Bitesize, Christian Aid, CAFOD, Oxfam and UNESCO.

### Science

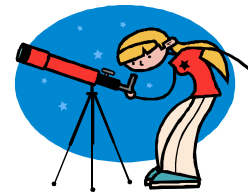
TV- as for Geography, viewing Horizon, Tomorrow's World, nature programmes & other one-off documentaries could

all develop youngsters thinking about science and scientific issues. Sky TV, satellite and cable all have specialist Science channels.

There is an excellent scientific magazine called Catalyst available online.

WH Smith also stock a high powered magazine, Scientific American, which is suitable for KS4 students and will develop awareness of

scientific issues.



There are some excellent scientific encyclopaedia available and an increasing range of user-friendly science books. Additionally there are thousands of Science sites on the Internet – use the subjects studied in class as a guide to what to investigate. The New Scientist web-site (and Active Channel) provides a good starting point.

Visit the Sea Life Centre, Marwell, and Intech at Winchester. In London there is the Science Museum and other museums of science and technology.

### Design Technology

Construction Kits and Toys seem to be less popular these days but LEGO has a new range involving computer control and programming.

Places to visit include the well known London Science Museum, and regional Science and Technology theme centres, such as at Portsmouth



### Physical Education

Encourage participation in local sports clubs. Staff will gladly provide details of these. Playing a sport outside school can maximise your child's potential and help improve social skills.



Encourage your child to watch sport live and on TV to observe what highly skilled sportsmen and women do in certain situations - in terms of technique and strategies. It is particularly useful to watch players who play in the same position as they do in team sports. Coaching books provide this sort of information.

Join in with your child to develop particular skills, and improve hand-eye co-ordination. Throwing, catching, kicking etc. are the most obvious examples.

### Religious Education

Encourage an interest in current affairs, by discussing events in the news and social issues. For example, why do we need such events as Comic Relief or Children in Need? In-depth news programmes and documentary programmes such as Panorama, Channel 4 News and Newsnight promote discussion. Films such as The Da Vinci Code, and the GOD Channel on TV are also of relevance and interest.



Encourage reading. Books about famous people with a religious background, for example, Martin Luther King, Bishop Desmond Tutu, Nelson Mandela, Mahatma Gandhi and Mother Theresa are a good stimulus. Similarly, books where the story is set in a different culture/religion give an insight into people's religious experience and attitudes.

also ideal opportunities to talk to them about what they are interested in.

Be creative in your interest as you talk to your children, and ask about the school day. You could get an idea from the homework diary or from exercise books of the areas being studied in different subjects and ask generally what they think of this or that issue. If you see that they have been studying the destruction of the Brazilian rain forest, and



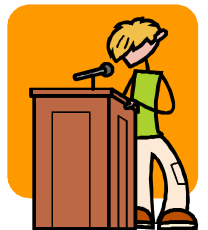
then ask them what they think of it, when it is next on the news. Talk to them about possible solutions to Iraq. On a national scale, consider the issues involved in providing enough shelter for the homeless. Ethical questions should not be avoided. Able children are often keenly interested in

these issues. Draw their attention to interesting or relevant television documentaries. Help able children to become critical viewers and readers by discussing the mass media and literature. Ask for their opinions on moral issues and dilemmas they have discussed in school, and encourage them to evaluate both sides of an argument.

## **Supporting and developing your child's abilities**

### **Developing language skills**

There can be no doubt that being able to communicate in your own language is a vitally important skill. Whether your child is already a mature reader and excellent communicator, or has yet to develop strong language skills, the following ideas can all be used to develop awareness and interest in the language we use. Many of these ideas also develop thinking skills and logical reasoning.



- Encourage children to play with words, even in such common settings as a car ride or shopping trip. This can include rhyming, opposites and puns. Make words from car number plates or play games with place names, especially using them as anagrams. Make it a fun and enjoyable pastime by making these games humorous.



- Provide a variety of books, magazines puzzles, and games to promote use of the imagination, logical thinking, drawing inferences and making predictions. Memory games should not be overlooked either.
- Emphasise the importance of speaking clearly and discussing ideas and opinions. Encourage an interest in the news and current affairs- buy a daily newspaper which you know your child will feel confident reading, for example First News is a weekly children's newspaper and is available in school.
- Continue reading to your children. Interesting short stories which they will find amusing are a good start, or stories about topics you know they are interested in.

*Suggested activities include:*

Play scrabble using only words around a theme (for example, 'farming', 'Christmas', 'weather'). Children must explain why they have selected the words they put on the board. Solve crossword puzzles or anagrams and construct your own. Practise with your child condensing a film, book or TV programme into 4 sentences or even 4 words.

Encourage your son or daughter to take part in the school trips and the exchange. The experience of visiting France or Spain and seeing life in a foreign country is all excellent enrichment of what goes on in the classroom. We also take part in the annual St. Vincent's Languages competition for GCSE students, so your child should be central to the teams competing.



Listen to a foreign radio station, buy a foreign newspaper and explore it with your child, listen to foreign music, create a dish from a foreign country using products similar to the native recipes. Visit the French Market at Gunwharf Quays, and try some different food, such as certain cheeses or meats.



Encourage use of the BBC Education Web Site - it has very good activities in French & Spanish. We have a subscriptions to [www.linguascope.com](http://www.linguascope.com), and [www.languageskills.co.uk](http://www.languageskills.co.uk), which are in both French and Spanish. There is also a wide range of language CD ROMs available. If you would like to get an email pen friend, visit [www.momes.net](http://www.momes.net).

There are after-school sessions on Tuesdays and Thursdays for specific help and advice for French and Spanish. We are also running a beginner's course in Mandarin, every Tuesday after school. This is especially interesting due to the much wider differences with English, as compared to European languages.

If you speak any of the language yourself, listen to your child speaking and test them on the vocabulary they have learnt that week.

Information & Communication Technology

Wider reading: Take an interest in computing magazines - be aware of technological changes. Look at the Tomorrow's World magazine, and sci-fi novels.  
Watch TV programmes and documentaries which show the effect technology has on our lives.



Visit the Science Museum in London, theme parks (with an eye to looking at their control systems) and Bletchley Park Museum (which celebrates the achievements of the Second World War code breakers, and the world's first computer). Go on the Key Stage 4 trip to Euro Disney for the seminars on Business Communication Studies/ICT.

On the computer, make more use of advanced features of the software such as macros. Try to use computers for modelling. Become familiar with presentation systems such as PowerPoint.

Create a database of your music collection.

Create a spreadsheet to show household spending.

Make use of the Internet in collaborative tasks, but be aware of internet safety issues, don't put yourself at risk.

Get involved in some wider IT activity - video editing, audio recording & editing, automated lighting systems, remote logging, weather forecasting, or astronomy.



Modern Foreign Languages

Take the opportunity of going to France or Spain whenever possible, and encourage your child to use their language skills. We run regular trips to France and Spain, make sure your child takes part.

**Developing creative thinking and analytical abilities**

The ability to think is an essential skill if a person is to adapt to the constant changes of life. It has many different



aspects: analysing and critically evaluating factual information, recognising patterns and linking together ideas are just a few of these. Once learnt this is a tool for life which can be used in all situations, and which forms a basis for many careers All subjects at school focus on developing this skill, but it is not subject specific. Encourage your child to participate in

different after-school activities, such as Youth Speaks and Debate Club

Help able children to become critical viewers and readers by discussing the mass media and literature.

*Suggested activities include:*

Discuss commercials for obvious and hidden messages. Pick a household item and invent 10 new uses for it, apart from the obvious. Design the perfect broom, vacuum cleaner or sink. Invent a new sport with logical rules, uniforms and equipment. Discuss a favourite TV programme and plan 2 new plots and sub plots for the characters.

**Developing musical abilities**

There are many different ways in which music can be beneficial. Playing an instrument develops hand/eye coordination, aural awareness and self-expression. In addition musical activities are also unusual in stimulating left and right hemispheres of the brain. This is thought to improve thinking abilities.



It has also been suggested that simply listening to music can enhance intellectual performance. Even without these advantages, listening to a wide range of music provides another route to understanding different cultures and historical periods.

*Suggested activities include:*

Learning an instrument - borrow, rent or buy one. Listening to different kinds of music - jazz, calypso, swing, as well as classical and pop. Composing music, on your own or with a group of friends.



**Developing visual and spatial awareness**

Get your child to redesign his or her bedroom to accommodate hobbies and interests. Allow suggestions for architectural or structural changes on paper. (You do not

- have to carry out the proposed changes!)
- Create and illustrate a cartoon strip featuring original animated characters.
- Learn a new craft.
- Play ball games.
- Design and produce your own web site.



**Developing mathematical and logical abilities**

Encourage quick mental calculation - e.g. playing darts, dice games and estimation of bills. Many weekend newspapers have puzzle pages. Some of these are excellent for developing logical reasoning and numeracy skills.

Many games such as Othello, Backgammon, Cluedo, Chess and Connect 4 encourage logical thought.



to look out museums in places you visit and if they seem interesting take a longer look.

There is the D-Day Museum, Royal Marines Museum in Southsea, the Historic Dockyard, the Portsmouth City Museum, a tank and weapons museum near Winchester, and the Imperial War Museum in London has excellent displays and reconstructed trench and Blitz experience.

There is an excellent Museum of the Native Americans at Bath and the Science Museum in London has a whole floor on the history of medicine.

Books are an obvious way to further an interest in History, and many are within the grasp of able children, Look for historical novels, children's accounts of life in war-torn countries - for example, Anne Frank's diary, and others which provide information on life in the past, to serve as a help in research .

The Internet has a wealth of historical information, of varying quality. There are several excellent sites on subjects such as the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> World Wars and the American West in the 19th Century. Television is an excellent resource, and there programmes on other topics other than the Nazis: Time Team, Dr Who, The Tudors, Rome, Robin Hood, Blackadder, the Discovery Channel, The History channel, Primeval, and Codex. There are also many historical films but, as with TV, be sure to check the details before believing them to be true!

Other things you could do as a family include inviting an elderly member of the family to discuss old times and life 50 years ago. Design a family crest or flag depicting family history. Prepare a motto to accompany the crest. Keep a diary of family history and make each entry different, such as a poem, slogan, an illustration or song lyrics.



Geography

TV is an excellent source of information to enhance youngsters' understanding of Geography. You should watch programmes such as: Coast, Planet Earth, Ray Mears, Tribe, Location/Relocation, A Place In The Sun, Wildlife on One, Horizon, the News, Wildlife SOS, Country File, Newsround, and the Really Wild Show. On ITV, watch the Savage Earth, Countryways, Bill Bryson's Notes from a Small Island and on C4 Tracks can be useful. If you have extra channels, the National Geographic Channel and Discovery are excellent,



Magazines to look at include the BBC Wildlife Magazine and National Geographic.

There are so many places to visit which will help develop understanding in Geography. Locally visit the Isle of Wight, the Queen Elizabeth Country Park, the South Downs, the New Forest. After a family holiday complete a holiday diary, for example of the high points and places visited. When on holiday look for geographical features and include these in a holiday diary, describing the high points, the places visited and the activities undertaken.

History

Visit local sites such as castles and cathedrals to allow your child to enrich their study of the Remove curriculum.



In Lower 4 visit civil war battle sites, and centres of the early Industrial Revolution, like Ironbridge, the Black Country Museum in Dudley and Railway Museums. Try

Use various Internet websites such as [www.q20.net](http://www.q20.net), [www.bbc.co.uk](http://www.bbc.co.uk), <http://puzzling.caret.cam.ac.uk>, <http://www.woodlands-junior.kent.sch.uk>.

**Developing an awareness of the natural**



Devise a weather station for recording conditions and predictions.  
 Plan novel ways of conserving energy and water based on your findings.  
 Chart the routine of animals in your household.  
 Find out about the behaviour patterns of wild animals and compare them to those of your pets.  
 Star gaze and investigate astronomy.  
 Learn about perennial and annual plants and plan a timetable for flowering.  
 Try growing your own food, use Portsmouth City Council's website for help: <http://www.growinggrub.co.uk/>  
 Try out new cooking techniques and food products at home. Try producing a healthy meal, many magazines have good healthy recipes, including the BBC Good Food

**Some Subject-specific: Advice**

If you would like some advice from subject teachers as to how to develop your youngsters' interest in particular subjects, then read on. Do not feel that you have to do all of the things suggested, but some of them may appeal and seem right for your child and your family.

### Art

Involve your child in design decisions around the home - particularly their own rooms. Get them to think which designs work, and which do not, and to identify why this might be.



There are many TV programmes based on design themes: Smart, Art Attack, Changing Rooms, Grand Designs, Restoration, The Culture Show and the Sky Arts channel. In addition, there are often many programmes on the lives, ideas, and techniques of the great artists.

Books and CD-ROMs can provide a wealth of information on specific artists and art movements. Taschen publish some excellent books at a reasonable price.

Encourage your children to enter art competitions and display their work.

Visit art galleries locally and nationally. Trips to galleries and craft shops can be an enlightening part of a foreign holiday too.

### Business Studies

The Mail on Sunday has probably the most accessible Money section to help able pupils with this subject.

TV- students should watch the News, Working Lunch, the Money Programme, The Apprentice, Dragon's Den, Beat The Boss and any other business style programmes.

Encourage general discussion in the family about the EU, trade unions, the work environment etc. to widen understanding.

Take your child to work with you in their holidays. Explain the jobs you do and the company you work for.



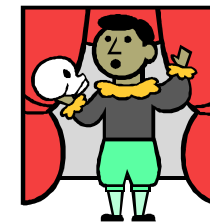
### Drama

Encourage critical viewing of films and TV dramas. Discuss the plot, where it worked and why and whether or not the characters were believable. If possible, take them to see live theatre productions and begin to evaluate the use of lighting, sound, costume and special effects.

Encourage your child to get involved in live drama. School productions provide an excellent starting point; these include regular events such as Rock Challenge and the Creative Arts competition.

General reading is important, especially of fiction: good narrative helps give ideas for their own improvised drama.

Ask your child to observe body language, mannerisms, accent and posture in people they meet, and discuss how people relate to one another.



### English

Go to the cinema or theatre, and discuss the productions you see. Read reviews of productions in the press.

When classic literature is adapted for TV, encourage your child to read the original book, discuss what genre the novel is, and look into the author's biography.

Encourage participation in writing or speaking competitions.

Visit sites related to Portsmouth's rich literary heritage – Arthur Conan Doyle, Charles Dickens, Rudyard Kipling,

Neville Shute. And visit places of interest in Hampshire, such as- Gilbert White's house in Selborne, Jane Austen's house in Chawton, Thomas Hardy's cottage near Dorchester or a little further a field- Stratford, for example.

