

More Able Students Policy

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Circulation: This policy has been adopted by the governors and is available to parents on request. It is addressed to all members of staff and volunteers and applies wherever they are working with children. The term “staff” includes college employees, parents, Governors, volunteers and workers employed by contractors.

‘Parents’ refers to parents, guardians and carers.

This document is a statement of the aims, principles and strategies for addressing the needs of the able and very able students.

General Rationale/Introduction.

We recognise that all students are individuals with their own strengths and weaknesses, gifts and talents. Within this range of individuality there are students who are more able intellectually than others, and students who are particularly talented in certain specific areas of ability. We consider that every student, irrespective of ability, special needs, ethnicity and social circumstances, has the right to be included in a broad, balanced and relevant curriculum.

Definitions

Each student is unique and to attempt a single definition is to generalise too widely. The term 'gifted and talented' in our college refers to the top 5% of the ability range in any of the following areas;

- general intellectual ability
- specific aptitude in one or more subjects
- creative or performing arts
- leadership qualities
- advanced social skills

Who are the 'more able' students?

The term 'more able' applies to students who show exceptional potential in academic subjects, or it applies to students who show exceptional potential in subjects such as sport, music, art or in any other creative subject.

What characteristics do 'more able' students display?

They can typically:

- think quickly
- reason well
- understand complex instructions
- grasp new concepts easily; remember and apply them
- become absorbed in tasks
- show invention and imagination
- ask searching questions
- make perceptive original comments
- demonstrate persistence and perfectionism

Additionally, more able young people may welcome problem solving and complex tasks. They exhibit a desire to move beyond the obvious and be inventive. It is easy to confuse 'gifted' with 'knowledgeable'. Alternatively, they are likely to exhibit unusual absorption and focus in a specific area of the curriculum e.g. music, arts, sport.

It is worth remembering that more able students can be:

- Good all-rounders
- High achievers in one area
- Of high ability but with low motivation
- Of good verbal ability but with poor writing skills
- Very able but with a short attention span
- Very able with poor social skills
- Keen to disguise their abilities

(This can be referred to as “Dual Exceptionality” so may have barriers to learning such as Asperger’s Syndrome, Dyslexia or physical disability).

Identification Procedures:

We identify these students so that we can provide effectively for them, and so that teachers can plan appropriate work and stimuli for them.

There is no single measurement with which to identify able, very able and exceptionally able students due to individuality. We use a combination of the following sources of information:

- Teacher observations and assessment leading to nomination. (Qualitative)
- Testing, such as in-house tests, standardised tests and progress made. (Quantitative)
- Students’ profiles using examples of outstanding work.
- Collation of evidence (i.e. individual student’s work), and overall attainment.
- Background knowledge from parents and past teachers and students themselves during transition period.

Aims of More Able Identification:

Having identified our able and very able students we aim to provide:

- Entitlement to appropriate education for each individual.
- Provision that provides the opportunity to work at higher cognitive levels.
- Provision that gives individuals the opportunity to develop specific skills or talents.
- The opportunity to experience a broader, richer curriculum.
- Support and care for the whole student, both socially and intellectually.

The following strategies are applied as appropriate:

(Provision/Strategies - Again this depends on the individual learning needs of the student).

In-class strategies include:

- An enriched, stimulating and relevant curriculum.
- Regular re-enforcement of high expectations e.g. a ‘challenge wall’.
- Independent and collaborative learning activities.
- Upward differentiation/extension in schemes of work, including differentiated homework.

- Teaching higher-level thinking skills in a subject context e.g. problem solving, decision making, lateral thinking, meta-cognition.
- Asking higher-order questions which encourage investigation and enquiry.
- Setting clear and challenging targets.
- Pupil self-assessment and the experience of set-backs to develop resilience.
- Identify and address under-achievement.

Out-of-class activities – we provide a variety of enrichment opportunities which include:

- A wide range of extra-curricular activities to broaden learning experiences.
- Differentiation embedded into Schemes of Work and lesson plans such as tasks that require higher order thinking skills.
- Enabling a student to study aspects of topics that they may not normally have time in the curriculum to study.
- Opportunities for artistic, musical, dramatic and sporting development
- Subject specific enrichment experiences e.g. Lectures, EPQ, DLD Diploma
- Competitions in-house e.g. art, creative writing, programming for computer science, maths challenge, science challenge.
- Encouragement of creative and independent interests where appropriate.
- Partnerships with other schools/institutions/organisations such as workshop events, holiday activity camps, and local or national schemes and competitions.

Responsibilities

The More Able Student Co-ordinator is responsible for:

- Helping to identify students who are more able by providing guidance for teachers.
- Monitoring progress and checking appropriate support and guidance is provided.
- Liaising with teachers to support provision for identified students
- Ensuring the Course Coordinator/Subject Leader/ Head of Faculty develops appropriate stimulating resources to meet the needs of these individuals.
- Sourcing extra- curricular activities appropriate to the subject area and needs of the students in collaboration with faculty heads and subject leaders.
- Supply information to help parents cope with the needs and support required by their child.
- Keep up to date with information and training required to deliver the most relevant support and guidance to more able students.

Success Criteria

The success is measured by qualitative and quantitative evidence of each individual pupil's progress and development of the More Able register and includes:

- Improved attainment in areas where they are Able, Gifted and Talented.
- Increase in active involvement by pupils in their own assessment of their progress and target setting
- Increased higher level questions being asked by the pupils
- Increased levels of independent learning – including risk-taking in learning
- Increased confidence and improved attitudes to learning

Related documentation:

More Able subject plan

SEND Policy

Academic English Policy (EAL)