
MOST ABLE STUDENTS

PREFACE

Chiltern Hills Academy is a learning environment at the heart of its community. We encourage every person in our community to:

Create, Aspire and Excel to 'Live life in all its fullness' (John 10:10)

We achieve this through our dedication to the seven Christian values of love, hope, self-discipline, compassion, forgiveness, respect and honesty.

We are a community in which staff, students and parents work collaboratively to develop a learning environment and organisation which is spiritual, safe, innovative, creative and exciting. All members of the Academy are motivated and inspired by the vision to give their best and to play a full part in the life of the school and in their own developing lives.

The Governors at Chiltern Hills Academy are committed to achieving the vision and values. They oversee and monitor this policy to ensure that this is being achieved.

1. RATIONALE AND AIMS

At the Chiltern Hills Academy we aim to provide a demanding and liberal curriculum delivered by staff that have high expectations of and model excellence for students. We are proud of the Academy's distinct and inclusive ethos.

Very able students are just as worthy of attention as others and are equally entitled to have their needs recognised, supported and challenged. We must reduce under achievement and nurture and develop talent. This talent may be latent and undetected therefore it is essential we are proactive. The Academy aims to provide equality of opportunity for all students to be inspired, motivated and enthused by an innovative curriculum that offers both enhancement and enrichment. Students are encouraged to be both positive and proud of their abilities and to feel valued and supported by all staff. The Academy aims to provide the opportunities and resources to ensure this occurs

2. DEFINITIONS

There is no typical student and therefore no typical very able student. Able students, like all students, show huge variations in personality, attitude, behaviour, (and under-achievement). It is helpful for staff, governors and parents to have a common understanding of the terminology used. The most able students may be referred to as: most able, highly able, exceptionally able, CHALLENGERS or high achievers.

Very able students may show some but not necessarily all of the following characteristics:

- Achieve or have potential ability in a wide range of contexts
- Demonstrate specific academic aptitudes or affinity for any curriculum area, subject, or aspect
- Challenge assumptions about ways of doing things and ask challenging questions
- Are outstanding leaders or team members
- May show evidence of high attainment across a wide range of subjects

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- Be underachieving, their potential masked by other factors, we may not appreciate or recognise (including disruptive behaviour)
- Have both outstanding abilities and special needs.

It is important for all school communities to acknowledge that very able students are to be found in all cultural groups, in all economic groups and across all areas of human endeavour. Criteria are overt and if parents and students wish to discuss identification with staff at the Academy, they are encouraged to do so.

3. IDENTIFICATION

Most able students are recognised through a regularly reviewed list. The DfE defines the G&T students as those at the very top of every school population – top 5% (2018)

The Academy's range of identification criteria are:

- We use varied sources of data on prior attainment and potential, including KS2 and CATS data
- Individual teachers' professional judgements, based on observation and assessment
- Subject specific characteristics for helping to identify most able students are devised by DfE and detailed in Departmental Handbooks
- Students' own self perception.

4. THE LEARNING CULTURE AT THE ACADEMY SUPPORTS MOST ABLE STUDENTS THROUGH:

- The promotion of independence and autonomy, supporting learners in using their initiative and allowing for risk taking
- Ensuring students are able to make links between one context and another without prompting
- Encouraging the use of a variety of resources, ideas, choice, methods of assessment and tasks, including ICT
- Involving learners in working in a range of settings / contexts (including seating plans) in / beyond school
- Engaging learners in reflecting on the process of how they learn and factors in making progress (metacognition)
- Allowing learners opportunities to think creatively, divergently, hypothesise about futures, use meta-cognition to challenge e.g. what other ways could we have done...? or how do we memorise?
- Encouraging independent / challenging learning
- Promoting skills in students for them to judge best/excellent work in a subject
- Providing effective formative and summative personalised feedback for all learners to support the identification and motivation of G&T students
- Providing extension at higher levels which challenges higher level thinking/critical thinking and are not repetitive
- Instilling a culture of questioning and digging deeper e.g. 'compare/contrast/predict/make judgement on' (not just 'How? What? When? Why?' of Bloom's taxonomy)

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- Providing opportunities for learners to take the lead, learn independently work on projects make own choices.

5. ORGANISATIONAL ISSUES

The pace and differentiation of lessons by task and by level are critical to enrichment. These challenge and use a variety of teaching and learning styles in order to increase motivation, inspiration and enthusiasm. Greater flexibility and creativity in the curriculum should enable all to succeed.

Role of class teacher:

- Differentiate specifically for the most able in lesson planning and homework.
- Show awareness of characteristics of most able students to aid identification within subject area.
- Know which students in each class have been identified as most able.
- Provide a range of teaching and learning strategies which extend and challenge (e.g. critical thinking, open-ended, problem solving).
- Target command words which extend very able using, e.g. Bloom's taxonomy (see, for example, Socratic Questioning).
- Set up activities with different 'entry levels' and elements of choice, ensure very able target higher level entry points.
- Exploit media and ICT to extend very able students.

Role of person responsible for most able students:

- Share policy and practice with staff and governors
- Attend training sessions
- Report to governors and liaise with governor attached to the most able
- Inform and communicate with new staff and ICT students
- Co-ordinate data on most able students for identification with and by all staff
- Initiate department reviews of data, processes and procedures
- Co-ordinate the Academy's involvement in any local summer school and other Higher Education Projects
- Raise department and whole school awareness of best practice inside and outside school
- Monitor learning centre for resources
- Liaise with Academy Year Leaders re transfer/transition and learning and attainment

Role of Form Tutor:

- Tutors are required to liaise so that all relevant subject teachers are aware of students' abilities that may not be brought to light in individual subject areas.

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Role of Subject Leaders:

- Raise department awareness of best practice inside and outside school
- Ensure department statement on policy and practice is in department handbook and monitor its application
- Ensure department policy and practice is reflected in schemes of work and appears on agenda regularly
- Contribute to effective criteria and review department record of most able students in each year group annually
- Monitor effective differentiation regardless of grouping policy, of extension and enrichment activities
- Monitor quality of enhancement lessons which lie within school day
- Monitor that different extension homework's are set and ensure schemes of work specify extension work
- Ensure ICT mentors and staff working with trainees implement policy in relation to classes with whom they work.

Role of Academic Year Leader:

- Monitor with Academic Tutors achievement and attainment of students identified as most able via range of information
- Celebrate work of all students and identify, as far as possible potential to develop gifts and talents
- Encourage student's participation and promote opportunities for leadership and communication skills.

Role of Senior Management:

- Ensure triennial review focus on department provision for most able
- Ensure data availability (wide range) for identification, dissemination, planning and monitor effective use
- Monitor and review policy across whole school and departments
- Ensure identification and provision is appropriate
- Monitor provisions through department line management meetings and team leaders meetings
- Encourage and promote CPD linked with the most able to raise awareness and skills of all staff within resources available.

Role of Governors:

- Monitor how the school ethos meets the needs of most able learners in the context of high achievement
- Support the Academy in the management and monitoring of policy and contribute to review
- Raise most able issues through their attachment to departments.

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7. MONITORING AND EVALUATION

Any monitoring or evaluation, in terms of integrity of the policy and its implementation and the effectiveness of its provision, must consider students' workloads and possible effects on motivation/self-esteem.

8. RESOURCES

In addition to departmental resources, subject teams should consider bids for development of more able resources. Lead Teachers will deliver regular training sessions and will recommend resources to departments.

MONITORING, EVALUATION AND REVIEW

This policy will be reviewed when there are changes in the law or at least every two years, to assess implementation and effectiveness.

This policy will be promoted and implemented throughout the Academy.