



Able Gifted and Talented Policy
This policy applies to the whole school

This policy is publicly available on the school's website and on request; a copy (which can be made available in large print or other accessible format if required) may be obtained from the School Office. All employees should read this policy in conjunction with our Curriculum Teaching and Learning Policy.

Legal Status:

This policy is integral to the Regulatory Requirements, Part 1 Quality of Education Provided (curriculum) (teaching) of the Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2014 in force from 5th January 2015. In our school the term 'staff', in the context of safeguarding, is inclusive of all staff and is also inclusive of students on placement, contractors, agency staff, volunteers, directors and proprietor.

Related Documents:

- Curriculum, Teaching and Learning policy
- Marking policy
- Homework policy

Monitoring and Review:

This policy will be subject to continuous monitoring, refinement and audit by the Principal who is supported in this process by:

- The Head of Education is responsible for overseeing the organisation of the curriculum and appropriate planning and delivery of lessons appropriate to the needs of Gifted and Talented students (ensuring that all classes are taught the requirements of the courses and that all lessons have appropriate learning objectives);
- Subject Leaders who observe the way their subject/s is/are taught throughout the school. They review long-term and medium-term planning, and ensure that appropriate teaching strategies are used.
- It is intended that the review and development of the curriculum will support enthusiastic and inspirational teaching. The process of review plays a key role in the continuing professional development of the teaching staff at Ashwicke Hall School.

The Principal undertakes a formal annual review of this policy for the purpose of monitoring and of the efficiency with which the related duties have been discharged, by no later than one year from the date shown below, or earlier if significant changes to the systems and arrangements take place, or if legislation, regulatory requirements or best practice guidelines so require.

Signed:

Date reviewed: November 2018
Next scheduled review: November 2019

Amanda Woods
Principal

Gifted and Talented Students at Ashwicke Hall School

Our students at Ashwicke Hall School are highly academically abled young people. They have been assessed as capable of achieving grades of A or A* at various academic levels. However some students may show abilities beyond this in one or more areas. In this way **Ashwicke Hall School** caters for students that **meet the following descriptions:**

- **Gifted:** students who have a broad range of achievement at a level well above average, typically in the more academic subjects;
- **Talented:** students who excel in one or more specific fields, typically those that call for performance skills, such as sport or music, but who do not necessarily perform at a high level across all areas of learning.

Ashwicke Hall School aims to identify and provide for those students ‘who either demonstrate exceptionally high-level performance, whether across a range of endeavours or in a limited field, or those whose potential for excellence has not yet been recognised by either tests or experts.’¹

In catering for students of these descriptions, Ashwicke Hall School does not explicitly use the labels ‘Gifted’ and ‘Talented’. Ashwicke Hall School fully acknowledges that those students with particular abilities, attainment, and/or dedication to a subject must be stretched and challenged. Ashwicke Hall School operates in this manner in order to ensure that there is no exclusion of ‘the contribution of motivation, application and dedication’ within our identification process, alongside measures of attainment.² Additionally the School seeks to ensure that no hierarchy can develop between attributes – e.g. between ‘gifts’ and ‘talents’. Finally, we believe that all students are likely to find the learning environment more motivational if it avoids permanent labelling and instead is perceived as being more flexible and attainable through identifying behaviour (‘excellence’) rather than innate attribute (e.g. ‘giftedness’). Excellence is a fundamental value of Ashwicke Hall School.

While we recognise and cater for these particular categories of students in our school, at the same time, we respect the right of all students, irrespective of differences in ability, to access various areas of learning, both for their self-fulfilment, and for their eventual development into active and responsible adults. We value the individuality of all our students and ensure that our teaching and learning takes into account the needs of all the students. We are committed to giving all our students every opportunity to achieve the highest of standards. We believe that by ensuring appropriate provision for gifted and talented students, we will ensure the highest quality of education for all Ashwicke Hall School students.

Mission Statement

Ashwicke Hall School aims to develop independent learners who exercise curiosity and creativity in all areas of their endeavours.

We recognise the risk of our most able, keenest and highest-performing students becoming ‘dependent’ rather than ‘independent’ learners, and the importance of providing a safe, encouraging environment in this way we will equip them for the challenges of higher education and their future careers, which will require resilience and the ability to adapt and cope in new environments.

Ashwicke Hall School recognises that students who are gifted and talented may fall within one or more of the following categories. Through personalised provision within lessons, appropriate enrichment activities, and individual support from individual teachers we aim to cater for all of the following:

- Broadly gifted - excel in all they do and enjoy that success; easy to identify;
- Talented - possess a particular, if not striking, ability in one area, e.g. Maths or Music; relatively easy to identify

¹ Freeman, pub. Ofsted, *Educating the very able*, 1998

- as they tend to be academically able and successful;
- Creatively gifted - deep thinkers who may be unpopular with peers due to a perceived lack of social skills; may be incorrectly identified as disruptive;
 - Concealed gifted - under-achieving students who do not want to be different from their peers so they may merge into their peer group; often such students are incorrectly identified as underachievers or simply less able.

Aims of our Gifted and Talented Provision at the School

- Personal: To celebrate every individual by ensuring that Students are stretched and challenged so that they reach their full educational potential. As with effective Additional Needs provision, the needs of Gifted and Talented Students must be catered for individually and specifically, and not just with a ‘broad-brush’ approach.²
- Precise: Clear School-wide process of identification and documentation of gifted and talented students, and effective provision across subjects.
- Inclusive: Our gifted and talented provision includes and develops different types of subject areas, for identifying excellence, includes non-invitation events that are open to all, and believes that all students should aspire to excellence.
- Diverse: The School acknowledges the many different aspects, angles and manifestations of gifted and talented students, and that no two students are the same.
- Fluid: The School recognises that excellence manifests at different times, whilst in some cases students may plateau or their patterns of talents may change, and that there is a need for regular assessment and re-identification based on the criteria.
- Broad: We aim to cater for a wide range of different interests, and of ultimate career areas, with variety of outcome a key ambition. We do not seek to produce one ‘type’ of student, or to propel all students into particular subject or career areas.

Identification of Excellent students

The identification process for gifted and talented students is designed to be flexible and responsive, in accordance with the body of educational research that suggests high-level attainment patterns and student enthusiasm can change over time, and may manifest unexpectedly at any stage in a student’s academic growth.³ With this in mind, identification will occur on a sixth-monthly cycle, with no preference given to students who have or have not previously been identified. In this way we recognise that, with exposure and encouragement, some students may begin to demonstrate excellence that have not done so before. This represents successful gifted and talented provision, and shows Ashwicke Hall School’s commitment to a ‘mastery’-based framework of provision for Gifted and Talented-type students where students are given the opportunity to demonstrate and develop qualities of excellence, rather than a ‘mystery’-based framework where students are designated as having innate abilities of an enduring and immutable nature.⁴

In early December (after the first term) and in early April (after the second term) teachers along with the Head of Education will be asked to arrange a specific department meeting. At this meeting the department will use their subject criteria to nominate 1-2 students per class whom they believe, based on performance in their subject, deserve to be considered as gifted and talented. The gifted and talented criteria for each subject are created by the Head of Education, Principal and Regional Director. These criteria include (but are not restricted to):

- Subject attainment (e.g. in tests, assessments, etc.)
- Subject curiosity/enthusiasm

² Bailey R, Pearce G, Winstanley C, Sutherland M, Smith C, Stack N, Dickenson M (2008) A systematic review of interventions aimed at improving the educational achievement of students identified as gifted and talented. Technical report. In: Research Evidence in Education Library. London: GIFTED AND TALENTEDI-Centre, Social Science Research Unit, Institute of Education, University of London

³ Goodhew, *Meeting the needs of Gifted and Talented Students*, 2009, pp. 9; Hymer, *Gifted & Talented Pocketbook*, 2009, pp. 8

⁴ Mystery vs. mastery approach: Hymer, *Gifted and Talented Pocketbook*, 2009, pp. 16-19; the concept of excellent being achieved through consistent practice is predominant in many current works spanning Science, Business and Education, such as Syed’s *Bounce*, and can be traced back to Ericsson, *The role of deliberate practice in the acquisition of expert performance*, 1993.

- Creative expression/imagination within a subject area
- Demonstration of wider 'life skills' (e.g. leadership, problem-solving, etc.) within a subject area

A full list of the generic and subject identification criteria can be seen in our related documents.

Ashwicke Hall School seeks to ensure direct input in identification from teachers as excellent will manifest in different forms across subjects, and those best equipped to recognise it are subject experts.⁵

The Head of Education will collate these lists, and compare teacher nominations with performance in aptitude tests. Those students whose score is above A- in the year group will be noted, and where such a student has at least one subject nomination they will be considered as Gifted and Talented. In this way Ashwicke Hall School ensures that both quantitative attainment and qualities demonstrated within the classroom are taken into account in identification, ensuring that those populations of students that could be described as 'Gifted' or 'Talented' are identified and provided for.

The Head of Education will create two G&T lists, which will be available to all teaching staff on the school network: those who have three or more subject nominations, or a high aptitude test score, and at least two subject nominations, who will be on the 'Core' list of Gifted and Talented Students. This list will cater for those that fit the description of a 'Gifted' child as included above. The second list is the 'Specialist' list, which includes those students who have received one or two subject nominations. This would include those with high aptitude for one particular academic subject, or who have shown aptitude in Drama, Sport, and Music etc. In this way the 'Specialist' list will cater for those that fit the description of a 'Talented' student as included above.

In addition these lists may contain students whose enthusiasm, diligence and application are such that they are performing above expectation in a subject, and whose commitment to the subject and to undertaking additional learning renders them suitable for inclusion within the talented list.

Where dual exceptionality exists, i.e. a student is listed both as Gifted and Talented and as having Additional Needs, the Head of Education will discuss the student with the Additional Needs Coordinator in order to ascertain what limitations or additional requirements might exist for challenge work, and to ensure that both members of staff are fully aware of the student's needs and interests.

Additional support for Gifted and Talented students

Whilst Gifted and Talented Students will have access to all usual forms of support on offer at Ashwicke Hall School whenever they are struggling, sometimes the problems encountered by a gifted and talented student may relate directly to their abilities, and therefore may require discussion with their teacher, or Additional Needs Coordinator. In these instances a personalised plan will be put in place to assist the student, and may include regular mentoring meetings with the relevant member of staff; communication with parents; close monitoring of student work and workload; etc.

Like many other students, gifted and talented students can often fail to achieve their potential and may be unable to cope with their abilities and can suffer from many difficulties. These difficulties are typically:

- low confidence and self-esteem;
- high degree of frustration and self-blame;
- poor study skills;
- social isolation and a belief that they are misunderstood and different to their peers;
- problems with concentration;
- living in own 'private' world.

Gifted and Talented students, like all students having additional education needs, have their own unique cluster of characteristics. The psychological imprints that learning abilities may have caused will effect individuals in different ways. Often dyspraxic able students feel greater levels of social threat for example than dyslexic students. ADHD able students typically will be less emotionally resilient than others. It is difficult to make generalised statements about features of the failing able child but there is recognition of certain characteristics which are considered in regard to the management of additional needs.

- **Coping Strategies.** Able students with additional needs do not necessarily have heightened emotional resources. Often the opposite is the case. These students may have suffered from inaccurate assumptions based on coping expectations which fall short of requirement. Sometimes such students are skilled at masking difficulties.
- **Parental Expectation.** No-one would assume for example a gifted musician need be similarly gifted in say English, chess or Drama. Often able students are expected to achieve a high level in all areas despite evidence that seldom is ability expressed uniformly across the board. Realistic expectations need to reflect the best interests of the child.
- **Developed Verbal Reasoning.** Good language resources can increase the ability to grasp complex concepts. Such skills can also arm a child to further develop avoidance and manipulative strategies. To avoid exposure and any resulting ill effect, able students may use language forcefully to protect self-esteem. In some cases a lack of tolerance is proportional to the command of verbal reasoning.
- **Social Difficulties.** Able students, like all students generally, require recognition for their successes. If they experience an overdose of failure heightened by untoward discrepancy in performance given expectation, social problems may be a further by-product of such experiences.
- **Agenda Search.** Able students who rely on determining factors that give reasoning an edge, may assume answers are too accessible to justify the challenge. They may search for hidden possibilities and thus steer an inaccurate course. The resulting wrong answer may cause acute embarrassment.
- **More Stretching/Challenge** Sometimes able students with Additional abilities and learning styles have a higher threshold of boredom. Even though processing skills may be developed, filing and accessing may be poor. Despite the need to stretch and challenge to keep them on track, stimulated and motivated, due consideration is required regarding aspects of inefficient functioning.
- **Concept Command.** Given the possibly superior bridging abilities, concepts may be grasped readily. This need not imply that they can be expressed adequately. To gain recognition able Additional needs students may have developed an appetite to forcefully express knowledge publicly and thus advertise their success. When denied success in certain areas of functioning there may be a need to set the record straight in terms of rectifying any untoward publicity when contrasted with others.
- **Frustration.** Able students may be better able to identify their own possible dysfunction. This may lead them to feel very sad or worried about their lives. It can lead to depression and acute frustration.

In assisting these students, Ashwicke Hall School will:

- help them to understand the reasons behind how their minds works, any under achievement and that this is a temporary inconvenience and not a lifelong handicap. They require help in managing the dichotomy in learning variation;
- rectify untoward responses to learning style as quickly as possible;
- help them develop key life skills. Able Additional needs students may require a considered intervention. They may have a better developed contribution to make toward their own assessment. Also, they may have a stronger potential to develop self-advocacy skills;
- assist them in utilising strengths. Able Additional needs students may require specific help in learning how to learn. Given the real strengths, these could be employed to help overcome any weaknesses;
- reassure and encourage. Such students may need to become more accepting towards themselves, especially if they have become reliant on seeking the advantage from expressing ability. Like all students, they need to know that the teacher cares and is with them and for them and skilled in techniques to put things right which may need due attention.

⁵ Goodhew, *Meeting the needs of Gifted and Talented Students*, 2009, pp. 2

Teaching and Learning – provision for Gifted and Talented Students

Whilst Gifted and Talented Students will be able to access additional enrichment activities, Ashwicke Hall School recognises that the most significant provision for Gifted and Talented Students occurs within the classroom on a daily basis.⁶ Where teachers plan engaging lessons with stretch and challenge in-built and accessible to all students, including those that are gifted and talented, then high levels of progress will be made by all. By taking this classroom-focused approach to provision Ashwicke Hall School aims to ensure that all students are working to the best of their capabilities, including those that have been identified as gifted and talented, and thus this provision results in the best standards of education for all and a culture where excellence and additional effort are encouraged and recognised.⁷

Subject teachers should aim to stretch and challenge students so that they work within the zone of proximal development identified by Vygotsky. Working in this way will help to ensure the development of new skills, knowledge and conceptual understanding. Gifted and Talented Students may require additional help or scaffolding in order to achieve this.

In aiming to stretch Gifted and talented students in this way, teachers will use a personalised approach to differentiation, using their knowledge of each student's abilities, knowledge and character to inform their approach. The subject teacher will be able to combine this with their subject expertise to create suitable activities and resources.

In doing so the subject teacher may design work that promotes the following attributes, which is a guide rather than an exhaustive list of approaches:

- a high degree of subject knowledge
- understanding of how to plan classwork and homework in order to increase the pace, breadth or depth of the coverage of the subject
- the capacity to envisage and organise unusual projects and approaches which catch students' attention and make them want to explore the topic
- the use of tasks which help students to develop perseverance and independence in learning through their own research or investigation, while ensuring that they have the necessary knowledge and skills to tackle the work effectively on their own
- the use of demanding resources which help students to engage with difficult or complex ideas
- the use of ICT to extend and enhance students' work and the opportunity to present the outcomes to others
- the ability to deploy high-level teaching skills in defining expectations, creating a positive classroom climate for enquiry, asking probing questions, managing time and resources, and assessing progress through the lesson
- the confidence to try out new ideas, to take risks and to be prepared to respond to leads which look most likely to develop higher levels of thinking by students⁸

Enrichment

Gifted and Talented students will also be given additional enrichment opportunities. This will take various forms, depending on opportunities available and what is appropriate for each child. Teachers, as well as the Student Life Organisation, have responsibility for including enrichment-type opportunities for Gifted and Talented students in their subjects, which might include the chance to attend talks, go on relevant visits, attend a reading group, etc. These activities may be provided solely for gifted and talented students, or where they are suitable for all interested students and have particular pertinence for gifted and talented students' enrichment may be made available for all, with particular encouragement of G&T students to attend.

Teachers will plan to meet termly with each G&T student, and where a tutor or subject teacher identifies a need for more frequent meetings these may occur on a regular basis. The purpose of this meeting will be to review the student's attainment, their engagement with and enjoyment of learning, and to ensure that their needs are being met and interests catered for.

Enabling Curriculum Entitlement and Choice

Curricular organization is flexible to allow students to have enrichment and to work beyond their age and/or phase, and across subjects to help maximise individual potential.

Assessment for Learning

Assessment data is used by all teachers across the school to ensure challenge and sustained progress in individual students' learning. Formative assessment and individual target setting is part of established practice. Self and peer assessment is part of classroom practice.

Leadership

All teachers have a responsibility to be aware of and to implement best practice for gifted and talented students. This is supported and led by the Head of Education.

Policy

The gifted and talented policy is integral to the school's philosophy. The policy directs and reflects best practice in the school.

Engaging the Community, Families and Others

Parents and carers are informed of developments and encouraged to be actively engaged in extending their students' education.

Responsibilities for provision

Classroom teacher

- Familiar with the gifted and talented students in their classes and subject areas
- Plans for enrichment, along with the Student Life Organisation, and challenge routinely within lessons
- Tracks the progress made by gifted and talented students in their classes
- Contributes examples of students' work for the department's webpage
- Assists with the planning and implementation of subject-related and cross-curricular gifted and talented events
- Schedules opportunities to discuss gifted and talented student progress in regular meetings
- Ensures data collection enabling tracking of gifted and talented student progress in their subject areas

⁶ Goodhew, *Meeting the Needs of Gifted and Talented Students*, 2009, pp. 12

⁷ Reis & Renzulli, *Is there still a need for gifted education? An examination of current research*, Learning and Individual Differences 20 (2010)

⁸ 'What does good teaching of gifted and talented students involve?', in *Providing for Gifted and Talented Students*, December 2001, pp. 25

Head of Education

- Familiar with all gifted and talented students
- Meets annually with each gifted and talented student, and more regularly where necessary. Creates individual support plans where a gifted and student may be struggling, in coordination with subject teacher or Additional Needs Co-ordinator.
- Works with teachers to support their departmental strategies for student provision
- Monitors provision for gifted and talented students during lesson observations
- Tracks the progress made by gifted and talented students
- Works with classroom teachers, and Student Life Organisation, to support their enrichment of lessons
- Works with the Student Life Organisation to plan and implement suitable subject-related events (e.g. talks, workshops, trips, etc.)

Parental communication

Ashwicke Hall School recognises the essential role played by parents when they are able to understand their child's needs and to support the school's provision for gifted and talented students. The Head of Education and Principal will communicate directly with parents when they raise queries, and will also contact parents in the event of exceptional achievements or where problems may exist for a gifted and talented student.