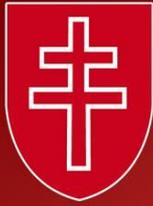


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# New Hall School

# Whole School Differentiation Policy

Reviewed by	Senior Leadership & Management Team
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Independent Catholic boarding and day school for boys and girls aged 3-18

[newhallschool.co.uk](http://newhallschool.co.uk)

## WHOLE SCHOOL DIFFERENTIATION POLICY

Differentiation ensures that every student maximises her/his potential through appropriate resources, tasks, group structures, response and support, thus enabling her/him to meet confidently the challenges of the wider world. It creates a climate which respects and caters for students from all traditions and encourages a desire to learn and achieve academic excellence according to each student's potential.

Differentiation underpins the teacher/student relationship and is founded in the gospel values of community and service.

Please also refer to the Preparatory Divisions' *Learning and Teaching Policy*.

### 1. Schemes of Work

Each department/Head of KS/Class Teacher has provision for differentiation built into the Schemes of Work. These are based on the Whole School Policy, but with subject-specific additions. Schemes of Work provide guidance on key learning objectives and on continuity and progression, with comments relating to differentiation included. These include guidance on extension work for those on the Most Able & Talented register and recognition of core skills and concepts which require appropriately designed resources for all students. Whilst building these guidelines into the Schemes of Work, we are aware that each lesson plan is a response by an individual member of staff to a particular group and, as such, will be unique.

### 2. Resources

It is recognised that differentiation is enhanced when the stimuli and resources are varied. Consultation, with the Head of Learning Development, the Vice Principal (Curriculum, Growth and Innovation) and the Head of EAL, is encouraged in order to ensure that the most appropriate resources are used.

New Hall uses its own and published materials. HoDs/Heads of Divisions aim to provide a variety of textbooks for the whole ability range. Where necessary, texts are supplemented by consolidation worksheets for students with learning difficulties. The Head of Learning Development also holds funds for extension texts to be purchased by academic departments, as appropriate. The school appreciates the need for clarity of presentation and worksheets are word processed, and page layout and font size are taken into account.

The use of information technology is encouraged. Interactive white-boards (IWBs) or equivalent are installed across the campus, and all departments have access to at least one in their area. All departments have DVD, video and/or audio collections and use different resources according to the needs of the subject and the individuals in each group. Computers/IWBs and/or CD-Roms/specialist software are routinely used to achieve understanding of a fundamental concept or to encourage extended investigation of a topic. In the Senior Divisions, iPads are issued to every student and every teacher and mobile technology is expected to play an increasingly important part in the process of learning and teaching. Pupils in the Preparatory Divisions have access to a class bank of iPads. Posters and other resources are used in displays which provide an alternative access

point to a topic or stimulate interest. Departments regularly renew their display boards according to current topics.

Library resources are available to support students researching or working independently. HoDs/Heads of KS/Subject Leaders advise the Librarian on suitable books, DVDs or software to be added to the stock and teachers are encouraged to take each group on a familiarisation visit to the Library so that each student knows where to look for the relevant material. Using the internet responsibly for research is also explained. In addition, classes can be taken to the library for their lesson when the library resources are required. The Librarian is available to advise individual students, according to their need, either during lesson time or when pursuing their own research.

New Hall is well-equipped with a wide range of specialist facilities: art studios, science laboratories, performing arts studios, music practice rooms, Swimming Pool, TV satellite links for modern languages, Sports Hall and technology rooms. We also have a rolling programme for the installation of Interactive White Boards across the site, and they are now present in the majority of classrooms. These facilities offer every student the opportunity to fulfil her/his potential both through the curriculum and through the development of personal interests.

### **3. Tasks**

Tasks are set to maximise the achievement of each student. This is accomplished by a variety of teaching styles and strategies to accommodate the different learning styles of individuals and to encourage both speculation and reflection. For example, we make a particular point of starting from a position of existing knowledge in a familiar context and then moving on to new tasks; both written and spoken questions are structured to enable students of all abilities to understand and respond; practical skills can be demonstrated as well as being explained verbally; different resources can be used and students are offered different levels of support.

In order to match tasks to the students' abilities, knowledge of each individual student is used, including analysis of baseline data and information from assessment tests carried out either in departments or by the Learning Development Department including the analysis of the Vice Principal (Curriculum, Innovation and Growth) and the Head of Learning Development.

Examinations are used to reinforce teaching as well as for assessment purposes. They are valuable to all years and indispensable to examination classes who have extensive practice with past papers. In the Preparatory Divisions, examination questions are read to pupils and their answers are scribed by an adult, if appropriate.

### **4. Response**

Students are encouraged to discuss their own and each others' work. Assessment criteria are made clear to students. Students are made familiar with marking policies and accept that differentiation will sometimes be achieved by outcome. In the Senior Divisions, marks for classwork or study will be diagnostic; they will be accompanied by a written or spoken comment in which the teacher will recognise individual achievement and indicate areas where progression could occur. In the Preparatory Divisions, Assessment for Learning strategies are used to facilitate pupils' understanding of assessment criteria.

## 5. Group Structure

New Hall School believes that it is appropriate to set students for some subjects. Others are taught in mixed ability groups. Setting takes place at present in the following subjects:-

Year 3	- set in Mathematics
Year 4	- set in Mathematics
Year 5	- set in English and Mathematics
Year 6	- set in English and Mathematics
Year 7	- set in Mathematics, Science (from Christmas) and French/Spanish
Year 8 -9	- set in Mathematics, Science, French/Spanish and Latin
Years 8 - 9	- banded according to ability for English, History, Geography, Theology.
Year 10 & 11	- set in English, Science, Theology, and Mathematics, and others as the timetable allows

The make up of a teaching group may be altered, either temporarily or permanently, at any stage of the term, if this is appropriate.

Small groups within a class can be used for discussion purposes, sometimes supported by LSAs or LTAs, allowing less confident students a non-threatening forum in which to express their thoughts and to provide the more able with the challenge of explaining their ideas coherently to their peers. Small groups are also used for practical work in many departments. Sometimes groups produce a collaborative piece of work. This encourages commitment and responsibility in the students as long as each student is clear about her/his own role within the project.

Individual investigations and project work are also encouraged in order to develop independent methods of working. The more able will benefit from the intensity of such work. The less able and less confident will benefit from the privacy if they make errors. In each case it is important to match the task to the student's ability if progression is to occur.

## 6. Support

### **For students with Learning Difficulties and/or Disabilities/Special Needs**

HoDs/Heads of Division/Subject Leaders are provided with information on the students' learning difficulties and/or disabilities/special needs by the Head of Learning Development, in the Preparatory Divisions. This information includes copies of EHC Plans for SEND students and information relating to the Code of Practice (*see Whole School Inclusion Policy*) by which students can be placed on different Stages of Assessment (SoA). It is recognised that this is a two-way process and Subject teachers liaise closely with the Director of Learning Development in providing subject specific targets for the plans and in identifying particular weaknesses.

Support staff are provided for the students with physical disabilities or specific learning difficulties. Staff discuss the work with their support staff to ensure they are utilised effectively.

Corridors, classrooms, laboratories are adapted to cater for students with physical disabilities.

To provide for able students we aim to recognise the signs of high ability. The two key strategies for the identification of the most able children are assessment by objective testing such as MidYIS and teacher observation. (See *Whole School Inclusion Policy*). Most Able & Talented students may display some or all of the following characteristics:

*ask searching and sometimes provocative questions*  
*are mentally and physically involved*  
*can construct abstract ideas*  
*draw own inferences from evidence*  
*enjoy learning*  
*are inventive*  
*are keenly observant*  
*thrive on complex problems*  
*possess wide general knowledge*  
*have good concentration*  
*read quickly*  
*untidy writing*

*have a good memory*  
*are highly curious*  
*may have wild ideas/vivid imagination*  
*show strong opinions/feelings*  
*master information rapidly*  
*prefer adults to peers*  
*initiate projects/ideas*  
*manipulate information*  
*often highly self-critical*  
*appear to day dream*  
*think quickly*  
*are persistent & determined*  
*impatient with self & others*

Opportunities for the enrichment of able students are built into Schemes of Work through extension activities and through open-ended tasks. In particular, it is crucial to challenge students during discussion by directing more difficult questions to develop higher order thinking.

### **Role of Tutors**

At the Senior School, tutors meet with each student on a regular basis to assess progress or areas of difficulty. They are able to build up a clear overall understanding of the students' needs and can co-ordinate extra support or further extension of talents.

### **Subject Staff/Class Teachers**

Support from subject staff/class teachers can occur during a lesson or in staff's own time, e.g. at break times and lunch times. Indeed, subject staff/class teachers and tutors often support students after school and many surgeries are run on a weekly basis. Subject staff/class teachers can contact parents for example via the home-school liaison book/ journal/homework diary where there is an area of concern.

### **Resources**

Teacher help ensures that resources are used effectively to support students and the librarian is useful in this capacity.

Extension opportunities, designed by Sixth Form subject prefects, are made available on Firefly, in some subjects.

### **Celebration of Achievement**

Students receive support through recognition of achievement. This is accomplished in a variety of ways, e.g. certificates are awarded during the Michaelmas Term and the Lent Term; prizes are awarded at the end of every year. At whole school assemblies, achievement outside the school is recognised and celebrated. The Preparatory Divisions have a Celebration of Achievement assembly

and pupils are entered into a "Golden Book" every week for outstanding achievement, effort or good behaviour.

## **7. Equal Opportunities**

New Hall has a mixed ability intake is committed to providing all of its students with full access to the curriculum.

It is recognised that some factors may be potential barriers to curriculum success. Factors such as gender, ethnic background, disability and social circumstances can have effects on students' learning. Material is selected and support given accordingly, as required.

Students up to Key Stage 4, for whom English is an Additional Language, normally have support in lessons and have timetabled EAL lessons. In the Sixth Form, all students are prepared for the IELTS examination, which usually comprises 3 double lessons per week.

New Hall offers a wide range of co-curricular activities, including music lessons and music groups, dance lessons, drama clubs, many sports teams and project type clubs. All these activities allow students to achieve their personal best and allow for differentiation.

With respect to gender issues it is important that, through the curriculum and the differentiated approach, each student leaves New Hall with positive ideas about the wide range of careers which are open to men and women alike.

*See also the Equal Opportunities Policy (Students).*