

MOST ABLE & TALENTED POLICY

1. Most Able & Talented General Rationale

- 1.1 The New Hall School Most Able & Talented Policy covers both the Senior and Preparatory Divisions. The whole School Most Able & Talented provision is overseen by the Director of Studies.
- 1.2 The term 'Learning Needs' is used at New Hall School in its wider context i.e. to include the needs of the Most Able & Talented (MAT) students. Such students are recognised as having specific individual needs owing to their marked abilities in one or more fields: general intellectual ability/specific academic ability/creative or productive thinking/leadership qualities/social skills/artistic ability/ability in the expressive arts and physical abilities. New Hall School believes that abilities and talents in academic and non-academic areas are not fixed and can be developed and discovered over time with the expert guidance of our staff. The School seeks to ensure that MAT students realise their potential.
- 1.3 New Hall School is committed to providing an environment that encourages all students to realise their potential. We recognise that every student is an individual with his or her own strengths and weaknesses, abilities and talents.
- 1.4 The Most Able & Talented Policy, although aimed specifically at the most able and talented, is intended to be inclusive in its nature, reflecting the Catholic ethos of our School which recognises the intrinsic value of each individual and ensures that their unique talents and abilities are celebrated. It is for this reason that our provision includes those who have the aspiration to achieve highly. The Most Able & Talented Programme aims to raise achievement throughout the School as well as meeting the specific needs of the most able.
- 1.5 Provision for MAT students is the responsibility of all members of staff at New Hall School; by raising the achievement of the more able we aim to raise the achievement of all children within the School.

2. Most Able & Talented Aims

- 2.1 For Most Able & Talented students, New Hall School seeks to provide:
 - entitlement to appropriate education
 - work at higher cognitive levels
 - opportunities to develop specific skills or talents
 - a concern for the whole person; social, emotional, spiritual, physical and intellectual

3. Most Able & Talented Definition

- 3.1 Whereas the Exceptionally Able student is acknowledged to have an Intelligence Quotient of 130+ (representing the top 3% of the population) (D, Montgomery), any definition of the Most Able & Talented student in terms of Intelligence Quotient is open to debate. There is no accepted Intelligence Quotient above which a student would be considered Most Able & Talented. Research indicates that up to approximately 15% - 20% of a year group might be considered Most Able & Talented. Exceptionally Able students are to be identified according to a combination of abilities, coupled with high performance levels on objective

tests. To ensure that the definition is not limited to academic aptitudes alone, the School includes talented students in the fields of drama, music and sport. Just as there is no such person as a typical student, there is no such person as a typical able and talented student.

- 3.2 In the Preparatory Divisions, an able pupil is generally accepted to be one who demonstrates a significantly higher level of ability than most pupils of the same age in one or more curriculum area. From 2015, the Most Able pupils may also be identified by high performance levels on objective tests. They may often have well developed learning skills and demonstrate their significantly higher level of ability in one or more subjects. There is no national definition for the 'Most Able' (Ofsted) or 'More Able' (NACE). In their 2013 report, Ofsted, defined 'Most Able' as 'the brightest students starting secondary school in Year 7 attaining Level 5 or above, or having the potential to attain Level 5 and above in English (reading and writing) and/or Mathematics at the end of Key Stage 2. Some pupils who are new to the country and are learning English as an additional language, for example, might not have attained Level 5 or beyond at the end of Key Stage 2 but have the potential to achieve it.' Ofsted has yet to redefine the term in light of the decision to remove assessment via National Curriculum Levels.

4. Most Able & Talented Identification

- 4.1 In the Preparatory Divisions, class teachers are asked to identify the MAT pupils in each class, through both subjective means and assessment data.

A teacher's professional judgement will be used to identify the Most Able and Talented and will be based on a combination of objective and subjective assessments:

- Ongoing teacher assessments
- Test results such as InCAS, CAT4, PTE, PTM and all current standardised tests in use
- High standards of work
- Depths of insight, intuition and understanding within lessons
- Outstanding talents which may be apparent within a lesson, e.g. for drama, sport, art
- Through parental discussion, finding out about pupils' hobbies and interests, which may give a fuller picture of their particular talents

Children who are identified as MAT are referred to the Director of Studies who maintains and reviews the register regularly and liaises with the Head of Learning Development and Heads of Year/Divisions to discuss progress and any indication of underachievement.

- 4.2 In the Senior Division, at the beginning of the academic year, every department uses its own subject-specific criteria in order to determine the students in Years (7-13) who should be defined as MAT in each curriculum area. These lists are shared with the Director of Studies. Transition information from feeder schools and entry tests are also utilised.
- 4.3 Baseline tests can be used to identify the potential of students on entry into Year 7. These tests are conducted in the early weeks of the Michaelmas Term and the results are distributed to staff. Departments are then able to cross reference with those students highlighted by these assessments to determine their own Most Able & Talented cohort and to identify possible underachievement.
- 4.4 The Director of Studies distributes information on Most Able & Talented students to the Senior Leadership Team, Heads of Department, Heads of Year, the Learning Development Department and tutors. This information is kept confidential, for staff use

only, and is reviewed by all departments on an annual basis. All of the MAT students are flagged on the School's management information system, iSAMS.

5. Most Able & Talented Provision

- 5.1 In the Preparatory Divisions, from Pre-Reception upwards, teachers are required to have available differentiated tasks and activities for the pupils to be stretched and challenged in terms of depth and complexity. Provision is made available through:
- High expectations of teachers
 - Tasks that are designed to consider levels of existing knowledge, skills and understanding
 - Planned extension opportunities or open-ended tasks
 - Effective use of questioning in class
 - Setting in Years 5 and 6 for English
 - Setting in Years 3, 4, 5 and 6 in Mathematics
 - Opportunities for pupils to develop higher order thinking skills
 - Differentiated homework
 - Varied teaching styles that support all types of learning
 - Use of Assessment for Learning (AFL) to increase pupil participation in planning and evaluation.

In addition, there is a whole range of extra-curricular activities on offer for the Most Able & Talented pupils. They may be invited to join specialist groups such as: Philosophy for Children, Platinum Music Medals, Competitive Gymnastics, Tennis, Netball and Cricket master classes. In addition, there are a number of opportunities for nurturing the potential abilities and talents of all pupils; for instance, the ESB (English Speaking Board), music theory classes, choir and orchestra, Latin club, science club, tap, ballet, jazz dance, Latin American & ballroom dance, fencing, rugby, football and riding. Able & Talented pupils also have opportunities to take part in external events such as the Essex Regional Preparatory School Quiz and the Primary Mathematics Challenge where appropriate.

- 5.2 In the Senior Divisions, students can engage in a multitude of enrichment activities provided alongside the academic curriculum. An extensive co-curriculum is one of the fundamental ways in which New Hall School provides a superior broad, balanced and relevant education for our students. MAT students have access to a range of academic societies such as the Feminist Society, Politics Question Time club and the Theology Society as well as Critical Thinking lessons. They are also invited to participate in the School's Debating Team. A detailed list of all of the academic societies and co-curricular opportunities is available on Firefly.
- 5.3 In the Senior Divisions, departments play a key role in Most Able & Talented provision, as evidenced in their handbooks or Schemes of Work (see *Whole School Differentiation Policy*). Each academic department has a teacher designated for co-ordinating MAT provision in the subject; usually this will be the Head of Department or this responsibility may be delegated to another teacher. Each departmental MAT co-ordinator meets regularly with the Director of Studies to discuss strategies for developing MAT provision. The 5 New Hall Learning Habits (Resilience, Collaboration, Intellectual Courage, Communication and Thinking Skills) are embedded across the curriculum and, whilst all students are encouraged to use them in lessons, they are particularly pertinent to the Most Able and Talented. Within the classroom, high quality teaching and learning ensures that the Most Able and Talented are challenged to achieve their full potential through a range of

approaches including: target setting, working with others of similar ability, differentiated class work and study, challenging questioning and extension tasks, all of which are all designed to provide challenge to our most able students. Departments offer extension and enrichment activities to build on students' own diverse interests and the curriculum is sufficiently broad to allow students to explore concepts that go beyond the confines of the schemes of work. The Extended Project Qualification is offered as another way for students to develop their research skills and to delve deeper into a subject for which they have a particular passion or interest. The requirements of examination boards for GCSE and A Level will be closely monitored so that students are able to achieve the highest grades in public examinations.

- 5.4 A great deal of provision for the most able is in place: invitations to writers and poets to conduct workshops, drama productions, theatre trips, LAMDA and ESB training, debating competitions, chess tournaments, specialist music and dance awards, sports training (places in county and national teams), masterclasses, UK Maths challenges, subject-specific lectures at university and specialist competitions, such as the national Physics and Chemistry Olympiads. Students are encouraged to continue to develop their potential through the wide range of enrichment activities currently available.

6. Most Able & Talented Monitoring

- 6.1 The progress of the MAT students requires close monitoring.

6.1.1 In the Preparatory Divisions, the Heads of Divisions are responsible for:

- Liaising with the Director of Studies to discuss the progress of pupils on the register and provision for ensuring all pupils, including those on the register, achieve their potential
- Monitoring the progress of those on the register with the class teachers
- Maintaining and updating the Most Able & Talented Register
- Liaising with the class teachers to support provision for able and talented pupils

6.1.2 In the Senior Divisions, the Director of Studies is responsible for:

- Liaising with Heads of Department, Heads of Year and Heads of Boarding to discuss the progress of students on the Most Able & Talented Register and provision for ensuring all students, including those on the register, achieve their potential
- Monitoring the progress of those on the register
- Maintaining and updating the Most Able & Talented Register
- Liaising with Heads of Department, Heads of Year and Heads of Boarding to support provision for able and talented students
- Overseeing the Oxbridge Programme and, working alongside the Sixth Form Management Team, supporting students applying to competitive universities/courses. The Director of Studies runs a weekly Oxbridge Society to provide tailored support for such students

7. Most Able & Talented Resources

- 7.1 Budgets are provided in both the Preparatory and Senior Divisions for the provision of Most Able & Talented resources.

- 7.2 Over time, each department is expected to build up a range of resources for MAT students.

8. Most Able & Talented: The use of outside agencies

8.1 The School is a member of the national body, The National Association for Able Children in England (NACE). Key staff attend conferences and suitable INSET activities.