

Dover Grammar School for Girls

Exceptional Potential Policy



Signatures:

Headteacher _____ Date _____

Chair of Committee _____ Date _____

Chair of Governors _____ Date _____

This policy was adopted by the Governing Body in April 2005

To be Reviewed May 2007, 2009, 2011, 2013, 2015, 2017

Next Review: April 2019

NB – In the absence of the Head Teacher the designated Deputy Head Teacher will assume their responsibilities as described in this policy



Exceptional Potential (Gifted and Talented) – A Policy Statement

Our core purpose is to inspire academic excellence and personal fulfilment. We encourage and expect high standards and success, fostering a sense of responsibility for self and others. Our aim is that all our students leave Dover Grammar School for Girls thoughtful, well-qualified and ambitious and ready to make a significant contribution wherever their futures may take them. We hope our students will want to give back to society some of the benefits which they have enjoyed through their engagement with education here.

We recognise that all students have abilities, talents and qualities which need to be identified, nurtured and developed both at home and at school, and that some are exceptional in specific areas. We believe that by early identification of the very able, we can assess needs and provide appropriate opportunities for extension and enrichment both within the school and through participation in extra-curricular activities.

We believe that meeting the needs of the very able as with all students, is a partnership and that working together, parents and teachers can mutually support their personal development. Our most able students arrive at Dover Grammar School for Girls with an additional educational need: the need to be challenged at an extremely high level in order to fulfil their potential. The following document sets out the ways in which the school:

- Identifies its Exceptional Potential students
- Raises the awareness of the needs of these students
- Creates a climate in which teachers adapt and adjust to take account of students' rapid development
- Ensures that all teachers are able to share in providing the level of subject support needed
- Draws on resources for Exceptional Potential students

Identification:

No single identification method is used since experience has shown that the very able student demonstrates their ability through a variety of means, at different times, under a variety of circumstances and to different people. Therefore, a combination of identification processes are used which are on-going throughout the student's school career. The following are used:

- Test scores – On entry into Year 7 those students with significantly higher than average CATs scores are identified (ie: 129 and above). Currently this identifies c 20% of the year group but this is under review. Parents are informed by letter and sent a reading list

- Identification in different subject areas: concise, dynamic and regularly updated if a student meets the following criteria:
 1. One of top 5 -10 students in the year group by attainment in the subject
 2. A consistently excellent attitude to learning
 3. Demonstrating a genuine sense of passion and commitment to the subject through, for example, wider reading, extra-curricular activities or simply a display of intellectual curiosity and enthusiasm

This is updated at the end of each year based on performance in examinations

- CATs scores and subject specific lists are correlated so that if a student with exceptional potential does not appear on the subject list, then intervention can take place
- Parental identification
- Information provided by a Primary feeder school
- Teacher nomination
- Through responses to challenges in lessons and extra-curricular activities

Awareness, provision and support:

There is a designated colleague with responsibility for raising aspirations and supporting the students with Exceptional Potential. It is recognised that all students have their aspirations raised by creating a provision that recognises achievement at the highest level. This colleague should support every member of staff in their desire to ensure access and aspiration are inextricably linked. The colleague reports directly to the Headteacher to ensure that aspiration is not just a goal but is achieved. It is measured by students accessing a richness of curricular and co-curricular activities and ultimately winning places at the most highly rated of the UK (and other countries) universities. The school records the percentage of students gaining places at Oxbridge, Medical schools, Russell Group and Times Top 30 universities. Increases in these figures appears to strongly lead to an overall increase in the calibre of universities and courses which are accessed.

- Students on the master list are invited to termly reading and discussion groups in the library to ensure that reading is broad and challenging and that students retain an interest in current affairs
- Within lessons, there are opportunities for effective and deliberate practice by effective differentiation
- Opportunities are identified for 'vertical' interaction and collaboration. Dedicated activities are provided such as mock trials, appropriate work experience, taster events at universities, master classes, summer schools
- Provision is created within subjects by accessing external opportunities for development. Students for instance have participated in Maths Olympiads, Articulation, Young Enterprise, Poetry writing competitions, HA speaking events and lectures, GA World Challenges, Music master classes with professional musicians and at musical festivals

- There is also much focus on provision within subject areas by maximising the experiences of colleagues and those who are more widely engaged in the subject.
- Aspiration raising events, such as visits from academics, distinguished speakers, engagement in events at top universities and the building of close relationships with exceptional providers are constantly being developed
- Students are identified early for support for applications for Oxbridge and Medical school and provided with mentoring, extra lessons and interview practice as well as support for any additional papers which must be sat

Resources and Teaching Styles

The colleague responsible for supporting students with 'Exceptional Potential' works closely with the Head and Deputy Heads as well as the Assistant Head in promulgating a culture of teaching for the most able as part of a general culture of excellence in teaching and learning. This is achieved through:

- Appropriate CPD for whole staff and appropriate groups on teaching styles and methods suited for the most able
- Provision of external CPD through bodies such as GSHA
- Provision of specific resourcing for departments and where appropriate for students
- Support via EFA bursaries for support for students who are unable due to lack of financial means to access Exceptional Potential external events
- Production of on line, printed and other resources or purchase of appropriate support materials
- Provision of guidance of appropriate methods to be deployed (list of suitable techniques follows)

Celebration of Success

The school raises achievement and aspiration through the celebration of all learners but in doing so it seeks to encourage all to work at the highest level. The students with Exceptional Potential, are celebrated through our school *where*:

- We create a climate where to achieve is an expectation and where we should aspire to the ordinary things being done extraordinarily well
- Exceptional achievement is the goal, and where such a goal is seen as desirable and entirely normal as an expectation
- The attitudes of all the community are to aspire to great achievement and this is celebrated regularly through assemblies, parental and student events, presentation evenings, certificates of achievement and in external publicity and promotion
- Achievement is measured as the best locally and nationally. Benchmarking is therefore essential

- There is a supportive yet constructively critical approach to learning and where constructive improvements are always sought

Teaching and Learning Strategies:

Starters

- Set investigations across a sequence of lessons
- Select students to set the starter activity
- Address the same objective through texts and tasks at varying levels
- Use pair or small group work with ability pairings or groupings at times
- Expect students to articulate rules or patterns to clarify understanding
- Choose tasks or examples that require higher-order thinking skills, such as evaluation and comparison
- Use differentiated or open-ended questioning
- Make a statement and ask for it to be justified
- Exploit the power of the follow-up question: 'What makes you think that?'
- Have a range of tasks based on the same text or focus
- Ask abler students to articulate the skills involved in completing particular tasks

Whole Class

- Use differentiated questions
- Differentiate expectations
- Prepare questions targeted on particular students that reflect their needs and personalities
- Prime able students for contributions that extend the experience of all
- Pitch texts just above the independent reading level of the class
- Avoid over-exposure of able students
- Direct questions to individuals to involve able students in interactive discussion
- Expect able students to articulate what has been learned
- Give an oral commentary with the more able in mind
- Involve students in modelling if appropriate
- Ask able students to articulate explanations and principles
- Make it possible for able students to enter tasks at a higher point

Plenaries

- Expect students to offer explanation, not just presentation
- Exploit the possibilities of presenting in the role and reporting back
- Encourage able students to take notes for feedback
- Allow able students a different timescale for feedback
- Be aware of attitudes of other students
- Focus on the articulation of what has been learnt, using appropriate terminology
- Tackle demanding objectives
- Instil the habit of metacognitive reflection on learning
- Build understanding of the big ideas
- Enable students to work with others of similar ability

Independent Work

- Differentiate by the quality of the task rather than the quantity of the expected outcome
- Marking should be formative, not just celebratory, and should be focused on specific criteria
- Share differentiated success criteria in advance
- Vary styles of response and avoid excessive pressure
- Offer the inspiration that can come from meeting older students who have Exceptional Potential.
- Encourage self-checking based on prompt sheets for self-analysis
- Monitor independent reading round the subject
- Learn about the process of enquiry via the published comments of practitioners
- Extend and exploit the conventions of different text types
- Match texts and task to students' abilities through negotiation based on high expectations
- Establish extracurricular groups
- Foster originality, Independence and initiative
- Set investigative, research-based tasks
- Make time for individual feedback
- Promote extended reading and writing
- Expect the use of ICT and encourage (monitored) e-mail link-ups with able students in other schools
- Consider having students in training as e-mentors for able students
- Ensure appropriate access to ICT
- Use modelling to build the confidence of able students
- Model problem-solving at different levels
- Use the terminology to support meta-cognition
- Model only that which able students need to know

Group Work

- Recognise that able students are entitled to teacher time
- Identify able students' shared needs and group accordingly
- Use additional adults as mentors
- Create task-specific groups
- Vary group membership
- Ensure that there are times when the ablest students work together
- Ensure able students have the opportunity to follow and to lead
- Give able students roles in group work that reflect their abilities
- Have group/student targets, not just class targets
- Promote self-evaluation
- Recognise and use the linguistic expertise of multilingual students
- Use out-of-lesson conferencing, for example with mentors
- Encourage students to set questions, not just to provide answers
- Negotiate over objectives, styles of response and criteria for evaluation

- Be open to suggestions that build on the students' cultural backgrounds
- Decide together on the objectives to be addressed by able students
- Discuss possibilities over presentation
- Allocate challenging roles in group work, for example, chairing the group, taking responsibility for moving discussion forward
- Use peer editing or marking
- Require the articulation of principles and development points
- Expect 'different' rather than just 'more'
- Help able students to contribute to the success of others
- Focus on qualitative outcomes
- Explore possibilities for acceleration
- Give all learning a time frame, but match timing to potential
- Compact the task and give a limited focus to promote depth
- Plan to engage with higher-order learning skills

Adopted by the Governing Body April 2005

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