

# ELIZABETH GARRETT ANDERSON SCHOOL

## **Higher Ability Student Policy**

### Context

At Elizabeth Garrett Anderson School we aim to add value to the learning of students of all abilities. This is achieved in lessons that are good and outstanding and by assessment methods that are accurate, continuous and signpost early the need for effective intervention.

### Aim

The aim of this policy is to provide guidance and support for teachers to ensure our gifted and talented students are effectively challenged.

### The Higher Ability Cohort

When identifying students who are of higher ability in specific subject areas it is important to consider all students and include those who:

- bilingual learners where the acquisition of English Language impacts on current attainment
- have the potential to achieve very highly but for other reasons have not yet shown high levels of attainment

Across the school the higher ability cohort is likely to represent the ethnic make up of the school.

Research has shown nationally that key indicators of higher ability students may include students who exhibit the following traits:

- become easily bored/distracted with repetitive tasks
- challenge rules/authority where the reason for the rule is unclear
- make creative contributions to discussions/debates
- think creatively and suggest ideas and thoughts spontaneously
- may appear to "daydream"

### Identifying the higher ability cohort

- Baseline data (K.S.2 results and cognitive ability test (CATs) results) and internal assessment data is circulated to all Heads of Faculty. There is discussion within faculties about higher ability students
- Subject data collected according to the agreed assessment cycle
- Parents are informed by letter when their child is identified as having higher ability in a specific subject or group of subjects.

### Meeting the needs of higher ability students

Our higher ability students achieve most when their experiences in lessons challenge them to learn / make progress and achieve highly and these experiences are combined with a variety of extra-curricular opportunities designed to engage their interest and develop their knowledge and skills.

As a school our curriculum is designed to support and stretch these students in the following ways:

- Flexible grouping in some subjects by ability level

- The opportunity to take additional subjects after school, both in school and in partnership across Islington
- Starting GCSE options in Year 9, facilitating AS/Advanced courses for some students
- A flexible options system where individual student needs and interests drive the structure of the offer
- An options system that offers a wide range of subjects and accreditation routes
- Development of personal learning and thinking skills (PLTs) in skills sessions in K.S.3

As teachers we support higher ability students lessons using the following differential approaches which aim to stretch and challenge students' thinking rather than make them do more of the same.

- Leadership opportunities
- Open ended research projects
- Students preparing and delivering lessons
- Assessment for learning approaches
- Engaging the students in planning the delivery of their learning
- Questioning techniques to challenge their thinking and encourage deep learning
- Web based work
- Group work

The range of extracurricular opportunities which are available to these students, include:

- A programme of vertically grouped master classes offered to our higher ability students across subject areas
- A wide range of music clubs including choir, jazz band and string group
- The opportunity to join student council teams to develop leadership skills.
- A wide range of other clubs that engage students interest and develop skills in a broad range of areas including debating, photoshop and dance.
- A range of subject based clubs to develop and stretch knowledge and understanding
- Visits to universities.
- A wide range of other educational and cultural trips and visits.

## Roles and Responsibilities

### School

As a school, we have the following responsibilities with respect to higher ability students:

- Provide a curriculum that engages, stretches and challenges
- Identify students who are our most able across subject areas
- Inform parents that their child is of higher ability and inform them of the ways we plan to support them
- Provide a wide range of extra curricular experiences students can choose to join.
- Monitor the progress of the cohort and intervene to ensure they achieve their potential.
- Provide development opportunities for teachers around best practice for the most able
- Provide links between higher ability students of all ages within school
- Build links with higher ability students in other schools

### Teachers

Teachers have the following responsibilities with respect to higher ability students:

- Use the available baseline data and subject assessment data to inform planning to challenge the most able

- Deliver lessons that are differentiated to meet the needs of all the students in the class
- Include activities in lessons that challenge students to develop their critical thinking skills
- Assess the progress of the students, intervening as needed to ensure good progress
- Seek advice from subject leaders and the teaching and learning team on developing classroom practice

### **Heads of Subject/Department/Faculty**

Heads of Subject/ Department /Faculty have the following responsibilities with respect to higher ability students:

- Develop the curriculum to meet the needs of all students
- Monitor the quality of teaching and learning in the subject.
- Monitor the progress of the higher ability students across the departments
- Provide support and development opportunities for the subject team in order to improve classroom practice
- Offer extracurricular opportunities which the students can join to further develop their knowledge/skills/engagement

### **Tutors**

Tutors have the following responsibilities with respect to higher ability students:

- Monitor the progress of students in their tutor group, across all subjects, intervening as needed.
- Liaise with parents to support learning and development.
- Use tutor time to further develop students' thinking skills and wider awareness
- Discuss the progress of these students with the Head of Year

### **Heads of Year**

Heads of Year have the following responsibilities with respect to higher ability students:

- Monitor the progress of higher ability across all subjects liaising with Heads of Faculty and pupil support panel to co-ordinate interventions to ensure good progress.
- Monitor the social and emotional development of the students.
- Nurture higher ability cohort in the year group.
- Monitor the attendance at extra curricular activities and encourage the students to join in the appropriate opportunities.
- Co-ordinate the tutor time to support the most able
- Develop an ethos of striving to succeed and improve in the year group

### **Line Managers**

Line managers have the following responsibilities with respect to the higher ability students:

- Discuss the progress groups of students with Heads of Faculty and Heads of Year during line management meetings and reviews.
- Support Heads of Faculty and Heads of Year in developing the practice of their team to best meet the needs of the most able
- Discuss the extracurricular offer and take up by students.

**Senior leadership - Designated person (Andy Webster)**

- Ensure the higher ability student policy is in place and implemented
- Advise on suitable strategies to support and challenge the most able
- Ensure faculties are clear which students are the most able in their subject areas and across the school

Support and advice can be found in school from:

The Teaching and Learning team: Linda Quinn / Janette Goss / Tracey Collins / Marina Johnston / Nigel Stemp

EMAS team: Head of EMAS Marina Johnston

SEN team: SENCO Janette Goss

