



WEST BROMWICH
COLLEGIATE ACADEMY

More Able, High Achievers Policy – 2023-2024

At West Bromwich Collegiate Academy, we believe that all students are entitled to an education that will enable them to develop their full potential, be that intellectual, physical, aesthetic, creative, emotional, spiritual or social, finding appropriate challenge in our learning environment.

Definitions

The term 'More Able' describes students who are considered to have an ability and attainment to develop to a level significantly ahead of their year group (or with the potential to develop those abilities or for high attainment).

'High Achievers' describes students who are excelling in a particular subject or area of the curriculum. We no longer label students as 'Gifted' or 'Talented' in a specific subject but use the overarching 'High Achiever' term to promote inclusivity between academia and practicality. Students can be considered a High Achiever in one or more subject. These subjects can correlate or be separate.

Key Objectives of the Policy and Provision

To ensure that most able students:

- Attain the highest possible competency level (Advanced) at the end of Key Stage 3 and in Key Stage 4 they are working towards a target grade of 7 or above.
- Become highly effective learners and critical thinkers.
- Become exceptional achievers and performers in their subject, art, or sport.
- Develop independency as high achieving learners.

To achieve these key objectives, the Academy will ensure that:

- Teaching and learning is both challenging and varied, using strategies that are shared throughout the Academy
- Levels of attainment and achievement indicate a high level of sustainability over a period of time
- Students are accurately identified using a process that is regularly reviewed.
- The curriculum offered by the Academy is flexible, allowing for enrichment and subject choice
- The ethos and pastoral care environment promotes ambition and achievement
- Staff have the opportunities to address teaching the most able through CPD opportunities
- Students are tracked and monitored effectively via interim assessment and intervention is carried out, where appropriate
- The Academy engages with the community and families in regards to More Able provision.
- The Academy provides opportunities for all learners to learn beyond the classroom and in and out of Academy environments, for example extracurricular provision.

Identification

Students who are more able may have some of the general characteristics:

Personal traits

- Inquisitive, curious, alert and responsive to new ideas
- Quick/agile thinkers
- High self-motivation/initiative; can work well independently
- Socially adept
- Show leadership qualities
- Good/unusual sense of humour
- Sensitive/sensitivity and empathy with others
- Socially immature/isolated; prefer computers to people

Learning Ability

- Learn new ideas and concepts quickly/easily/readily
- Good at reasoning/logical/analytical thinking
- Good at dealing with abstractions/abstract thinking
- See relationships between things; can generalise from specific facts
- Good at understanding things/meanings; show unusual insights
- Able to memorise quickly/easily
- Follow complex directions easily
- Keen powers of observation
- Advanced vocabulary/verbally fluent/good self-expression
- Learned to read early, often before school age; rapid readers
- Good attention; concentrate and persevere for long periods if interested

Learning Styles

- Dislike repetition of concepts and closed tasks; get bored easily
- Informed/show interest in ideas and concepts beyond their years
- Creative/imaginative; original ideas in problem-solving; may be artistic/musical
- Inclined to choose unusual but effective methods of working, perhaps using a different line of logic or jumping steps
- Many interests/hobbies; read across a wide range of subjects
- Prefer verbal expression; reluctant to record things in writing
- Resent imposed timetable restrictions if interested in a task
- Perfectionists; may lean towards being obsessive

[2021 National Association for Able Children in Education]

This list is by no means exhaustive, with all staff encouraged to 'talent spot' and identify those students who display particular gifts or talents.

The following notes outline some of the ways in which More Able students are identified at WBCA.

- Base line testing – students complete various tests (specifically Literacy and Numeracy) at the beginning of the Academic year. More Able students are then placed in the Saturn/Neptune group within each classroom.

- Year 7: Data and general information passed on from Primary school. Primary school link staff assist in the transition and dissemination of appropriate information regarding Gifted and Talented students.
- Years 8 and 9: Data from previous years and information from students' L4L teachers as well as progress throughout their time at WBCA in comparison to their peers.
- Key Assessments - Throughout the academic year consistently high performing students are identified. They have the opportunity to demonstrate their gifts and/or talents through a number of avenues: classroom performance (competencies), key assessments and extra-curricular clubs.
- Mock Examinations – KS4 Mock examinations allows for an insight to see where More Able students from KS3 are working at and whether additional provision is needed to achieve high target grades (7+).

Tracking and Assessment

More Able learners will be tracked and assessed throughout the year. The list of More Able learners is not immutable but can be added to or changed over time depending on progress within the tracking and assessment. More Able students will have a progress tracker that will be updated throughout the school year.

Some of the tracking and assessment methods in place for More Able Learners include:

- Teacher assessment;
- Use of tests e.g., cognitive ability tests (CATs); GL Exams
- Regular tracking of performance of individuals and sub-groups;
- Comparison with local and national outcomes;
- Learner profiles and portfolios;
- Arrangements for receiving information or passing it on at transfer and transition.

Management of More Able Provision

More Able Student Coordinator – U Langley has the overall responsibility for the More Able Coordinator role. The policy will be developed in collaboration with the SLT and

Heads of Year to:

- Identify pupils with high potential, recognising that whilst some pupils are overt about their abilities, some may actively hide it and others may not readily be able to display their ability due to the need to develop higher order communication skills in English.
- Improve motivation and attainment of our most able pupils by ensuring that benefit from a coherent, co-ordinated and distinctive teaching and learning programme, which will provide a consistent challenge and which will be responsive to their individual needs.
- Encourage pupils in developing their personal skills as well as their knowledge and understanding.
- Encourage high learner self-esteem so that pupils can be confident and yet critical, and evaluate their own learning.

- Monitor progress and achievement and to set individual targets for identified pupils in accordance to school's policy and practice.
- Promote aspiration and excellence in all pupils.
- Provide a range of out of hours enrichment and extension activities.

Curriculum, Teaching and Learning

Provision for More Able

We endeavour to meet the needs of More Able children through careful identification and monitoring strategies and by providing access to a curriculum that will not only support the development of the whole child intellectually, socially, and emotionally, but will enable them to show aptitudes and quality of thinking.

We strongly believe that engaging teaching and learning for all is the key to securing achievement for every child. Through creative curriculum activities, more-able pupils are given a wide variety of exciting challenges and experiences, developing the ability to question, explain, persevere, communicate their thoughts, and take risks in their learning whilst building relationships.

We support our more-able pupils by giving them opportunities for open-ended tasks, higher-order thinking challenges and extension activities. In class children work in a range of ways, ability groups, mixed ability, paired work and independent work. We use a variety of teaching styles and a range of higher-level questions to stimulate critical thinking.

Provision for More Able students will be provided by the More Able Students Coordinator but will require implementation by their class teacher. Ideas for departmental development of More Able students can be found here:

- Opportunities provided to lead parts of lessons
- Additional learning activities provided via class TEAMS or Challenge Menus
- Students are provided with additional activities/tasks in order to extend their learning and wider reading. They are provided with activities as additional/ alternative homework.
- All lessons and activities have extension tasks that use higher order thinking skills as a basis or include Next Step activities
- Students may be able to participate in assemblies
- External speakers, workshops designed for all students but with a focus on More Able
- Careers guidance on Options and Routes – focus on Further and Higher Education

Stretch/Challenge Extensions in Lessons

Developing a deeper understanding through encountering more complex resources and materials, tackling more challenging questions and tasks, demonstrating higher levels of thinking, and presenting increasingly sophisticated responses. These challenges should also be targeted at students achieving the next competency or level above peers.

Staff are encouraged to present these Stretch/Challenge Extensions with the same image – available through the More Able TEAMS – to allow students to easily identify the challenges throughout the lesson. This should encourage students to maintain a growth mindset and continually learn whilst being challenged. Students will also have been exposed to this image from Y7 to Y11 ensuring that the expectations are imprinted into their mindset. Furthermore, it is urged that if promising students are not accessing challenge slides in lesson that they must be encouraged to complete these tasks outside of the classroom. Studies show that ‘implementing a stretch and challenge model in your classroom requires teachers and students to recognise that learning should be difficult.’ (*Light 2017*).

Monitoring will be used throughout the academic year to ensure these challenge slides or activities are being used for consistency across all subjects and years. This consistency was brought to attention by students through a survey conducted by U Langley. The most common motif was that ‘students did not know where to or how to access the challenges in lesson’.

If staff are struggling with what activities to place on the ‘Challenge Slide’ they can contact U Langley who has an array of CPD books and readings for staff as well as access to a NACE Membership and Key Leaders CPD courses.

The Role of the Heads of Department

Each subject area will require a member of staff to help with subject-specific guidance in More Able students, their role will be to:

- Oversee the interests of More Able students and to monitor their progress towards demanding targets
- Ensure that the More Able policy is implemented
- Generate, review and update the More Able register
- Obtain and monitor academic data and targets
- Regularly feed back to students and parents regarding progress
- Ensure that the CPD co-ordinator is aware of the specific professional development needs for staff to ensure high quality delivery of More Able provision
- Develop enrichment activities beyond the classroom targeting More Able Students

Enrichment/ Extracurricular

Enrichment activities at WBCA must provide opportunities for learners to reveal and develop their abilities.

Areas we can consider include:

- Opportunities for problem-solving, decision-making, analysis, synthesis, creative thinking, speculation, evaluation and research;
- Planning and monitoring of enrichment activities, including clubs, societies, activity days, masterclasses, day and residential visits, visiting specialists, weekend activities, summer schools;
- Collaboration with other schools, external organisations, governors and other individuals with appropriate expertise;
- Opportunities for learners to engage with “real life” scenarios;
- Use of local resources such as libraries, art, drama or theatre groups;
- Opportunities to participate in performances, sports activities, community and other projects;
- Participation in national schemes, competitions and festivals.

Already in place within school:

- Year 9 -10: Scholars Programme by the Brilliant Club - The Brilliant Club’s Scholars Programme gives pupils from non-selective state schools the opportunity to work with a PhD researcher to experience university-style learning. It helps pupils to develop the skills, knowledge and confidence to secure a place at a competitive university and succeed when they get there. We work with pupils from aged 8 to 18, supporting pupils to make an informed choice about their future.
- Extracurricular clubs targeted with subject-specific stretch and challenges. I.e., Young Engineers and Chess Club. (Teachers to keep a note of attendance so More Able students can be monitored).
- Opportunities under the RAISE programme at the University of Birmingham.

Past Opportunities within school:

- Year 9: Brilliant Club for English Mentoring. Students receive a 1:3 mentoring in specified themes within English by a Post-Graduate Tutor to stretch and challenge their abilities.
- Students have also been encouraged to join the National Saturday Club as well as a Virtual Summer Camp by Debate Mate.
- Debate Mate (KS3) – A debating club delivered by our staff along with trained university students. The club raises speaking and listening attainment, as well as improving a range of high order thinking skills and non-cognitive abilities such as confidence, teamwork and leadership.

Pastoral Care

Specific challenges can be experienced by more able learners when it comes to their well-being, such as pressure to perform.

Areas we must consider at WBCA, and target are as follows:

- Ethos of provision for emotional, social, intellectual development and self-esteem;
- Provision for personalised learning;
- Pastoral support from class teacher, form tutor or coordinator;
- Mentoring, coaching and peer support, e.g. buddy scheme;
- Learner voice – feedback, one-to-one discussion, questionnaires, representation on school council;
- Partnership with parents and carers.

Parental Support

Support from parents and carers is a key factor in the success and development of all young people, including the more able. Communication with parents to answer the following questions is important for the More Able Learners:

- What does it mean to be “more able”?
- How do you know if you have a more able child?
- How do schools identify children with special abilities?
- What is the current approach to children with high ability?
- What should schools provide for more able children?
- What information about your child and the school’s provision can you expect to be given?
- What questions could you ask of the school?
- How do you overcome barriers and difficulties?
- What can you do to help your child at home?

At West Bromwich Collegiate Academy we will work closely with Parents and Carers to make sure the provision for the More Able, Higher Achiever Learners are met and understood by all parties.

Parents and Guardians can access the More Able segment of the WBCA website to understand what it is WBCA do for their children, here they will also find information on how to support their child at home.

PROCESS FOR DEVELOPMENT AND REVIEW

This policy and the success of the school’s provision for the more able pupils will be reviewed annually by the More Able Co-ordinator and members of the Senior Leadership Team.

Points under consistent consideration:

- Alignment with the school improvement or development plan;
- Focused monitoring of the quality of teaching for more able learners;
- Criteria for assessing the impact of the policy.