

# High Attainers Policy



## 1. Rationale & Aim

Samuel Whitbread Academy (SWA) has an active philosophy of inclusivity and ensuring that all students achieve their potential especially in the areas where their talents lie. Excellence is encouraged from all students and a rich and challenging curriculum is constantly endorsed. The government asks schools to recognise the specific cohort of high attaining students.

## 2. Policy

High attaining students are those who achieve, or have the capacity to achieve, significantly above average for a student in their year group at their school. According to the DfE, high attaining students are defined more specifically as follows:

- Gifted – a student with high ability or potential in one or more academic subjects
- Talented – a student with high ability or potential in expressive or creative arts or sports
- “All-rounders” are students who are both gifted and talented

SWA employs a variety of teaching and learning strategies and continues to review schemes of learning to ensure that they are sufficiently challenging for the more able students. SWA use a range of systems to track students’ progress to take account of social and pastoral concerns as well as academic progress.

SWA are committed to offering a range of activities outside the lesson such as extra-curricular opportunities, tutorials, expert lectures and participation in The Society.

SWA aims:

- To effectively identify a minimum of 10% of students (as recommended by DfE) as high attainers which reflects the cultural and ethnic diversity of our community.
- To provide all learners with an education matched to their individual learning needs.
- To encourage in SWA an ethos that ensures focus on effective teaching and learning.
- To develop depth and breadth of opportunity recognising the specific social and emotional needs of higher attaining students.
- To provide an environment for the development of the whole student: intellectual, spiritual, moral, aesthetic, physical, personal and social; with opportunities to develop specific skills or talents.
- To promote and encourage:
  - Recognition/ identification of more able students
  - Appropriate assessment of ability and monitoring
  - Appropriate assessment of pupil requirements
  - Innovative teaching strategies
  - Incorporation of detailed differentiation in schemes of learning
  - Programmes of enrichment activities
  - Parental support

### Identification and assessment

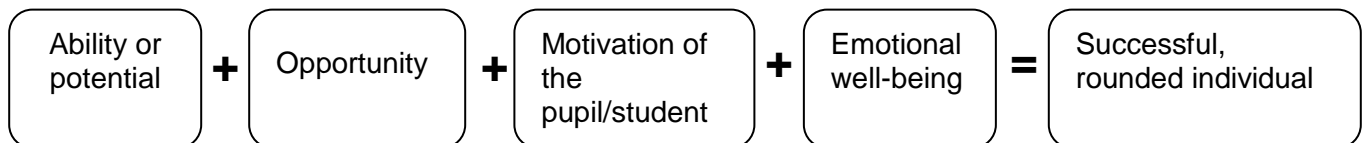
The higher attainers are a diverse group and their range of attainment will be varied. Some do well in statutory national curriculum tests, world-class tests or national qualifications. However, being a high attainer covers much more than the ability to succeed in tests and examinations.

SWA's groups of high attaining students will show one or more of:

- A specific aptitude for a curriculum subject
  - A specific aptitude within one area of a subject
  - Outstanding verbal ability
  - High-level practical skills
  - Leadership qualities
  - Team working abilities
  - Physical ability
  - General intellectual ability
  - Intellectual curiosity
  - Initiative / originality
  - An ability to memorise swiftly
  - Quick and fluid reasoning or learning
  - A capacity for creative thought
  - Artistic ability
  - Social emotional or spiritual qualities
- [QCA (2000); H Gardner (1993); D Eyre (1993) etc]

SWA use a range of strategies for identification. Together these allow meaningful identification of an appropriate cohort:

- Quantitative test data - this is relative to each schools own data systems (ie. FFT/ALPS)
- Qualitative information - this includes:
  - Teacher recognition: data from conversations, marking and monitoring, classroom observation
  - Parental or peer nomination
  - Information from feeder schools and outside agencies, predicted progress between key stages, analysis of progress
- External factors such as the nature of support from parents/carers and the experiences at home have a major impact on the development of a student's abilities, as do the opportunities that are afforded to the student at school.



### **Difficulties in identification**

It is important to recognise that not all high attaining learners are obvious achievers. Many actually underachieve - their potential is masked by factors such as frustration, low self-esteem, lack of challenge or low teacher/parent expectations. Furthermore, students from homes where English is an additional language may struggle to express themselves in school. Others underachieve because they have learning disabilities that obscure or eclipse their gifts or talents. This is known as dual exceptionality. To enable these students to fulfil their potential, it is vital to give everyone the opportunity to excel.

### **Teaching and learning**

At the heart of the provision for high attaining students will be what happens in the classroom, in every lesson, on every day. **This is the direct responsibility of every class teacher.** Classrooms should be places where learners are inspired, encouraged and challenged to question, speculate

and hypothesise. SWA's teachers will acknowledge students' ability and differentiate so that all students have the best possible chance of learning and fulfilling their potential. The challenge for teachers is to make every lesson motivating and engaging, and to ensure that every child is effectively stretched and challenged.

When planning and delivering lessons teachers will consider how the needs of high attaining students might be met through:

- Open ended activities and investigation
- Aspirational expectation
- Enrichment
- Extension
- Pupil/student mentoring

Schemes of learning and departmental planning should provide learning programmes and resources to cater for the needs of high attaining students. SWA will provide a curriculum and learning experience that is broad and available to all learners and, in addition to formal lessons, this will include:

- A range of extra-curricular activities that enable all learners to develop their particular talents, e.g. sport, music, art, ICT and school visits.
- Access to centrally provided activities through The Society.
- Managing whole school resources e.g. library, ICT, art to allow learners to follow and develop particular interests.
- More curriculum provision in different subjects.

## **Roles and Responsibilities**

### Role of the Trust

BEST works in partnership with parents, schools/academies, the community and other agencies to provide opportunities for individual learners to demonstrate their full potential and develop individual aptitudes, abilities and talents. It acknowledges that learning is ongoing and takes place both within and beyond schools.

### Role of all staff at SWA

It is the responsibility of all staff to identify high attaining learners in consultation with parents/carers, students and other agencies, to maintain a register of these students and to establish an ethos and provision through which exceptional ability in all its forms is recognised, valued and celebrated. SWA will ensure that higher level targets are set to ensure that the needs of high attaining students are met.

### Role of the Governors

The Local Governing Body, in their role as 'critical friends', has a special responsibility for ensuring that the needs of all students are met. Governors set the strategy within which the policy is shaped and ensure that its implementation is monitored and evaluated. SWA helps the governors to do this by providing data on the progress of high attaining learners and involving governors in decisions about proposed policy changes.

### Role of the Principal and Senior Leaders

Principals and senior leaders are responsible for ensuring that:

- the curriculum meets the needs of individual learners, including those who are high attainers;
- sufficient resources, support, training and status are provided to the high attainers coordinators;
- there is an academy commitment to, and support for, high attainer learners;

- there is a SWA policy for high attainers that provides a clear framework for subject policies or guidelines:
- that the register of high attaining students is updated
- Lead the development, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the SWA's policy for high attaining students.
- Keep all interested parties, including parents, staff and the Governing Body (through the link governor for high attainers) informed of relevant activities and initiatives.

#### Role of the Head of Academia and Head of Academics (teaching and learning)

The high attainers team work together in a variety of capacities. The team is well supported by the Academy's senior leaders and have the authority to move things forward throughout the academy and is given time for their work. Both roles have specific responsibilities.

Head of Academia should seek to

- Act as the 'Champion' of able and talented students by creating and sustaining positive attitudes towards them, establishing a shared understanding of their academic, social and emotional needs and ensuring that all able students receive the right blend of challenge and support.
- Ensure that identification procedures are in place and are understood and implemented consistently by all staff throughout the academy (alongside the Head of Academics)
- Research and identify appropriate resources for high attaining students and advise and/or offer staff appropriate in-service opportunities regarding their use.
- Work with sixth form or teacher mentors, or other appropriate Academy personnel, to address the needs of underachieving and/or disadvantaged students who have been referred.
- To develop and promote out of lesson opportunities to support the progress of high attaining students.
- Monitor and evaluate the performance of the high attaining cohort, including analysis of data, and devise strategies to address issues identified.
- Maintain and develop staff awareness of high attainer issues, identify development needs and seek appropriate training opportunities.
- Maintain their own professional awareness and development of current issues relating to high attainers education including attendance at national and local training for school coordinators.
- Meet and work with all other co-coordinators, within BEST and the LA, to develop and implement a support programme for all schools, reporting progress on a regular basis.

Head of Academics (teaching and learning) should seek to:

- Act as the 'Champion' of able and talented students by creating and sustaining positive attitudes towards them, establishing a shared understanding of their academic, social and emotional needs and ensuring that all able students receive the right blend of challenge and support.
- Ensure that identification procedures are in place and are understood and implemented consistently by all staff throughout the academy (alongside the Head of Academia)
- Ensure that registers of high attaining students are completed, maintained and made available to staff as appropriate.
- Identify and promote teaching and learning opportunities within and across the curriculum and support colleagues in devising explicit activities including enrichment activities.
- Coordinate the provision of high attaining pupils in all year groups within the academy including the monitoring of planning, curriculum and schemes of work
- Identify and promote teaching and learning opportunities within and across the curriculum and support colleagues in devising explicit activities in lessons.
- Research and identify appropriate resources for high attaining pupils and advise and/or offer staff appropriate in-service opportunities regarding their use.

- Identify and analyse the ways in which classroom provision (curriculum and T&L) is effective
- Work with appropriate academy personnel to address the needs of underachieving and/or disadvantaged high attaining pupils who have been referred.
- Maintain and develop staff awareness of high attainer issues, identify development needs and seek appropriate training opportunities.
- Monitor and evaluate the performance of the high attaining pupils, including analysis of data, and devise strategies to address issues identified and ensure that relevant stakeholders are kept informed.
- Maintain their own professional awareness and development of current issues relating to high attainers education including attendance at national and local training for school coordinators.

#### Role of Curriculum Leader/Year Leaders/Key Stage Leader/Head of Department

These leaders will ensure that good provision is made for high attaining students through their support and monitoring of teachers' planning, schemes of learning and the performance of students. They will also support teachers in identifying students who have been considered high attaining.

#### Role of the teacher

The teacher is at the heart of SWA's provision for high attaining students. SWA's teachers cultivate effective learning environments by:

- providing suitably challenging activities and questions to extend the core learning tasks;
- encouraging students to take risks, to play with ideas and to regard all answers, whether right or wrong, as productive opportunities for learning;
- providing rigorous and constructive feedback to students on their work;
- looking for opportunities to widen the scope of learning activities beyond the Academy and the classroom.
- Providing the high attainers team with students who are excelling in their subject but not previously identified.

#### Role of the student

SWA's students are involved in articulating what helps them to be effective learners. They are given opportunities to:

- develop the language to discuss the process of their learning;
- participate in setting targets for learning including how they will evaluate the outcomes.

These approaches enable students to develop strategies for working successfully within a range of contexts so that they become more diverse and effective learners.

#### Liaison with parents/carers

SWA's parents and carers are notified that their child has been identified as a high attainer. They are advised about the provision made for their child's educational needs.

SWA actively encourage parents/carers to inform the Academy of their child's specific accomplishments and skills achieved outside school, so that we can recognise and build on these strengths within the curriculum.

It may arise that a student is identified in the top 5–10% in a school but, on transfer to a different school, no longer falls into that band of ability and is, therefore, no longer on the school's high attainers register. However, differentiated classroom experiences are part of every-day teaching and extra-curricular activities are never restricted to members of a high attainers register.

### **3. Monitoring and Evaluation**

SWA's policy for high attainers is reviewed two yearly or as required to ensure that our students are realising their capabilities. Essential components of our monitoring include:

- The use of assessment data to provide appropriate learning for high attaining students.
- Regular review of the progress of the high attaining cohort.
- The effectiveness of student tracking and Teaching and Learning Survey.

### **4. Implementation and Review**

This policy will be made known to all staff, parents/carers and governors, and published on the Academy website. Copies are also available upon request from the Academy office. This policy will be reviewed two yearly or as required.

Staff training needs are identified through:

- Performance management
- Departmental meetings
- School Improvement Plan
- Curriculum reviews.

### **5. Author and Date**

Approved by BEST Principals February 2015

Updated by Associate Principal (K. Bridge) – June 2016

Reviewed by David Hall – November 2018

Updated by David Hall – January 2019

Reviewed and updated by Clare Hood – November 2021

Date ratified by Governors – December 2021

Next review date – November 2023