



# Brentwood School

## SENIOR SCHOOL ACADEMIC ENRICHMENT POLICY

### (Including Able & Talented)

#### Introduction

All children have the right to a broad, balanced and relevant education that serves to provide continuity and progression whilst taking individual differences into account. In our School we aim to provide a curriculum that is appropriate to the specific needs and abilities of all of our children. We plan our teaching and learning in such a way that we enable each child to aspire to the highest level of personal achievement. This policy outlines the School's practice and procedures relating to academic enrichment for all, and the specific support extended to pupils identified as exceptionally able or talented.

We embrace a 'growth mind-set' philosophy and believe that all children have the potential for profound intellectual, cultural, emotional and spiritual growth. Consequently, we consider *all* of our pupils to be able and talented and, at Brentwood School, we extend the provision of academic and co-curricular enrichment to all. This inclusive approach is predicated upon a recognition that it is our responsibility, as educators, to help all children to identify their particular intellectual passions, to nurture their creative instincts, to develop their cultural sensitivities and to support their sporting potential. This individualistic approach, underpinned by a firm belief in the unique potential of each child, guides and informs provision for all pupils.

All children possess the potential to improve their level of performance and to become more "able" by acquiring, consolidating and developing their skills through the application of a conscientious and assiduous work ethic and the provision of learning opportunities that inspire and challenge them. However, it is educationally appropriate to identify some pupils as "exceptionally able" and their individual needs require a carefully tailored provision.

In our nomenclature, "**Talented**" children are those who are able in Art, Drama, Music and Sport. "Exceptionally talented" children are those who require special provision. The School considers that "**exceptionally able and talented**" pupils are those pupils who achieve, or have the ability to achieve, at a level significantly in advance of the average for their year group. At Brentwood we consider all such performers to be considered as "exceptionally able or talented". In addition, there may be any number of pupils who are considered **able and talented** due to a particularly strong ability within a specific subject(s).

Teachers monitor the performance and progress of all children using a rigorous cycle of assessments and examinations. Whilst we maintain a register of those pupils identified as 'able and talented' our approach is dynamic and proactive and relies upon putting in place coherent strategies and providing meaningful opportunities for each individual child. We endeavour to recognise and develop the potential of all our pupils and we believe that each child has a unique contribution to make to our community and society.

## **Identification Strategies**

We use a wide range of strategies to identify exceptionally able and talented children. We liaise closely with the Able and Talented Co-ordinator in the Preparatory School and those charged with similar responsibilities within our feeder schools in order to share information relating to academic performance and to ensure a smooth transition to the Senior School.

Brentwood has a process of identification and review which is ongoing rather than episodic. The A&T register is a constantly evolving document rather than a static statement of fact at a particular moment in time. We use multiple criteria and sources of evidence to identify specific abilities and talents. The identification process is inclusive and designed to identify pupils with potential as well as those already performing at a high level. It does not disadvantage any group of learners on the basis of ethnicity, gender, disability or specific learning needs.

## **The Monitoring Process**

The Head of Academic Enrichment (line managed by the Deputy Head Academic) monitors pupils in each year group, in liaison with the Heads of Year. The Head of Academic Enrichment also has oversight of academic societies including JSABS, the Junior Colloquium and SABS.

The Head of Department leads the department in determining the criteria for exceptional ability and those with exceptional talent. The Head of Department monitors the quality and nature of the provision and ensures its implementation throughout the department.

By virtue of the register, individual teachers know who is designated as Able and Talented within each year group, as well as within their specific subject. Similarly, teachers are cognisant of the criteria for Ability or Talent as articulated and defined within their subject area. They monitor the progress of individual pupils and endeavour to meet their needs, for example, by providing differentiated tasks and contributing to the academic enrichment and co-curricular provision within their subject area.

The Head of Elite University Applications co-ordinates and monitors the quality of provision for Oxford and Cambridge applicants and he is assisted by the Director of the International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme, who helps to engage pupils in Creative and Critical Thinking. Designated members of staff are responsible for preparing pupils applying for highly competitive courses such as medicine, dentistry, veterinary science and law. Specific provision is available for those applying to overseas universities such as Harvard and Yale.

## **Resources and Subject Specific Strategies:**

All teachers cater for the needs of particularly Able and Talented pupils in their classes, whether those classes are streamed or of mixed ability. In particular teachers:

- have high expectations of all pupils and set challenging learning objectives
- foster the development of higher-order skills such as analysis, evaluation, synthesis, judgement, creative thinking, persuasive writing and delivering presentations
- ask higher-order questions (c.f. Bloom's taxonomy), that will engage and challenge pupils and encourage deeper thinking
- plan lessons and activities that enable pupils to access top grades
- make clear the criteria for success; ensure pupils have access to mark schemes and exemplars of annotated top-level answers so that they understand what is required for an 'A/A\*' answer
- encourage responsible risk-taking, unusual ideas and creative solutions
- seek opportunities for cross-curricular links

- set investigative or problem-solving tasks requiring autonomy and self-motivated research on the part of pupils
- pupils are taught independent research skills so they can pursue their own lines of enquiry as part of the KS4 Human Universe programme
- provide opportunities for pupils to work collaboratively
- encourage pupils to reflect on and take responsibility for their own progress and set targets for improvement
- recognise and reward flair, as well as achievement and effort and, in so doing, make explicit what has been achieved, so that others can see how to get there
- use the Able and Talented register to identify pupils who may need stretching further in the classroom, or encouraging to engage in co-curricular programmes. Concerns about underachievement are shared with the relevant Head of Department and Year Group teams.

*Every department:*

- has its own Able and Talented policy, specific to the provision within that department but compatible and in accordance with the aims and strategy of this policy. The department policy is reviewed annually to ensure that it is meeting the needs of the Able and Talented pupils in that subject
- considers the needs of Able and Talented pupils when creating and updating schemes of work and learning objectives
- establishes programmes of acceleration and/or enrichment in their subject, including departmental societies or other activities for both Lower School and Upper School pupils (which are open to all); older pupils help organise or run these activities.
- creates subject-specific activities which stretch, challenge and motivate all pupils
- rewards and celebrate achievement within their subject
- advises and supports Sixth Form pupils applying to Oxbridge or other universities to read their subject, or indeed any other interested pupils, by discussing course options, recommending additional reading and offering additional classes (which may overlap with departmental academic societies)
- ensures new members of the department are trained in the use of, and are implementing, this policy
- devotes time regularly (within the context of departmental meetings and INSET ) to discussing pedagogical issues and to ensuring high expectations.

**Wider Provision for Exceptionally Able Pupils:**

- Extensive setting in the 1<sup>st</sup> to 5<sup>th</sup> Year
- A weekly award (sponsored by the Headmaster) to award particular academic endeavour across the curriculum
- 1<sup>st</sup> Year pupils are encouraged to take part in the 1<sup>st</sup> Year Challenge which engages them in three creative tasks
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Year Headmaster's Award develops this further with a focus on extending academic interests
- 1<sup>st</sup> - 2<sup>nd</sup> Form: Junior Colloquium
- 2<sup>nd</sup> – 3<sup>rd</sup> Form: Junior Academic Enrichment Academy (residential academic enrichment summer course held at Leiston Abbey)
- 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Year Junior Sir Antony Browne Society
- Sixth Form: Sir Antony Browne Society
- Additional meetings and tutorial support sessions
- Provision of peripatetic music and drama lessons, together with specialist art and sports coaching enables talented pupils to realise their potential
- There are special programmes for potential Oxbridge, Medical, Dentistry and Veterinary Science pupils as well as potential Law pupils. These pupils are mentored and have tutorial style support sessions. Additionally, they benefit from visiting speakers, interview opportunities and a programme of creative and critical thinking lectures. Pupils following A

Level courses undertake in-house extended research projects, whilst IB pupils complete the Extended Essay and Theory of Knowledge course

- We seek to reinforce the concept of independent learning in seeking suitable opportunities from outside agencies such as summer schools, essay competitions, Mathematics and Science Olympiads
- We encourage a culture where it is perceived by pupils as a positive quality to be 'bright'.

### **Wider provision for Exceptionally Talented pupils:**

- The extra-curricular programme caters for exceptionally talented pupils, for example, through sports teams, musical ensembles and concerts, art and drama clubs, exhibitions, productions and workshops
- Opportunities for pupils to receive specialist coaching outside of school are also encouraged in the form of attendance at specialist music schools, sports clubs, academies and conservatoires
- Borough, county and national representative honours are also encouraged and celebrated
- The rewards system, including colours, provides acknowledgement and praise of pupil achievements
- Mentoring Programme: in some cases, Able and Talented pupils are assigned subject mentors to ensure that they are being provided with opportunities to develop their interests under the tutelage/direction of an acknowledged expert.

Further details about the provision for pupils who are identified as being able and talented in an academic subject or talented in Music, Sport or Visual Arts can be found in the relevant Department Handbooks.

### **Staff Development and Training**

The School makes use of staff training and encourages staff to attend courses and conferences on issues regarding able and talented children. Subject specific training provided by the International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme provides excellent advice and guidance with regards to teaching pupils of all abilities.