SOLIHULL

Stretch & Challenge Policy
Senior School

Owner: Senior School Deputy Head: Academic
Reviewer: Senior School Head of Teaching and Learning
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Version 10

School

Introduction

We recognise that the majority of pupils at Solihull School perform well above the national average in terms of academic achievement. We believe that stretch is important for all of our pupils. To this end we aim to provide a rigorous curriculum which allows each child to reach for the highest level of personal achievement. Similarly, we believe that intellectual curiosity and 'stretch' should extend beyond syllabus requirements and to that end we provide a wide range of academic co-curricular extension groups which allow pupils of all ages to excel. Finally, we recognise that some pupils are particularly gifted academically. These pupils are identified through our Scholars and Oxbridge programme and have additional stretch opportunities.

Our school's aims talk of valuing the individuality of all our children. The aims of our school make specific reference to teaching and learning that considers the needs of all children. They also identify the commitment to giving all our children every opportunity to achieve the highest of standards. This policy guides the way in which this happens for our more able and very able children.

1. Aims and objectives

Through this policy we aim to:

- generate a culture of intellectual excitement and curiosity;
- respond to the individual needs and interests of our pupils in order for them to reach their full potential;
- ensure that we challenge and extend children through the work that we set them;
- encourage children to think and work independently.

2. Identification of Able, Gifted and Talented Pupils

Most Able:

We use a range of strategies to identify more able and very able children. The identification process is ongoing and begins when the child joins our school. Each child's pre-school record gives details of their achievements and interests in particular areas. Discussions with parents and carers enable us to add further details to these records.

Upon entry to the senior school, pupils who have performed exceptionally well in the 11+ examination and interview are offered an Academic Scholarship. Those pupils awarded a scholarship then are encouraged to take part in the academic enrichment programme. Similarly, both internal and external pupils can opt to take Scholarships at 16+.

Gifted:

In the first term of every year Heads of Department are asked to identify, through consultation with teachers, pupils who are particularly gifted in their subject. This information is used by the relevant subject teachers to differentiate their responses and interactions with pupils and held centrally by the PA to the Deputy Heads.

Talented:

At the start of every year the Directors of Sport, Music, Performing Arts and Debating are asked to identify particularly talented pupils. This information is used by coaches and teachers to differentiate response to pupils and this information is also disseminated to all staff on the AGT list.

All children undergo baseline assessment within the first half-term of joining the school. MidYIS tests are taken by all who join in the Thirds. The Learning Support department also administers LASS screening for all new entrants at 11. This gives information about their developing skills and aptitudes across several areas of learning. Pupils who join the school for the sixth form take the ALIS TDA test. These results, combined with their GCSE scores and information from their previous school(s), are the key indicators at this stage.

As the children progress through the school, we test them regularly to ensure that they are making the sort of progress that we are expecting of them in their personal targets. We identify them as very able or gifted children when they achieve high levels of attainment across the curriculum, or in particular skills or aspects of subjects. Heads of Section have an overview of each child's progress across each section of the school.

Teachers discuss the children's progress with parents at the Parents' Evenings and report annually on each child's progress. In addition, the Head of Academic Scholars monitors the particular progress of Scholars and ensures that they are being stretched and fulfilling their potential.

3. Teaching and Learning Style

Teachers in our school plan carefully to meet the learning needs of all our children. We give all children the opportunity to show what they know, understand and can do, and we achieve this in a variety of ways when planning for children's learning by providing:

- a common activity that allows the children to respond at their own level
- an enrichment activity that broadens a child's learning in a particular skill or knowledge area
- an individual activity within a common theme that reflects a greater depth of understanding and higher level of attainment
- the opportunity for children to progress through their work at their own rate of learning

Children meet a variety of organisational strategies as they move through the school. Each strategy supports all children in their learning but gives due regard to the very able and gifted learners.

Our setting policy provides a structural underpinning to the necessary differentiation for some subjects.

Learning is also enriched through regular homework activities linked to the work being undertaken in classes. This offers teachers a further opportunity to set work at the level of individual children.

4. Co-Curricular Activities

We have an extremely extensive academic co-curricular provision which includes over 25 different academic clubs and societies and covers a wide range of subject areas and interests. Examples of which can be seen below:

- The Junior, Thirds, Lower, Middle and Senior School Debating Societies
- Junior & Senior Maths Club
- Chess Club
- The English Society Talks and the English+ Group
- Scribbling Nibblers Lower School Creative Writing Group
- Religion and Philosophy Discussion Group
- Extended Project Qualification
- Financial Literacy Course
- Young Enterprise
- Model United Nations
- The German Magazine
- Engineering Education Scheme, Green Power Racing and Physics Extension Group
- Classics and Greek Societies
- History Extension Group
- Politics Magazine, Politics Book Club and the Politics Film Club
- Biology Chemistry and Physics Olympiad
- The Society of Biology Charter Lectures
- Med/Vets Programme
- Oxbridge Programme
- Coding Club

Our extensive co-curricular provision provides many forums for the gifted and talented child to further develop his or her talents. These clubs and societies provide spaces for the pupils to present material themselves – Debating, Maths talks etc., and also exposes them to outside speakers – English Society etc.

We enter a number of competitions. Particular successes have been had in the Maths and Biology Olympiads and competitive Debating, in which we have ranked top in Central England for the last six years.

The children will also have the opportunity to experience a range of educational visits that further enrich and develop their learning. Recent examples include – Biology workshops at the University of Birmingham, trips to the Houses of Parliament, extension trips to Oxford University and visits to the local business centre to look at strategies and architecture.

The Classics Society which attends lectures and tours local, national and international sites of interest.

Foreign tours which further allow our pupils to stretch themselves beyond the curriculum include the annual Geography Fieldtrip to Iceland, the Classics society visits to ancient ruins and the recent expedition to Peru.

5. Head of Teaching and Learning

The Head of Teaching & Learning is responsible for overseeing the stretch and challenge opportunities within the school.

The Head of Academic Scholars co-ordinates provision for all Academic Scholars and Exhibition Award holders.

Together they undertake the following:

- overseeing the selection of Scholars, annual projects, monitoring performance and evening events
- working with HOD's to ensure that lessons stretch and support the most able pupils
- providing advice and support to staff on teaching and learning strategies for more able and very able children
- monitoring the co-curricular programme's contribution to our provision for the most able
- identifying extension opportunities both locally and further afield