



DOWNSEND
SCHOOL

Able, Gifted and Talented Policy

Statement of Philosophy

At Downsend School we believe that all children 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.

All students have individual needs, which puts personalised learning at the heart of our teaching and learning. We are mindful of the importance of our role in helping to develop the whole child and not just one aspect of their abilities. Gifted and talented pupils should be given the opportunity to study subjects to a greater breadth and depth. We aim to provide opportunities to develop specific skills and talents.

Downsend School is committed to providing an enjoyable and sufficiently challenging curriculum for all its students. In addition, we will provide opportunities to identify and in turn nurture those who are more able.

This document outlines Downsend's practice for working with gifted and talented pupils and illustrates our commitment to them.

Definitions

Gifted refers to students who achieve, or have the ability to achieve, significantly above average compared with other students in their year group at Downsend. A **gift** may be seen in the following areas:

- Reasoning - Verbal and Non-verbal Reasoning
- Maths
- English
- Science
- ICT
- Geography/ History
- Languages – MFL/ classical

Talented refers to students who achieve, or have the ability to achieve, significantly above average compared with other students in their year group at Downsend. A **talent** may be seen in the following areas:

- Creative and Performing Arts – Art, Design & Technology, Drama, Music
- Physical Education / Sporting ability
- Extracurricular pastimes – eg. Chess

More able refers to students who achieve, or have the ability to achieve, above average in one or more subject areas or domains, including areas outside the main school curriculum.

Exceptionally able refers to students who exhibit outstanding ability in one or more subject areas, and is only met on rare occasions.

Dual Exceptionality refers to students who are gifted or talented but also subject to a barrier of learning, such as Asperger's Syndrome, or a physical disability.

It is worth remembering that able pupils can also be:

- ◆ of high ability but of low motivation
- ◆ of good verbal ability but have poor writing skills
- ◆ very able but with a short attention span
- ◆ very able with poor social skills
- ◆ keen to disguise their abilities.

Identification

In identifying gifted and talented pupils, Downsend makes use of a broad range of methods.

Formal Data Gathering:

- GL Assessments: Reception,
- Year One – Progress in English and Progress in Maths
- CATs Assessments: Yrs 2-8
 - Developed ability – Verbal and Non-verbal Reasoning
 - Reading
 - Mathematics/Quantitative/Spatial
- Internal School Formal Assessment
- External School Formal Assessment

Observation of the Learning Environment:

- Teacher observation of oral responses – classroom
- Teacher observation of written responses – classroom
- Teacher observation of physical ability – classroom/ outdoors
- Teacher nomination – class teacher/ tutor/ subject teacher/ peripatetic teacher
- Specific criteria developed by subject teachers in consultation with Head of Department and G&T Co-ordinators in both Lower and Upper School
- Parental nomination
- Outside agency nomination

Provision of opportunities:

- Through differentiated activities within class lessons
- Through 'Curriculum' activity weeks
- Through Puzzle Clubs / Activity & Enrichment Days
- Through small 'Challenge Focus Groups'

Downsend School makes sure the identification process is rigorous, transparent and fair. We do not discriminate against any group of children and include pupils who are late developers.

Where attainment is not high but there are indications of potential high ability, the school strives to identify that potential and nurture it.

Testing of individual pupils will be carried out by the Special Needs Co-ordinator and/or the Gifted and Talented Co-ordinators if appropriate.

The register of children is reviewed throughout the school year.

Evaluation

As with all of our school policies, the transfer to consistent practice across the school is of paramount importance and therefore we must evaluate our progress. The responsibility for evaluation will fall to the G&T Co-ordinators, who will report directly to the Curriculum Manager and the Senior Management Team, as appropriate.

Monitoring

The teachers assess the progress of gifted and talented pupils through normal classroom practice. Additional monitoring is done by the Class Teachers/Form Tutors, who look at pupils' work on a termly basis. The Curriculum Manager and G&T Co-ordinators also analyse and collate the results of national and school-based tests, which provide valuable information for future planning.

Arrangements for co-ordinating provision

G&T Co-ordinators: Downsend School has an appointed G&T coordinator in both the Upper and Lower Schools to co-ordinate and champion the school's response to meeting the needs of gifted and talented children. The G&T coordinator also liaises with the Pre-Prep staff to help identify and support the needs of gifted and talented children.

Schemes of Work: All schemes of work are planned by Year Group staff in the Pre-Preps, Heads of Department (or Heads of Year in the Junior School) to include specific enrichment materials and ideas on a topic by topic basis.

Responsibility for all: An awareness amongst all staff of their role in the identification of and teaching of G&T students, based on subject specific criteria.

G&T Register: The establishment of a register of gifted and talented students established by the Curriculum Manager and G&T Co-ordinators and published to all curriculum areas.

CPD: Continuing Professional Development for staff that develops teaching and learning styles that take account of differentiation, enrichment and extension within subject areas.

Challenge Focus Groups: Children will be invited to Challenge Groups, eg. Puzzle Challenge Clubs and Reading Challenge. The children will be selected by the G&T Co-ordinators in discussion with Heads of Department./ Heads of School and Heads of Year.

Responsibilities

Teachers:

- To identify the students who meet the criteria
- To use enrichment / extension materials appropriately
- To identify and address underachievement

Heads of Year:

- To identify the students who meet the criteria
- To plan for and use enrichment / extension materials appropriately
- To identify and address underachievement
- To provide the Curriculum Manager and G&T Co-ordinators with assessment results.

Heads of Department:

- To prepare subject specific criteria with the G&T Co-ordinators
- To inform department staff of these criteria
- To identify the students which meet the criteria
- To pass these names on to the G&T Co-ordinators
- To provide schemes of work that contain enrichment / extension materials for identified students
- To ensure that enrichment / extension materials are being used appropriately by staff.
- To encourage children to enter local and national events and competitions.

G&T Co-ordinators

- To prepare from prior attainment data, a register of the top 10% of each cohort year.
- To gather names of identified students from all areas of the curriculum
- To categorise this information in a register, circulated to the Senior Management Team and all teaching staff.
- To meet with Heads of Department and Heads of School on a biannual to review provision within departments.
- To prepare courses of action for children who are identified as able in many areas (by agreement with senior management).
- To monitor the provision of G&T students
- To evaluate the progress made by G&T students on an annual basis.
- To lead / co-ordinate challenge focus groups

Curriculum Manager

- To monitor schemes of work and ensure that they allow opportunities for enrichment and extension.
- To work with the G&T Co-ordinators to oversee the process and activity
- To include items concerning the provision of G&T children on meeting agendas.
- To ensure that staff are made aware of opportunities for CPD development in supporting the needs of G&T children.

Classroom Strategies

At Downsend, we acknowledge the importance of establishing the prior knowledge, understanding and skills pupils have to avoid unnecessary repetition of work, which can be demotivating. We are alert to the pupils who are very able but who are underachieving.

Through effective planning, assessment, record-keeping and liaison with children's previous teachers we aim to:

- ◆ establish what they have done previously in order to prevent repetition
- ◆ reduce peer pressure to underachieve
- ◆ provide challenges through high-quality tasks for enrichment and extension rather than acceleration
- ◆ plan work, so that there is always extension material for the able children
- ◆ differentiate appropriately
- ◆ allow the children to make choices about, and organise, their own work
- ◆ set individual, challenging targets
- ◆ set individual homework where necessary
- ◆ expect them to carry out, unaided, tasks that stretch their capabilities
- ◆ develop their ability to evaluate and check work
- ◆ improve study skills

At Downsend, gifted and talented pupils are encouraged to carry out extra research work in their own time to further develop their knowledge.

Extra-curricular Activities

Downsend provides a wide range of extra activities for our gifted and talented pupils. Out of the classroom pupils can:

- ◆ take part in extra-curricular activities and clubs, e.g. sports, art, drama, music, foreign language, ICT and electronics
- ◆ take part in local, regional or national competitions, quizzes and debates
- ◆ go on educational visits
- ◆ go on residential trips both abroad and in the UK