



Chenderit School
A VISUAL ARTS COLLEGE

aim high

CHENDERIT SCHOOL MORE AND MOST ABLE POLICY

REVIEWED BY GOVERNING BODY – September 2020

ADOPTED BY GOVERNING BODY – September 2020

Specific temporary changes as a result of the Covid-19 outbreak and partial closure of schools from March 20th until the end of July are identified in text boxes.

Aims and rationale

We believe that the most effective way of ensuring that more and most able students achieve their potential in an inclusive comprehensive school is by creating a culture of high expectations for all students. Effective teaching of the more and most able will create opportunities for excellence for all students. Careful tracking of the progress of more and most able students allows us to monitor and intervene; this process supports the progress of other key groups: for example, boys, students with particular learning needs or disadvantaged students. Many of these groups overlap: our aim is to recognise prior achievement, identify potential and pursue excellence for all students.

We have deliberately chosen to use the terms “more and most able” rather than “gifted”, because “gifted” has unhelpful connotations of ease, or of being special; if we accept Carol Dweck’s concept of a “growth mindset”, application, effort and willingness to learn from our successes and failures is of greater significance than having a “gift”. The concept of mastery implies that all students should be expected to master knowledge, skills and understanding to a high level. The phrase “more and most able” is rooted in evidence: we are focusing on students who have demonstrated their ability; the terms are based on prior attainment, not magical thinking.

The term “talented” may refer to skills and expertise in sport and the arts that might manifest itself either in or outside school, but we no longer use this label to identify groups of students.

We are also committed to the belief that some students have an asymmetric ability profile: they may be very good at reading and poor at writing. Although they may not fall into the group of “more and most able” they have the capacity to achieve excellence, and deserve the chances to do so.

Objectives

We need to ensure that each of our systems and practices help fulfil our aims, by

- Identifying the more and most able at the point of transition
- Ensuring staff have access to information about prior learning and attainment
- Tracking progress
- Ensuring our curriculum is well-sequenced, appropriate and challenging
- Teaching to the top – a mastery approach
- Intervening to provide appropriate support
- Supporting disadvantaged pupils
- Offering appropriate enrichment

- Celebrating success
- Sharing good practice in teaching

Identifying the more and most able, and talented, at the point of transition

When students arrive in year 7 we routinely collect a range of information that helps us assess their prior learning and attainment:

- Teacher assessment in writing
- Standardised testing scores in maths and reading, with a score of 100 as an average for the cohort as a whole (SATs)
- For most students, a benchmark piece of writing completed in their primary schools
- Evidence collected in discussion with primary teachers by our head of transition, Ruth Hoose, and, where appropriate, our SENDCo, Debbie Coleman

All staff have access to the data from SATs in their SIMs markbooks. Students are identified in SIMs as being in one of three broad bands HML – High ability, middle ability or low ability, based on their reading and maths scores at the end of KS2. These are the categories that were used in RAISEonline and now in the IDSR. In the past, students averaging level 5 in reading and maths would be in the High band: we have estimated an equivalent scale for students who are now on scaled scores. We describe students in the High band as More Able.

Our target setting and tracking of student progress is based on a flightpath model. The flightpath is based on KS2 SATs information – reading and maths. We have five bands: the highest of these is the blue band – students who should be targeting grade 9 at GCSE. This small group of students is the group we term “most able”. The number of students we have in each band varies, according to the prior attainment of the cohort. Because some students in the past sat Level 6 maths papers at the end of key stage 2, we have more students in year 10 and 11 who are identified as most able because of their maths ability than their ability in reading, where 5a was the highest grade we have.

We have retained the term “talented” to describe students who participate and show skill in sporting or cultural activities.

In 2020, the position is different, owing to the cancellation of SATs. While we do have evidence from discussion with primary teachers, we have no standardized data. We have taken the decision to carry out the CATs testing in the autumn term. These are a range of tests of cognitive ability that do not assess the taught curriculum. They will give us an indication of the differing ability of students, and allow us to identify More and Most Able students.

How do staff access and use this information about prior learning and attainment?

Staff registers in SIMs contain most of this information, and staff use it when creating seating plans, and assessing work. This means high prior ability students are easy to identify; staff should use this information when planning work to offer appropriate challenge all students, including the most able and the most able disadvantaged students.

In order to set appropriate targets for our students we have developed a flightpath model, using the best information we have about likely progression from key stage 2 to 4. Our targets are demanding, so that students are targeted to make progress in line with that achieved by the top 30% of students nationally. We have aligned the new grades and KS2 scores as carefully as we can, and created five flightpath bands. Students who come in with significantly above average data at KS2 are in a band that targets attainment at Grade 9

GCSE. Our targets for all students, but particularly the more able, are therefore challenging.

To ensure staff are constantly aware of an appropriate level of challenge for each student, a target grade sticker is placed on the inside of exercise books.

In normal years, an even more powerful piece of visual evidence is stuck into the back of books – a photocopy of the piece of work written in primary schools and the piece written in transfer week. Staff and students, at a glance, can see whether students are working to their potential. This will not be the case in 2020.

How do we track progress of more able and the most able students?

Students are assessed in all subjects, three times per year, and a summary report is emailed home. Staff assess the level of attainment of students, in terms of five categories: working at age-related expectations, those working significantly above or above, those working below or significantly below. In KS3, our reporting system automatically completes the “progress” judgement. Where students joined us with above-average attainment and have now dipped so that their attainment is average, the report will determine that they are “Below target” in terms of progress.

In KS4, tracking is easier, because we can use predicted GCSE grades. Once again, we want to see students maintain their flightpath band.

We use Attainment 8 and Progress 8 data to ensure our expectations are high enough, and that students are making progress in line with national expectations.

Our tracking therefore enables staff to identify underperformance by the more and most able, and disadvantaged students in particular.

Monitoring and accountability

We have mechanisms and practices that ensure the progress of the more and most able is regularly reviewed and intervention put in place. Each of the following has a specific responsibility:

- The class teacher plans, sets and marks work, assesses progress and puts in place remediation if necessary.
- The head of subject monitors the progress of the whole cohort, paying particular attention to the progress of DP, more able and more able disadvantaged students. Where intervention is needed, appropriate action is taken.
- The tutor monitors evidence of progress in reports and, where there are concerns or underperformance in a number of subjects, investigates and works with the student and their parents to provide appropriate support.
- The head of learning assesses the progress of the cohort as a whole, paying particular attention to the progress of the more and most able, with specific focus on disadvantaged students.
- The head and leadership team monitor progress data for the school as a whole, with a focus on the key groups.
- Governors are regularly presented with reports allowing them to ask school leaders questions about the progress of these key groups.

Subject leaders are responsible for ensuring that staff in their teams assess in ways that are standardised and moderated, and therefore make valid judgements.

During lesson observations, observers look specifically at the progress of disadvantaged students and the more able.

The School Improvement plan has the progress of these groups as a specific focus.

The governors receive, review and approve our “More and Most Able” policy.

Ensuring our curriculum is appropriate and challenging

In order to build on the improved knowledge, skills and understanding of incoming year 7 students and make good progress towards more challenging GCSE exams, subject teams have been asked to raise their expectations of what students can do in KS3, year 7 and 8. Training activities, including whole-school moderation and standardisation activities allow staff to see what raised expectations look like, in different subject areas.

All teams have been asked to collect examples of good work at different standards, to show students “what a good one looks like” – WAGOLLS.

In writing our schemes of work we set high expectations for all students – ARE – and make explicit what we expect of more able students at each stage of their school career. Staff are using markschemes and exemplification to make clear our expectations for individual tasks. In KS3, year 7 and 8, we use five levels of response:

- Exceeding
- Extending
- Secure
- Developing
- Emerging

In our reporting to parents, in KS3 we share brief descriptions of what ARE look like in each subject, at each stage of the year, and what work that is significantly above ARE looks like.

In KS4 and KS5 we use exam board criteria, which are regularly shared with students.

Teaching to the top – a mastery approach

Ways of differentiating in order to support and challenge the more and most able have long been the subject of debate. In a number of subjects the timetable allows setting based on prior attainment, and in key stage 3, heads of subject may choose to group students in this way, and do so, for example in maths. This allows material to be covered in appropriate depth and detail in a different classes.

However, in even the most rigorously setted subjects, each class will contain a range of ability; students may be strong readers, but indifferent writers; many subjects, for example, option subjects will regularly have a mix of abilities and skills.

In some areas, heads of subject decide that mixed groups are the most effective way of organizing students, and this approach is one favoured by some aspects of the mastery approach to teaching.

The growth mindset, promoted by Carol Dweck¹, has been very influential in schools recently. It offers the positive message that all students can achieve:

In a growth mindset, people believe that their most basic abilities can be developed through dedication and hard work—brains and talent are just the starting point.

At the same time, based on teaching that has been observed in the China and South East

¹ <https://mindsetonline.com/abouttheauthor/index.html>

Asia, the idea of mastery has been promoted in mathematics in particular, and is central to the maths curriculum implemented since 2015².

What these philosophies have in common is the idea that we can do more to nurture excellence in all students. In a mastery classroom, the more and most able do not race ahead onto more stretching material, they gain a deeper understanding of the same ideas and concepts being studied elsewhere in the class.

A mastery approach does not imply that all students proceed through a series of exercises at the same pace. There is whole-class teaching of key concepts, but, for example, at the end of a lesson, students who have been studying a concept at greater depth might demonstrate to the class what they have discovered and accept questions from their peers.

Intervening to provide appropriate support

The progress of all students is tracked, and assessment evidence is analysed to spot patterns of underachievement. Comparison of work completed in year 6 and in year 7 allows staff to spot a dip in achievement; normally, in November, year 6 staff from our local primaries visit to share a work scrutiny of year 7 work with Chenderit staff. Year 6 staff will be keen to see that their former students have made good progress.

Class teachers and heads of subject will adjust teaching and schemes of work to ensure the more and most able continue to make good progress. A range of intervention strategies – contact with home, extra support and challenge from staff in school – will be applied to address the problem.

Year heads regularly focus their attention on the progress of MAMA students, and meet them to discuss their work.

Supporting disadvantaged pupils

Of greatest concern to those who work in education Sir Michael Wilshaw (HMCI) and Ofsted, is the underachievement of the more and most able disadvantaged students. These are subject to particular monitoring, and the range of interventions in place for disadvantaged students (for example, support to buy resources or go on educational visits, mentoring and access to inspiring speakers) has particular relevance to this group of students.

We are determined that no students should underachieve at school as a consequence of a lack of resources, of all different kinds, including cultural capital, at home. A statement of how we support disadvantaged students is published on the school website.

Offering appropriate enrichment

We offer a wide range of sporting and cultural activities, visits, performances and competitions that provide many opportunities for students to excel. We expect students with particular skills, our “talented” pupils to be active participants in these activities. There may well be social reasons, for example lack of transport, that limit access for some students who would benefit from taking part in these activities: part of our tutor programme is to encourage students to record and keep a log or portfolio of evidence of their participation so that we can support those who face barriers – social or possibly emotional – to joining in.

Celebrating success

We do not want any student to hold back from displaying their skills because they believe

² National Centre for Excellence in the Teaching of Mathematics <https://www.ncetm.org.uk/resources/47230>

their success might be frowned upon. We challenge this attitude by expecting high quality effort and presentation from all students and celebrating success in all its forms:

- Sharing good work in class and on the website
- Displaying examples of good work around the school
- Using Wagolls to inspire students to produce outstanding work

Sharing good practice in teaching

When observing lessons our school leaders look out for good examples of high-quality teaching of the more and most able students so that we can share good practice. Middle leaders in school have also contributed to a collection of teaching strategies, shared with all staff. Good practice is regularly shared on training days or in staff information meetings.

The opportunities provided by educational technology (EdTech)

The period of partial closure from 20th March until the end of the summer term provided a tremendous stimulus to the development of the use of technology to support learning. Staff became familiar with the use of the Google suite of software to manager learning, and to allow students to respond in increasingly sophisticated ways. MAMA students will be well-placed to make the most of the new opportunities this technology offers.

A renewed focus on MAMA in 2019 – 20 onwards

In their meetings in the autumn of 2019 governors rightly identified that despite detailed policies and guidance to staff, progress of MAMA varied, year-on-year, and it is hard to see a consistent trend of above average achievement.

They asked the leadership team to refocus the MAMA strategy. Training was planned for later in the academic year, but unfortunately had to be postponed as a result of the partial closure of schools.

However, one outcome was put in place before closure, and will form the basis of future work. A template grid was drawn up, in line with other self-evaluation tools, that asks each curriculum area to identify areas of strength, weakness and training and development needs. This grid will form the basis of regular discussion, through the team review and exams and curriculum analysis discussions.

A copy of the template is attached as an Appendix.

More and most able policy and practice: Curriculum 11-18

Planning		KS3 RAG	KS4 RAG	KS5 RAG	Evidence and comments
1	The curriculum is ambitious and constructed so that students are supported to develop the knowledge, skills and understanding needed to achieve the highest grades in year 11.				
2	Learning is carefully sequenced so that students build knowledge, skills and understanding cumulatively so that they can reach the highest grades.				

Teaching		KS3 RAG	KS4 RAG	KS5 RAG	Evidence and comments
3	Clear explanation and presentation conveys information at level that allows students to know and understand complex ideas and detailed information				
4	Work is well-pitched so that it provides an appropriate level of challenge for MAMA students				
5	Teaching communicates high expectations : students are expected to know more and remember more and do more at an appropriately high level				
6	Work builds on prior learning: the teacher knows the students and is aware of those capable of accessing the higher grades				

7	Questioning consolidates learning and prompts students to think more deeply, to apply their knowledge and reflect				
8	Teachers regularly share examples of high quality work to inspire and model “what a good one looks like”				

Assessing		KS3 RAG	KS4 RAG	KS5 RAG	Evidence and comments
9	Regular assessment promotes students to grasp each component to the highest level				
9	Effective assessment allows the teacher to judge whether students are on track to achieve the highest grades				
10	Effective assessment prompts teachers to identify gaps and adjust their teaching in the light of evidence – what do the students need to do next?				
11	Effective recording of assessments allow the teacher and team to identify underperformance and share information.				

Intervening		KS3 RAG	KS4 RAG	KS5 RAG	Evidence and comments
12	Accurate identification of students who are not producing work that is an appropriately high standard in in place				
13	Appropriate interventions are planned, take place and have an impact: more high quality work is evident				

	Reviewing	KS3 RAG	KS4 RAG	KS5 RAG	Evidence and comments
14	Evaluation of schemes of work leads to changes that improve the impact of teaching				

	Training and CPD	KS3 RAG	KS4 RAG	KS5 RAG	Evidence and comments
	Staff knowledge and skills are audited and gaps identified				
	Teachers acquire the knowledge they need to help students achieve the highest grades.				
	Staff support one another to share effective pedagogy – teaching that will provide access to the highest grades.				