



Charles Darwin School

Supporting Potential High Achievers Policy

Persons Responsible:

Governors: Curriculum Committee

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1. Overview

- 1.1. At Charles Darwin School we have students with a wide range of abilities and talents. Our most able students take part in enrichment activities designed to develop thinking, raise aspirations and foster an enquiring mind, thus gaining experiences to shape bright futures.
- 1.2. Parents may have been familiar with the term 'gifted and talented' in the past. We refer to students as Potential High Achievers (PHA) as we believe that to be gifted or talented is not acquired, but is earned through hard work, excellent effort and risk taking through learning. All students have the potential to be high achievers with the right attitude and hard work.
- 1.3. Using a range of data and information, students are identified, monitored and tracked, in terms of academic performance across all subjects, as well as participation in extracurricular activities, both within school and outside.
- 1.4. Whilst the choice of subjects for GCSE is ultimately the family responsibility, we would guide our highest achieving students to a broad academic pathway that provides a firm foundation at GCSE to aspire to our excellent Sixth Form and on to university.
- 1.5. Of course, our work at school needs support from home, as stretch and challenge outside of school come from the range of experiences that families share together, both intellectually and culturally. In lessons, expertise from our teaching staff helps to drive the standards of our more able students; widening perceptions and challenging students to develop their skill set to aim for the highest academic grades, whilst developing a passion for the subject.
- 1.6. We recognise that some students join us with pre-existing disadvantages and therefore potentially slightly lower grades upon entry. These students are welcomed and supported through the same programme of activities as outlined below. Enrichment for PHA students can take many forms.
 - 1.6.1. Year 11 GCSE PHA students each have an academic mentor who they meet on a regular basis for 'tutorial-style' coaching sessions.
 - 1.6.2. Year 7 PHA students take part in a weekly extra-curricular enrichment programme presented by visiting alumni and subject specialists in curriculum areas around the school to broaden subject knowledge beyond the learning at key stage 3. Enrichment allows students to experience and workshop teachers' specialisms and interests.
 - 1.6.3. Year 8 PHA students are invited to begin studying a GCSE; the Higher Project Qualification, an extra-curricular project.
 - 1.6.4. Year 10 PHA students have the parents' interview and academic review day and some students begin with academic mentors in preparation for Year 11.
 - 1.6.5. Year 9 PHA students have a STEM science drop-day to develop their talents in problem-solving and engineering solutions and last year all PHA students took part in a communication skills workshop.
 - 1.6.6. Many of our most able take part in regional maths challenges, competitions, master classes and aspirational/intellectual visits to places such as the Houses of Parliament.

- 1.6.7. Year 7 and 8 students interview celebrities and the local community for the annual BBC School Report to develop their journalism and media skills. Our Year 11 students appeared on BBC Radio 4's 'Any Questions'.
- 1.6.8. We offer immersion experiences at universities such as Oxford in addition to visits to our London universities. All disadvantaged students who are potential high achievers will make at least two visits to university, firstly in Year 8 at around options time, then again, to Oxford University in the spring term of Year 10.

2. Aims

- 2.1. Charles Darwin School is an inclusive school across the age and ability range. An underlying aim of the school is to ensure all students are given the chance to reach their full potential in all areas of school life. Excellence in all areas is encouraged and celebrated throughout a students' school career whilst developing and supporting their future beyond school. In order to aspire to these goals a group of approximately 20% potential high achievers are identified in the first few weeks of Year 7.
- 2.2. Potential High Achievers are identified by high SATS and/or CATS scores/Reading Age or through the transition meetings with primary teachers, CAPP data from the school reporting system and participation in extracurricular teams, performance, music, through leadership or other exceptional performance. Identification is not, and should not be, an exact science. However in terms of being broadly in line with current thinking, students with SATS scaled scores in excess of 112 are included in this group.
- 2.3. Where students enter the school from a disadvantaged background, the school recognises this and students are included where disadvantage may have lowered their SATS exam grades for example.

3. Provisions

- 3.1. The school acknowledges that provision for PHA students has to take place primarily within the classroom, through a variety of appropriately challenging tasks. The school will support this work through grouping students by ability where appropriate, increasing the depth of curriculum expertise and supporting extra-curricular activities. In order to support this work:
 - 3.1.1. All departments must define characteristics demonstrated by high achieving learners in their subject.
 - 3.1.2. All departments must identify at least one member of staff who has responsibility to support this work and liaise with the Assistant Headteacher.
 - 3.1.3. Departments are responsible for selecting and monitoring students; ensuring that all students are given work to enable them to achieve or exceed their target grade.
 - 3.1.4. The school's Governing Body must identify at least one member to take an added interest in the schools' work in this area.

4. Monitoring and evaluation

- 4.1. The progress and achievements of the PHA students will be regularly monitored, reviewed and celebrated by both departments and the named Assistant Headteacher.
- 4.2. Students new to the school will be added as necessary and student progress will be reported on to senior leaders after each CAPP data report.