



Highly Able Student Policy

Definition of Highly Able learners:

The Department for Education and Ofsted define Highly Able in terms of those whose progress and attainment significantly exceed age-related expectations in one or more areas of the curriculum. They also use the term “higher attainers” for learners achieving the highest standards in English and maths. These have largely replaced the category Gifted and Talented, although the terms are not necessarily synonymous.

Identifying Highly Able Learners:

Identifying Highly Able learners is a complex matter. It is important to make a judgement using a variety of sources, including but not limited to prior attainment, CAT tests as part of GL assessments, teacher assessment, work scrutiny, screening programmes, discussions with students and test results.

Some schools have a policy of including the top 5-10% of students in each cohort, although there is no suggestion that this is the best or only way of identifying Highly Able learners. There is also no consensus on whether schools should have a register or definitive list of Highly Able learners, although where they do it is accepted that this list is always subject to change. Typically, it is revisited at the start of each term.

At Ron Dearing UTC, students ‘learn by doing’ across a number of academic and technical subjects. As such, many will possess talents and abilities that are not easily identifiable simply by looking at data: they may not have learning experiences which have enabled them to showcase their talents in their previous schools. It is an ongoing responsibility for all teaching staff, therefore, to identify and support such potential wherever they find it, particularly in non-academic subjects.

As a starting point, however, students who achieved a Level 5 in both maths and English at KS2, or a scaled score of 110 or above, will initially form the Highly Able cohort. It is then the responsibility of teachers and subject heads to propose additional students.

Supporting Highly Able learners at Ron Dearing UTC:

There is no one way of supporting a Highly Able student, but a personalised approach should always be adopted in partnership with parents, carers and external organisations. The key factor to consider is the engagement and involvement of the student in any discussions and decisions, taking account of their level of maturity, personal development needs and wellbeing.

The aims of our Highly Able provision at RDUTC are:

- To identify, stimulate, stretch and challenge our Highly Able learners
- To personalise learning where possible, so that it meets the specific needs of the individual
- To encourage learners to be focussed, reflective, active and engaged in their learning
- To create a challenging, diverse and enriching climate for learning, where high levels of ability and attainment are recognised and celebrated

The role of Teachers in Highly Able provision:

Teacher responsibilities at RDUTC include: the identification of Highly Able students; planning lessons that stretch and challenge all learners, including the Highly Able; keeping up to date with information on the Highly Able students they teach; liaising with the Highly Able coordinator.

Teachers at RDUTC should make the following part of their teaching in order to support our Highly Able provision:

- Regularly reinforce high expectations
- Plan a variety of differentiated activities
- Use carefully chosen resources, including enrichment and extension materials
- Make pace and momentum a key part of their lessons
- Encourage active listening and participation from all students, including the Highly Able
- Ask open ended questions and encourage students to ask higher level questions themselves
- Work on developing thinking and study skills, including metacognition
- Create opportunities for independent learning
- Identify and address underachievement

Above all, the Highly Able provision at RDUTC should be met, in the first instance, by high quality first teaching. When teachers plan and deliver challenging lessons that reinforce high expectations and meet the differing needs of all students, the core part of our Highly Able provision is already being met.

The role of the Highly Able Coordinator:

The role of the Highly Able Coordinator will include the following:

- Prepare a register of Highly Able students for circulation to teaching staff

- Write and implement the Highly Able Provision Plan
- Support staff in developing Highly Able provision
- Contribute to and manage the records of Highly Able learners
- Keep SLT informed about provision, training needs and student needs
- Identify areas of need within school
- Carry out observations and learning walks of Highly Able students to support their provision
- Work with a group of students to develop Highly Able provision across the school
- Take the lead on enrichment activities for Highly Able students
- Find ways to celebrate Highly Able achievement across RDUTC
- Meet with heads of subject/department on a regular basis

Highly Able students and RDUTC partners:

The Highly Able Coordinator will build on the work we already do with the University of Hull and our Employer Partners, creating the sort of enrichment activities that could only be offered by RDUTC. There are already strong industry and higher education links for our sixth form students, but we must create similar enrichment opportunities for Highly Able students in Key Stage 4.

The role of Heads of department in Highly Able provision:

- Making Highly Able provision a standing agenda item at department meetings
- Sourcing and sharing subject enrichment resources with their teams
- Making Highly Able provision an integral part of their schemes of work
- Including Highly Able provision in their learning walks and observations

Highly Able Student Group:

The Coordinator will regularly meet with a group of students to refine Highly Able provision at RDUTC. An initial meeting in January 2019 provided feedback on the sort of teaching that they best respond to:

- Lessons that allow students to apply their learning
- Fast pace, high energy
- Clear challenge
- Differentiated, targeted questioning
- Being able to 'own' their own learning
- Modelling / WAGOLLS
- Always explaining 'why', not just 'what'
- Paired work but not always group work
- Smaller classes / one to one support
- Less molly-coddling, more independence
- Ongoing interaction between teacher and pupil
- Instant feedback

- Clear relevance
- Effective behaviour management

Meetings will be held each half term to review and refine Highly Able Provision at RDUTC.

Implemented: 1st Sept. 2019

Review Date: July 2020