

St John Fisher Catholic High School



High Starters Policy

Designated Teacher:	Coordinator of High Starters/Assistant Headteacher
Adopted:	January 2016
Review Period:	Three Years
Review Date:	January 2019

“Educating for Life”

Our Values



Rationale

A focus on ‘Most Able’ students is justified by consideration of entitlement and inclusion. Educators have long recognized that ‘one size does not fit all’ either for students with learning difficulties or for those who are capable of increased pace, depth and challenge (Winstanly 2004). The rights of more able students to equality of appropriate provision have been articulated under the DfE personalisation agenda as one aspect of the wider rights of all students to provision suitable to their individual needs (DfE 2005). The ‘English Model’ of gifted and talented education emphasises integrating gifted and talented students with age peers in so far as possible and enabling teacher in ordinary classrooms to differentiate teaching to meet their need (Eyre 2004).

Revision of Terminology

The report ‘Educating the Highly Able’ produced the Sutton Trust (July 2012) recommends ‘the confusing and catch-all construct “gifted and talented be abandoned’ and suggests the focus, as far as schools are concerned, should be on those capable of excellence in school subjects, which the report terms, ‘highly able’. This echoes the new government focus on the academically ‘Most Able’ in OFSTED reports issued in June 2013 and March 2015. Thus, in response, St. John Fisher’s identification and naming process has altered slightly.



Student's previously classified as 'Gifted and Talented' at St. John Fisher will now be described as 'High Starters', 'Secondary Achievers' and 'High Academic Achievers.'

High Starters

These students are those identified by the Department for Education based on strict criteria; which encompasses them having high (Level 5a+) SAT scores. Furthermore, we look at CAT scores undertaken by Year6. These students are thus 'High Starters' as they enter Secondary school displaying an exceptional level of academic achievement in relation to their peers at KS2. We identify students at the start of Year 7 to ensure that they are stretched from the moment they enter KS3. The list of High Starters is fixed as it is based on attainment displayed at KS2. Students cannot be removed from this list and the school provides within the curriculum as well as through an extracurricular programme of Challenge to ensure that students achieve at the highest level at KS4 and beyond.

Secondary Achievers

We acknowledge that some students are slower to emerge as academically able, and thus at the end of KS3, student academic performance is reviewed to ensure that extremely able students do not 'slip through the net' in terms of KS4 challenge provision. These students are tracked as 'Secondary Achievers' and closely monitored and challenged at KS4 and beyond.

High Academic Achievers

Within Years 12 and 13 those students with a capped GCSE score of 428 or above in their top 8 GCSEs are identified as 'High Academic Achievers' and are given access to further challenges, including the EPQ (Extended Project Qualification) and are offered the opportunity to join the Oxbridge Programme which supports students in the application process for these universities. The programme begins with the student's choice to visit one of the two universities for an open day and experience life in one of the colleges. The programme in Year 13 then ensures that the highest academic achievers are securely guided in the admissions procedure via talks from Admissions officers, talks centred on applications to colleges, workshops on personal statements and mock Oxbridge interviews. This programme is overseen by the Oxbridge co-ordinators of both schools in the Associated Sixth Form.

Individual Subject Stretch & Provision

Even though a student may not have evidenced a breadth of previous academic attainment to result in identification as a 'High Starter', 'Secondary Achiever' or 'High Academic Achiever'; exceptional ability in individual subjects is directly nurtured. The level of challenge for all students is highest in the classroom itself. Students are stretched through the development of among other skills; Resilience, Critical and Logical thinking, Creative



thinking, Independent Research skills, Problem Solving, Self-evaluation and Reflection skills. Heads of Department monitor student performance and intervene in a timely manner when students are not on track to achieve their forecasted targets.

The whole school commitment to Assessment for Learning in our practice means that all students are given clear success criteria and work is clearly referenced against subject assessment criteria, with clear targets for progression. This enables all students, even the most able, to clearly see the steps to the next level of achievement in all Key Stages so that they can continue to advance at the pace and level suitable to them, regardless of age or year group. The school uses a process of setting from Year 7, as appropriate, in order to enhance learning.

Beyond the classroom a wide range of enrichment activities are offered, for our most able students. In addition, our students participate in regional and national experiences provided by the LA, various universities and national academic, sporting and artistic forums. For example, our current High Starters and Secondary Achievers are encouraged to participate in debating, targeted trips and national competitions. Specific details of all the opportunities available are available on the school website. These opportunities are reported to parents in the termly Newsletters.

Provision is managed by:

- The School Co-ordinator for High Starters
- The Assistant Head teacher with responsibility for Tracking and Assessment
- A member of the governing body

