

Policy on Exceptionally Able Pupils.

Drawn up and ratified by the Board: April 2015

Signed; Eamonn O Dulainn, Cathaoirleach

Policy on Exceptionally Able Pupils

Rationale: All students are entitled to an education appropriate to their needs, abilities and potential. For too long the field of exceptionally able/talented children has been divorced from mainstream, as if by virtue of their high ability, these children require less; less teaching, less input, less support, less concern. Inclusive education provides a gateway for everyone. In classrooms where inclusion and differentiation are the norm, diversity will be valued, the strengths and needs of all children nurtured and the achievements of all children raised. In line with our school ethos, Harold's Cross NS strives to eradicate barriers to learning and to provide participation for all. This policy outlines the school's practice and procedures relating to the identification, the ongoing support of exceptionally able/talented pupils and provides a framework whereby that can be achieved.

Aim: To provide an education that is appropriately challenging and enables those who are exceptionally able/talented to realise their full potential.

Definition: There is no universally agreed term for students who would generally be described as exceptionally able. However in Harold's Cross NS staff has agreed the following- "an exceptionally able child is one who is in the top 5% in terms of academic ability based on quantitative and qualitative assessment.

A talented pupil is one who is in the top 5% in non-academic area/s such as the visual or performing arts, sport, leadership ability, special ability in empathy, understanding and negotiation".

It also includes those children who could be recognised as exceptionally able or talented but who are not presently reaching his/her full potential. Exceptionally able/talented are pupils with one or more abilities developed to a level significantly ahead of the classmates.

Identification: A range of approaches and strategies will be used to identify these students which will take account of all cultural, gender and ethnic groups that make up the school community. Students of exceptional ability need to be identified as early as possible so that sound educational planning and practices can take place to support their needs. Identification will begin from first upwards and will be an on-going process involving the following -

1. The use of standardised tests - NRIT, Micra/Sigma T/Drumcondra, diagnostics tests.

2. Teacher input based on observation, teacher designed tests.
3. Use of psychological assessments, outcomes of Assessments of Needs, CTYI assessments and or referrals from these agencies or other organisations.
4. Pupils whose subject work, oral language, presentations, project work, skills sets, higher order thinking skills are of a standard far higher than their peer group.
5. Parental input/observations
6. Peer input/observations
7. Outstanding performance in non-academic areas such as – sport, music, art, drama, I.T.
8. Pupils who exhibit exceptional inter or intra-personal skills in the daily life of the school.

Information considered will depend on the area of excellence/talent exhibited by a child.

Programmes/Approaches:

The provision of supports for these children will be a collaborative effort involving all the stakeholders in the school community. The model that we will use will involve either enrichment and or an acceleration approach. Enrichment is the horizontal extension of the curriculum to provide deepening and expansion of learning. Acceleration is a vertical extension of the curriculum –early introduction of content, or quickening of pace of delivery etc.

Approaches used will include the following- differentiation, flexible groupings, special classes, withdrawal or pull- out programmes, mentorships, competitions, clubs, and cluster groups.

The following approaches will form part of the school plan for the coming academic year 2015-16
Implementation of Building Bridges of Understanding - third and fourth

The Jigsaw Classroom – all classes. Each class teacher to implement this strategy at least once during the year in relation to science/history/geography.

Roles and Responsibilities:

Principal and Board of Management:

The principal will liaise with and support class teachers, SEN team and parents in its implementation. She will endeavour to access the experience of professionals from among the school and local community and link in with agencies/companies who may be able to support programmes/projects.

- will identify, enlist and secure the support of teachers, parents and the wider community who will support the effective implementation of the policy.

- will ensure that the policy is reviewed on a regular basis and that its contents are made known to every section of the school community.

Expertise will be sought to support the staff in the implementation of this policy and where possible, funding provided by the Board.

The class teacher: The class teacher is a key figure. He /she, supported by the principal and SEN team will be responsible for the identification of pupils, differentiation, the implementation of extension/enrichment programmes and the creation of an educationally rich environment where the emotional, social and physical needs, as well as the intellectual needs are catered for.

The SEN Team:

The SEN team in collaboration with the Principal will be responsible for the assessment stage of this process, the organisation of extension classes, clustering, withdrawal when feasible, the drawing up of IEPs in collaboration with the class teacher and the provision of advice, information and support to class teachers.

Coordinator: When Posts of Responsibilities are reinstated and if approved by the Board a member of staff will act as coordinator who will be responsible for the following -

Maintain a register in consultation with the principal, staff and parents

Monitor the school's provision for pupils identified as being talented or exceptional able.

Monitor the progress of pupils identified.

Be responsible for sharing data with the principal, teachers, and parents.

Coordinate the handover of information for students transitioning to secondary school.

Coordinate resources, books, materials, project based work, ICT resources etc.

Establish clubs and activities

Review all activities etc relating to the project.

Parents;

Parents are also key players in this policy. All policy documents in relation to exceptionally able/gifted pupils will be made available to them. The school will keep parents apprised of all decisions/actions in relation to their child and where and when possible they will be involved in the drawing up of plans to realise the potential of their child. Those parents who have a skill which can be used to enrich, extend pupils'abilities will be encouraged to become involved in realizing our objectives.

Pupils: Pupils will be consulted with and involved in decisions which impact on them such as the kinds of supports they feel would be beneficial.

Evaluation: The policy will be monitored on an ongoing basis using an SSE approach. Data will be collected enabling the school to assess the efficacy of the plan and consider the need for alterations. The following will be looked at –student progress, the identification process, teacher needs and supports, supports for differentiation, the policy itself, resources, parental involvement and community supports.

Implementation: It will be implemented from September 2015 and will initially be reviewed in June 2016 and on a regular basis thereafter.

Ratification: This policy was ratified by the Board of Management on April 23rd, 2015