

MOST ABLE & TALENTED POLICY

1 Most Able & Talented (MAT) general rationale

- 1.1 This policy covers both the Senior and Preparatory Divisions.
- 1.2 The term 'Learning Needs' is used at New Hall School in its wider context, i.e., to include the needs of the Most Able & Talented students. Such students are recognised as having specific individual needs owing to their marked abilities or talents, such as, general intellectual or specific academic ability, creative or productive thinking ability, physical ability, leadership, social or artistic ability, and artistic talent. New Hall School believes that abilities and talents in academic and non-academic areas are not fixed or always immediately obvious and can be developed and discovered over time with the expert guidance of staff. The School seeks to ensure that all MAT students discern and fulfil their potential.
- 1.3 New Hall School is committed to providing an environment that encourages all students to discern and fulfil their potential. New Hall School recognises that every student is an individual with his or her own strengths and weaknesses, abilities and talents.
- 1.4 This policy, although aimed specifically at the most able and talented, is intended to be inclusive in its nature, reflecting the Catholic ethos of the School. New Hall School recognises the intrinsic value of each individual and ensures that their unique talents and abilities are celebrated. It is for this reason that the provision at School includes those who have the aspiration to achieve highly.
- 1.5 Provision for MAT students is the responsibility of all members of staff at New Hall School; by raising the achievement of the most able and talented, the School aims to raise the achievement of all students within the School.

2 Most Able & Talented aims

- 2.1 For MAT students, New Hall School seeks to provide:
 - access to an appropriate and challenging education
 - work at higher cognitive levels
 - opportunities to develop specific skills or talents
 - support for the whole person; socially, emotionally, spiritually, physically and intellectually

3 Most Able & Talented definition

- 3.1 *The National Association for Able Children in Education* defines more able students in terms of those whose progress and attainment significantly exceed age-related expectations. New Hall School is careful to ensure that talented students in fields such as drama, music and sport, are similarly recognised.

4 Most Able & Talented identification

- 4.1 MAT students are identified according to high performance in objective tests and the professional judgement of teachers.

In the Preparatory Divisions, class teachers are asked to identify the MAT pupils in each class. A teacher's professional judgement will be based on a combination of objective and subjective assessments:

- ongoing teacher assessments
- test results such as CAT4, PTE, PTM, NTS Assessments
- high standards of work
- depths of insight, intuition and understanding within lessons
- outstanding talents which may be apparent within a lesson, e.g., for drama, sport, art
- through parental discussion, finding out about pupils' hobbies and interests, which may give a fuller picture of their particular talents

Children who are identified as MAT are referred to the Head of Division who maintains and reviews the register regularly and liaises with Class Teacher to monitor progress.

- 4.2 In the Senior Division, at the beginning of the academic year, every department uses its own subject-specific criteria to determine the students in Years 7-13 who should be defined as MAT in each curriculum area. These lists are shared with a Vice Principal. Transition information from feeder schools and entry tests are also utilised.
- 4.3 Baseline tests are used to identify the potential of students on entry into Year 7. These tests are conducted in the early weeks of the Michaelmas Term and the results are distributed to staff. Some students will be identified as MAT due to their performance on these baseline assessments. Students who are awarded Academic Scholarships (on the basis of their admissions assessments) are also identified as MAT.
- 4.4 A Vice Principal ensures that MAT students are flagged on the school's management information system, iSAMS.

5 Most Able & Talented provision

- 5.1 In the Preparatory Divisions, from Pre-Reception onwards, teachers are required to offer differentiated tasks and activities for MAT pupils to be stretched and challenged. Provision is made available through:
- high expectations of teachers
 - tasks that are designed to consider levels of existing knowledge, skills and understanding
 - planned extension opportunities and open-ended tasks
 - effective use of questioning in class
 - setting in Years 3-6 in English and Mathematics
 - opportunities for pupils to develop higher order thinking skills
 - differentiated study
 - varied teaching styles that support all types of learning
 - use of Assessment for Learning (AfL) to increase pupil participation in planning and evaluation

In addition to the provision in class, there is a wide range of co-curricular activities on offer for MAT pupils within the Preparatory Divisions. MAT pupils may be invited to join specialist groups in academic areas (such as Politics, Philosophy and Debating), musical fields (such as orchestras and choirs) and sport. In addition, there are a number of opportunities that are available to all pupils (see *Preparatory Divisions Co-Curricular Booklet*). MAT pupils also have opportunities to take part in external events such as the Essex Regional Preparatory School Quiz and the Primary Mathematics Challenge, where appropriate.

- 5.2 In the Senior Divisions, academic departments play a key role in MAT provision, as evidenced in their handbooks and Schemes of Work (see *Whole School Adaptive Teaching Procedure*). The Head of Department in each subject is responsible for ensuring sufficient stretch and challenge is embedded and that teachers are supporting the progression of all students, including those identified as MAT. The Five New Hall Learning Habits (Resilience, Collaboration, Intellectual Courage, Communication and Thinking Skills) are embedded across the curriculum and, whilst all students are encouraged to use them in lessons, they are particularly pertinent to the MAT students. Within the classroom, high quality teaching ensures that MAT students are challenged to actualise their full potential through a range of approaches, including: target setting, working with others of similar ability, differentiated class work and study, challenging questioning and extension tasks. Departments offer extension and enrichment activities to build on students' own diverse interests and the curriculum is sufficiently broad to allow students to explore concepts that go beyond the confines of the Schemes of Work. The Higher and Extended Project Qualifications are offered as another way for students to develop their research skills and to delve deeper into a subject for which they have a particular passion or interest.

Within subject areas, a great deal of provision for MAT students is in place such as workshops from visiting writers and poets, Trinity examinations/qualifications, theatre trips, UK Mathematics Trust challenges, subject-specific lectures at university, and specialist competitions such as the national Physics and Chemistry Olympiads. Students are encouraged to develop their abilities and talents through the wide range of enrichment activities that are available.

- 5.3 As in the Preparatory Divisions, Senior Divisions' students can engage in a multitude of enrichment activities alongside their academic curriculum. An extensive co-curriculum is one of the fundamental ways in which New Hall School provides a superior broad, balanced and relevant education for students. MAT students have access to a range of academic societies such as the Feminist Society, Politics Question Time and the Theology Society, as well as Critical Thinking lessons. They are also invited to participate in a wide range of activities such as the School's Debating Team, drama productions, chess tournaments, specialist music and dance awards, sports training (places in county and national teams) and masterclasses. A detailed list of all the academic societies and co-curricular opportunities is found in the *Senior Divisions Co-Curricular Booklet*.

6 Most Able & Talented monitoring

The progress of the MAT students requires close monitoring.

6.1 In the Preparatory Divisions, the Heads of Divisions are responsible for:

- liaising with the Vice Principals to discuss the progress of pupils on the register and the provision for ensuring all pupils, including those on the register, fulfil their potential
- monitoring the progress of those on the register with the class teachers
- maintaining and updating the Most Able & Talented Register
- liaising with the class teachers to support provision for MAT pupils

6.2 In the Senior Divisions, the Vice Principals are responsible for:

- liaising with Heads of Department, Heads of Divisions and Heads of Boarding to discuss the progress of MAT students
- ensuring all academic departments have provision to help MAT students fulfil their potential
- monitoring the progress of MAT students
- maintaining and updating the Most Able & Talented Register
- liaising with the Head of Sixth Form & Oxbridge Coordinator, to help support MAT students applying to competitive universities/courses

7 Most Able & Talented resources

7.1 Budgets are provided in both the Preparatory and Senior Divisions for the provision of MAT resources.

7.2 Over time, each department is expected to build up a range of resources for MAT students.

8 Most Able & Talented: The use of outside agencies

8.1 New Hall School is a member of the National Association for Able Children in England (NACE). Key staff attend conferences and suitable INSET activities to assist them in their support of MAT students at School.