



SEVENOAKS
PREPARATORY SCHOOL

High Learning Potential policy including EYFS

Status and Review Cycle: Statutory / Annual

Policy reviewed and amended: 24.7.19

Next review date: 30.8.20

Governor Lead: Mr Derry Wiltshire

Policy Holder: Mr James Ashcroft

Policy for Provision for children with High Learning Potential

‘A teacher’s job is to make work difficult. If you are not challenged, you do not make mistakes.

If you do not make mistakes feedback is useless.’

John Hattie (2008)

Aims

- To support every pupil in realising their potential in whichever aspect, or aspects, of their development in which they may show outstanding strength or ability.
- To encourage and equip pupils to explore their areas of interest or strength with confidence, independence and enjoyment.
- To offer opportunities to all, including More Able learners, to discover and try out new areas of interest.

Philosophy

Sevenoaks Prep is characterised by its strong ethos of seeing every child as an individual and working with them to realise their own potential. Our ‘Way of Life’ underpins this and is a key aspect of our outstanding provision for the personal development of our pupils. A key aspect of this ethos in practice is acknowledging that children have differences in their learning needs and that we have a duty to meet those needs.

Sevenoaks Prep is committed to inclusive education and recognises that some students have exceptional ability or potential in one area or more of school life. They may show outstanding strengths and abilities, or gifts, in academic/formally tested subjects and/or exceptional talents in practical areas. Students who have outstanding abilities, gifts or talents are recognised as having special learning differences. To enable these students to realise their own potential, we must ensure that they are challenged by the tasks we offer them; encouraged to develop their abilities, gifts or talents with energy and enthusiasm; supported in their emotional and social development and valued as part of the whole school community.

Identification

Whilst we acknowledge that every one of our students possesses talents that make them unique and valuable, it is important for us as educators to make a directed effort to provide for those students that have the potential to achieve significantly above the level usually planned for and expected of their age group in individual areas of learning. It is to this end only that we identify and are aware of those who we consider to be, or have the potential to be, More Able Learners in specific areas. To this end tracking documents for year groups 3-8 are produced on a continuous cycle (and updated termly) based on Standardised Scores achieved in any internal test taken at Sevenoaks Preparatory School. Highlighted in these documents are scores which fall in the 120-124.9, 125-129.9 and 130-or-above range with the dual purpose of offering summative information as well being a factual indicator of what might be expected of any given pupil, given the right conditions, in the future. These documents are used alongside information passed on during the school’s hand-over procedures at the end of each academic year in which academic results, work ethic and

personality characteristics are shared between the current and future teaching staff of each year group.

This complementary information of 'hard' data and professional judgement enables the staff the opportunity for careful planning within the context of 'Quality First Teaching' to ensure that each pupil can extend, or realise, their knowledge, skill and enjoyment in their area(s) of talent, gift or ability. Whilst Sevenoaks Prep's ethos does not encourage singling pupils out by placing them on an exclusive list, the partnership between the school and the parents is such that areas of strength or potential are shared through the usual formats of teacher/parent meetings and reports. This is so that the pupil's journey can be shared by the school and the home environment without the pressure on the pupil of a formal label.

Provision

The education and care of the whole child is central to our approach at the Prep and we are conscious of the different stresses and burdens that such learning differences can bring. For this reason, our primary focus for the delivery of provision for more able, gifted and talented pupils is through 'Quality First Teaching'; recognising their needs as part of the range of individual needs that are present in an inclusive classroom. We also see this as a means of reaching out to those pupils who may have areas of high potential ability that are as yet unrecognised (perhaps due to underachievement or dual or multiple exceptionality) and to ensure that they have the greatest opportunity to display those talents. For example, activities are encouraged which allow all pupils to access, consolidate and explore material at their own level within a whole class setting. Provision for more able learners and opportunities for all pupils to be challenged are indicated in Schemes of Work.

To allow pupils to explore their abilities and interests further, access to additional and different provision is provided when and where appropriate. This may be through involvement in school clubs, societies and projects; attendance of activities organised by outside agencies or through individual or group work within the school day. Occasionally we allow pupils to pursue their particular interests (specifically sport) outside our school setting but during school hours. This is done in careful consultation between parents and staff and we as a school will always facilitate this within the context of reiterating our concern that any additional and different provision should only cause the minimum level of stress to pupils. We are particularly sensitive to issues such as alienation from peers, higher workload and the burden of high expectations. Sevenoaks Preparatory School ensures that pupils amongst the more able, gifted and talented cohort are supported by staff and the pastoral school leaders as an integral part of our pastoral responsibility to every student.

Our approach at each age phase

It is important that we recognise that every child will develop at their own rate and in their own style and that there are differences in children's development in each age phase. In order that our provision reflects this, our approach is tailored to the needs of each of the age phases of the school and is guided by the expertise and experience of the teachers who work in each phase. However, the guiding principles are the same: to ensure that pupils' strengths are recognised and nurtured and that they are supported in reaching their potential.

EYFS

The EYFS provision at Sevenoaks Preparatory School comprises a Nursery class, two Kindergarten classes and two Reception classes. The focus in this age phase is on ensuring that all children establish a confident, positive relationship with the school environment and begin to see themselves as successful, capable learners.

At this stage in particular, each child's development is advancing at different speeds in different areas. There is no expectation that a child will be performing at the same level in different areas of their development or that an area showing rapid development at a particular time will continue to do so. This ongoing development of each pupil is constantly monitored and supported by the EYFS team. Where an unusually high level of ability is observed in a child this is always defined in terms of the specific area in which it appears. In an individual child this may be in one area or it may be in several. It is expected that a child displaying strengths in some areas may also have specific areas of weakness, relative either to themselves or their peers.

A child may be recognised as having 'potentially high ability' in a particular area in order that provision can be made to nurture that strength. All observations made of the children facilitate the EYFS staff in planning appropriate next steps for each child. In this way 'Starry Night' merely enhances the cycle of observation and provision that is embedded in EYFS practice by allowing focus on a wider range of indicators.

The observation that a child has a strength in a particular area can lead to them being guided to particular activities within the setting and such activities being suggested to parents to follow through at home. Our EYFS setting is run by experienced and talented staff and it is the skill of the practitioners' interaction with the child which is the key resource employed to promote the child's engagement in their area of strength and to extend and develop their thinking and expertise.

Years 1 and 2

Years 1 and 2 work together with the EYFS department to form our Pre-Prep. The focus in Years 1 and 2 is to continue to develop a love of learning and the secure emotional foundation begun with the EYFS staff. The children continue to be taught in class groups organised by age to enable staff to progress the children towards more formal learning in line with their development. The Year 1 and 2 staff take full advantage of the information given to them on each individual pupil via the EYFS Profile and the Starry Night Protocol, as well as via their discussions with parents. In this way they are able to plan opportunities to nurture and develop the existing strengths and potential of each pupil. Ongoing assessment and evolving knowledge of pupils enables lessons and project work to be differentiated to allow pupils to explore their current strengths and discover developing ones. At this stage, a pupil's learning is seen as being very fluid, with gains (relative to peers and self) being uneven and constantly changing across a wide range of academic and non-academic areas. For this reason, our focus at this stage is not on identifying children with high learning potential at the outset, but very much on offering provision that enables all pupils to show and develop their abilities at whatever stage they are currently displaying them. This is done through planned activities during lessons, roles and responsibilities given around the school, an increasing range of extra-curricular clubs and opportunities to participate in local events outside of school, some of which are mentioned in the weekly school newsletter.

Years 3 to 5

Years 3, 4 and 5 comprise the initial years in the Prep school. There are two classes in each Year and these are no longer distinguished by age. The pupils are taught by their form teacher for most subjects, but take an increasing number of classes with subject specialist teachers. Provision is differentiated in a number of ways, depending on the circumstances. Setting is used in Maths teaching, for example, graduating from two very flexible sets in Year 3 to three sets in Year 5. In all subjects, teaching strategies are used that allow each pupil to access the material being explored, with opportunities for all pupils to surpass their own expectations. In this way all pupils are free to achieve their potential, whilst working alongside their peers, keeping achievement high and personal pressure low. At this stage, the range of clubs and activities offered outside lessons opens up even further and pupils are encouraged to take part in activities and further study, in the form of prep or individual projects, to help them explore their areas of interest and strength further.

Years 6 to 8

Pupils in Years 6, 7 and 8 are taught in two classes per Year group. All lessons are taught by subject specialist staff, with central subjects (English, Maths, Science, MFL) being taught in sets. Pupils have a form tutor who coordinates information about them and provides the first level of pastoral care. In all lessons, teaching reflects the Sevenoaks Prep ethos set in the earlier years of allowing all pupils to achieve their potential and differentiated teaching is provided to allow all pupils to continue to meet or surpass their expectations. In this way our provision allows strengths and abilities, or their potential, to be displayed. As the number of staff involved in each pupil's education increases further, sharing information about pupils becomes more imperative. All staff have access to the Standardised Scores colour tracking files which also record information on outstanding performance in non-academic subjects and skills. In this way, staff can be aware of strengths and abilities that may not be immediately apparent in the subjects they teach but that could be utilised to create a way for the pupil to realise their potential. Any 'dropping off' of earlier high standardised scores is clear and teachers are encouraged to use their professional judgement to 'flag up' anyone who does not appear to continue their previous level of attainment with the MALCo and/or SENCo. At this stage of their school career, the Standardised Scores colour tracking files are also used to guide decisions about future schooling and scholarship applications. A wide and varied range of clubs and activities are available to pupils at this stage to enrich their experiences. Participation in off-site trips and out-of-school groups is encouraged to further allow them to explore their strengths and interests. In Year 7 and 8, pupils take part in the Oak Award scheme which encourages them to become involved with Challenge, Creativity and Community. All pupils at this stage take a fuller role in the duties and roles that help in the day to day running of the school. Those with strengths in interpersonal, leadership and organisational skills are offered opportunities to utilise and refine these in the form of our House Captaincy and Prefect systems. Pupils with strengths in these areas are also involved in such responsibilities as taking prospective parents on tours of the school and helping new pupils settle into our school community.

Monitoring

The Assistant Heads (KS2&3) and Head of Pre-Prep look out for indications that a pupil may not be realising their potential (suggested by 'dropping off' of scores or a consistent mismatch between what the scores show and how a pupil manifests him/herself in the

classroom and elsewhere) and staff are encouraged to do the same. Any concerns can then be assessed and discussed, and will include the expertise of the SENCo where appropriate.

Partnership with Parents

Parents are key providers of information about their child's strengths and abilities and teaching staff value their input and insight. Likewise, staff provide feedback to parents regarding the strengths and abilities that have been noticed in their child. Given the close relationships which staff develop with our families, this may be done during informal discussions during the school year, at formal parents' meetings or in written reports. Noted strengths are always discussed as such and are put in the context of the child's current stage of development, rather than being necessarily assumed as a constant feature of them as learners. Suggestions for how a child's strengths can currently be developed and nurtured would also be discussed.

Parents are also invited to share their expertise at relevant times to extend and enrich the experiences we offer to pupils through their involvement in lessons, clubs or workshops run by staff. For example, those with skills in the business sector have been involved in coaching sessions as part of the Year 8 Social Entrepreneurs Project.

On rare occasions, and where appropriate, parents and staff enter into a dialogue regarding the possibility of a pupil 'skipping a year'. These discussions very much take place within the context of the pupil's academic achievement to date, their personality and outlook, and parents' goals for their child in the longer term, as being 'out of year' has implications for the kind of senior school a pupil has access to as well as the child's mental wellbeing. The school always judges each individual case on its own merits and, if a decision to accelerate a pupil is taken, the extended teaching team, including pastoral leaders, are involved to ensure the transition is smooth and well-supported.

Roles and Responsibilities

The Role of the Assistant Heads (KS2&3) and Head of Pre-Prep:

The Assistant Heads (KS2&3) and Head of Pre-Prep support staff in providing for the learning differences of more able and exceptionally able students as well encouraging staff to provide challenge for all learners. The Assistant Heads (KS2&3) and Head of Pre-Prep are responsible for maintaining and updating the Standardised Score colour tracking files and making them available to teaching staff. The Assistant Heads (KS2&3) and Head of Pre-Prep also assists subject coordinators, Heads of Departments and class teachers in their planning, resourcing and delivery of provision. The Assistant Heads (KS2&3) and Head of Pre-Prep meet termly to audit examples of successful provision from across the school to allow the standards of our most able pupils to be monitored and to share the excellent practice of staff amongst one another in this area.

The Role of Teaching Staff:

Provision is most effective when embedded within lessons and so the responsibility for providing experiences for children with High Learning Potential lies primarily with the teaching staff. Teaching staff are encouraged to share their observations on pupils and compare them against the Standardised Score colour tracking files in order to inform their teaching and provision for children with High Learning Potential.

The Role of the SENCo:

Children with High Learning Potential are regarded by our school as having a learning difference and, as such, the SENCo is called upon for guidance and advice on this area. This is particularly evident when providing for pupils with Dual or Multiple Exceptionality or those who may be underachieving for any reason. The SENCo liaises closely with the Assistant Heads (KS2&3) and Head of Pre-Prep to offer and request advice on provision for these pupils. The SENCo also ensures relevant information from assessments is shared.