

COOKSTOWN HIGH SCHOOL



Gifted & Talented Pupil Policy September 2018

Ethos & Rationale:

Cookstown High School is an inclusive school which seeks to provide a secure and challenging environment that encourages the development of all pupils, ensuring that no “ceiling” is put on achievement. The school recognises that there are pupils who have a very high general ability across the curriculum (gifted) or who have a talent in a specific area. These pupils should be identified, challenged and supported in order to ensure that their individual needs are met both within and outside the curriculum.

The schools ethos celebrates the uniqueness of each individual and seeks the development of independent learners. The policy should be read in conjunction with and interpreted in the context of the school ethos.

Definition:

Cookstown High School uses the term **Gifted and Talented** in the same way as CCEA to describe learners who are achieving, or who have the potential to achieve, a level substantially beyond the rest of their peer group inside our school.

Those learners who demonstrate or have the potential to demonstrate extremely high levels of ability, compared to their peers across the entire population, will be referred to by the term **Exceptionally Able**.

Guidelines for Teachers:

This Guidance for Teachers sets out non-statutory guidelines to support the teaching of Gifted and Talented learners. The guidelines reflect good practice already taking place in schools throughout Northern Ireland and are consistent with the aims and objectives of the Northern Ireland Curriculum.

Aim:

The aim of this policy is to support inclusion by ensuring a consistent approach to the identification, provision and support of the Exceptionally Able, pupils in school. To achieve this, we will endeavour to:

- Use an agreed, shared definition of the term ‘exceptionally able’;
- Promote a consistent approach for all members of staff to cater for exceptionally able pupils;
- Identify exceptionally able pupils at the earliest possible opportunity;
- Provide stimulating learning experiences for all pupils that encourage independence and autonomy, and support pupils in using their initiative
- Provide opportunities for pupils to work at higher cognitive levels;
- Provide opportunities for all pupils to reveal and develop their potential abilities;

- Provide opportunities for pupils to develop specific skills and talents;
- Encourage pupils to reflect on the process of their own learning and to understand the factors that help them to make progress;
- Foster the holistic development well-rounded and balanced pupils, both intellectually and socially;
- Encourage pupils to be open to ideas and initiatives presented by others, thus promoting the importance of citizenship and collaboration;
- Work in partnership with parents and guardians to help them promote their children's learning and development;
- Make best use of links with other schools and the wider community to enhance learning opportunities.

Identification & Characteristics:

At Cookstown High School we identify children as '**exceptionally able**' if they are performing at a 'deepening level' which is significantly above the expected level for their year group in one or a number of different curriculum areas. This identification will also be made in conjunction with discussions with the class teacher; taking in to account baseline tests, national statistics (where available) and a combination of some of the following characteristics:

- Facility with language use
- Logical reasoning ability
- Imagination and creativity
- Ability to link concepts and ideas
- Ability to question ideas and concepts
- Wide reading
- Wide general knowledge
- Excellent memory skills
- Ability to engage in problem solving
- Interpersonal skills
- Emotional Intelligence
- Bodily/kinesthetic skills
- Rapid assimilation of material
- Focused concentration on specific tasks
- Musical, sporting or dramatic ability
- Keen observation

The exceptionally able pupil will show a range of these characteristics in a particular subject area such as music, drama or art. Pupils may not be permanently 'exceptionally able' but may have phases in their school careers when they display characteristics of an exceptionally able pupil.

The school will endeavour to identify pupils who have the potential to be **gifted and talented** and are underachieving in all or some curriculum areas. A list of these pupils by class group will be maintained as the **Gifted and Talented Register**. The school will seek to find strategies to meet the individual needs of these pupils.

Methods of Identification:

The school will use a range of agreed criteria and sources of evidence. These may include but are not limited to:

- Diagnostic testing
- Information provided at all points of transition, both external (for example, primary to secondary) and internal
- Standard Assessment Tests, including CAT, PTE and PTM
- Reading tests
- In-school monitoring system
- Subject specific criteria for identifying the most able
- Staff recommendations and observations
- Results in external examinations such as AQE, GL Assessment, GCSE, IGCSE, IBAC, diplomas
- Performance in competitions eg. debating, sport, music
- Information from parents, guardians and other outside agencies
- Information from peers

The school will keep records of those pupils who show particular or overall high ability within the curriculum. It is recognised that pupils develop at different rates, therefore the number and members of the identified group of pupils will change over time. Staff should actively use all available information to inform planning and pupil progression.

Provision:

School level:

- Setting by ability within subject areas when applicable
- Differentiation and extension within individual teachers' planning, to provide challenge for gifted and talented pupils at departmental level
- Withdrawal for specific activities (when appropriate) that allow gifted and talented pupils the opportunity to work together on challenging and enriching tasks
- Involvement of gifted and talented pupils in extra-curricular or co-curricular activities that extend the boundaries of the curriculum
- Acceleration is not usually recommended because there may be social difficulties through differences in levels of maturity. It should be possible to address the needs of these children within the appropriate year group. However, there will be times when it will be appropriate for children to work with older children, through curricular activities with other year groups or through visits to other schools.
- Mentoring by an older pupil in a particular subject

Within the classroom, the learning culture should:

- Be pupil centered, valuing and utilising pupils' own interests and learning styles
- Encourage the use of a variety of resources, ideas, strategies and tasks
- Encourage metacognition, or 'thinking about thinking'
- Provide a secure learning environment where risk taking is valued
- Provide a challenging learning environment, allowing pupils to access the higher order thinking skills
- Involve pupils in working in a range of settings and combinations: as individuals; in pairs; in groups; as a class; cross-year; cross-school; inter-school
- Encourage pupils to ask questions of themselves, of their peers, of adults, and of ideas (abstract and philosophical thinking)
- Encourage target setting that involves pupils in their own learning and progress
- Celebrate creative and original thinking
- Ensure that homework extends the learning of the individual pupil, encouraging independence and self-motivation

Out with the classroom, the school will seek:

- Opportunities for able, gifted and talented pupils to take part in enrichment activities; Masterclasses; mentoring younger pupils; peripatetic music teaching; sporting events; dramatic productions; competitions; residential courses, summer schools;
- Collaboration with outside agencies that provide guidance, ideas and support for able, gifted and talented pupils;
- Involvement of adults (parents, local businesses, University) with abilities and knowledge in specific areas, in order to motivate and inspire able, gifted and talented pupils;
- Opportunities for able, gifted and talented pupils to participate in Gifted and Talented Summer Schools where available;
- Contribution to travel expense (if incurred) for pupils whose ability enables them to represent school at events outside school time;
- Facilitation of pupils (for example through the provision of catch up work) whose ability results in them being away from school for a time to develop their talent or gift.

Co curricular provision includes but is not limited to:

- Bar Mock Trial
- BT Young Scientists Competition
- Key stage 3 Science Quiz
- Linguistics Olympiad
- Maths challenge
- Regional level sports events
- Young Innovators

Roles:

The Headmaster through the Vice Principal (Curriculum) has specific responsibility for identifying and monitoring the progress of able, gifted and talented pupils in the school.

The Vice Principal (Curriculum) will maintain the Gifted and Talented Register.

The SENCo has regular access to the Senior Leadership Team, and liaises with other Leadership Team members, with the staff, and with parents. The SENCo will advise parents if their children have been added to the Gifted and Talented register and if and when they have been removed from it.

The Senior Teachers will liaise closely (according to their individual areas of responsibility) with the Vice Principal Pastoral to identify and develop gifted and talented pupils.

Heads of Department have a responsibility to lead in the identification and reporting of pupils who may be gifted and talented in their subject.

All Teachers have a responsibility to pay due regard to the ability, attainment and potential of each pupil and to report those who may be gifted and talented to the head of their department. Teachers have a responsibility to look for meaningful co-curricular opportunities for pupils.

Monitoring and review:

The Board of Governors has a responsibility to ensure that this policy is reviewed regularly and updated as appropriate in line with good practice.

Monitoring is closely linked with progress reviews and the annual reports to parents. Records of identified able, gifted and talented pupils are regularly reviewed through monitoring data and teacher recommendations.

Linked documents:

Assessment Policy

Learning & Teaching Policy

School Ethos

Special Educational Needs & Inclusion Policy