

Stowe School

Additional Needs Policy

(Incorporating the EAL, SEN and Highly Talented Pupils Policies)



5.1.8 ADDITIONAL NEEDS

Stowe School recognises that some pupils will have specific learning difficulties, may be academically highly talented (AHT) or have English as an additional language. The Skills Department, the EAL Department and the coordinators for AHTs support these pupils to help them achieve their potential in public exams as well as becoming successful independent learners. Stowe offers its pupils a tailored programme of support dependant on need.

Details of programmes followed, along with updated scores (SEN) are recorded on ISAMS for staff to access.

STUDENTS WITH SPECIFIC LEARNING DIFFICULTIES

The Skills Department helps students overcome specific difficulties so that they can be successful learners here at Stowe. This is carried out through in class support, differentiation within the classroom, prep support, small group tuition and occasionally in one to one lessons.

The aims of the Department are to increase reading, spelling and numeracy abilities of pupils who are within the below average and low average range and to prepare pupils for public exams across all of the subjects.

Pupils are identified by prep schools, through the Third Form screening or by teachers. They then access a range of support dependant on need and severity. Many pupils come for a series of lessons in a small group to remediate the identified problem. Some attend prep club in order to gain support for prep, some have in-class support. In rare cases, a student will give up a whole subject and attend Skills for up to three lessons per week.

Explicit targets are set by the pupil when attending skills and these are reflected on each term. Teachers keep a record of skills taught and progress made. This is communicated to parents via reports and parents' meeting.

Pupils with an EHCP

Stowe School will implement the support detailed in the EHCP within the funding provided by the local authority. Reasonable adjustments will be made to ensure the pupil has the best possible opportunities here at Stowe within the EHCP funding.

Where a pupil needs to be assessed for an Education and Health Care Plan, the SENCo will co-ordinate school records and information to support the application.

HIGHLY TALENTED PUPILS

Definition

There is an inherent difficulty with the widely-used term 'Gifted & Talented', as the latest research indicates that there is no such thing as natural talent and so the idea of someone being 'gifted' with special attributes may be misleading. We do, however, believe that pupils come to us with a range of talents and that there are some pupils who are already very talented when they arrive, and that it is important to recognise where they are and to ensure they are challenged and stretched so that they continue to develop to their full potential. For that reason we prefer to call them 'Highly Talented', rather than 'Gifted & Talented'.

Identification

There is a clear distinction between potential and attainment. Not all very able pupils will be among the highest attainers in terms of exam grades. Equally, some pupils may come into the School very well trained for

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and successful in exams, but without independent problem-solving ability, which may lead teachers to make false assumptions about how that pupil will cope with deeper academic challenges. Because of this, rather than rely solely on entrance, internal and external exam results and/or teacher recommendations, we look most carefully at the results of the baseline aptitude tests taken by all students on entry (CAT4 from Sept 2019). Scores in these tests of 130 or more place students in the top 2.5% nationally. Although a student may have an off day and underperform in these baseline tests, a strong result is never achieved by luck so it is a good indicator of aptitude, though not the only one.

With this in mind, our system for identifying those to be entered on the Skills Register as Academically Highly Talented Pupils is as follows:

1. Those who enter in Year 9 or Year 12 on an academic scholarship
2. Those who in the CAT4 achieve an overall score of 130 or above
3. Those who have shown consistently strong achievement and ability across the board in comparison to their peers (based on internal and external exam results, as well as Academic Progress Grades).

Some students may not be academically highly talented across the board, but may be highly talented in one or more subjects, or in the Arts or Sport. Music, Art and Sports Scholarships are available on entry to those who can prove their strength of talent through assessment. Equally, each department, including all academic departments, will have a clear system for identifying those who prove highly talented in their fields based on baseline scores and internal assessment. If those identified by a department are not already on the Academically Highly Talented register, the Head of Department will communicate the names of the relevant pupils to the Lower or Senior School Academic Scholars Coordinator and to the Head of the Skills Department, so they can be added to Skills Register.

Our provision for the Academically Highly Talented

All teachers will be expected to check the Skills Register on a regular basis to make a note of those in this category, along with any other Special Educational Needs, and differentiate accordingly in the work done in class and set as prep, with extension opportunities made available on the VLE or through academic societies.

Because all pupils have the potential to improve on their attainment and because no pupils should feel excluded from being able to grapple with deeper academic extension, the School operates an Open Minds Programme in the Lower School. This consists of a series of extension events, some subject specific and some cross-curricular, which are open to any Lower School pupil who would like to attend.

In addition to Open Minds, Stowe also offers the Lower School Academic Scholars (LSAS) group. This is an invitation-only group designed to provide extra stretch to our most highly academically talented pupils in the Third, Fourth and Fifth Forms. Any pupil who arrives at the School on an Academic Scholarship is expected to attend. Others from these year groups can also apply to join the group through filing in an application form, and decisions will be based on the evidence from his or her baseline data, academic transcript, APGs, internal exam results and the recommendation of teachers and tutors. Those on the Academically Highly Talented register will be encouraged to apply. Commitment and contributions to the Open Minds Programme and to subject-specific extension societies is expected by all members.

In the Sixth Form, the Senior School Academic Scholars Co-ordinator oversees the running of the Head's Essay Society (HMES) and Oxbridge preparation. Ambitious members of the Lower Sixth Form who are aiming to apply for the most competitive universities can apply to join the society in October. Members will be selected on the basis of an application form providing evidence of their academic performance at GCSE, evidence of

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self-driven extension, and teacher/tutor recommendation. As a rule of thumb applicants are expected to have attained at least six A* grades at GCSE (or points equivalent). HMES meets every Monday in the evening and members will be expected to produce and read papers in preparation for submission to outside competitions and will also be expected to critique each other's work. The Senior School Academic Scholars Coordinator will be responsible for mentoring and monitoring the progress of all members of the group and for supporting pupils through the extra steps and deadlines that come with applications to Oxbridge, to read Medicine or Veterinary Science, or to apply to an Ivy League university in the USA, or other elite institution abroad.

Our provision for the Highly Talented in Sport, Art, Design and Music

The School offers scholarships on entry in Art, Design, Music and Sport to talented applicants on the basis of our own scholarship assessments. We offer a wide and in-depth range of opportunities for stretch and challenge in Art, Design, Music and Sport and those holding scholarships are expected to take an active role in performing in School teams and ensembles, or in the creation of art for exhibition. The School will also endeavour where possible to allow Scholars to participate in representative teams and competitions that will help to further their development. The respective departments are responsible for monitoring each Scholar's progress and contribution, providing detailed mentoring and guidance for the Scholar, and to report back to the Scholarships & Bursaries Committee.

Celebration of our Highly Talented Pupils

The School aims to showcase and celebrate the achievements of all of its pupils. Those that are academically highly talented may, if not already in receipt of an Academic Scholarship, be awarded an Honorary Academic Scholarship on the basis of achieving 8 or more A* grades at GCSE (or points equivalent). Those attaining more than 6 A*s or at least 8 A/A* grades in total will be awarded academic colours, which are represented by Academic Ties and Pins. We also celebrate academic attainment, as well as effort, through the APG Suppers held after each grading session. Tutors can flag up excellent achievement in the APG session through a Mention for Praise recorded on the database to be celebrated in House. Excellent work can be rewarded by subject teachers through Merits, Commendations and Benes, which can help determine School Prizes. Where time permits, lists of those awarded Commendations or Benes that week are read out by the Head in School Assembly.

Those in receipt of any Scholarships are listed as such in the School Calendar. Highly talented pupils are also encouraged to showcase their talents in public arenas, such through debating competitions, concerts, plays, fixtures and exhibitions, and are also invited to perform or speak in School assemblies. There is a noticeboard in the Sports Department celebrating the achievements of, and providing information for, our elite level sportsmen and sportswomen.

English as an Additional Language (EAL)

There is provision for pupils who do not have English as their first language, which is co-ordinated through the EAL Department. The aims of the Department are:

* To provide pupils with the necessary language skills to access fully the school curriculum at GCSE and A level by improving the standard of students' general English in all key skills.

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* To prepare pupils for external examinations including the IGCSE in English as a Second Language/CAE/IELTS/TOEFL/CPE/PTE (*see key below) and to facilitate university entry.

* To provide subject-specific support to pupils in their chosen GCSE and A Level subjects where appropriate.

Initial assessments for EAL students help to determine the level of support required. Assessment data is used to inform decisions about classroom management and curriculum planning. In cases where EAL and SEND are connected, the Head of EAL will liaise with the Head of Skills/subject teachers where necessary to set targets and plan appropriate work. Relevant information on pupils with EAL is accessible by all staff on the School database.

In the Lower School, Stoics have the opportunity to follow courses in English for Academic Purposes (EAP) tailored to their individual needs. Some pupils study for the IGCSE in English as a Second Language as one of their main GCSE options or as an additional GCSE subject. International sixth formers may need to be prepared for the IELTS/TOEFL examinations (or equivalent qualifications) in order to meet university entrance criteria. Courses in general English and academic writing are also available, as well as English language support for subject-specific areas.

The EAL Department encourages close links with all academic departments, the library, the boarding houses and tutors in order to monitor progress and to ensure that the EAL programmes meet the specific language needs of each individual. This comprehensive approach to EAL teaching as well as the small-group, personalised context of EAL classes enables pupils to maximise their English language development and enhance levels of cross- curricular attainment.

*key

CAE= Certificate in Advanced English

CPE= Certificate of Proficiency in English (Cambridge ESOL)

IELTS= International English Language Testing System

PTE= Pearson English Test

TOEFL=Test of English as a Foreign Language