



Wychwood School  
OXFORD

## HIGHLY TALENTED PUPILS POLICY

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### **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. Pupils come to us with a range of talents and that there are some pupils who are very talented already when they arrive. It is important to recognise such pupils and to ensure they are challenged and stretched so that they continue to develop to their full potential. These pupils are identified on the Skills Register as Academically Highly 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, 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 examination results and/or teacher recommendations, we look carefully at the results of the baseline aptitude tests taken by all pupils on entry (MidYIS, YELLIS and ALIS). Scores in these tests of 130 or more place pupils in the top 2.5% nationally. Although a pupil 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.

Our system for identifying those to be entered on the Skills register as Academically Highly Talented Pupils is as follows:

1. Those who enter on an academic scholarship
2. Those who in the CEM MidYIS, YELLIS or ALIS test 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 Progress Grades).

In addition, we identify those talented in the four areas measured by MidYIS – Vocabulary, Mathematics, Non-Verbal and Skills to help staff target their differentiation.

Some pupils 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, Ability in Drama and Design form part of the assessment for the all-rounder Lee scholarships. Furthermore, each department, including all academic departments, has a clear system for identifying those who prove highly talented in their field 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 Academically Able Coordinator who will add their names to the Skills register.

The register of Highly Talented pupils and a review of the performance of those on the register can be adjusted at any time based on emerging evidence, however there will also be an annual audit and review led by the Academically Able Co-coordinator every January and June.

### **Our provision for the Academically Highly Talented**

All teachers will be expected to check the Skills register on a regular basis and to make a note of those in this category in their mark books, along with any other Special Educational Needs, and differentiate accordingly. The needs of highly able pupils should be addressed both in class and with regard to work set as prep, with extension opportunities made available either by setting different tasks or by offering extension activities.

Wychwood offers two clubs for the Academically Able. For pupils in UTs and Shell, the Lee Club has been running for many years. This is an invitation-only group designed to provide extra stretch to our most highly academically talented pupils in those year groups. 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 filling in an application form, and decisions will be based on the evidence from his or her baseline data, tracking data, progress sheets, internal exam results and the recommendation of teachers and tutors. Those on the Academically Highly Talented register will be encouraged to apply. For pupils in Remove, Inters and LTs, the Acorns Club has run since 2018. As with the Lee Club, membership is by invitation only, invitations being based on evidence from baseline and internal data and from teacher recommendations based on aptitude. This club aims to extend pupils' general knowledge and love of scholarship.

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

The School offers specific scholarships on entry in Art, Drama Music and Sport to talented applicants on the basis of our own scholarship assessments, as well as Lee scholarships to those with talents across the board. We offer a wide and in-depth range of opportunities for stretch and challenge in Art, Drama, Music and Sport and those holding scholarships are expected to take an active role in performing in School teams and ensembles, or in the production of art for exhibition. The School will also endeavour where possible to allow for 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 reporting back to the Awards and Bursaries Committee each year in June.

### **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 eight or more GCSEs at grade 8 or above. Those attaining at least six grade 8 and above at GCSE, or at least eight grades of grade 7 and above at GCSE, will be awarded academic colours. The Honorary Academic Scholarships and Academic Colours are announced in assembly at the start of the year and recipients are applauded. Tutors can flag up excellent achievement in the progress sheets and through A Word for Praise recorded on the sheet circulated at staff meetings. Excellent work can also be rewarded by subject teachers through alphas and commendations. Lists of those awarded alphas that week are read out by the Head in School Meeting on Thursday and those gaining commendations are read out by the Head at termly Certificate Assemblies.

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.