

## **Gifted & Talented Education Policy**

St Mary Magdalene Academy is a Christian community of learning. We aim to nurture young people to become high achievers and to discover their vocation in the global society.

“Show by a good life that your works are done by gentleness born of wisdom”  
James 3.13

### **Aims and Objectives**

St Mary Magdalene Academy aims to provide the highest standard of education and raise student attainment through a balanced and varied curriculum that allows all students to make progress and achieve their full potential, including those who are Gifted and Talented.

Education at St Mary Magdalene Academy is fully inclusive and therefore we aim to cater for the needs of all students in every single lesson through the appropriate differentiation of work and tasks set. As a result, a large proportion of the Gifted and Talented education we offer will take place in the classroom. The focus of education at the Academy should be on maximum rather than minimum level competency for all students, including those who are Gifted and Talented. This will be enhanced by a programme of enrichment activities aimed specifically at those students who have been successfully identified as being Gifted and Talented, offering the opportunity for these students to extend their skills, experience and knowledge in a range of subject areas outside of the standard curriculum.

St Mary Magdalene Academy believes in creating equal access to opportunity for all its students. By providing much of the education for our Gifted and Talented students within the classroom we aim to avoid segregation and create an ethos that celebrates achievement and success. Gifted and Talented education at the Academy will not only focus on students who are already high achievers but rather on identifying potential in all our students, raising aspirations and helping them to achieve this, creating a genuine enthusiasm for learning. St Mary Magdalene Academy envisions ability as far more malleable. We believe in a ‘Pedagogy of Plenty’ – when we see more students as being capable, more will become capable.

## **Definition**

St Mary Magdalene Academy have chosen to use the terminology 'Gifted and Talented' and to adopt the DCSF definition. This is in line with Excellence in Cities and the current provision undertaken in secondary schools. We accept the following recommendations:

According to the DCSF, '**gifted**' students excel in academic subjects such as Maths, English, Science or Information Technology, whereas '**talented**' students are those that have special ability in Art, Music, Drama, Dance and Physical Education. It is important to emphasise that students identified do not necessarily demonstrate high attainment but have the potential to achieve well.

The DCSF advises that the Gifted and Talented cohort should be between 5-10% of a school's population. The balance within the cohort should be roughly 2/3 academically gifted or 'all rounders' and 1/3 specific talent. Through raising expectations and a focus on challenging teaching and learning, **all** students should benefit from the provision.

The overall aim is for **all** students to make progress as the provision for Gifted and Talented students filters down. This very much supports equal opportunities in students' access to learning and the overall raising of aspirations.

## **Identification**

There is no such thing as a typical gifted or talented student. They are individuals and demonstrate widely differing patterns of behaviour, skills, aptitudes and attainments.

Students at St Mary Magdalene Academy can be identified as gifted and talented:

- at any age as they develop at different rates
- through provision of a wealth of opportunities.

The Gifted and Talented register at St Mary Magdalene Academy should be treated as a working document. That is to say, it can change – students can be added to or removed from the register at any time. The register will be maintained by the teacher responsible for Gifted and Talented education (currently Liz Stanley), however the register should be viewed as a collaborative document and staff are invited to suggest changes at any time during the course of the academic year. The register will be reviewed in any case at the end of each Curriculum Unit.

All staff will be actively involved in the identification and support of Gifted and Talented students. The process of identification will be fully inclusive. Lack of knowledge of the English language and/or different cultural and socio-economic

backgrounds will not prevent identification as Gifted and Talented; neither should behaviour or additional difficulties.

In order to make the process as inclusive as possible, teachers and teaching assistants will be provided with two simple checklists that focus on general behaviours and learning characteristics of Gifted and Talented students, rather than specific academic criteria. These should be used as a starting point in the identification of Gifted and Talented students but are by no means exclusive. Teacher assessment in line with the Academy's Assessment Policy will also be used as a method of identification, as will the reading age of the student. Talented students may be identified from all or some of the following criteria:

- Music examinations
- School drama/music productions
- Artistic achievement
- Contribution to school life
- Success in out-of-school achievement
- Departmental nominations
- Outstanding sporting ability.

Teachers and teaching assistants will be given regular CPD sessions to support them in identifying Gifted and Talented students.

Baseline data will also be used as an initial method of identification for students joining St Mary Magdalene Academy in Year 7:

- They have KS2 SAT level 5 or above in English, Mathematics **and** Science;
- They have a KS2 SAT level 7 in either English, Mathematics **or** Science;
- They have a CAT score of 126 or greater in one of the categories of verbal reasoning, non-verbal reasoning or quantitative reasoning;
- They have a CAT score of 120+ in any two categories.

### **Provision**

In order for Gifted and Talented students to receive a coherent and inclusive approach, it is necessary for all staff to be aware of this policy and to act upon it. We need to provide a consistent approach and to be aware that Gifted and Talented students have as much need for differentiated work as any other student. We need to ensure that we are always aiming for maximum rather than minimum competency when planning and preparing work for Gifted and Talented students.

Leading Teachers will be asked to consider provision within their subject area for this cohort of students and to monitor and develop that provision in line with curriculum developments and other school policies. Schemes of Work, Department Handbooks and Lesson Plans should clearly outline how Gifted and

Talented students will be challenged, monitored and assessed. Flexible grouping arrangements will be used throughout the school e.g. small groups of similar ability in mixed ability classes, as will setting where appropriate.

As already stated, the majority of the provision for Gifted and Talented students at St Mary Magdalene Academy will take place in the classroom, however, it will be necessary to supplement and enhance this provision by taking advantage of learning resources outside of St Mary Magdalene Academy, sometimes as part of students' mainstream programmes and sometimes as enrichment or extension. St Mary Magdalene Academy will aim to enable students to attend summer schools, workshops, master classes, revision sessions and to work with local industries and businesses. It will be advantageous to build strong links with the other educational establishments within the local community and internationally. It is important that any specially funded work to improve provision for Gifted and Talented students is connected to the main structures, systems and developments in the school, and where possible reflects and supports the schools' Church of England ethos and specialism in Humanities and Global Citizenship. The involvement of Leading Teachers in terms of generating ideas for suitable enrichment activities within their subject area is important for this work to be carried out successfully.

Careful provision must be made to ensure that the curriculum provided for our Gifted and Talented students matches and develops their interests, needs and aspirations. We aim to give our students the opportunity to be able to choose from a diverse range of experiences - general, vocational and work-based – all of which will be planned to offer coherence and to secure progression routes. St Mary Magdalene Academy could therefore provide opportunities for Gifted and Talented students to do some or all, of the following:

- Emphasise or specialise in a particular area,
- Experience additional challenge in courses and programmes beyond the requirements of qualifications,
- Work towards higher-level qualifications in some subjects or aspects of a programme,
- Experience new settings and engage with adults in a range of employment, professional and other formal contexts,
- Tackle qualifications earlier than their peers where appropriate and progress to higher-level qualifications or broader learning opportunities at the same level,
- Plan learning opportunities for themselves and peers,
- Pursue their programme with a number of providers working in partnership to optimise learning opportunities, challenge or relevance to further education and career aspirations.

The pastoral care system will provide individual support for Gifted and Talented students who need extra help. The SENCO will work with the Gifted and

Talented Co-ordinator to provide support for students who are identified as Gifted and Talented but who also have Special Educational Needs. Teaching assistants will be available to assist the teachers in providing suitable activities for Gifted and Talented students. Teaching assistants will be given regular CPD in relation to supporting Gifted and Talented students.

### **Monitoring**

As with any work undertaken in schools, it is important to regularly monitor and review progress in order to assess the impact and effectiveness of the provision being offered. G&T provision will be monitored during each Curriculum Unit.

The teaching and learning programme for Gifted and Talented students will be monitored by the Gifted and Talented Co-ordinator and Leading Teachers through:

- Lesson observations
- Work sampling
- Moderation of work
- Scrutiny of planning
- Discussion with students.

### **Roles and Responsibilities**

**The Principal and Vice-Principal** will have overall responsibility for ensuring the policy is carried out.

#### **The Gifted and Talented Co-ordinator will:**

- Work with the relevant parties to monitor and update the Gifted and Talented student register and recording/storing records and information
- Develop and maintain the Gifted and Talented action plan.
- Liaise with the Local Borough's Advisor to keep up-to-date with Gifted and Talented developments and to be aware of external provision.
- Attend London Borough of Islington Gifted and Talented Group.
- Identify students, in collaboration with Leading Teachers, to participate in external events and activities.
- Deliver INSET on Gifted and Talented education for the whole school.
- Develop external links to benefit the provision of Gifted and Talented education.
- Support departments in planning the provision for more Gifted and Talented students.
- Liaise and meet with parents/carers of Gifted and Talented students.

#### **Leading Teachers will:**

- Apply National Quality Standards in Gifted and Talented education to track provision within their Curriculum area.
- Ensure that Quality Standards are being worked towards.

- Identify the key characteristics of a Gifted and Talented student in their subject area.
- Monitor the progress and provision of students registered as Gifted and Talented in their subject area.

**Teachers and Teaching Assistants will:**

- Identify Gifted and Talented students in particular areas and track their progress.
- Set appropriately challenging tasks and learning opportunities within lessons.
- Differentiate appropriately and take into consideration students' differing learning styles.

**The Governing Body will:**

- Ensure resources are made available.

**Budget**

Funding for Gifted and Talented activities will be provided on a departmental basis.

**Parental Involvement**

St Mary Magdalene Academy will inform a parent/carer in writing if their child is identified as being Gifted and Talented. Parents and carers should have the opportunity to contribute to the Academy's understanding of their child. It is important, however, that parents and carers understand that the Gifted and Talented register is a continually changing and developing document and that their child could be added or removed during their time at the Academy. It is important to inform parents/carers of all decisions made and the reasons for these decisions. All parents/carers will be made aware of the difference between a student who is Gifted and Talented and a student who is a hard-worker. Students on the Gifted and Talented register will also be provided with the same information. It is the Gifted and Talented Co-ordinator's responsibility to communicate with and support students, parents and carers.

***Parental Involvement***

*Parents/Carers receive regular information about the progress of their child. In the primary department this is three times a year and in the secondary department this is four times a year. Parents will be made aware through the reporting system if their son or daughter is considered to have particular Gifts or Talents in a subject or activity.*

*For those students who are on the Gifted and Talented register their targets will be clearly matched to their activities and identify the progress being made. Parents/Carers will be able to discuss progress with class or subject teachers as appropriate during the normal parent/carer evenings and consultation events.*

**Policy and Action Plan**

The Policy and Action Plan for Gifted and Talented education at St Mary Magdalene Academy will be written and maintained by the Gifted and Talented Co-ordinator. These will be reviewed and evaluated annually in September. As with the Gifted and Talented register, all staff will be invited to contribute their thoughts and ideas to the Policy and Action Plan. This should be a collaborative process and it is important that all staff feel comfortable with the Policy and Action Plan so that they can then use it to inform their work and support the School Development Plan. All staff will be given a copy of the Policy and Action Plan to file and it will also be available on the Academy's Intranet.