



5.1.8 GIFTED AND TALENTED/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 very talented already 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 the 'Highly Talented', rather than 'Gifted & Talented'.

Within the whole School it may be expected that 10-15% of pupils could be described as highly talented in a particular subject or subjects. A few may be very able across most of the curriculum. 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.

In general those deemed to be Highly Talented are likely to show some or all of the following characteristics:

- Thinking quickly and accurately
- Working systematically
- Finding creative solutions to problems
- Communicating thoughts and ideas well
- Expressing frustration with routine methods and ideas and requiring stretching
- Demonstrating particular physical dexterity or skill
- Showing musical or artistic creativity
- Sound judgement
- Fascination with a particular aspect of the curriculum
- High levels of attainment in some aspects of the curriculum

Our provision for the Academically Highly Talented

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 filling in an application form, which needs to then be supported by the evidence from his or her APGs and the recommendation of teachers and tutors. Commitment and contributions to the Open Minds Programme and to subject-specific extension societies is expected by all members.

LSAS will be divided into sub-groups of no more than 15, with one group for the Third Form and the rest a mix of Fourth and Fifth Form in each sub-group. Each sub-group will have a member of staff to lead activities and to mentor the pupils. The LSAS Coordinator is responsible for coordinating the activities of the sub-groups in the three junior years, ensuring that the academic progress of the members is closely monitored, and liaising



with the Senior Academic Scholars Coordinator in the Sixth Form to ease transition.

In the Sixth Form the Senior School Academic Scholars Coordinator oversees the running of the Headmaster'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 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. 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 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 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 highly talented academically 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. Those attaining 6 or more 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 Headmaster 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 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.