CODE OF PRACTICE
THE ATHENA PROGRAMME
Provision for More Able, Gifted or Talented Students

Background

Redmaids’ High School is a selective school, most children being of national average or above average ability. The selection process includes at least two nationally standardised tests in non-verbal reasoning and mathematics for all prospective pupils.

MidYIS testing is used in Year 7 to benchmark and track students’ academic progress through KS3. YELLIS testing is used for the same purpose at KS4 and ALIS testing at KS5. This data adds to the evidence from teacher observations and other less formal testing. A standard MidYIS score of 125 indicates a ranking within the top 5% of the national population; many of our girls score within this range and our classroom teaching reflects this. For the purposes of identifying the most able girls within our school population at KS3, we note all those scoring at least 125 as their overall MidYIS or YELLIS score. Within this group we further identify those pupils scoring at least 135 (the top 1%), and the smaller subset of pupils scoring exceptionally high in these tests, that is, 140 or above, which comprises the top 0.4% of the national population. Students with scores of at least 135 can be described as academically gifted. At KS4 we identify girls with a YELLIS overall score of 125+ as academically gifted, and those scoring between 120-124 as academically more able. In Sixth Form we identify girls scoring an ALIS baseline of 120+ as being academically gifted, and note is also taken of more able girls who score between 115 and 119.

Note may also be taken of students in any Key Stage who show evidence of being More Able or Gifted in academic subjects not tested by MidYIS etc for example art or music.

Talented students comprise those with ability in the wider curriculum areas (see definitions, below).

Teacher expectations are high for all students and there are differentiated tasks in many lessons, but it is felt that if we are to fulfil the school’s aims for all our students then some special provision should be made for our most highly-achieving children, both those with exceptional academic ability and those with precocious talent in any area.

Reviewed and updated June 2020
**Purpose**

- To fulfil the school aim that we recognise each student’s individuality within the context of high and consistent expectations
- To identify More Able, Gifted and Talented children quickly and positively in the school
- For staff to feel confident about working with exceptionally able students

**Definitions**

Much has been written about how to identify More Able, Gifted and Talented children and staff recognise that exceptional ability can be considered in a number of different areas:

- general intellectual ability
- specific academic ability (e.g. in mathematics)
- creative thinking (unconventional responses to conventional tasks)
- leadership and social awareness ability
- emotional intelligence
- visual and performing arts ability (e.g. drawing, music, drama)
- physical ability (e.g. mechanical skills, athletic ability)

For the purposes of the School we will adopt the following broad definitions of Academically More Able or Gifted, and of Talent in wider areas:

**Academically More Able students**: those identified by class and subject teachers as performing ahead of most of their peers in core curriculum subjects, and/or scoring at least 125 overall in the standardised MIDYIS, and YELLIS tests, or 120 in the ALIS tests. These will also include girls who show the potential to achieve very highly but whose formal scores may not as yet reflect this.

**Academically Gifted pupils**: those exceptionally able pupils, often identified by class and subject teachers as far ahead of their peers, who score at least 135 in the standardised tests (or 125 in ALIS), and who may require educational provision outside our normal range of delivery.

**Talented pupils**: those identified by subject staff in wider curriculum areas such as art, music, drama, PE and IT as performing substantially ahead of their peers, and, where applicable, achieving precocious success in the relevant exams, competitions or sports teams. Evidence from out of school achievements provided by parents may also be relevant in identifying these students. This category may also include students with advanced emotional or social awareness or interpersonal abilities.

**Practice**

The identification of these three types of student is the responsibility of all the staff who are in contact with them:

1. Evidence from the MIDYIS scores and other attainment tests for More Able or Gifted students is collated by the Assistant Head – Co-curricular (Yrs 7-9) and Reviewed and updated June 2020
2. Class and subject teachers may propose names of students to be added to three lists, according to the definitions of More Able, Gifted and Talented students above.
3. Evidence from music and drama exams, competitions, sports teams and parental information about out-of-school achievements for Talented students, is collated by subject staff in the relevant departments.
4. Staff make a joint decision based on all the evidence, resulting in a register comprising lists of More Able, Gifted and Talented students.
5. This process is formally carried out each October, although individual students may be considered for addition or removal from the registers at any time.

**Provision for Academically More Able Students**

1. These students should be able to be catered for within the differentiated provision normally provided at the School.
2. Where appropriate, extension and enrichment materials will be given in class, and students will be individually considered for participation in extra events, challenges, competitions or courses etc.
3. Intellectual challenge for these students must be through the quality of work rather than the quantity.
4. Self-initiated and self-directed learning can be given to the exceptionally able student to develop their knowledge.

**Provision for Academically Gifted Students**

As above, with the addition of:
1. These students may need a specially planned programme of work rather than that normally provided.

**Provision for Talented Students**

In the case of Talented students subject and specialist staff have particular responsibility for proposing students for participation in extra-curricular events, competitions, tournaments etc.

**Staff Training**

Redmaids High School offers a range of teaching and learning CPD opportunities for staff, which include sessions on successful differentiation, and stretching and challenging the more able. The Assistant Head – Co-curricular and the Athena Co-ordinator may also liaise with the Deputy Head Academic to provide further opportunities for G&T specific training opportunities for staff.

**Athena Programme**

The Athena Programme not only offers ‘stretch and challenge’ opportunities for girls to go beyond the set curriculum, but also facilitates the development of independent enquiry skills, adding an additional layer to the provisions available in lessons and through the extra-curricular activities programme. The purpose of the programme is two-fold:

Reviewed and updated June 2020
• To provide for the needs of girls who are considered to be More Able, Gifted or Talented.
• to offer opportunities for all girls in the school to develop their abilities in particular areas of interest

Athena programme activities may include:
• subject-specific competitions
• events within school, such as author talks
• events outside of school, such as visits to lectures in and around Bristol
• twilight sessions
• independent research projects
• staff and older student subject-specific mentors
• “Red Talks” – subject-specific presentations delivered by Sixth Form students and Year 8 students as “Junior Red Talks”
• lunchtime seminars
• Oxbridge preparation programme

Athena activities are open to all. Where the events are designed for smaller groups, pupils will be allocated places initially on a first come, first served basis, and a waiting list will be produced. A record of attendance will be kept and the Assistant Head Co-curricular and/or the Athena Co-ordinator may use their discretion to ensure that as many girls as possible are able to access the opportunities available.

Involvement with the Athena programme is overseen and monitored by the Assistant Head – Co-curricular (Yrs 7-9), Alice England, and the Athena Co-ordinator (Yrs 10-13), Christine Locock. In KS3 students sign up to Athena twilight sessions via the Hub and attendance at these will be monitored by the member of staff leading the session and by the Assistant Head – Co-curricular. Tutors will encourage students to participate in events and the Assistant Head – Co-curricular and the Athena Co-ordinator will liaise with staff about student engagement with the Athena programme.

Athena Colours (Junior half and full colours and Senior half and full colours) will be awarded as a result of exceptional involvement in the Athena programme. The decision will be made to award these colours by the Assistant Head – Co-curricular and the Athena Co-ordinator based on the attendance of students at Athena events and discussions with tutors and subject staff, where appropriate.

All departments should ensure that opportunities are offered in their subject area as part of this programme. Opportunities should be offered to all girls if numbers allow, however specific girls may be targeted for a certain event or trip. In this event, the Assistant Head Co-curricular and/or the Athena Programme Co-ordinator will liaise with subject staff to provide a list of suitable girls based on the year group, subject area and nature of the event or trip.

Laura Beynon/Val Dixon June 2020
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Linked policies:
SEND
Monitoring, Reporting & Assessment
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