



The Holt School Potential High Attainer Policy

April 2018

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“Meeting the educational needs of the [most able] is about building on good general school provision, not about providing something entirely different.” Professor Deborah Eyre, 2001.

The Holt School has an inclusive policy to drive and direct learning for all students and, therefore, to identify and meet the needs of our most able students. These students are referred to as Potential High Attainers.

At the centre of our policy is a consistent and committed approach from all staff and departments to provide a secure and challenging learning environment for all students, ensuring that no “ceiling” is placed on achievement. The Holt School takes pride in achievement and we encourage all our students to become independent learners with high aspirations for their future.

This policy will give a clear understanding of how our Potential High Attainers are identified, supported and monitored to ensure the development of their potential as a whole.

Aims

The school aims to:

- Challenge able students within the classroom.
- Provide stimulating learning experiences for all students that encourage independence and autonomy and support students in using their initiative and allow them to achieve their full potential.
- Provide opportunities for students to work at higher cognitive levels.
- Provide opportunities for students to develop specific skills and talents.
- Encourage students to reflect on the process of their learning and to understand the factors that help them to make progress.
- Foster the development of a well-rounded and balanced individual, both intellectually and socially.
- Encourage students to be open to ideas and initiatives presented by others, thus promoting the importance of citizenship and cultural diversity.
- Encourage students to develop leadership potential and provide opportunities for this.
- Celebrate achievement.

Definitions

- **Potential High Attainers (PHAs)** are approximately 10% of students in each year group as measured by actual or potential attainment in the statutory curriculum.
- **Subject Potential High Attainers (SPHAs)** are approximately 10% of students in each year group who are significantly more able than their peers in a specific subject area.
- **Exceptionally Able:** the top 2% nationally as measured by actual or potential attainment in the statutory curriculum or a curriculum area.

Our system allows for students to be nominated as Subject PHAs even if they do not qualify for the whole school register. This increases our percentages to a more realistic figure of approximately 25% of the school population being considered a Subject PHA in one or more areas.

The PHAs are a diverse group and their range of attainment will be varied. Some do well in statutory national curriculum tests or national qualifications. However, being a PHA covers much more than the ability to succeed in tests and examinations. For example, PHAs may demonstrate leadership qualities, high-level practical skills, capacity for creative thought and interpersonal skills.

A more general checklist could include:

- Possessing superior powers of reasoning, of generalising from specific facts, of understanding meanings and of seeing relationships (Laycock)
- Originality and initiative in intellectual and practical work (Montgomery)
- Ability to inform quickly, store, sift, analyse and organise it to develop coherent and complex arguments (NACE)
- Having high personal standards and possibly frustration if they cannot achieve their own standards; be highly demanding of themselves; have a perfectionist approach (Leyden)

- Having exceptional curiosity and constantly wanting to know why (Wallace)

Checklists are an aid to identification but they will not be used inflexibly or independently of other methods of identification.

Each department has subject specific PHA criteria that are focused on their subject content and key skills within their curriculum area.

Identification Process

There are a range of strategies that are used for identification. Together these allow meaningful identification of an appropriate cohort:

1. Quantitative data: these include CATS, SATS, FFTd, ALPs and National qualifications including for example Music, Art and sporting assessments.
2. Qualitative information. This includes:-
 - Teacher recognition: subject specific criteria, data from conversations, marking and monitoring, classroom observation
 - Use of data bases: transition data and information from feeder schools, predicted progress between key stages, analysis of progress.

Following identification, the school's PHA register is created for each year group. Parents receive information via their daughter's review grades informing them of any specific subjects for which they have been nominated. The PHA Lead and school SIMS manager are responsible for managing the PHA register.

It is important to note that students may be added to the register at any point in the academic year but can only be withdrawn from it at the end of a Key Stage, or when they cease studying a particular subject. All students joining the school after the start of year 7 are reviewed on admission and added to the register as required.

The school also considers external factors such as the nature of support from parents/carers and the experiences at home as these have a major impact on the development of a student's abilities, as do the opportunities that are afforded to the student at school. The school identifies PHA students who are underachieving in all or some curriculum areas, in order to meet their individual needs.

Further details and guidance are available to all parents and students on the school Frog site.

Difficulties in Identification

It is important to recognise that not all PHAs are obvious achievers. Many actually underachieve – their potential is masked by factors such as frustration, low self-esteem, short attention spans, poor social skills, lack of challenge, or low teacher/parent expectations.

Monitoring Process

- The Heads of Department and Heads of Year are responsible for the monitoring and evaluation of progress for all students in their year group.
- The tutors are responsible for the academic mentoring of their tutees on the PHA register: the setting and reviewing of targets and seeking support from subject staff, Heads of Departments and Heads of Year when necessary.
- Heads of Department are responsible for monitoring, reviewing and evaluating the progress of Holt PHA students on the whole school register and those on their Subject register.
- Progress reviews operate throughout the year and targets are discussed.
- If a Holt PHA student appears to be underachieving, mentoring may be set up by the PHA Lead/Head of Year.
- The PHA Lead/Head of Year will discuss this issue with the student and parents.
- Classroom teachers are responsible for monitoring progress of the PHAs by using summative and formative assessment data along with professional observations.

- The PHA register is available on SIMS. All electronic registers show the PHA students for each class. Individual subject strengths and progress are logged on to each student's personal area on SIMS.
 - The register follows a student across the key stage, showing all data and performance in all areas of the curriculum.
 - The register tracks all students in each year group.
 - Each department include PHA provision in their department documentation and Frog pages.
 - Core subjects have a named PHA Lead teacher who works with the Head of Department/Faculty and PHA Lead to maintain the Subject PHA Frog pages and ensure a high standard of provision and guidance are provided.
 - The PHA Lead will work with the SENCO to ensure adequate provision for any students with 'dual exceptionality'.
- NB. Students who underachieve because they have learning disabilities that obscure their gifts or talents are known as having a 'dual exceptionality'.*
- There is open communication between subject staff, students, Heads of Year and the PHA Lead.

Organisational and in-class approaches

Important strategies include:

- The coherent management of student groupings (whether in mixed ability groups or ability sets) and recognition that whilst there may be a higher concentration of PHAs in some groups there can be students who have Subject PHA nominations in all groups
- The provision of opportunities for PHA students to work with students of similar ability.
- The provision of enrichment/extension activities and tasks.
- Differentiation within subject areas.
- Individual learning opportunities allowing students to organise, carry out tasks unaided and critically evaluate their own work.

Within the classroom

The most effective provision for PHA students to allow them to excel is the challenge that is provided within the classroom. Departments and staff have high expectations of all students. Staff recognise the diversity of learning styles of the students within their classes and provide for this through their planning. Opportunities for stretch and challenge work are written into departments' schemes of work.

Including:

- Open ended tasks
- Higher order questioning and thinking skills
- Differentiation
- Problem Solving

NB. Please see Teaching & Learning Policy

Outside the classroom

As part of our PHA provision the following are offered on a regular basis and, although these will benefit all students, they are particularly apt for ensuring that students who have potential in these areas are given opportunities to practice and extend their skills.

- Enrichment activities: school clubs; master classes; sporting events; Bar Mock Trials; peripatetic music teaching; residential courses; debating and public speaking activities; drama productions; Enterprise Week, outside speakers, visiting science and MFL groups and participation in a wide range of local, regional and national competitions.
- Super-curricular provision: subject specific guidance and suggestion pages are available on the school Frog area.
We feel it is important for students to actively develop their interests and wider reading at an early age.
Regardless of a student's future plans, the ability to extend themselves and research independently into their interests is an invaluable skill.
- Collaboration with outside agencies that provide guidance, ideas and support for very able students: NACE, Sutton Trust, Eton Summer School.

- Involvement of adults (alumni, parents, local businesses, University) with abilities and knowledge in specific areas, in order to motivate and inspire students.
- ISSP Events hosted at Wellington College. Holt PHA Lead is on the Steering Group for the ISSP Project. They provide an expanding range of opportunities from Year 8 to Year 13 incorporating Science, Maths, Technology, MFL, Humanities and English.
Oxford University work with the ISSP to provide a programme of events supporting students to aspire to and gain entry to Russell Group Universities and Oxbridge Colleges. Events include Aspiration Workshops, Personal Statement and Super-curricular workshops, networking events with Oxbridge Ambassadors and a mock interview evening.
- Wellington College Events: lectures, debating, conferences and super-curricular opportunities across a range of subject areas.
- The Holt Oxbridge and Early Entry Programme led by a dedicated Oxbridge Lead. Providing a comprehensive programme that supports the PHAs once they reach Sixth Form.
- Federation Schools: Joint projects from the Federation have included business and enterprise events, Languages in Business day, STEM events and competitions.