



St Mary's School  
CAMBRIDGE

# Differentiation Policy

*This policy is the responsibility of Senior School Director of Teaching and Learning in conjunction with the Head of Juniors. This Policy is reviewed by the Senior Leadership Team.*

*Last review: October 2021*

*Next review: October 2022*

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## Ethos

Mary Ward founded educational establishments which focus on the development of the whole person and focused on education which was sufficiently broad to provide the opportunity for real discernment of vocation whatever the starting point of each individual. As an HPL world class school we are committed to maximising progress of all pupils whatever their level of current progress.

## Rationale

Providing for all pupils: Able or Gifted (which means those with higher levels of current progress), those with Special Educational Needs (SEN) or Disabilities as well as those who do not fall into any particular category from the Early Years to the Sixth Form, including our boarders, is an integral part of teaching and learning at St Mary's School, Cambridge (the School). The School's Aims state that we:

- help all pupils to develop their skills and abilities, intellectually, emotionally, and socially.
- provide teaching which makes learning challenging, engaging and enables all pupils to progress.
- are committed to working for quality and equality of opportunity.

In addition, as an HPL school we hope to encourage greater enterprise, self-reliance, and independence in all pupils.

In order to achieve these aims, we ensure that all pupils receive the opportunities that are necessary to develop their specific skills or talents.

By providing educational opportunity for all and committing to provide an environment in which all pupils are enabled to realise their potential, we comply with the 2010 Equality Act.

This Policy should be read in conjunction with the Equality Policy, the SEND policy and the Scholars' Policy.

## Able and gifted pupils

We recognise that some pupils are 'able' or 'gifted' learners who have well above average levels of current progress in one or more subjects. We recognise that ability or giftedness can identify itself at any time in a pupil's school career and therefore avoid excessive labelling or any notion that talent is fixed or innate. We encourage all pupils to exercise a 'Growth Mindset' and value and encourage all efforts whatever the starting point. We also recognise that some pupils have dual exceptionality; they are able and may be gifted but also have a learning need which can mean it is more complex to identify their ability and to support them in their studies.

## Identification of able pupils

We use information from LUCID, MidYIS, YELLIS, ALIS and teacher observation to identify students as Able and/or Gifted. The Director of Studies collates information annually and such pupils are signified with a symbol on iSAMS. All pupils are tracked against their MidYIs/YELLIS/ ALIS score.

The scores used to identify Able and Gifted pupils are as follows:

- Able à Score = 115 to 129 (inclusive)
- Gifted à Score = 130+ which is representative of the top 2% of students nationally.

## Measuring progress

We use the above identification process through which we update and monitor:

- Pupil progress for all year groups
- We compare scores and progress against expectations and aspirational Grades. (Information is compiled by the Deputy Head: Data and Operations)
- Form Tutors monitor progress in one-to-one Tracking and Monitoring sessions.

## Co-ordination

The Deputy Head; Data and Operations and Assistant Head: Teaching and Learning, the Head of Learning Support in the Senior School and the Head of Learning Support and Head of Juniors have overall responsibility for supporting staff in the implementation of the Policy and co-ordinating the monitoring of the progress of all pupils. They work in conjunction with the School's Service and Leadership Co-ordinator to ensure appropriate and coherent provision.

## Within school provision

The principles of good teaching for all young people provide a foundation for effective provision for all pupils whatever their needs or current level of progress. For most pupils, provision will be made within the normal curriculum, for example: open ended questioning, investigative work, explicit teaching of thinking skills, attitude, study skills and problem solving. Important strategies will include:

- The recognition that whilst there may be a higher concentration of Able and Gifted pupils in some groups, for example, the higher sets, there will be pupils who have strengths in all groups.
- The provision of a range of activities and tasks. All schemes of work will include differentiated learning outcomes and use of a range of teaching styles, discussion, teacher modelling and a variety of resources. Schemes should also have flexibility to respond to pupils' needs in real time built into them.

- The development of independent learning by allowing pupils to organise their own work, carry out tasks unaided, develop their thinking skills, evaluate their work, become self-critical and have high expectations of themselves.

For those in the Sixth Form with highly competitive course or university aspirations extra classes are provided in the summer and autumn terms preceding application.

## Monitoring

Each Department has a procedure to monitor the progress of all pupils. All teachers have responsibility for raising concern about individual progress in departmental meetings. There is a process of continual monitoring, support, guidance and enrichment for pupils through the Tracking and Monitoring system. Form teachers are the key players in implementing this. In addition, many pupils are also Scholars or have a recognised learning need. Scholars are particularly overseen by the relevant department, and in the case of academic scholars, by the Service and Leadership coordinator; this works alongside departmental monitoring. The Head of Learning Support oversees the progress of those with learning needs.

## Extra-curricular provision

As a school with a broad range of levels of current progress, it is important that all St Mary's pupils are given the opportunity for intellectual, sporting, and creative challenge.

The following are offered on a regular basis and, for the benefit all pupils every other Friday afternoon in the senior school. Optional clubs and societies are appropriate as a way of ensuring that pupils who have potential in subject areas are given opportunities to practise and extend their skills as appropriate to the age range of the pupil:

- Residential experiences and out of school trips (for example, Language Exchange trips, the Hockey Tour etc)
- School activities and clubs (for example School Choirs and orchestras, The Duke of Edinburgh's Award, The Arts Award, GCSE Greek, GCSE Statistics)
- Musical and dramatic productions and sporting activities (for example the annual Christmas and Summer Concerts and the Boarders' Concert)
- Links with organisations outside School (for example, Faculties of Cambridge University)
- Competitions (for example Inter-School Debating)
- Lectures (lunch-time library talks by visiting speakers)
- Academic Engagement blog in the Sixth Form
- Business and charity projects (for example the Fun Run, Fair Trade projects, Lourdes Fundraising and Young Enterprise)

An enrichment programme and Clubs and societies booklet is published and distributed to all pupils and parents annually.

## Junior School procedure

It is our intention to cater for each child individually. In doing so we endeavour to monitor individual learning and regularly discuss individual children at staff meetings. We realise that each child has her own preferred methods of learning and an optimum pace suited to her ability. Children find different aspects of the curriculum particularly interesting or may have a particular talent. In regular assessment, we aim to highlight our higher achievers and to provide strategies to further their development in the highlighted area/s.

Children who achieve higher than expected target levels or are showing signs of excellence are considered for the following:

- Specifically differentiated work within the classroom
- Additional support in their area of excellence
- Particular themes to research individually in line with higher achievement in a particular area of learning. This research is retained as evidence of further learning by the class teacher, and in the case of Year 5 and 6 children as part of their Enrichment Portfolio
- Parents made aware and their help sought to ensure that the education of the child continues as a three-way process
- Advised by the School to visit and report on places of interest linked with their particular interest or talent

All excellence is regularly celebrated at school. Some talents have the benefit of further development outside of school and all successes are enjoyed within the School community.

## Monitoring

All pupils are monitored through our Assessment and Tracking system, initially by the Form Teacher and confirmed by the Assessment Co-ordinator and the Head of Juniors.

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