

ST BERNARD'S HIGH SCHOOL

A Catholic Academy for Arts and Science

Gifted, Able and Talented

St Bernard's High School was reaccredited with the NACE Challenge Award on 26 September 2014, in recognition of maintaining a strong focus on supporting and challenging able learners. The NACE assessor acknowledged "the clear understanding that provision is driven by good classroom practice, supported by enrichment across the school", further commenting that "excellent practice is supported by current research informing pedagogy and classroom-based research has been part of the drive for school improvement.

Introduction

As a Catholic learning community we have a shared ethos, which emphasises inclusivity and the potential for all. As such, the school promotes equal opportunities for all to discover their strengths and talents. What is seen as good practice for Gifted, Able and Talented students is regarded as being so for all students. This approach is encapsulated in the NACE (National Association for Able Children in Education) mission statement to "provide for pupils with high abilities whilst enabling all pupils to flourish".

Identification

A Gifted Student demonstrates higher levels of cognitive ability in a range of areas. An Able Student may exhibit a particular aptitude within a particular subject, with skills which may not always transfer so easily to other curriculum area. These students may be on the SEND Register but can demonstrate key subject-specific skills. A Talented Student has a specific ability in a practical subject, including Music, the Visual Arts and Sport. An Exceptionally Able Student is a term used to describe students who are two levels above national expectations for their age. They will be representative of the top 2% of students nationally. In Year 7 analysis of KS2 and Cognitive Abilities Testing (CATs) is supplemented with teachers' professional judgements concerning whether students would benefit from being on the Gifted and Able Register. At least twice a year there is an update to ensure that all student potential is tapped into and harnessed and supported across all Key Stages. In addition, parents can make a referral and so too can the students themselves.

Provision

Expectations by all staff are high. Lessons are appropriately differentiated to ensure maximum challenge and the NACE assessor commented, during the recent reaccreditation, that all students are fully engaged in their learning. This is supplemented by a wide-ranging enrichment programme at lunchtime and after-school. In addition, students have access to courses, seminars and Master-classes, Easter and Summer Schools organised by Universities and other charitable providers. STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths) and Arts' Weeks encourage students to utilise their problem-solving skills through enquiry-based learning. The school was awarded the Artsmark Gold for the fourth consecutive time, reflecting the wide provision for students to study the arts. The school boasts a vibrant chamber choir and orchestra, offers specialist guidance to those in the Excellence in Sport group, enters the Shakespeare Schools' Festival Workshop annually, has an annual Arts exhibition to show the wide range of excellent artistic endeavours produced by students and staff, and has had success in the *Jack Petchey 'Speak Out' Challenge*. In addition, there are wide-ranging opportunities for student leadership through the Programme for Learning Ambassadors, the House System, Prefects, the Student Council and Head Student Team.

Enrichment Activities

In June 2012 Ofsted commented on the "positive learning atmosphere" at St Bernard's and that "the Gifted, Able and Talented Programme provides challenging enrichment across all year groups". As a school committed to providing a learning environment which encourages all students to maximise their potential, including students who display some form of giftedness, we believe in enhancing the depth and breadth already in the curriculum. Students have had opportunities to discuss literature with the authors *Malcolm Rose, Nicola Morgan and Anne Cassidy* and have been able to improve their problem-solving skills through a Pi Day and through work with the *Maths Puzzle Company*. A wide-range of students have also had the opportunity to work with local artists and have supported a Deanery Primary School with the construction of a mosaic. In addition, other students have taken part in the *Dora Love Holocaust Competition* and others have led a UN World Habitat Day. There is a Learning Community led by students in the lower school. Annually, students in Year 9 take part in Personal Challenge Days. The school also boasts competitive entries into the Suffolk Music Festival and the Southend Drama Festival. Those students in the Excellence in Sports Group have been visited by *Peter Hart* from the Modern Pentathlon and have attended Human Performance Seminars. The school continues to strive to offer exciting and challenging opportunities at all levels and for all students.

Targets and Parental Support

All students on the Gifted and Able Register and their parent(s)/carer(s) meet annually with Senior members of staff to discuss their academic progress and targets are reviewed to ensure appropriate support and guidance. All students receive an Individual Education Plan. Students have commented that they find this time valuable and it encourages them in their endeavours. All students on the Talented Register are encouraged to take every opportunity to enhance their talents through public performance and competitive activities. Mentoring is available to students from academic staff, coaches and Learning Mentors. In addition, the school offers students Independent Advice and Guidance through its own Careers Coordinator.

Specific Key Stage 4 Opportunities

In Year 10, students on the Gifted and Able Register have the opportunity to visit Queen Mary College (London University) and also Cambridge University. In addition, training for public speaking is offered as part of the school's link with the *Jack Petchey Foundation* by the *Speakers Trust*. Work Experience preparation takes place in Year 10 and preparation and advice is appropriate to the students' aspirations. This is supplemented in Year 11 with a Medical Seminar and Careers in Science Day at Southend Hospital, as well as continued access to *GIFT* Master-classes and challenging extra-curricular activities and Workshops. Revision seminars are organised through *Learning Performance Seminars* and take place on Saturdays.

Specific Key Stage 5 Opportunities

Gifted and Able students are encouraged to take an additional AS course in either Critical Thinking or Government & Politics when they enter Year 12. This is supplemented by an increasing number of students also undertaking an Extended Project Qualification (AQA) and focusing on an area of independent interest. In addition, students have the option to supplement their academic learning with a leadership qualification through the Duke of Edinburgh's Gold Award, the Arts Leaders' Award and the Community Sports Leaders' Award. A wide-range of University visits are planned annually and students can access Easter & Summer Schools. Those preparing for BMAT and UCAT (medical), LNAT (law) and HAT (history) examinations are supported by departments so they can demonstrate their potential to University Gate-keepers. In addition, there is a developed Oxbridge Programme to support students for Oxbridge Interviews and the school takes part in the Oxford University Shadowing Scheme.

Working with Partners and Stakeholders

St Bernard's High School has worked with the following partners to enhance the learning of Gifted, Able and Talented students:

- National Association for Able Children in Education (NACE) www.nace.co.uk
- Newman University College www.newman.ac.uk
- Liverpool Hope University www.hope.ac.uk
- Oxford University www.ox.ac.uk
- Cambridge University www.cam.ac.uk
- Queen Mary College (London University) www.qmul.ac.uk
- Essex University www.essex.ac.uk
- University of East Anglia www.uea.ac.uk
- Happy Puzzle Company www.happypuzzle.co.uk
- PSHE Association www.pshe-association.org.uk
- Anne Cassidy (author) www.annecassidy.com
- Malcolm Rose (author) www.malcolmrose.co.uk
- Nicola Morgan (author & speaker) www.nicolamorgan.com
- Southend Hospital www.southend.nhs.uk
- Duke of Edinburgh Award www.dofe.org
- Arts Leaders' Award www.artsaward.org.uk
- Sports Leaders' Award www.sportsleaders.org
- Jack Petchey Foundation www.jackpetcheyfoundation.org.uk
- Shakespeare Schools Festival www.ssf.uk.com
- Learning Performance Seminars www.learningperformance.com
- Speakers Trust www.speakerstrust.org
- GIFT www.giftltd.co.uk