



# LOUGHBOROUGH

## High School

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Policy Title: 03b Academic Extension Policy (more able pupils)

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Point of Contact (Reviewer): Dr Sean Reid – Deputy Head Academic

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## **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

This policy represents the Loughborough High School provision for our most able students. In other schools this might be referred to as Gifted & Talented, or Able, Gifted and Talented.

It is general educational practice in the United Kingdom for schools to make provision for their most able. This is a dimension of provision that is inspected: more able students are expected to progress at a rate appropriate to their ability, irrespective of class, school or national averages. As well as this, the spirit of the Equality Act of 2010 demands all are treated fairly and with due consideration: as such, our most able students should not be forgotten or overlooked based on their enhanced ability or just left to their own devices. This chimes with our commitment to Fundamental British Values, in catering to the needs and demands of all students as individuals in a democratic and respectful way.

Due to the provision made for students in co-curricular arenas at Loughborough High School (the 'talented' side of the old Gifted & Talented coin), management of such high-performing students in sports, music, drama and the arts will be devolved to these departments.

## **2.0 AIMS AND RATIONALE**

The thrust of academic extension as a general, school-wide principle fits with Loughborough High School's selective intake and is the spirit of our policy. Our average student sits within the top 10% of the national cohort, and thus we aim to intellectually and academically extend all of our students.

However, within this provision there is still a place and desire to identify our most academically-able students and extend and challenge them to the utmost of their academic capabilities. We specifically provide extension for our most able sportspeople, dramatists, artists and musicians, and we should similarly do so for our most able academic girls.

## **3.0 ACADEMIC EXTENSION FOR ALL OF OUR STUDENTS**

Loughborough High School's students, being able and in many cases exceedingly so, should benefit not just from interesting and engaging 'core' content in lessons, but also by going 'off-piste' to develop and extend thinking by looking at new, unusual, or related topics to those studied in lessons. This should be considered a central part of our philosophy: it should not be seen as an optional extra, considering the highly able students we teach in comparison to national averages. High-quality teaching and learning is at the heart of all we do.

Outside of the classroom, students can be extended in many ways, including (but not limited to):

- Visits from external speakers as arranged by departments
- Attending our academic speaker programme series which is open to all in the school community
- Visits to external sites / speakers
- The running of subject-based clubs and societies
- Collaborative work between departments to fuel thinking about the connections between subjects
- Recommendations of reading lists or articles for wider reading
- The production of department or year group magazines, where students can write about existing or new interests to enhance their learning
- Undertaking the EPQ (Sixth Form) or other external qualifications which we offer as a school as an additional qualification

## **4.0 THE ACADEMIC SCHOLARS' PROGRAMME (FOR OUR MOST ABLE STUDENTS)**

### **4.1 Aims, provision and constraints**

We have a specific focus on our most able students through our Academic Scholars' Programme. The programme's aim is to identify and then stretch our most able students. This is achieved through a mix of activities. Wherever possible, we try to offer academic activities that are open to any student who would like to attend sessions, irrespective of whether they are an Academic Scholar or not, such as our academic society meetings which are open to all students but with the expectation that Academic Scholars should attend where possible.

## **4.2 Identification of Academic Scholars**

Particularly able academic students at Loughborough High School will be identified as Academic Scholars in a number of ways. It should be emphasised that these students are being highlighted as being particularly gifted in the Loughborough High School context, even if almost all students at the school are highly able compared to national norms. If someone is not identified as an Academic Scholar, that does not mean they are not able or intelligent compared to the national average. We aim to identify approximately 10% of a given year group, and aim to do so in the most objective ways possible. The ways of identification are:

1. Application assessments
2. Entrance baseline testing
3. Departmental recommendations by teachers once the year is underway<sup>1</sup>
4. School examination results at the end of the year

Once identified, pupils are invited to join the programme through contact with their parents / guardians. Parents and guardians have the right to decline entry onto the Academic Scholars' Programme if they would prefer their daughter not to be placed on our register. Once entered onto the register, Academic Scholars will not be removed between Years 7 – 11 unless the child, parents or guardians request so or there is active disengagement with the programme.

A central register of Academic Scholars will be available to all academic staff once formulated each year, highlighting those demanding particular attention within the school.

## **4.3 Provision for students who excel in a subject/s but are not an Academic Scholar**

The Academic Scholars' Programme identifies students who excel across a range of aptitudes, tests and subjects. However, there is therefore the possibility that a student might be the most able student in a given subject in a year group, but not be on the Academic Scholars' Programme. These students should be considered 'gifted' in a subject.

As part of the departmental recommendations undertaken each year, teachers and Heads of Department are invited to identify 'exceptional' students in their subjects, and what can be done to extend these gifted students specifically in the subject in question whether this individual is a member of the Academic Scholars' Programme or not.

## **4.4 Provision for those on the Academic Scholars' Programme**

We run the formal Academic Scholars' Programme in Years 7 – 11. Within these years, teachers are encouraged to extend and push these students in class through a variety of ways. Central provision away from lessons includes a mix of extension sessions, and the advertisement of appropriate extension opportunities like essay competitions.

We do not formally run the Academic Scholars' Programme in the Sixth Form (although we maintain a register) as we believe that by this age students should be taking responsibility for their own academic development. However, within this year group we offer Oxbridge, vet, dentistry and medical university preparation as well as significant subject-based opportunities revolving around clubs, trips, essay competitions and the like. Many teachers utilise students' ALIS scores from GCSE to identify the most able students in their subject at the beginning of the academic year in addition to the Academic Scholars' register we publish for the Sixth Form.

## **4.5 Extension for Academic Scholars' Programme students in class**

Teachers and Tutors should have higher expectations of the most able; a string of Bs can and should be challenged if an able student should be achieving more. In general, extension provision should be considered

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<sup>1</sup> Departmental recommendations will be key for highlighting exceptional students in given subjects. It is worth drawing attention to the fact that MidYIS baseline testing provides a generic overview of ability and provides an overall score, but that within this, pupils can have varying scores in the four categories of verbal, mathematical, non-verbal and skills testing in the paper. So, for example, one imaginary girl in Year 7 who has an overall MidYIS score of 130 may not make it onto the ASP register overall. However, her mathematical score on MidYIS might be 141, which would put her as one of the top mathematicians in the year. Teachers / HoDs might consider viewing each year group according to aptitude relevant to their subject to detect highly capable students in teachers' subjects for monitoring.

a central part of a Loughborough High School diet: it should not, as the Sutton Trust put it, be considered a 'bolt on.'

Within the classroom, extension can be achieved through:

- Setting in certain subjects, allowing the most able to go further and faster
- Differentiation, where activities are tailored to test gifted students in difference to the main class
- Gifted students being given different stimuli or resources to other students
- Ability seating, where gifted students are banded together in group work and given a more difficult task
- Ability pairing, where students of lesser ability are paired with those of the highest ability to encourage gifted students to lead this pair work
- Gifted students being encouraged to synthesise, evaluate and recreate their learning if finishing early
- Direct questioning of gifted students asking higher-order questions or double questioning to really ingrain learning (using, for example, Bloom's Taxonomy)

#### **4.6 Extension of Academic Scholars outside of class**

Outside of the classroom, extension for Academic Scholars can be achieved through:

- School-wide extension society meetings, which are targeted and pitched at the most able even if open to all
- Ability grouping on school trips, where gifted students are banded together and might be taken to different rooms or activities than others on the trip to extend them beyond simply visiting the exhibition / gallery etc.
- Invitations to those recognised as excelling in a particular subject to lectures within departments
- Master classes, where the most able are invited to attend a specific workshop
- Departmental-based extension societies, particularly for university preparation sessions for interviews
- Designated lead roles for gifted students in club and society meetings
- External competitions such as Olympiads, essay writing prizes, design challenges etc.
- Acting as peer mentors for younger students
- School publication of selected essays / articles by students celebrating exceptional work

Please note that the above are suggestions and are not prescribed either to staff or students. Opportunities will vary depending upon the student, their interests and those of the subject.

#### **4.7 Monitoring those on the Academic Scholars' Programme**

The Deputy Head (Academic) will monitor those on the Academic Scholars' Programme to ensure satisfactory progress is being made (or that there is no relative underperformance) through:

- Informal discussions with teachers, Tutors and other relevant individuals like parents or carers
- School registers to ensure Academic Scholars are attending school as expected
- The school sanctions records to ensure Academic Scholars are engaged in learning
- The reports system to ensure that able students are achieving well
- The rewards system to ensure that able students are achieving well
- End-of-year examinations to ensure that able students are achieving well

We will also annually survey those on the Academic Scholars' Programme, to ensure they feel they are being adequately challenged and stretched both inside and outside the classroom.