



Hardenhuish School Aspirations Policy

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Manager**



Hardenhuish School

Aspirations Policy

Mission Statement

- Hardenhuish School takes a broad and inclusive approach to aspirations and challenge where all learners, regardless of their prior attainment are inspired to learn and supported to succeed. Perhaps most traditionally, we seek to identify and support those pupils with high prior and / or current attainment, be it in a specific area of the curriculum or across several subjects. In addition, Hardenhuish School also recognises, identifies and provides for learners with advanced skills in areas such as leadership, communication, entrepreneurship and vocational skills as well as in sports and the performing arts. Ultimately, we seek to provide a stimulating and challenging curriculum for all pupils and students regardless of their prior and current attainment, recognising that our learners develop at different stages and therefore adopt a flexible and responsive approach throughout all key stages.

Aims

- To provide a broad and balanced curriculum which is underpinned by the six values outlined in the curriculum policy, most notably the importance of depth and challenge for all.
- To support and encourage pupils and students to have high aspirations for their time at school and in their lives outside and beyond Hardenhuish.
- As part of the above, to implement procedures and strategies that will inspire students who are forging ahead in a variety of different ways, be it, for example, through their prior attainment, their leadership qualities or their entrepreneurial mindset. All students will be supported towards setting, and achieving, aspirational goals.
- To ensure that all pupils are motivated to achieve to the best of their ability and set standards of excellence as an example for others to follow.
- To work alongside NACE (National Association for Able Children in Education) as well as local and national schools in order to develop our provision for high prior attainers and ensure that we are constantly striving to achieve 'cognitively challenging classrooms'
- As part of our engagement with NACE, we aim to gain the NACE Challenge Award through a process of re-accreditation.
- To provide opportunities for all pupils and students to work at high cognitive levels and be nurtured in developing specific skills or talents.

Rationale

All pupils, regardless of prior attainment, thrive when given encouragement and support. Pupils with high prior attainment and other skills and talents such as those demonstrating leadership and entrepreneurial skill should be identified by classroom teachers and other staff members where appropriate (e.g. Research & Development: Aspirations Lead), so that they can be supported and challenged in their curriculum. Strategies need to be devised and implemented and pupil and student progress needs to be monitored (in much the same way as pupils and students with Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCP) or additional SEN (Special Educational Needs). This is not to say that more pupils and students with high prior attainment are more worthy of individual attention than other pupils – rather that, within a framework of equal opportunity, they are entitled to have their needs recognised and addressed.

Talent alone does not guarantee success and, as is the case with all pupils and students, those with high prior attainment may need targeted support to realise their potential for a number of reasons:

- Talent can easily be wasted without appropriate knowledge and skills to direct it. Advice and support may be crucial in this respect.
- Talent may go unrecognised in the absence of staff being ready to identify and nurture it. In some cases, the talent may be latent.

- Without an appropriately challenging curriculum and pupils and students given recognition for their efforts, pupils may be discouraged.
- Talent may require stimulation outside of the curriculum and so it is important that we continue to explore opportunities for students' talent and skills to continue to develop rather than stagnate and perhaps decline.
- Like all pupils and students, pupils with high prior attainment may need emotional and/or psychological support in special respects and should therefore be given due consideration as part of our systems for academic and pastoral and support (e.g. tutor mentoring)

Identification Procedure

- As part of our broad and inclusive approach to aspiration and challenge, staff at Hardenhuish seek to identify and challenge all learners, regardless of their prior attainment. As a result, our aim is to inspire pupils and students so that every child has access to a wide range of learning opportunities, both inside and outside of the classroom. Pupils and students are not labelled as being 'gifted' or 'talented' in a particular subject, or indeed across the curriculum. Instead, classroom practitioners and curriculum leaders seek to provide opportunities for pupils and students to engage in cognitive challenge throughout all key stages. When identifying pupils and students with high prior attainment and those who require additional challenge, staff should consider a range of quantitative and qualitative data. This includes:
 - CAT data
 - KS2 SAT data
 - KS3 teacher assessment
 - GCSE and other public examination data
 - Internal assessment data
 - Primary School Teacher nomination
 - Information from pupils and/or parents on pupils' (perhaps on entry to school and as part of an ongoing three way partnership between school, pupils and parents)
 - Ongoing dialogue between staff, including for example at the handover stage from one teacher to the next.

Provision for pupils and students with high prior attainment

Teaching and Learning in the classroom

The principles of good teaching and learning provide a foundation for effective provision for all pupils and students. The most important provision is that delivered in the classroom in everyday lessons. Therefore, effective support and provision is the responsibility of all teaching staff. Teachers seek to utilise the NACE Challenge Framework so that they may plan and reflect on the extent to which their curriculum planning and individual lessons are aspirational and offering up regular opportunities for cognitive challenge. Excellent teaching and learning is characterised by:

- Lesson plans which accommodate the needs of all pupils, recognising and building on what learners already know, avoiding unnecessary repetition and setting out appropriate objectives
- A classroom culture of high expectations and aspirations, in which it's 'cool to be clever' and where all sorts of talents and abilities are valued.
- The use of varied teaching approaches to make learning an enjoyable and challenging experience.
- Encouraging independent thinking and open inquiry.
- Selecting and using questions that stimulate higher order thinking.
- Encouraging and supporting pupils and students in asking their own questions.
- Promoting and modelling a variety of thinking skills.
- Modelling and requiring the pupils to use effective problem solving techniques.
- Using class discussion effectively.
- The development of young people's confidence, self-discipline and understanding of the learning process (metacognition): helping them to think systematically, manage information and learn from others.
- Provision of high quality teacher feedback and regular Directed Improvement and Reflection Time (DIRT), so that pupils know how to improve and have the opportunity to ensure feedback impacts on their learning.
- The use of peer and self-assessment to support young people in owning their learning,

Curriculum

The school is committed to providing a broad, balanced and stimulating curriculum which enables wide ranging individual talents to flourish and doors to be opened to future opportunities. We place great importance on the cognitive development that results from studying a subject in great depth. The challenge of understanding complex and abstract concepts, processes and cause and effect relationships develops new skills and ways of thinking that are not accessed by more superficial learning. For this reason, our expert and specialist staff often teach beyond the syllabus and offer a huge

range of enrichment activities, trips and visits to extend learning. Our curriculum is underpinned by a knowledge-rich approach, where the invaluable knowledge that we want our pupils and students to acquire is clearly defined, prioritised and respected. Most significant, is the powerful knowledge which enables learners to develop thinking that takes them beyond their own experiences so that they can explain, predict and envisage alternatives.

Grouping

Effective provision for pupils with high prior attainment includes a variety of grouping approaches, including those outlined below:

- Grouping by prior attainment so that pupils and students have the opportunity to work with others of a similar ability to enable the provision of appropriate enrichment and extension activities and ensure intellectual stimulation and accelerated progress.
- Mixed ability grouping provides opportunities for all learners to make progress and the chance to have high aspirations and achieve at the highest levels. These groups reflect the society in which we all live, and help our young people to develop a variety of skills that will develop their understanding of subjects and their relationship with their peers. For example, it is often highly beneficial for the high prior attaining pupil to support and explain a concept as this allows their own understanding to be developed and strengthened.

Enrichment

We aim to offer a regular, varied and on-going programme of enrichment activities out of timetabled lessons as a key component of the provision for all pupils, including activities such as:

- Competitions
- Visits, including trips to top universities
- Productions and exhibitions
- Musical and sporting activities
- Field trips
- Visiting experts and outside agencies
- Enrichment days / visits / residential
- Collaboration with local schools and universities
- Summer schools
- Inspirational career talks

Local and National provision

Pupils and students are encouraged and supported to participate in a range of local and national opportunities, be it in further developing their subject knowledge or preparing them for university or the world of work.

Roles and Responsibilities

Role of the member of the Leadership Team with responsibility for Aspirations

- Circulate the policy to staff and governors.
- Lead on the NACE re-accreditation process
- Assuming we are successful in our re-accreditation to the NACE Challenge Award, ensure that this is used as part of the school's promotional material and student recruitment strategy.
- Incorporate clear objectives within the School Development Plan to further encourage high aspirations and challenge both inside and outside of the classroom, regarding both academic attainment and in all aspects of development (e.g. leadership, entrepreneurial opportunities, etc).
- Work with the Deputy Director of Sixth Form to identify pupils in Key Stage 4 and students in Year 12 for an Oxbridge and Russell Group university group. Support students through this process through a range of enriching opportunities (e.g. external advice and guidance, relevant trips, MOCK interviews)
- Manage the allocation of the Aspirations budget.
- Funding to be deployed to Curriculum Leaders from existing capitation to provide diverse, interesting and challenging activities.
- Ensure that provision for pupils with high prior attainment is a feature of CPD on teaching, learning, assessment and curriculum planning.

Role of Research and & Development: Aspirations Lead (2 year fixed term role from 09/20 – 08/22)

- Research and disseminate the best evidence based practice for the cognitively challenging classroom, be it from within school, at a local / national level and through our work with NACE.
- Work alongside the Leadership Team member with a responsibility for Aspirations to apply for the re-accreditation of the NACE Challenge Award and ensure that these standards are upheld.
- Support Curriculum Leaders in developing challenge within their curriculum

- Plan a diverse and exciting range of extra-curricular and enrichment opportunities to appeal to a variety of young people across the key stages
- Regularly hold student voice events in order to plan for and feed back from levels of challenge within the classroom and extra-curricular / enrichment events.
- Liaise with the sixth form core and enrichment lead and Oxbridge / Russell Group co-ordinator as well as outside agencies, including other schools and universities, to encourage high aspirations for all young people.
- Challenge and aspiration within the curriculum, including

Role of Curriculum Leaders and Learning Managers

- Review levels of challenge within their curriculum / year groups and plan for cognitive challenge.
- Disseminate best practice regarding the encouragement of high aspirations and appropriate levels of challenge (e.g. reminding subject teachers to use work from the next key stage where appropriate).
- Provide sufficient challenge in all sets to allow all students to access higher order thinking and high levels of cognitive challenge.
- Include regular review of setting placements.
- Ensure that all pupils are given work that is appropriately challenging.
- Routine review of key stage, GCSE, AS and A2 results in terms of the performance of pupils and students with high prior attainment, linked to identification and monitoring procedures within their curriculum area.
- Curriculum planning and assessment / progress maps show a pathway towards exceptional performance criteria.
- Setting and grouping to be kept under regular review so that students' emerging needs are identified and met.
- A wide range of extra-curricular activities to be provided to all pupils and students.
- Lesson observations by Appraisal Managers to take account of:-
 - level of interest and involvement of pupils with high prior attainment
 - appropriateness of level of challenge
 - quality and range of resources
 - questioning that encourages higher order thinking
 - pupils' understanding and ownership over their learning

Role of Classroom Teacher

- Establish a 'teach to the top' mantra, with scaffolded support for pupils and students where necessary
- Have a clear understanding of their learners' prior and current attainment in order to provide suitably challenging work and respond to emerging needs.
- Where relevant, provide a range of teaching and learning strategies which extend, enrich and challenge learners (e.g. critical thinking, enquiry-based learning, problem-solving).
- Encourage the use of Tier 2 and Tier 3 vocabulary in oral and written work (Tier 2 vocabulary is language that enables learners to express their ideas in a more detailed and descriptive manner. Tier 3 vocabulary refers to low frequency language used in specific domains, often at advanced level and higher education)
- Marking and feedback to pupils should offer further challenges, customised for the individual pupil.