ST EDMUND'S SCHOOL
CANTERBURY

School Policy for Pupils with Unique Abilities and Exceptional Talents (UAT)

Aims and Rationale

We want the school community to consist of intellectually curious, fair minded and creative thinkers. Former pupil, the novelist Lawrence Durrell wrote, "I imagine; therefore, I belong, and I am free". We aim to connect every pupil through a love of learning, the pursuit of possibility and the challenge of being the very best they can be. We promote following values:

- Each other – We recognise our responsibility to create a caring and supportive community. So, we show kindness, respect and empathy for other people, prioritise the nurturing ethos of a family and community-orientated school, and have strong pastoral systems and policies
- Intellectual Curiosity & Creativity – We love learning and seek to foster creative, critical and lateral thinking. So, we provide an outstanding holistic education and realise the academic potential of each individual through inspirational teaching. We go beyond the curriculum, encourage individual research and cross-curricular approaches, develop self-study skills and reflect on our learning.
- Excellence – We commit to being the best we can possibly be in all things. So, we foster a positive culture that celebrates achievement, we set high standards and encourage individual endeavour, and we accept that taking risks and making mistakes are valuable parts of learning.
- Individuality – We recognise that everyone is different and has unique needs, strengths and aspirations, and we promote equality of opportunity. So, we provide wide-ranging opportunities for moral and social, spiritual and cultural and creative and physical development. We encourage and support every pupil to "be all they can be". We actively promote social mobility and inclusion and do not tolerate racism or any form of prejudice
- Social responsibility – We promote the idea that individuals must contribute to the greater good of society. We understand that we live in an inter-connected world where our actions can have profound consequences for others. We provide rich opportunities to develop personal resilience, leadership and communication skills. We emphasise the importance of teamwork and empathy

Definitions

Recognising complexities of the term "Unique Abilities and Exceptional Talents" we adopt a multi layered approach.

Very Able – pupils identified as predicted or having achieved top grades in a range of subjects. Very able pupils will be working at the top of age expected levels.

Exceptionally Able - pupils working well beyond age expected levels.

Talented - pupils performing extremely well in an aspect of school life. This could be within subjects specific e.g. within an academic subject, trying exceptionally hard in their studies, or a

creative such as sport, music, art, drama. A UAT pupil may also display skills within leadership or exceptional emotional maturity.

Leadership

The staffing structure aims to realise our ambitions for these pupils.

- The Deputy Head Academic is responsible for the 'UAT' Policy, including overseeing the achievement and provision of UAT pupils across the school
- The Director of Teaching and Learning leads on supporting teachers in their day-to-day practice

- The UAT Coordinator works with pupils with UAT, coordinating enrichment and identification and harnessing pupil voice.
- Heads of Department are responsible for identifying pupils with UAT in their subjects, and for providing them with stretch and challenge
- Assisted by the Assessment Coordinator, Housemasters and the Key Stage Coordinators monitor track progress (through termly ARC meetings) of pupils and ensure that enrichment or interventions have an impact on progress and achievement through support of subject skills and / or learning behaviours

Designated responsibility for UAT includes:

- Managing the school programme of academic enrichment
- Leading on the sharing of good practice in teaching and learning for stretch and challenge
- Liaising with other schools and outside agencies on enrichment projects, good practice and curriculum provision
- Identifying pupils and their needs, in consultation with pupils, parents and teachers
- Informing pupils, families and teachers about provision for stretch and challenge
- Monitoring provision, intervention and progress
- Targeted intervention and provision for individual pupils
- Allocating funding and managing the stretch and challenge budget

Heads of Department

Ensure the provision within their department and subject area meets the needs of UAT pupils by:

- Leading the identification process of pupils with UAT
- Developing and reviewing schemes of work as appropriate
- Leading staff within their department on good practice for stretch and challenge
- Allocating the Department budget appropriately
- Liaising with the Deputy Head Academic to ensure that the school policy is implemented

The Assessment Coordinator and Head of Key Stages work closely with the pastoral team to:

- Monitor, track and implement intervention to support the progress of all pupils
- Encourage participation in a wide range of enrichment events

Identification

The UAT Coordinator identifies a group of pupils within each Senior School year group at the start of each academic year. This is done as listed below:

1) Transition information is passed on through feeder schools (for more information see 'Tracking and Assessment'.
2) Teacher observation and assessment based on their expert knowledge of pupil performance and likely potential (see Appendix 1 checklists of general and subject specific criteria)
3) Data and pupil tracking. Each pupil scoring within the top 5% nationally for their age on our benchmark MidYis and ALIS tests, working at grade 7 and above across subjects is automatically listed as 'Very Able'.
4) For Key Stage 5, GCSE level attainment is considered. All pupils achieving an average of grade 7 or above are listed as 'Very Able'.
5) Nomination through staff, parents or peers
6) Self-nomination

Our UAT register is formally updated once a year and shared with all staff via ISAMS, where teachers may access a child's UA , EA or ET status via their class register.

We track progress carefully and offer extension work and co-curricular enrichment sessions to all pupils when appropriate. At the beginning of the school year, all UAT pupils are provided with information on suggested enrichment activities. Many enrichment activities form special programmes and activities for the very able and talented within the academic studies, music, art, drama and sport.

We closely monitor the performance of our very able pupils on an ongoing basis through the ARC Reporting system, in pupil progress meetings, departmental meetings and in public examinations as an internal control process and for academic reporting to Governors. Academic reporting to governors includes a breakdown of most able pupils to identify underrepresented groups on the basis of gender, EAL, SEND, etc.

Curriculum, Teaching and Learning

We seek to help every pupil to reach their academic potential, explore new ideas and technologies and to challenge and develop their thinking.

Within the classroom we aim to ensure that our lessons are stimulating and engaging for all pupils. This is achieved through differentiated teaching and learning strategies. To develop pupils' intellectual curiosity and love of learning, activities involving research/study skills, problem solving, decision making, analysis, synthesis, speculation and evaluation are built into the curriculum.

Pupils are encouraged to challenge themselves academically through extension tasks and enrichment activities. This includes making use of the school library and online resources and attending relevant co-curricular enrichment opportunities.

We offer a broad, creative and flexible curriculum designed to provide a range of academic opportunities. Core subject classes are set by ability in Year 9 (based on independent benchmarking tests and the results of Year 8 School examinations). In Year 10, setting by ability occurs in English, English Literature, Mathematics and the Sciences, with "triple Science" available to those pupils in Set 1. Year 9 and GCSE option choices enable opportunities to specialise in, for example Languages (Latin, Spanish, French), Film Studies, Economics, Film Studies, Humanities and the Arts.

At Sixth Form, we offer many subject options and, on an ad hoc basis, make additional provision for students seeking to take non-curricula subjects like Chinese, German, Italian and Russian.

This choice and flexibility is of great benefit to our UAT pupils. The Extended Project Qualification has also been a great success in terms of promoting intellectual curiosity, research interests and original thinking among our pupils.

We provide a challenging and enriched curriculum to enable pupils with unique abilities and exceptional talents to emerge, be recognised and developed. Having high expectations means that pupils are encouraged to engage in their own learning by being active participants in lessons and taking responsibility for their own learning, grasping the initiative where possible. The emphasis is on increasing the depth of the curriculum for UAT pupils rather than providing an accelerated curriculum.

The following characteristics of high achieving learners are developed through a pupil's education, either through the curriculum (which they are taught), everyday teaching and learning (how they are taught) or through enrichment. These characteristics are additional to those listed in 'Aims'.

- Sharp and precise use of vocabulary, a good command of academic English and fluent numeracy
- Knowing what an A or A* at A-Level or a grade 7,8,9 at GCSE requires through formative assessment
- Good speaking, listening and critical thinking skills
- Good independent study skills
- For depth, learning beyond the syllabus
- For breadth, linking learning across subjects and to the real world
- Knowing how to make sure of appropriate resources and support

<u>Teaching and Learning Strategies: Nurturing Creativity, Stretch and Challenge, Metacognition</u>

As teachers we routinely:

- Consider what kinds of teaching will lead to the kind of learning that is needed
- Develop our pupils' habits of mind through a systematic focus on promoting creative dispositions and developing metacognitive skills
- Teach challenging lessons that make our pupils think hard
- Understand how young people learn, are able to evaluate the thinking behind pupils' own methods, and can identify common misconceptions
- Review pupils' previous learning so that they have a secure base from which to develop their knowledge and understanding
- Model the learning process, using a range of strategies, and put in place the necessary scaffolding to enable all pupils to achieve quality outcomes
- Use effective questioning to probe pupils' understanding and identify gaps in knowledge
- Create opportunities for structured deliberate practice so that pupils are given time to craft and improve their work
- Use formative assessment to identify strengths and weaknesses in pupils' knowledge, understanding and skills and provide incisive feedback about what they can do to improve
- Embed reading, writing and communication and, where appropriate, mathematics across the curriculum

- Set challenging prep that consolidates learning, deepens understanding and prepares pupils for future learning

The School's Core Teaching values are:

Nurturing Creativity for rich, deep learning and fresh perspectives

Challenging Lessons to make pupils think deeply

Metacognition for Independence; enhancing self regulation

For more information, see the Staff Handbook and the Curriculum, Teaching and Assessment Policy.

Tracking and Assessment

Once identified as Very Able or Talented, a pupil will be labelled as such and flagged to all staff. They will enter a tracking process, which includes monitoring wellbeing. As an institution, we believe the best way to ensure that VAT pupils meet their potential is by close tracking of their academic performance through their school careers combined with deployment of appropriate intervention strategies when necessary. The school tracks all pupils' academic progress closely throughout each school year relative to recognised benchmark assessments and target grades. Each new entrant to the school is assessed.

To track pupil progress in vital public examination years a "Target Grade" is included on ARC cards. For all year groups, the statistical prediction emerges as a result of careful analysis of a range of data sources.

For GCSE, Target Grades are informed by MidYis and Yellis testing. MidYis and Yellis are nationally recognised programmes of educational testing, assessing pupils' chances in various GCSE subjects as a result of their responses to a wide range of numerical, vocabulary and spatial awareness questions.

For Sixth Form pupils, a similar approach is taken. In the early days of the Lower Sixth a similar (but harder) test is offered. The ALIS test is, again, nationally recognised and gives us grade predictions for all A level subjects. This data is used alongside pupils' GCSE scores to generate the statistical prediction.

Progress data on all pupils is produced termly and is reviewed by academic staff in regular Pupil Progress meetings. This data is informed by our school assessment and marking policy which stipulates that at least one piece of work is marked and graded half termly in core subjects and at least termly in all subjects. During reporting periods, VAT pupils can be cross referenced using our UAT register and the pupil data spreadsheets produced. Action plans are devised for those who are underperforming in one or more subjects. These are implemented by the Heads of Key Stages. Pupils who perform particularly well in each Academic Review period are recognised with prizes in assembly, including postcards home and termly academic colours which are celebrated with the award of a badge. Parents are informed formally of pupil progress through the regular Academic Review cards and reports.

Transition information is passed on through feeder schools. This process starts during the summer term of Year 8, when local feeder schools are contacted for information on incoming pupils. The primary feeder is to Senior School is the Junior School, which adopts similar processes of identification of UAT pupils. Prior to joining the school all incoming pupils submit school reports and their cognitive and academic abilities are assessed.

Consideration will be given to all requests that take pupils out from curriculum time. Consultation with the individual pupil, parents, coaches, co-curricular staff and pastoral managers will be an important part of the decision-making process.

Super-Curriculum

Beyond the classroom we provide a wide range of super-curricular activities, clubs, talks and trips, to enrich pupils' education (Appendix 2). These are implemented by Heads of Department, working closely with the Assistant Head Co-Curricular. The school's super-curricular offer enhances our curriculum and enables pupils to pursue their interests beyond the curriculum.

Pupils are offered opportunities to build independence in thinking and problem-solving skills, and link concepts together across the curriculum. We believe this is key to building on the classroom-based knowledge-based curriculum. One way this is achieved is through the Friday afternoon Skills and Service programme. All pupils within Year10, 12 and 13 opt into opportunities such as debating club, musical ensembles, art masterclasses, extended learning opportunities such as TEFL and Open University courses, news review, sports coaching awards, Combined Cadet Forces Art masterclasses, extended learning opportunities such as TEFL and Open University Courses and more.

Pupils learn to take on roles and perspectives through the people they encounter, often through their education. This can be historical or fictional characters met through reading, Drama lessons or our library Curiosity Shop. The "Curiosity Shop" lunchtime lecture programme brings in leading academics and professionals to talk on a range of academic topics. All Very Able and Talented are also invited to attend fortnightly stretch and challenge lectures throughout the year. All pupils have continual access to the library, including reading and discussing books and the opportunity to be introduced to top quality dramatic and musical experiences. In Years 10, 11 and 12 pupils attend Elevate Education sessions – study skills workshops run by university students.

There is a specialised enrichment programme for Sixth Formers, including the Inspire Excellence enrichment programme, structured assistance to enter essay competitions and the Extended Project Qualification: a research qualification which has equivalent status to an AS Level.

St Edmund's is part of the East Kent Schools Together Partnership, a collaboration across state and independent schools to share resources and exchange experiences. This partnership benefits all pupils as it enriches teaching and learning by forging strong relationships and sharing professional practice. Through participation in shared competitions and initiatives pupils have a broader experience, feeling confident relating to a wide spectrum of people in a variety of situations.

There are a huge variety of clubs, societies and lectures. Some clubs, activities and academic trips are focused on specific interests, tasks or projects and are accessible to time-limited groups. Entry and exit to these groups are contingent on such factors as interest, application and the decisions of pupils themselves. We recognise our responsibility to track and support the progress of pupils talented in co-curricular areas, making sure that individuals are supported fully on pathways to potential careers, for example:

- Time off for our most talented actors to participate in films, TV shows and participation in London shows

- Adapted curriculum for our most talented cricketers for their work at Kent County Council Cricket Academy
- Time off for a talented elite runner to participate in the British Athletics Academy Pathway.
- Encouragement and support for pupils of suitable ability to attend the Saturday conservatoires in London (RAM, RCM etc)

Personal, Social and Emotional Issues

We take seriously our duty to monitor pupil performance carefully and to provide a dynamic and engaging super-curricular programme to support, promote and enhance our UAT pupils. It is our belief that the principal means of developing such pupils is through differentiated and inspiring teaching 'to the top'. This can only be achieved through strong pastoral monitoring and systems that support while nurturing a growth mindset. We recognise the fluidity and complexity of ability and that pupils identified as 'UAT' may require additional pastoral support. The Head of PSHEE will develop Schemes of Work for PSHEE that develop growth mindset in all pupils, challenge VAT pupils and encourage responsibility.

- The PSHEE programme includes sessions on study skills, building resilience and mindfulness.
- Our vertical pastoral structure means that Housemasters and form tutors work with the same pupils for several years, getting to know them as individuals.
- Form tutors support their tutee's academic progress, including discussing academic report and ARC cards.
- The school council meets regularly. Minutes and discussion points are acted upon at leadership level.
- Peer support structures are in place where appropriate.
- Underperforming pupils are discussed at both an academic and pastoral level before support is put into place.

We encourage all pupils to believe that ability and potential are malleable qualities cultivated through learning and effort.

Partnership with UAT pupils and their families

Regular 'Stretch and Challenge' meetings are organised in order to provide uniquely able and / or exceptionally talented pupils with the opportunity to discuss their provision, including the need for any further support.

Parents are fully involved in decisions for pupils to take:

- additional/early GCSEs or A/AS Levels
- part in school trips, productions and concerts

Exceptionally Able Pupils

Some descriptions for students whose ability exceeds that of even their "UAT peers" include "genius, gifted, very bright, highflyer etc". The term "exceptionally able" describes pupils whose needs go beyond those of students already deemed to require opportunities for enrichment and extension in the normal curriculum.

We recognise that exceptional ability may be masked by:

- the perception that exceptionally able students are blessed with special qualities and advantages to succeed and they don't need additional consideration
- Emotional problems and adjustment issues e.g. an exceptionally able student may be chronologically aged thirteen, at the emotionally developmental age of ten, and working intellectually at a post-16 level without the life experiences to temper their thoughts.
- Dual exceptionality – a physical, intellectual, or learning disability.
- Those who, despite their exceptionality, may persistently underachieve due to boredom, lack of interest, or extreme perfectionism.
- Inability to control attention sufficiently to complete tasks he/she finds simple and repetitive.
- The child has already gone beyond the level being taught and sees connections, relationships and depths which make it very difficult to give the expected answer
- A child who is proficient at blending in is unlikely to be recognised as highly able by his teachers.
- EAL - exceptional ability may be masked by the fact that they are not being educated in their first language.
- Some from minority backgrounds may not show "traditional" signs of exceptionality, as different values and skills are prized differently in different cultures
- Exceptionality can emerge later in a school career or may not have been spotted earlier.
- **Being 'all things to all people' as a talented 'all rounder' can mask the exceptional**

Students with exceptional ability are just as much in need of support as their peers for their individual educational needs and for the social and emotional challenges exceptionality can bring.

We believe that the key to meeting the needs of exceptionally able pupils is through school and classroom flexibility and attention to planning and practice which reflects the individual profile of the student.

The school's assessment and monitoring systems show how the children are progressing and help staff identify any who may be underperforming. It is accepted that such children are likely to be able to perform well beyond national expectations and that normal assessment systems do not stretch their capabilities.

Classroom provision for the higher and advanced performer is monitored through observation as part of the ongoing cycle of lesson observations and work sampling. Observation may take the form of SLT Learning Walks, appraisal and peer observation. All schemes of work indicate appropriate extension resources and materials for use with higher and advanced performance students in lessons. All subjects share designated enrichment components for use with higher and advanced performance students in their schemes of work.

The following additional provisions are in place to meet the needs of exceptionally able pupils:

- Triple Science GCSE for those in Set 1
- A-Level Further Mathematics alongside Mathematics A-Level
- Further Mathematics taught off timetable
- English Language at AS Level taught off timetable

Continual Professional Development

Arrangements for staff development relating to the high-quality teaching of UAT learners is as follows:

- The School is a member of NACE. The website log-in, resources, guides and course information are regularly shared and promoted with staff
- Best practice in teaching of very able pupils is shared amongst all staff through the School's peer observation programme, termly SLT walks, appraisal and marking scrutiny.
- Staff regularly attend external courses such as those run by NACE and other external providers.

Policy Review and Development

Provision for UAT pupils is a key part of the school development plan and departmental planning, which feeds into the appraisal process.

The impact of this policy will be assessed in the following ways:

- The outcomes for UAT pupils are presented and analysed in a report presented to Governors each September. This includes evaluation of educational performance measured against potential
- The quality of teaching for UAT learners is monitored by regular observations from Heads of Department and the Senior Leadership Team.
- The pastoral welfare of identified UAT pupils to be monitored by Housemasters and the Head of PSHEE through regular wellbeing questionnaires

AEB/NJH/EOC Sept 2025

Review due: Sept 2026

Appendix 1: Checklists of general and subject specific criteria (source: NACE)

Identifying very able learners: general characteristics

Very able learners may display a selection of the following characteristics:

Personal traits

- Inquisitive, curious, alert and responsive to new ideas
- Quick/agile thinkers
- High self-motivation/initiative; can work well independently
- Socially adept
- Show leadership qualities
- Good/unusual sense of humour
- Sensitive/sensitivity and empathy with others
- Socially immature/isolated; prefer computers to people

Learning ability

- Learn new ideas and concepts quickly/easily/readily
- Good at reasoning/logical/analytical thinking
- Good at dealing with abstractions/abstract thinking
- See relationships between things; can generalise from specific facts
- Good at understanding things/meanings; show unusual insights
- Able to memorise quickly/easily
- Follow complex directions easily
- Keen powers of observation
- Advanced vocabulary/verbally fluent/good self-expression
- Learned to read early, often before school age; rapid readers
- Good attention; concentrate and persevere for long periods if interested

Learning styles

- Dislike repetition of concepts and closed tasks; get bored easily
- Informed/show interest in ideas and concepts beyond their years
- Creative/imaginative; original ideas in problem-solving; may be artistic/musical
- Inclined to choose unusual but effective methods of working, perhaps using a different line of logic or jumping steps
- Many interests/hobbies; read across a wide range of subjects
- Prefer verbal expression; reluctant to record things in writing
- Resent imposed timetable restrictions if interested in a task
- Perfectionists; may lean towards being obsessive

Art

Very able learners in art may display a selection of the following characteristics:

- Think and express themselves in creative, original ways
- Want to follow a different plan to others, challenge tasks given or extend their brief in seemingly unrelated directions
- Enthusiastic and interested in the visual world; have a strong desire to create in the visual form
- Driven by ideas and persevere until they have completed a task successfully, with little or no intervention from the teacher
- Take risks without knowing what the outcome will be
- Can be quirky and display humour
- Interested in the art world, art forms and culture
- Analyse and interpret their observations and present them creatively
- Work in innovative ways
- Enjoy experimenting with materials; able to go beyond the conventional and use materials and processes in creative and practical ways
- Communicate original ideas, insights and views
- Confidence in using a wide range of tools and techniques skilfully
- Keen to extend their technical abilities; sometimes get frustrated when other skills do not develop at the same time
- Explore ideas, problems and sources on their own and collaboratively, with a sense of purpose and meaning
- Make unusual connections between their own work and others' work
- Critically evaluate visual work and other information

NB: Aptitudes in the arts may reveal themselves early given the right conditions but can also remain hidden if a learner has limited encouragement or opportunity.

Design and technology

Very able learners in design and technology may display a selection of the following characteristics:

- High levels of technological understanding and application
- High-quality making and precise practical skills
- Readily accept and discuss new ideas; conceptualise beyond the information given • Have flashes of inspiration and highly original or innovative ideas
- Demonstrate different ways of working or different approaches to issues
- Identify the simple, elegant solution from complex, disorganised data
- Reflective and constructively self-critical
- Link the familiar with the novel
- See application in 2D or 3D
- Transfer and adapt ideas from the familiar to a new problem
- Sensitive to aesthetic, social and cultural issues when designing and evaluating
- Capable of rigorous analysis and interpretation of products
- Conduct independent research to solve problems
- Work comfortably in contexts beyond their own experience and empathise with users' needs and wants

English

Very able learners in English may display a selection of the following characteristics:

- Read widely, fluently and independently
- Read with meaning, drawing on inference and deduction; can “read between the lines”
- Sensitive to the nuance of language
- Use language precisely, with technical accuracy
- Delight in the meaning of words
- Use extended vocabulary
- Show pleasure and involvement in experimenting/playing with language and manipulating language to effect
- Awareness of the special features of language, such as rhyme
- Write or talk in imaginative, lucid and cogent ways, showing flair and creativity
- Can express ideas succinctly and elegantly
- Grasp the essence of particular styles and adapt them to their own purposes
- Can display a sophisticated sense and appreciation of humour; this humour can be “quirky”; understand irony etc
- Contribute with incisive, critical responses
- Can analyse own work
- Can produce written work that is substantial and the product of sustained, well directed effort
- Elaborate on content that is exceptional for their age
- Can engage seriously and creatively with moral and social themes expressed in literature
- Can justify opinions convincingly and challenge others’ points of view
- Strong communicative skills
- Articulate and confident speakers
- Very good listening skills
- Show enthusiasm and enjoyment in the subject; can be sensitive

NB: Learners who are very able in English may demonstrate marked ability in reading, writing, speaking and listening. However, it is not unusual for development in one of these areas to be more pronounced than in others, e.g. children who are fluent readers may be reluctant writers.

Geography

Very able learners in geography may display a selection of the following characteristics:

- Understand concepts clearly; can apply this understanding to new situations to make interpretations, develop hypotheses, reach conclusions and explore solutions
- Understand geographical ideas and theories; apply them to real situations
- Communicate effectively using both the written and spoken word, in ways that are appropriate to task and audience
- Learn subject-specific vocabulary and use it accurately
- Reason, argue and think logically
- Able to manipulate abstract symbols and recognise patterns and sequences
- Use and apply mathematical principles and formulae to solve geographical tasks and problems
- Identify their own geographical questions and sequence investigations
- Understand, and able to explain, complex processes and interrelationships
- Enjoy using graphs, charts, maps, diagrams and other visual methods to present information
- Competent and confident in using the wide range of visual resources required
- Well-considered opinions on issues such as the environment and life in different places • Wide-ranging general knowledge about the world and topical issues
- Able to transfer knowledge from one subject to another
- Creative and original in their thinking, frequently going beyond the obvious solutions

History

Very able learners in history may display a selection of the following characteristics:

- Perform at levels of literacy that are advanced for their age
- Able to communicate effectively in different forms
- Use subject-specific vocabulary with accuracy and confidence
- Show particular skill at inference and deduction
- Able to make logical connections between events and people
- Good understanding of cause and effect
- Able to set both new and previously acquired information in a chronological framework
- Broad range of general and historical knowledge
- Can discuss the significance of events, people and changes
- Maturity in ability to analyse historical sources and organise historical information • Able to demonstrate and use a wide and growing knowledge base
- Able to use several sources simultaneously with confidence and perception, including complex and ambiguous ones
- Keen awareness of the characteristics of different historical periods
- Able to question, challenge and develop own lines of enquiry
- Good grasp and understanding of historical interpretation
- Can make imaginative links between the topics studied in multiple subject fields
- Ability to hypothesise; can make judgements and justify them
- Can take on broad concepts
- Offer unexpected insights
- Willingness to search for new information and ideas
- Enquiring mind
- Can cope with tentative conclusions
- Developed sense of empathy and imagination
- Use visits to historical sites as a basis for further investigation

NB: High ability in history can take time to emerge, as the nature of the subject can often require maturity. However, young children can display a marked interest and enthusiasm for history that can develop as they mature.

ICT

Very able learners in ICT may display a selection of the following characteristics:

- Use and learn about ICT hardware and software quickly, confidently, efficiently and independently
- Demonstrate ICT capability significantly above that expected for their age
- Use ICT to support their studies in other subjects
- Use their skills and knowledge of ICT to solve problems, design information systems and suggest improvements to existing systems
- Consider the limitations of ICT tools and information sources
- Consider social, economic and ethical issues raised by the use of ICT
- Consider the purpose for which information is processed and communicated, and how the characteristics of different kinds of information influence its use
- Use initiative to exploit the potential of more advanced features of ICT tools and skills, e.g. coding
- Explore independently beyond the given breadth of an ICT topic
- Develop systems that meet personal needs and interests
- Grasp and premeditate structures, for example structures in data and directories
- Intrigued, rather than frustrated, by problems; show tenacity and creativity when solving them
- Inclination and ability to help others, e.g. explaining the logic of required steps

NB: Many learners may enter school with well-developed skills and knowledge in aspects of IT. Some may have skills and knowledge in more advanced aspects, including coding. Teachers should be aware of this and provide opportunities for their further development and application.

Mathematics

Very able learners in mathematics may display a selection of the following characteristics:

- Rapid and sound memorisation of mathematical material • Learn and understand mathematical ideas quickly
- Reason logically: can verify, justify and prove
- Work systematically and accurately
- More analytical
- Recognise patterns easily and see the formal structure of a problem in a way that leads to ideas for action
- Use mathematical symbols accurately and confidently as part of the thinking process • Make jumps in reasoning
- Think flexibly, adapting problem-solving approaches
- Demonstrate curiosity and enthusiasm for mathematical problems
- Make connections between the concepts they have learned
- Can take a creative approach to solving mathematical problems
- Reverse their direction of thought – may work backwards and forwards when solving a problem
- Communicate their reasoning and justify their methods
- Sustain their concentration throughout longer tasks and persist in seeking solutions
- Enjoy working at increased depth
- Adept at posing their own questions and pursuing lines of enquiry
- Take delight in numbers and use them in other areas of the curriculum, e.g. storytelling
- Enjoy mathematical puzzles and problems

NB: Some learners who are highly able in mathematics perform at levels that are unusually advanced for their age. It is recommended to challenge the pupil with broad but challenging enrichment and extension activities, rather than accelerate through the curriculum.

Modern foreign languages

Very able learners in modern foreign languages may display a selection of the following characteristics:

- Early awareness of the second language as a separate system
- Curiosity about how language works
- Ability to extrapolate general rules from samples
- Ability to pick up new language and structures quickly
- Ability to make connections and classify words and structures, e.g. to help them learn more efficiently
- Ability to identify, memorise and reproduce new sounds
- Strong desire to put language together by themselves
- Creativity and imagination when using language
- Desire to ask further questions and seek solutions
- Awareness and use of a range of strategies for learning
- Intense interest in the cultural features of the language studied
- Ability to transfer skills across and to other languages

NB: Becoming a competent and independent language learner is a process which develops alongside intellectual maturity and familiarity with the language and culture. Linguistic development is also very dependent on input and opportunity.

Bilingualism may or may not indicate exceptional aptitude in language learning but taking account of learners' experience and expertise in another language (e.g. home language) is an important factor in planning and in building confidence and motivation.

Music

Very able learners in music may display a selection of the following characteristics:

- Captivated by sound and engage fully with music
- Select an instrument with care; may be unwilling to relinquish the instrument
- Find it difficult not to respond physically to music
- Memorise music quickly, without any apparent effort
- Able to repeat more complex rhythmical and melodic phrases given by the teacher and repeat melodies (sometimes after only one hearing)
- Sing and play music with a natural awareness of the musical phrase; the music makes sense
- Particularly sensitive to melody, timbre, rhythms and patterns
- Demonstrate the ability to communicate through music, for example to sing with musical expression and with confidence
- Show strong preferences, single-mindedness and a sustained inner drive to make music
- Have the motivation and dedication to persevere and practise; show a commitment to achieving excellence

NB: Pupils more often show their musical talent through the quality of their response than the complexity of their response. Musical quality is very difficult to define in words, as music is a different form of communication from language. Therefore, musical talent is at least as much about demonstrating a higher-quality response within levels as about attainment at higher levels. Musical talent can be seen at every level of attainment. Those with a high ability in music show a particular affinity with sound. This type of ability is sometimes difficult to identify, especially when it is not combined with more general ability.

Aptitude in music may reveal itself early given the right conditions but can also remain hidden if a pupil has had limited encouragement or opportunity. Teachers may encounter pupils whose musical skills and performance are developed to such an extent that it is difficult to provide for them in the everyday classroom – as well as pupils in whom abilities of great promise are merely latent, and who need intensive and focused development of skills.

Physical education

Very able learners in physical education may display a selection of the following characteristics:

- Use the body with confidence in differentiated, expressive and imaginative ways
- Good sense of shape, space direction and timing
- Movement is fluent and can be elegant
- High degree of control of their body; good control of gross and fine body movements and can handle objects skilfully
- High degree of motivation and commitment to practice and performance
- Use technical terms effectively, accurately and fluently
- Able to analyse and evaluate their own and others' work, using results for selfimprovement
- High level of understanding of principles of health-related exercise and their application in a variety of activities
- Particularly high levels of fitness for their age
- Specific strengths in particular areas, e.g. games or dance
- Able to perform advanced skills and techniques and transfer skills between activities
- Good decision makers; able to take the initiative; demonstrate autonomy, leadership and independence of thought
- Able to reflect on processes and outcomes to improve performance
- Take risks with ideas and approaches
- Show perseverance and commitment
- Involvement with a range of related extracurricular activities
- Understand the need for effective coaching

NB: In addition to the above characteristics, specific sports and physical activities will have their own list of skills and abilities.

Science

Very able learners in science may display a selection of the following characteristics:

- Aware of how the context influences the interpretation of science content
- Recognise patterns and relationships in science data
- Can hypothesise/predict based on valid evidence and draw conclusions
- Decide quickly how to investigate fairly and manipulate variables
- Enjoy researching obscure facts and applying scientific theories, ideas and models when explaining a range of phenomena
- Recognise and process reliable, valid and accurate data; can explain why data is unreliable, invalid or inaccurate
- Inquisitive about how things work and why things happen
- Good observational skills
- Enjoy talking with the teacher about new information or ideas
- Think flexibly, generalise ideas and adapt problem-solving approaches
- Ask many questions
- Enjoy logical reasoning
- May be able to miss out steps when reasoning
- Strive for maximum accuracy in measurements of all sorts
- Use advanced and extensive vocabulary, including the use of appropriate language from other areas of the curriculum such as mathematics
- Put forward objective arguments, using combinations of evidence and creative ideas, and question other people's conclusions
- Extremely interested in finding out more about things around them
- Read widely on science or science fiction
- Have scientific hobbies and/or members of scientific clubs and societies
- Able to sustain their interest and concentration and go beyond an obvious answer with greater depth
- Able to evaluate findings and think critically; can be self-critical
- Easily bored by over-repetition of basic ideas; may approach undemanding work casually and carelessly

NB: Learners who are very able in science can show intense interest in one particular area of science, sometimes to the exclusion of other topics.

Appendix 2: List of Co-Curricular Enrichment Sessions (2025-26)

Academic Enrichment Programme: Clubs, Activities and Academic Trips by Year Group

Available to all years:

- **‘**Curiosity Shop’ programme of lunchtime lectures by visiting academics, local professionals and in-house specialists.
- Lunchtime and after school clinics in all subjects
- Skills and Services Programme – Years 10-13 (Combined Cadet Force, art Masterclasses, film review, music ensembles, news review, debating and public speaking, craft skills, drama rehearsal and stage crew, sports coaching award, robotics, extended learning courses (TEFL/Open University/Harvard X, EPQ), volunteering and work experience.
- Inter-House quiz, chess and music competitions
- St Edmunds School Flying school
- Leiths Academy cookery course (Saturdays)
- Sailing experiences (occasional)
- Self defence and Jui Jitsui (occasional)
- Mountain Biking
- Masterclasses (Music, Art, Geography, Maths, Drama)
- Open Art sessions on Saturday mornings
- Sport Scholars’ programme and pre session training
- Fortnightly academic enrichment talks (Stretch and Challenge)
- Artists’ workshops
- European Week of Languages
- Debating Society: inter-school matches, regional and national competitions
- Duke of Edinburgh Awards (Bronze, Silver and Gold)
- Music and Dance recitals
- St Edmund’s Festival
- Leadership posts in school chapel, library and dining hall committee
- English, Drama and Dance theatre trips
- Music trip to Saltzburg
- Film Music trip to the Royal Albert Hall (music scholars)
- Drama trips to New York and LA
- Thrupp Essay Prize competition (U5 and Sixth Form)
- Young Geographer of the Year Competition

Fifth Form

- U5 trip to Greenwich Royal Observatory
- L5 outdoor activity week
- L5 geography woodland fieldwork
- U5 Geography fieldwork in Blencathra
- U5 Design Technology trip to Design Museum
- Art trips to London Galleries and locally
- Arts Scholars trips- various.
- End of Year Art and Design Technology Exhibition

- AS English
- GCSE Further Maths
- East Kent Schools Together initiatives
- ESU Debating competition (Dulwich College 2025)
- Global Challenge Day – Languages
- Combined Cadet Force filed days and overnight exercises
- Conbined Cadet Force – Adventurous Training weekends and holiday camps (Easter and Summer)
- History Trip to Dover

Sixth Form

- Fortnightly 6th form Enrichment Talks (Inspire Excellence)
- Lower 6th Ethics Workshop
- Leiths 'Introductory Certificate to Food and Wine'
- Further Maths A-Level
- Extended Project Qualification ("EPQ")
- EPQ Training Day (University of Kent)
- Gamelan Workshop (Music Department)
- Life drawing workshops (Art)
- Literary Society
- Politics Society
- Science Society
- End of Year Art and Design Technology Exhibition
- Art department trip to Chatham Historic Dockyard
- Biology Electron Microscope trip to University of Kent
- Design & Technology Trip to London Design Week
- Film Music Trip to the Royal Albert Hall (Music Scholars)
- Geography Trip to Malham
- L6 Biology trip to Flatford Mills
- Olympiads in Mathematics, Physics, Chemistry and Biology
- Teaching English as a foreign language online course (TEFL)
- Aspirational Digital Conference
- English Trip to Stratford Upon Avon
- English Literary Festival – Faversham
- RS and Philosophy conference
- Gold Duke of Edinburgh expeditions to the Lake District
- Combined Cadet Force filed days and overnight exercises
- Combined Cadet Force – Adventurous Training weekends and holiday camps (Easter and Summer)
- Business and economics trips and conferences
- History trip to London