



EXCELLENCE PATHWAY POLICY

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1. Philosophy and rationale

At Uppingham Community College we believe in the importance of providing appropriate and enriching learning experiences for all students of all abilities to ensure equal opportunity. Our approach is governed by guidance taken from NACE (National Association for Able Children in Education) and DfE publications:

- The education of high achieving learners is a whole-school endeavour to be embraced by all school staff
- Addressing the needs of high achieving learners will raise achievement for a much wider group of learners in a school
- Providing for high achieving learners is not about labelling, but about creating a curriculum and learning opportunities which allow all children to flourish
- Ability can be revealed across a range of specific domains or more generally, and not only in traditional academic subjects
- An ethos of high expectations and aspirations is crucial for any school providing for high achieving learners
- Teachers are central to providing challenging and enriching education and their professional development is paramount
- Ability is a fluid concept: it can be developed through challenge, opportunity and self-belief

Building on these core beliefs, this policy provides guidance as to how we will fulfil the needs of our high achieving students by meeting the following objectives through our UCC Excellence Pathway aims:

- To identify the high achieving students
- To produce an accurate register of named students
- To address the needs of the high achieving through providing support and teaching which makes their learning challenging, engaging and enables them to reach their full potential
- To provide enrichment activities both inside and outside the classroom which support self-reliance and independent learning, and which ensure students' varied interests are nurtured and pursued
- To raise aspirations for all high achieving students
- To liaise with parents of high achieving students

2. Definition of High Achieving

The DfE and Ofsted both define the high achieving in terms of those whose progress significantly exceeds age related expectations. The National Association for Able Children in Education (NACE) states 'exceptionally able pupils are those who have the capacity to achieve or perform at the very highest levels' across the curriculum subjects.

3. Leadership

The designated lead for the Excellence Pathway is the Deputy Principal – Mrs Clare Duffy. The lead teacher is responsible for leading the strategic direction of the Excellence Pathway provision and its continuing evaluation and refinement.

The Deputy Principal has overall responsibility for:

- Ensuring that an Excellence Pathway policy is developed, implemented and is aligned with the UCC Education Plan
- Regularly reviewing this policy and assessing its impact e.g. through student voice, event feedback, assessment data
- Compiling a school register of high achieving students with overview of department registers
- Lead the review of the high achieving register in the autumn term
- Coordinating the monitoring of high achieving student progress
- Ensuring that the professional development programme includes relevant aspects of provision for the high achieving and delivering INSET where necessary
- Working with relevant staff to monitor and update the register
- Communicating with parents about the Excellence Pathway provision
- Supporting departments in planning for their high achieving learners
- Liaising with partnership schools to ensure successful transition
- Keeping the governing body informed on the Excellence Pathway provision
- Attending CPD courses to remain informed of the latest developments

It is the role of Heads of Departments along with class teachers to:

- Identify high achieving students in their subject area and add them to a subject register
- Review this department high achieving register at least annually
- Review and embed Excellence Pathway provision in the subject schemes for learning
- Use strategies to aid those students identified as high achieving
- Research and facilitate additional enrichment experiences that would benefit the students
- Monitor progress of the high achieving through department meetings and data capture review points and intervene where necessary

4. Identification

The high achieving students are identified through various sources of information including:

- Initially through Key Stage 2 SATs to identify a year group cohort
- Transition information
- Assessment data and student tracking processes
- Subject-specific criteria
- Teacher observation

By using a wide range of identification methods this helps to facilitate the identification of high achieving students from groups which may be at risk of underachieving or are underrepresented in the school. All of this information is collected by the Deputy Principal and the register, which is updated annually in the autumn term, is made available to all staff.

5. The High Achieving register

Whilst it is not a statutory requirement anymore to compile a school register of high achieving students, at UCC we continue to do so to aid student identification and allow for improved provision planning, enrichment and intervention. The register is shared with all staff and teachers are expected to identify who the high achieving students are in both their form groups if they are a form tutor and their teaching groups.

Our approach to identifying high achieving students is based on a 3 tier approach:

School register

A central school register is held of the highest achieving students. This is broken down by year group and contains approximately 10% of each year cohort. Each new year 7 group is created early on in the autumn term and is based on students' performance in KS2 SATs. Whilst this core register remains fairly static students can be added to it if they are identified by 3 or more individual subjects during the annual review. This creates a 'school group of high achieving students'.

Department register

In addition to the 'school register' all departments identify the top 10% (approximately) of students for their subject for each year group. This is based on data capture performance (academic achievement), target grades, prior attainment, teacher observation and/or evident talent in a particular area. This creates a 'department group of high achieving students'.

Class register

All class teachers are also expected to identify the high achieving students in their teaching groups, regardless of which set they may be in (where sets are used). Here 10% as a guideline is used flexibly dependent upon class sizes and subject. This creates a 'classroom group of high achieving students'.

6. Monitoring and tracking arrangements

The high achieving register is reviewed every year in the autumn term and all teaching staff are involved in the decision process with discussions held about individual student performance. Students can be removed from department registers if other students have superseded them in terms of attainment. However, such decisions are scrutinised by both Heads of Departments and the Deputy Principal to ensure that students are not removed just because of underachievement, taking into account other individual factors which may have had an impact on that student. This process often involves a student's form tutor, Personal Development Coach or Progress Leader to ensure that the student is well supported and any underlying barriers to learning are identified and addressed.

Whilst the core school register does not vary much year on year, students new to the school are considered for inclusion as well as any students who are highlighted by 3 or more subjects during the annual review process outlined above.

We track and assess all high achieving students using a variety of methods which are collated by the Lead Teacher. These include:

- Teacher assessment
- Regular tracking of performance of individuals and sub-groups
- Comparison with local and national outcomes
- Pupil profiles and portfolios
- Arrangements for receiving information or passing it on at transfer and transition

For our year 11 high achieving students we use subject level data to identify underachievement and offer various personalised interventions such as academic mentoring or revision sessions to support the student.

7. Provision

Curriculum, teaching and learning

At UCC our curriculum is broad and balanced offering all students access to a wide range of subjects. Our provision is aspirational and seeks to provide suitable challenge for all students.

In class provision for high achieving students is detailed in the Excellence Pathway documentation and includes:

- A broad and creative curriculum
- General ethos – embracing challenge, high expectations, a focus on deeper learning and celebrating intellectual curiosity
- Management of student groupings to provide high achieving students the opportunities to work with others of similar ability
- Setting or streaming of teaching groups
- Planning for high achieving learners, including assessment for learning (AfL) processes and extra resources
- Effective use of support staff to challenge and support high achieving learners
- Effective use of classroom, library and online resources including technology to help provide extension work
- Differentiation including questioning, higher-order thinking skills and open-ended tasks
- Activities involving research/study skills, problem-solving, decision-making, analysis, synthesis, creative thinking, speculation and evaluation
- Purposeful talk about learning and metacognition

Extra-curricular enrichment

The following activities and opportunities are offered on a regular basis. Whilst they often benefit all students, they are particularly apt for high achieving learners as they provide opportunities to practice and extend their skills further. We aim to ensure all student interests are well-supported and nurtured so that they can pursue those interests through our comprehensive provision:

- Enrichment days/visits
- Residential experiences
- School clubs
- Level 2 Higher Project qualification
- School council, form reps and year reps and other roles of responsibility
- Musical and sporting activities

- Academic events e.g. Maths Challenge, CREST
- National competitions e.g. Young Writers, Foyle's Poetry
- Links with local resources and charities e.g. Rotary Club, Uppingham school and theatre
- Mentoring
- Talks from external speakers
- Series of fortnightly enrichment lectures delivered by staff on 'University level' topics
- Role of subject ambassadors to support staff e.g. in Drama, Music
- University visits
- Relevant work experience
- Targeted year 11 academic progress monitoring and related intervention strategies

Each department is also asked to offer at least one additional experience for high achieving students during the academic year to encourage further development. These activities are reviewed after they have taken place and modified for the following year if necessary.

Personal, social and emotional support

Many high achieving students face unique challenges in their learning, often feeling a pressure to perform and setting themselves high targets. We seek to mitigate these pressures through the following provision:

- Pastoral support from class teacher, form tutor, Personal Development Coach or Progress Leader (and external agencies if required)
- Mentoring, coaching and peer support, e.g. student mentors
- Pupil voice – feedback, one-to-one discussion, questionnaires, representation on school council
- Partnership with parents and carers

8. Parent partnership

A parent information booklet is available on the school website which details the Excellence Pathway provision available for high achieving students at UCC and highlights key points from this policy. The Deputy Principal is available for parental contact to discuss high achieving students and their progress/enrichment opportunities and can be contacted via school reception.

9. Links with other policies

This policy has links to the UCC 'Feedback for Learning' guidance and the following other UCC policies:

- Assessment
- Pupil Premium
- SEND