

Individual Needs Policy

Introduction

This policy has been designed to incorporate the full range of individual needs of students of The Blue Coat School and includes areas of particular individual need. In particular it highlights procedures for students identified as:

- **Gifted and Talented**
- **Having a Special Educational Need (SEN)**
- **Being identified as potentially benefiting from a programme of Aim Higher Support**

The School recognises that students may have Special Educational Needs either throughout, or at any time during, their school career.

As an academic selective School, the School recognises that the majority of students in School would be identified as gifted and talented if attending other types of school. The School therefore encourages students to become part of the National Academy for Gifted and Talented Youth and, where funding is available and deemed appropriate, undertake activities that extend learning culturally, academically and socially are provided.

The School's policy recognises that disabled students should not be discriminated against or disadvantaged.

Aims and objectives:

The policy aims to clarify systems to ensure that:

- All students have full access to all elements of the school curriculum.
- The individual educational needs of students are identified, assessed and provided for, raising attainment and aspirations.
- The roles and responsibilities of staff in providing for student's educational needs and encouraging staff development are understood.
- Enrichment activities and extension of provision through enhancing students' access to facilities, resources and expertise across institutions are provided.
- Students with Special Educational Needs and disabilities are identified as they arise and ensure that their needs are met in all subject areas, ensuring access to all activities within School to enable the best possible progress.
- Parents are informed of their child's Special Educational Needs and that there is effective communication between parents and School and also that students have the opportunity to express their views regarding decisions which affect their education.
- Prior learning and progress, particularly between Key Stages, is noted.

- Effective partnerships and the involvement of outside agencies is utilised effectively.

Identification of Individuals Needs

As an academic selective school Blue Coat School also recognises that it is less likely to receive students with moderate or severe learning difficulties. However, it is recognised that some students may have Special Educational Needs (SEN), which need to be addressed.

This includes students who have been, or are identified, as having the characteristics of a Gifted or Talented student in one or more subject in accordance with the identification criteria found in Appendix A.

This also includes students with sensory impairment, medical conditions, physical disabilities, Autistic Spectrum disorders and any other needs covered by the Special Educational Needs Code of Practice (2008). Students are classed as having a learning difficulty if they:

- Have a significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority of children of the same age; or
- Have a disability, or difficulty, which prevents or hinders them from making use of educational facilities of a kind generally provided for children of the same age in schools within the area of the LA.

Students who have English as a second language are not regarded as students having a learning difficulty. However, the School recognises that students for whom English is not a first language may require bespoke support. For the purposes of definition, individual educational provision means:

- Educational provision which is additional to, or otherwise different from, the educational provision made generally for children of their age in schools maintained by the Local Authority, other than special schools, in the area.

Students who are identified as requiring additional support to raise aspirations in relation to Higher Education will be targeted for Aim Higher Support.

In every instance students identified are included in lists held, updated and maintained by the SEN Co-ordinator or Gifted and Talented Co-ordinator. Teaching staff are subsequently kept informed, and feed information to Individual Education Plans.

Individual Needs Procedure in Practice

Gifted or Talented

Identification:

Referral, assessment and identification can come from various sources e.g.

- Following classroom evidence
- Parental request
- Management request
- Following receipt of LA information from previous school (e.g. primary school)
- Following National Curriculum assessments
- Following individual interviews after initial identification
- Following evidence from out of school activities
- Following a subject teacher's request after observations or use of checklists.

Identifying criteria and categories of Gifted and Talented students can be found at Appendix A.

Early identification is important to minimise the difficulties that can be encountered when intervention and provision do not occur, such as high degrees of frustration, boredom, or sense of isolation.

Provision:

To ensure that students who have been designated as 'gifted or talented' are appropriately challenged, and that teachers frequently take account of this and modify the scale and extent of the tasks with which they are presented in a way which does not draw negative attention.

Extra curricular activities – The School has a coherent programme of valuable activities, which are provided through the National Academy and organised within School. These include

- Summer schools;
- Other study support provision;
- Mentoring for able students, drawing upon the services of students from similar backgrounds, academics and business people.

The Curriculum – There is not a detailed, standard curriculum for gifted and talented students, because their needs are very individual. The emphasis is, instead, on the development of a target-based programme in order to:

- Meet individual student's needs;
- Build upon their individual strengths;
- Encourage development in areas in which they need support.

Since it is vital to remember that gifted and talented students may be academically several years ahead of their peers but are still likely to be emotionally and socially at their chronological age, a Learning Mentor is appointed by the School to give support with the academic, social and personal development of the students identified as gifted and talented.

Responsibilities

The Gifted and Talented Co-ordinator will:

- Initiate whole school activities related to gifted and talented students
- Ensure staff awareness of the students needs promoting co-operation and collaboration of departments across the whole curriculum with respect to gifted and talented students.
- Ensure that gifted and talented students are discussed at Staff/School Improvement meetings and that best practice and experience is shared amongst staff.
- Encourage gifted and talented students to attend an additional club/team/activity because this allows:
 - ✓ Non specialist staff/parents/others with a particular interest/talent to offer their experience and/or time to broaden and enrich the Curriculum offered to the students.
 - ✓ Students of different ages and abilities to interact.
 - ✓ Students and staff to interact and learn together in a somewhat less formal manner.

The Head of Department/Subject Manager will:

- Evaluate the department's provision for gifted and talented students in the annual planning and development cycle.
- Refer cases of gifted and talented students to the gifted and talented Co-ordinator.
- Ensure that team members have and build on existing skills to form clear, relevant and attainable targets for gifted and talented students and that best practice and experiences are shared between the staff in the team.

The Class Teacher will:

- Assist in the identification and referral of gifted and talented students.
- Assess personal development needs in relation to their professional development.
- Facilitate learning using a variety of meaningful activities, which involve students in the learning process.
- Develop activities, which allow for reflection, application and future use of learning.
- Provide differentiated materials, ensuring gifted and talented students have access to the curriculum.

Monitoring and Evaluation

The above provisions will be monitored by the Headteacher/Gifted and Talented Co-ordinator in a variety of ways such as, through the outcomes of standardised tests, feedback from students, teachers and parents, student attendance at study support activities in this way regular evaluation of provision and progress will take place.

Support will be given to departments where necessary in the form of additional training, sharing of best practice, purchase of resources and review of teaching strategies.

Special Educational Needs (SEN):

Admission arrangements for students with Special Educational Needs (SEN)

The School's admissions criteria does not discriminate against students with Special Education Needs or disabilities, and its admissions policy has due regard for the guidance in the Codes of Practice which accompany the SEN and Disability Act 2001. Through appropriate curricular provision, the School respects the fact that students:

- Have different educational and behavioural needs and aspirations
- Require different strategies for learning
- Acquire, assimilate and communicate information at different rates
- Need a range of different teaching approaches and experiences

Parents or carers seeking the admission of a student with mobility difficulties are advised to approach the school well in advance so that consultations can take place.

Special provision is made for students when they sit the School's entrance examination according to need. Independent professional verification of the student's Special Educational Needs is required to be provided in written form to the school before the student sits the entrance examination.

Identification

Referral, assessment and identification can come from various sources e.g.

- Following classroom evidence
- Parental request
- Management request
- Following LA information from previous school (e.g. primary school)
- Following National Curriculum assessments
- Following individual interviews after initial identification
- Following evidence from out of school activities
- Following a subject teacher's request after observations or use of checklists.

Provision

There is a named Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENCO) for the School. The School also employs a Special Educational Needs Learning Mentor (SEN Learning Mentor). The SENCO and the SEN Learning Mentor roles, together, co-ordinate the progress of students on the Special Educational Needs Register. The SEN Learning Mentor provides a mentoring service to these students and this also supports the Form Tutors and Heads of Year. Students have the opportunity to meet regularly with the SEN Learning Mentor.

Resources - There is an element of funding within the School's annual budget to cover Special Educational Needs. The School has various resources available to students such as laptop computers. Students are advised and encouraged to use them as the need arises.

Training - Support will be given to NQT's and other members of staff who wish to undertake training in Special Educational Needs. The school makes an annual audit of training needs for all staff taking into account school priorities as well as personal professional development. The school is allocated funding from the Standards Fund each year that it may use to meet identified needs.

Responsibilities

Teachers should respond to student's needs by:

- Providing support for students who need help with communication, language and literacy
- Helping students to manage their behaviour and to take part in learning effectively and safely
- Helping individuals to manage their emotions particular trauma or stress and to take part in learning

The Governing Body as a whole is responsible for making provision for students with Special Educational Needs. A nominated Governor will take responsibility for Special Educational Needs.

It is the responsibility of all classroom teachers to ensure that they are aware of all students with Special Educational Needs in classes they teach. They must identify these students in their mark book or planner and ensure that they refer to the student's Individual Education Plan (IEP) and any other published guidance in order to meet their needs.

Monitoring and Evaluation

The school is committed to early identification of Special Educational Needs and adopts a graduated response to meeting Special Educational Needs in line with the Code of Practice 2002 or subsequent legislation. A range of evidence is collected through the usual assessment and monitoring arrangements: if this suggests that the learner is not making the expected progress, the Form Tutor will consult with the SENCO in order to decide whether additional and / or different provision is necessary. These are outlined in an Individual Education Plan.

Individual Education Plans (IEP's) - The IEP will set targets for the student and will detail:

- the short-term targets set for or by the student

- the teaching strategies to be used
- the provision to be put in place
- when the plan is to be reviewed
- success and/or exit criteria

The IEP will be reviewed on an individual basis and the outcomes will be recorded. Students will participate fully in the review process. Parents/carers will also be invited to participate in the target-setting and review process.

The three levels of intervention status are identified as follows:

School Action - If a teacher identifies a student who may have SEN it may be necessary to devise an Individual Education Plan (IEP). This sets out any arrangements that are additional to or different from the usual curriculum. The SENCO meets with the SEN Learning Mentor, student and parents, and involves them in setting strategies and targets. These are then detailed in the IEP. The IEP's are reviewed on an individual basis.

School Action Plus - If adequate progress is not made after a reasonable period of intervention and review, the SENCO may conclude that further support is needed. In some cases, outside professionals from health, social services, support services or the educational psychology service may be involved with the student. The SENCO meets again with the SEN Learning Mentor, student and parents, and involves them in setting strategies and targets and a new IEP is drawn up.

Statemented Students- There are currently no students at The Blue Coat School who have a Statement of Special Educational Needs. However, for students who have statements of SEN, in addition to the review of IEPs, their progress and the support outlined in their statement will be reviewed annually and a report provided for the Local Education Authority. If a student makes sufficient progress a statement may be discontinued by the Education Authority.

The SEN Register - The School maintains a Special Educational Needs Register. This is kept confidential from students and is displayed only on the notice board in the staff-room for staff only reference. The names of students and their particular stage of Special Educational Needs are detailed. The register is frequently updated as student's needs alter, they leave or the information about them changes.

Monitoring and Evaluation

A formal review of the progress of all students with Special Educational Needs is carried out twice a year. The Headteacher, the Governor with responsibility for Special Educational Needs, the Special Educational Needs Coordinator and the Deputy Head (Personal Development), meet and discuss the progress of all students identified on the

Special Educational Needs Register. A termly strategy review also revisits the SEN register to ensure resources are being deployed in an appropriate priority order.

Partnership and Liaison - External support services play an important part in helping the school identify, assess and make provision for students with Special Educational Needs.

- The School receives regular visits from the Schools nominated Educational Psychologist.
- Multi-agency liaison meetings, with representation from Social Services, the Connexions Service, Health, and the Educational Psychology Service are held whenever they are deemed necessary.
- The Connexions Service Personal Adviser is involved whenever Transition Plans are written or reviewed for students with SEN.
- In addition the School may seek advice from specialist advisory teaching services for students with any speech and language, sensory impairment or physical difficulties.

Complaints - The School's SENCO should be contacted in case of any difficulty or concern. Parents who are not satisfied that their child's Special Educational Needs are being adequately met by the school have the right to complain to the Headteacher. Parents of students with Special Educational Needs or disabilities whose concerns cannot be resolved by the usual school procedures can request independent disagreement resolution. The School will make further information about this process available on request.

Aim Higher

Identification

Students who may potentially benefit from Aim Higher Support:

- Students who have limited knowledge of what Higher Education has to offer.
- Students with disadvantaged circumstances who have potential to succeed in higher education.
- Teacher and pastoral nomination based on relative academic progress and achievement data.

Provision

- Learning Mentors/shadowing/e-mentoring/graduate mentoring.
- Visits to Further Education and Higher Education
- Study support
- Revision sessions
- University awareness as part of aspiration raising

- Easter revision school provision

Monitoring and Evaluation

- Evaluation of activities and student voice about activities and support to measure impact.

Review and update:

This policy is to be reviewed and updated annually.

Gifted and Talented Quick Guide

Referral, assessment and identification can come from various sources and early identification is important to minimise difficulties.

The School offers extra curricular activities such as

- Summer school
- Other study support provision
- Mentoring

The Gifted and Talented (G & T) Co-ordinator will:

- Initiate whole school activities
- Ensure staff awareness of promoting collaboration of departments
- Ensure students are discussed at improvement meetings

The Head of Department/Subject Manager will:

- Evaluate provision in the department
- Refer cases to the G & T Co-ordinator
- Ensure team members have appropriate skills for target setting of G & T students

The teacher will:

- Assist in identification and referral
- Assess their own personal developments
- Facilitate learning through meaningful activities
- Develop activities allowing reflection, application and future use
- Provide differentiated materials for G & T students

Provisions will be monitored by the Headteacher/G & T Co-ordinator. Support will be given to departments by additional training sharing best practice, purchasing resources and reviewing teaching strategies.

Quick Guide to the Special Educational Needs Policy

The school's admissions criteria do not discriminate against students with special educational needs including mobility. Special provision is made for students sitting the school's entrance exam according to their needs.

Details are transferred from the student's primary or secondary school when they are admitted to school.

NQT's and other members of staff who wish to undertake training in Special Educational Needs will be supported by the school. It is the responsibility of all classroom teachers to ensure that they are aware of all students with Special Educational Needs in classes they teach.

The Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENCO) co-ordinates work with the Special Educational Needs Learning Mentors (SEN Learning Mentor).

If a teacher identifies a student who may have a Special Educational Need it may be necessary, following liaison with SENCO, to devise an Individual Educational Plan (IEP) which should include targets, teaching strategies, a review plan and monitored success/exit criteria.

If adequate progress is not made after a reasonable period the SENCO may conclude further support is required. This could be from health care professionals, social services, support services or the educational psychology service. SENCO, SEN Learning Mentor, student and parents meet to set strategies, targets and a new IEP.

A Special Educational Needs Register is displayed on the notice board in the staff room detailing students and their particular stage of SEN.

A formal review of progress of all students with SEN is carried out each term. The Headteacher, Governor responsible of SEN, SENCO and Deputy Head (Personal Development) meet to discuss progress of all students on the SEN register and review resource deployment and level of priority.

APPENDIX A

Characteristics of Gifted and Talented Students:

Some characteristics associated with the Gifted and Talented child are that he/she:

- Is highly curious.
- Has good and sometimes lateral-ideas which may appear at first to be silly.
- Knows most of the answers and starts to ask questions.
- Answer questions but then tends to elaborate.
- Needs only one or two repetitions for mastery.
- Constructs abstractions.
- Prefers company of adults.
- Draws inferences.
- Creates original work and designs.
- Invents.
- Manipulates information.
- Memorises and makes informed guesses.
- Is keenly observant.
- Is highly self critical and often sets exceedingly high standards for him/herself.
- Thrives on complexity.

Categories of Gifted and Talented Students:

- **Broadly gifted** – excelling in all they do and enjoying their success – easy to identify.
- **Talented** – possessing a particular ability in one area, e.g. Maths or music – relatively easy to recognise as they also tend to be academically able and successful.
- **Rebellious gifted** – possess a range of behavioural problems which manifest themselves in disruptive behaviour and under achievement often incorrectly identifies as purely disruptive and/or low ability.
- **Creatively gifted** – deep thinkers who are often unpopular with their peers due to a perceived lack of social skills and ‘things in common’ – often incorrectly identifies as disruptive.
- **Concealed gifted** – under achievers who do not want to be different to their peers and so they merge into their peer group – often incorrectly identified as underachievers or simply less able.