



# IPSWICH SCHOOL

## POLICY FOR THE ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE PROGRAMME

### BACKGROUND

- Ipswich School is academically selective and many of our pupils might be described as academically excellent.
- Nearly all take ten GCSEs, some eleven.
- The majority of pupils study 4 A Level subjects in Year 12.
- The School offers a demanding curriculum, with subjects that require rigour and prepare pupils for challenging courses at A Level and university.
- All pupils take at least one modern foreign language at GCSE.
- Teachers are encouraged to go beyond the demands of public examination syllabuses when appropriate.

### AIMS

Ipswich School aims to provide for the individual needs of all pupils, which puts personalised learning at the heart of our teaching and learning. In addition, we will provide opportunities to identify and in turn nurture the most able pupils in the school.

Our wish to challenge our most able pupils has led us to develop a programme which sets out to:

- Encourage lively minded pupils to enjoy learning for learning's sake.
- Provide a range of opportunities for our most able pupils, inside and outside the classroom, to stretch and challenge themselves.
- Monitor the involvement and achievement of the most able pupils to guarantee that their progress and development is commensurate with their ability and potential.
- Provide our academically excellent pupils with an environment in which they can celebrate their gifts with others and enjoy the challenge of working with others both within and beyond their own year group.
- Provide opportunities both for those who are academically excellent overall and for those who demonstrate academic excellence in one or two specific areas.
- Offer very bright pupils appropriate challenges, without adding unduly to the overall burden of their work, mindful that some pupils will be rated as academically excellent in a number of subjects.
- Offer a differentiated teaching approach for the most able pupils.
- Offer an attractive and coherent programme of challenge for bright pupils, at every stage in their school careers, which will excite and engage them as well as prepare them for a lifetime of high and happy achievement.

## **DEFINITION**

We have adopted the following definitions for the term 'Academic Excellence':

- Those who display exceptional ability, potential and passion in particular subject areas.
- Those pupils who possess a general academic learning ability that is significantly greater than most of their peers and who display this ability across a wide range of subjects ('all-rounders').

Ipswich School is very successful at identifying and nurturing sporting and musical talent and many pupils play representative sport and perform to a high level in music. Those talented in these areas do not necessarily come under the umbrella of this programme, unless they study music or PE as academic subjects, but clearly many of our Academically Excellent pupils are also talented performers in sport and music, and helping these individuals to lead a balanced life will be part of the role of the Academic Excellence Coordinator.

## **IDENTIFICATION**

Only students in Years 9-13 will be considered for entry onto the AE programme. That said, students in Years 7 and 8 are warmly encouraged to attend lectures and to participate in extension activities and relevant competitions.

No one method of identification can be entirely accurate since specific subject criteria will apply. We endeavour to obtain as much information about individual pupils as possible. The methods of identification employed are as follows:

- Information from any previous schools.
- Quantitative criteria, i.e. internal and external exams and formal tests.
- Qualitative criteria, i.e. teacher assessment and nomination (based on subject-specific checklists). This will take into account the fact that very able pupils may underperform due to a lack of challenge and motivation.
- The register will go beyond Foundation/Queen's Scholars, reflecting the fact that different pupils develop at different stages. As a general guide each subject will likely include no less than 15% of its pupils and no more than 25% of its pupils. The exception being subjects with very small class sizes where a much larger percentage may be recorded as academically excellent.

It is not the case that the Academic Excellence register will be exclusively populated by those who perform best in exams, since we also wish to include students with passion and potential.

## **EVALUATION**

Evaluation of the progress of the programme is vital to ensure consistent practice across the school. This is the responsibility of the Academic Excellence Coordinator, who will report directly to the Senior Deputy-Head (Academic & Co-Curricular). Results of evaluation will be shared with the Academic Committee of the Governing Body.

## BUDGET

A budget has been allocated to the Academic Excellence Programme and will be managed by the Head of Academic Excellence, to be reviewed annually.

## PROVISION

Ensuring provision for the Academically Excellent is the responsibility of all staff. Provision in the classroom should be an extension of the general planning process and should not be made at the expense of other pupils.

There should be a mix of *extension* (pursuit of greater depth) and *enrichment* (opportunity to explore more broadly).

## DIFFERENTIATION

### *Classroom Strategies*

- encourage more independence in planning and self-directed work (structured research)
- use higher order questioning, encouraging pupils to **analyse** (investigate, classify, compare, contrast) **synthesise** (combine, rearrange, invent, what ifs?, speculate, hypothesise) and **evaluate** (judge, give opinion, contrast, conclude, explain)
- provide less structure to stimulus material
- use real-life problem-solving scenarios
- involve pupils in the delivery of a lesson (research and presentation/teaching)
- encourage more able pupils to work as mentors (not as 'mini-teachers')
- enrichment-breadth (cross-curricular activities/projects, working outside the confines of the curriculum)
- extension – depth (e.g. extended projects)
- pace – purposeful and engaging, but giving pupils time to think.

### *Summary of differentiation strategies*

Differentiation strategy	Encourages challenge through
Task	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• open-ended activities</li><li>• more complex demands and responses – target-setting</li><li>• use and application</li></ul>
Outcome	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• quality of work expected (<i>sometimes</i> this will be 'amount' of work)</li><li>• different assessment criteria</li><li>• more complex responses</li></ul>
Level of independence/support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• removing scaffolding/support to help learning</li><li>• planning own learning through structured research</li><li>• use of reference materials/resources</li></ul>

Pace/time	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• less time to complete simple tasks and more time for self-study</li> <li>• accelerate or compact some part of the curriculum, instead offering depth and breadth</li> </ul>
Resource	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• a wide range of materials at different levels of complexity and style (visual, aural, linear etc)</li> <li>• access to other adults and subject specialists (including academic peer mentors)</li> </ul>
By interest	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• prioritising skill(s) to be developed</li> <li>• self-selected learning activities</li> </ul>

### ***Other Forms of Differentiation***

- setting or streaming (e.g. Maths is taught in sets from part way through Year 7 to Year 11)
- acceleration (e.g. top set Maths pupils taking Additional Maths alongside their GCSE in Year 11). Thinking Skills (AS) for our most able Year 11 pupils.

### ***Extra-Curricular Enrichment***

We offer challenge outside the curriculum in the form of:

- Clubs (e.g. Mandarin Club)
- National competitions
- Lectures - mostly delivered by pupils
- Extended Project Qualification: an A level equivalent extended essay or project
- Conferences, including an Academic Excellence conference
- Regular athenaeums – both for Middle school and for Sixth Form pupils
- Workshops and master classes (working with pupils from different year groups)
- Opportunities made available by university links.

## **ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

### ***Academic Excellence Coordinator***

- To work together with the Senior Deputy-Head (Academic & Co-Curricular) to raise the profile of more able pupils within the school in such a way as to reinforce a culture which celebrates high academic success.
- To draft and maintain a policy for the Academically Excellent pupils at Ipswich School.
- To ensure that procedures for identifying potentially Academically Excellent pupils are in place, understood, and applied within departments.
- To prepare and maintain a register of Academically Excellent pupils across year groups and in departments. This will be reviewed annually on a formal basis and will take into account the fact that pupils develop intellectually at different stages.

- To ensure that all other policies and practices within the school have taken into account the needs of Academically Excellent pupils.
- To ensure that the School Programme provides Academically Excellent pupils with experiences of an exciting and challenging breadth.
- To lead staff in their contribution to the Programme and to make a significant contribution to it personally.
- To recruit willing and interested staff to contribute to the programme.
- To offer advice, support, resources and training to staff and departments so that they can provide learning experiences of sufficient depth, both in and outside the classroom.
- To track the progress of pupils identified as Academically Excellent during the academic year (including formal tests and other assessments), their development between years and their participation within the programme.
- To liaise with a key link member of staff in each department (departmental coordinator) to monitor provision in different curriculum areas.
- To liaise with teachers, parents, and pupils to monitor the quality of provision for the Academically Excellent, both in and outside the classroom.
- To establish links with outside organisations (e.g. The Villiers Park Education Trust and Excellence East).
- To assist in the recruitment of Academically Excellent pupils to Ipswich School.
- To communicate current and future opportunities available through the programme (e.g. the Lecture Programme).
- To manage the budget for the Academic Excellence Programme.

### ***Heads of Department***

- To prepare subject-specific criteria for the identification of Academically Excellent pupils.
- To liaise with members of the department to identify pupils who meet these criteria and to pass this information to the Academic Excellence Coordinator.
- To work closely with the departmental coordinator to ensure that the needs of the Academically Excellent are met within that subject area.
- To consider acceleration, fast tracking or early entry for the most able pupils.
- To provide schemes of work that contain enrichment/extension material for the most able.
- To ensure that enrichment/extension material is being used by subject teachers.

### ***Departmental Coordinators***

- To support school provision of opportunities to develop the skills and abilities of Academically Excellent pupils. This will involve close liaison with the Academic Excellence Coordinator.
- To contribute to the development of department policy on identification, teaching and learning of more able pupils.
- (Along with the Head of Department) to set up measures to monitor and support the progress of the most able pupils and their involvement in the programme.
- To assist/lead/promote departmental training in ways of providing suitable programmes for Academically Excellent pupils, to take account of:
  - embedding extension activities and enrichment in schemes of work and lesson plans
  - individual learning styles of pupils

- PSC and independent learning
  - assessment (formative and summative)
  - promoting a positive learning climate
  - coordinating dissemination of good practice within the department
- (In conjunction with the Academic Excellence Coordinator) to keep abreast of national and local developments and brief the department.
  - To liaise with the Academic Excellence Coordinator to promote extra-curricular enrichment opportunities (e.g. competitions, courses, master classes).
  - To make a personal contribution to provision for the Academically Excellent.
  - To assist with the choice of resources.

### ***Pastoral Staff***

- To liaise with the Academic Excellence Coordinator concerning pupils' academic progress and pastoral issues, adjusting expectations as required.
- Academically Excellent pupils need to be encouraged to integrate as fully as possible. For some pupils their excellence may cause them problems and staff should bear in mind the following points:
  - Very able pupils may exhibit different behaviour owing to frustration, impatience and self-consciousness
  - Pupils of high intellectual ability appear way ahead of their chronological age; social growth does not always keep pace
  - Some academically excellent pupils find their ability isolating
  - Underachievement may be caused by pupils feeling threatened by peer pressure
  - All pupils respond to praise and it is just as important to academically excellent pupils.

### ***All teaching staff***

To be aware of the pupils in their classes who appear on the Academic Excellence register and to provide differentiated activities and a range of support and resources for more able pupils. This will be reflected in planning and in lessons.

### ***Parents/Carers***

We encourage parental involvement in their child's learning through PSC, Open Days and visits to the school (e.g. to view GCSE and A Level art work) or to attend the lecture programme with their son/daughter. We value the support offered by parents/carers in this and all areas of school life.