

Amendments to Policy for Exceptionally Able Students

Schull Community College

December 2008



NCCA GUIDELINES for EXCEPTIONALLY ABLE STUDENTS

We have brought our policy into line with the *Guidelines* by:

- Removing the references to ‘gifted and talented’, replacing them with ‘exceptionally able’
- Adding some additional objectives that refer to identification and to differentiated teaching
- Changing the range of targeted students from the top 3% to the top 10% of students



RATIONALE

- Included to focus our minds on the WHY of the document
- It affirms the link between Special Educational Needs and Exceptional Ability
- It underlines the fact that not all exceptionally able students are instantly identifiable and that many have associated difficulties



PROGRESS towards OBJECTIVES

- Until 2006/2007, through assessments we identified incoming students who required additional learning support
- For the last two intakes, we have also identified the students who are in the top ten percent in the incoming assessments



Teacher Nomination

- Has raised awareness and begun debate
- As shown in the research by Al-Hroub and Whitebread, hard-working, 'bright' children may be mistaken for exceptionally able children
- Some teachers have too elevated an idea of what constitutes exceptional ability
- Some very thoughtful and observant teachers nominate students who may have great weakness in some areas



Teacher Nomination

- Autumn 2008: more than 10% identified from 1st and 2nd Years
- Among First Year students, three omitted from nominations who achieved very highly on in-coming tests
- Among Second Years, six omitted who achieved highly on incoming tests
- Correlation with examination results and some anomalies



Diagnostic Assessments

- **Assessment has been very productive**
- **Students have been identified who are very able but who have a specific learning difficulty**
- **Support has been put in place for these students**



Monitoring of Progress

- In-house examinations
- Discussion with subject teachers
- Collaboration with parents
- Discussion with students



IEPs

- NOT YET!
 - informal arrangements
- Support and resources as required

Differentiated Teaching

- Some teachers have always differentiated their teaching, resources and outcomes according to the ability of the student
- More difficult for others, perhaps:
 - where numbers of students are large and
 - where the subject does not seem to lend itself easily to differentiation
- Some teachers would like more in-service/professional development opportunities in this area



Extra-Curricular Activities

- **Chess club**
- **Orchestra**
- **String Group**
- **Debating**
- **Quiz Team and entries to other competitions and quizzes**
- **Astronomy Club**
- **Library**
- **Art Room**



IDEAS FOR THE NEAR FUTURE

- **Reading Group**
- **Discussion Group**
- **Young Scientist**



Pastoral Team

- **Very much involved with any perceived difficulties**
- **Excellent liaison between teaching staff, SEN team and pastoral team**
- **Counsellor available**



SEN ROOMS and RESOURCES

- **Used by several students for:**
- **Kurzweil**
- **Quiet space**
- **Printing out work**
- **Library**