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