Reach for the Stars: Supporting the most able

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Farlingaye High School, Woodbridge, Suffolk
Farlingaye High School

- 1950 students
- 470 in Sixth Form
- Very large, mainly rural catchment area in Suffolk. 60% bussed in
- Last Ofsted was April 2013
- Leading Edge school since the start of LE programme
- Teaching School
- Lots of extra curricular things go on, staff are great, excellent CPD programme
- KS2 data suggests students are at national average on arrival or slightly below.
- 3, 100 minute lessons a day; fortnightly timetable
- 73% 5 A*-CEM in 2015
Key aspects

- Clear identification of your most able
- Staff with clear responsibility for most able
- Monitoring and tracking is essential
- Different “categories” that you need to be aware of:
  - Very able, happy with that and happy with others
  - Very able and can be quite isolated
  - Very able but lazy/ don’t want to be seen as able
  - Any of the above and PP
General approach at Farlingaye

- The most important thing is outstanding teaching with high level challenge and differentiation
- The ethos in the school has to allow those who are able to do well
- The school’s philosophy is to provide activities in all areas of learning including extra curricular that students enjoy/are good at
- For us, it’s about breadth of experiences not about pushing students into extra GCSEs or early GCSEs
- Students are also expected to take some responsibility for the activities they get involved in
- Need to monitor and track as a discrete group
- Each faculty has to take responsibility for its most able
- Need to seek the views of the most able/ individual students
- All relevant aspects of the school need to also focus on most able e.g. Disadvantaged Students work, CPD, assessment
Outcomes

- This year 31% of our grades were A/A*
- A third of students achieved 5 A/A* grades
How we identify our most able

- Top 10% in a year group based on 3 sets of data out of 4 – KS2 scores, CAT scores, PIE/PIM and FFT data
- Changed to this after a period of confusion!
- We also have top 10% “best in subject” but we no longer inform parents of this unless there is a specific event going on
Staffing

- Most Able Coordinator is part of our Leading Edge team
- Two others on our Leading Edge team support activities for most able and are paid a smaller amount
- Each faculty has a coordinator for most able – we pay £400 – next year we probably can’t afford this.
- That person has to ensure that each faculty has its own identification methods, principles and activities
Disadvantaged Students who have PP funding and are most able

- Is this group given the same attention in a school, given that accountability has focused on 5A*-CEM and 3LOP?
- Do we therefore breathe a sigh of relief that more able disadvantaged students are doing OK and leave them to it!?
- Detailed analysis of the top 4 of our most able PP showed that they were not achieving as well as those with the same KS2 scores with a significant impact on post 16/18 expectations.
96% of privately educated children go on to study at any university

36% of state school children go on to study at any university

16% of children eligible for free school meals go on to study at any university

48% of privately educated children gain a place at a highly selective university

18% of state school children gain a place at a highly selective university

2% of children eligible for free school meals gain a place at a highly selective university

Source: Neil Atkin, the Brilliant Club
25 practical things that we do that may be of interest

But behind all we do, is our view that the most important things is outstanding teaching with high level differentiation.
“Teacher expertise is the most important thing” (John Hattie)
25 practical things that we do that may be of interest

1. Make sure your person looking after the more able has no other responsibilities; do small payments to someone each faculty to develop projects and activities.
2. **Freddoes group in year 11!**

- for most able underachievers (extended to include most able PP students with subject tutoring)
3. Homework Carousel in Years 7 and 8

- To encourage independent learning and to ensure consistency
- 4 weeks to complete with a common completion date
- All subjects except Maths and Langs
- Differentiated tasks; separate booklets for least able, extension tasks for most able
- On line
- Advantages of it
- Mixed reactions initially but we’re getting better!
4. Keeping interest at KS3: Year 9 Diploma
5. Our option pools in year 10 allow students to do 11 or 9 GCSEs so that more able can do one more GCSE. (In our options we split so that there is additional literacy/numeracy for those who came up with 4c and below in English/Maths; other have a 2 period a fortnight GCSE choice.)

6. Your extra curricular activities can be run to support the more able – we try to offer a really wide range of opportunities— including our annual Focus Fortnights, Activities Week, productions, trips abroad, huge number of sport competitions, concerts,
7. Whole school strategies – some examples

- Bar Mock Trial in year 9 and year 12
- Stock market investments,
- Councils
- Optional EPQ
- Most Able team competitions/days
- Snippet Magazine
- Dora Love Project
- PP most able taken to LSE/UEA
7. Make sure there is a specific website for the most able to access as well as your general section in your school website. Our most able have their own website as well as our general website.

8. Have a booklet full of everything that is going on to post it home to parents.
10. Year 12 coach able year 10/11; year 9 teach Maths and French in the primaries.

11. Most able are invited from two or three year groups to have lunch together lunch/ trips out together
12. Monitoring and tracking progress as they go through school and especially at GCSE; and follow up.

13. Mini achievement six week schemes in years 7 to 9

14. Offer specific groups support for medicine, dentistry, veterinary science, Oxbridge

15. Subtle and discreet marking that does not just say “excellent” or “you couldn’t improve this”!

16. Work with staff on open ended questioning skills

17. CPD
FOCUS FORTNIGHTS
Focus Fortnight:
- examples of activities for more able

- A week either side of half term in Oct/Nov
- A huge range of activities, events, assemblies and speakers supporting a theme – this year it was “Respect”. There were specific events to attract the most able.
- Professor of Oceanography as guest speaker
- One Life Day with a variety of interesting speakers
- Student Takeover Day
- Song writing workshops
- Artist in Residence
- Boot Camps and nutrition workshops for top sports people
- Science activities with seminars run by A level students
- Numeracy test for different levels of jobs
- Biology week and seminars run by Sixth Formers
19. Celebrate Success

Farlingaye High School

Holly Keenan, 11Y, excels at the sport of Kite-Surfing

Recognising Success

2014–2015

Things the school is proud of in the last academic year!
Another great idea from Weydon School!

Things we are proud of
20. All faculties have to run their own additional programmes, managed by their link person
Each faculty has its own programme – much of it is within their curriculum but they will do additional activities

**Technology**
- Threads textiles Club
- Lego League
- Co-space programming competitions
- Rotary Chef Competition
- D and T London trip
- Most able enrichment morning
- Trip to V and A
- Ready Steady Cook
- Events in Activities Week

**Science**
- Science Club
- Science Seminars delivered by sixth form/staff
- Biology week - including dissections
- National Science and Engineering week
- Science most able day
- Bill Bryson Chemistry prize
- Bird Club
- Morning mammal and moth trapping
- UEA trip Chemistry competition
- Physics Olympiad
- Year 6 visit with the Science Man.
- Coaching by year 12/13 to year 11
Each faculty has its own programme – much of it is within their curriculum but they will do additional activities

**Humanities**
- Geography in the news discussion groups
- Girton writing competition
- Subject conferences at university
- Historical anniversaries competition
- Dora Love Project
- Mentoring by sixth formers for able GCSE students

**Languages**
- Talented linguists programme
- German annual Saturday conference for local schools
- Going Global competition
- Year 9 teaching in the primaries
- 3 exchanges and additional trips abroad
- Support and early exam entry for bi-lingual students
Each faculty has its own programme – much of it is within their curriculum but they will do additional activities.

**Maths**
- Infographic competitions
- Cypher Club
- All levels of maths challenges
- Maths photography competition
- Inter-school team competitions in different years
- Maths Year 6 competition with primary school teams

**Creative Arts**
- Arts Award
- 15 musical ensembles
- Artists in residence weeks
- Dance Club
- Drama Club
- Art is the Cure
- 7 concerts
- Super rock evening
- Drama Showcase
- Three productions a year
- Huge choral concerts! 120 music students tour in Europe bi-annually
20. Mentoring/ questionnaires
21. Peer coaching for A/A* borderline year 10/11 from A level students; year 9 teach in the primaries
22. At post 16 we have specific staff/groups to support Oxbridge and medicine/vet/dentistry applicants
23. Promoting summer schools etc, high level work placements for individuals
24. Setted residential revision “awaydays”
24. Revision Awaydays/Residentials

- Six setted groups
- Hire a scout camp 7 miles away
- Staff come and go to deliver sessions
- Leave at 8 and return at 10 from school
- Incredibly intensive, highly structured revision; one hour session on final revision and exam skills
- Minimum breaks and easy food
- Have done two days ones with an overnight stay for years, but changed last year to all one day ones due to exam pressure
- Makes a big difference to borderline/underachieving A/A*
Focusing on A/A* and 8/9 grades
My top tips for subject areas from that list to improve results for top end

- Has to be an atmosphere in your lessons where it’s OK to be seen to do well
- Students MUST have top quality notes that they can revise from – give them to them.
- Make students do test every 3 weeks or so throughout the course so they retain their knowledge and level of detail.
- Ensure students have the opportunity to do longer mini-exams.
- Support and monitor NQTs and newer staff
- Make sure each subject has a teacher i/c targeting A/A* grades
- Could you develop a subject achievement scheme, possibly with a focus on peer support, targeting the most able
- Identify those that could get A/A* and inform all staff/write to parents
- Go for re-marks
- Run a whole faculty revision programme, perhaps target the most able, which goes right through the exam period and phone home to ensure students attend
- Make sure students know what the exam board want – very able can miss out more basic steps/ideas and miss marks
- Do setted revision
Self assessment
Revision tips for the most able

1. Get their notes in order first and foremost and ensure they are detailed! (Avoid minimising notes onto cards that they revise from)
2. Revision has to be focused and pacey – ignore ineffective methods that are slow or too group based.
3. Mnemonics (for A rather than A* students)
4. Image trains and drawings in margin (for A rather than A* students)
5. Look…repeat…cover …repeat
6. Repetitive questioning of differing levels (follow 4 and 5 with one word answer test)
7. Reduction e.g. 60 words..to 30..to 15..
8. Explanation and example cards of higher level ideas; higher level ideas on cards e.g. English terminology

9. True and false paragraphs (they have to underline the bits that are true/false)

10. Use diagrams; turn anything into a chart, double bubble map, cause and effect flow chart etc.

11. Teach someone else

12. Practice questions that they use mark scheme to mark for a friend.