



Exceptional Learners Policy

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ETHICAL LEADERSHIP

1. Thomas Tallis School Plan 2023-24 has six aims.

1	A powerful curriculum
2	The best teaching and learning
3	Great achievement and progress
4	Excellent personal development
5	Behaviour for a strong community
6	A model for a better world

As part of aim 6 Thomas Tallis School has adopted the *Framework for Ethical Leadership in Education*. This means that we try to behave in a principled and correct manner in everything we do.

Schools and colleges serve children and young people and help them grow into fulfilled and valued citizens. As role models for the young, how we behave as leaders is as important as what we do. We therefore behave with **selflessness, integrity, objectivity, accountability, openness, honesty and leadership**. We demonstrate **trust, wisdom, kindness, justice, service, courage and optimism**.

1. Aims of this policy

- Ensure consistency in our approach for more able and exceptional learners
- Set out expectations for all members of the school community with regards to exceptional learners.

2. Principles and Practice

“Lack of achievement is worthy of our attention, never more so than when it is seen amongst learners who have very significant gaps between potential and performance. This is the case for more able learners who need our support in removing barriers to their success and opening doors to achievement”. Carrie Winstanley, Professor of Pedagogy at the University of Roehampton 2019

All young people at Tallis – regardless of their background, context, attainment levels or any other labels they may acquire – can benefit from and deserve to have their specific needs catered for. This is no less the case for the more able and exceptionally able learners than for any other group. At Tallis, we follow the ‘equality of challenge’ principle in asserting that all children are entitled to challenge - the Equality of Challenge principle (Winstanley, 2004).

Through this policy we aim to achieve a whole school ethos where achieving at a high level is an expectation, by implementing effective identification and monitoring of our more able and exceptional learners based on their academic abilities and potential.

3. Definitions

The definition of ‘Exceptionally Learner’ (EL) that we use is as follows: exceptionally able learners’ potential abilities exceed those of the more able learners. At Tallis this is the top 10% of students in terms of ability at the beginning of Year 7. This is based on KS2 data and internal data for those where the Year 6 data is missing or is significantly at odds with their KS2 data. More Able Learners (MAL) are those in the higher tier in KS2. This is then reviewed at the end of each Key Stage.

4. Exceptionally Learners (EL) Methodology

New Year 7 students are identified based on their externally assessed tests taken in Year 7 and average Key Stage 2 English Reading and Maths scaled score – the top 10% with the highest average KS2 scores will be allocated as EL for this year group until they reach Year 11. EL student progress will be reviewed at every data drop and intervention will take place for students who are not meeting their potential. Where there are students who are performing at an exceptional level but are not on the list, these will be added where appropriate. In order to ensure the list is representative of the Tallis community, we also consider the addition of students from under-represented groups.

5. Teaching and Learning

At Thomas Tallis we strive to ensure that lessons are sufficiently challenging to consider the expected knowledge, concepts and skills in each subject and teach our classes just beyond that point. We should aim to embed a challenging classroom ethos through the language we use with students and help motivate them to accept tough challenges.

Our approach to teaching and learning is set out in our Tallis Praxis handbook and teachers should refer to the strategies provided to ensure lessons are tailored to the individuals within the classroom, including exceptionally learners.

In addition to this, curriculum and subject leaders are responsible for ensuring the provision in their areas meets the needs of EL students by:

- Developing and reviewing schemes of learning as appropriate
- Leading staff within their department on good practice for stretch and challenge
- Allocating department budgets appropriately

6. Tallis Exceptionally Learner (EL) Experience

Thomas Tallis provides a variety of extra-curricular clubs and activities, allowing for both enrichment and extension. Sports teams, music and drama clubs and many opportunities for performance are organised. Language days, reading clubs, theatre visits, field trips, community projects/performances, and debating competitions are also available. These can be either exclusively for the EL cohort or inclusive opportunities for the EL cohort to take part in across the curriculum. Enrichment activities provide opportunities for students to work with those of different ages, but similar interests and abilities. Specific opportunities for EL are part of the **Tallis Experience** which includes:

- The development of the Foundation and Projects Qualification which is an expected pathway for all EL students.
- Links (incl. workshops and visits) with Russell Group Universities
- Challenge seminars and enrichments
- Mentoring
- Reading opportunities including challenging book groups and sixth form reading buddies.

7. Communication with parents and carers

At Tallis we create the list of EL students in order for staff to know who has already demonstrated the potential to achieve highly within the year group and ensure their needs are met. This also allows us to monitor the progress of the EL students to evaluate learning across the school. Parents are not routinely informed if their child is on the EL list but we may contact them specifically with regard to their child's potential for a number of reasons including:

- Informing them of the expectation for their child to join the Projects Qualification programme
- Offering mentoring or intervention programmes for those who are falling behind
- Offering specific co-curricular and enrichment activities that would benefit their academic development and progress
- Invitations to information events such as coffee mornings to support your more able teen

8. Key responsibilities and professional development

NACE recommends that a member of the Senior Leadership Team takes overall responsibility for the education of the more able. At Thomas Tallis, this role is fulfilled by Daniel Talbot (Acting AHT: T&L). Chryssa Sdrolia (CL Projects) has responsibility for running our EL enrichment programme. Our designated governor for the more able is Mark Turner.

The school is committed to extending and developing teachers' skills in provision for EL students. This includes provision of:

- CPD sessions which provide a forum for sharing and disseminating good practice, including strategies for challenging the more able
- Whole school INSET sessions that respond to particular aspects of pedagogy
- Coaching and individual support where appropriate

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