Identifying High Achievers at Southfields Academy.

English

A High Achiever in English may have the following characteristics

- Shows an independent interest in one or all of the elements that form the English curriculum (speaking, reading, and writing).
- Shows an interest in literature that is broader than a prescribed curriculum (selection of books, love for a particular genre…).
- Able to read teacher feedback, respond to it and able to retain this feedback and apply it over a period of time.
- Asking questions or clarification to do with feedback/interpretations of texts.
- Can ask challenging questions of the teacher.
- Ability to hold and justify opposing views.
- Can become complacent or arrogant – sometimes will interpret tasks in a way that they'd like to, especially something creative. Can be unwilling to follow teacher methods/exam strategy.
- If not challenged, easily distracted or withdrawn.
- Can find examinations or examination technique difficult or overwhelming as they're required to streamline their thoughts and have to work within parameters.
- May not produce their best work in class, but enjoys the competition of an exam.

What are the responsibilities of the groups below?

- HA students – Independence and willingness to engage with learning with enthusiasm
- Class Teachers – Challenge and engage without putting pressure on students who will label themselves as gifted and can become upset if they can't meet success criteria – emphasis on personal achievements. Communication with students about their likes and dislikes in terms of literature – open conversations. Asking students to highlight/identify a new skill so that students can see what they're developing.
- TAs – Subjects specialist assistants can take HA students out to extend on skills and challenge them. TAs can assist with pace – the more able may be ahead of the class and group work could focus on extension work. Identify a skill and work with students on applying skills to other texts.
- HoDs & Post Holders – Advice, intervention and support. Rewards/trips (workshops, author visits) for those who show a passion or interest for literature.
- Line Managers/SLT – Celebrating success, commitment and dedication to subject. Avoid labelling students, especially publically.

Strategies to develop and support HA learners

- Engaging without prompt from an adult, out of pure enthusiasm and passion for learning. Students, when asked, should be reading something they're interested in out of choice. Teachers can develop this through conversation around book choice and offer interesting recommendations.
- Giving students the opportunity to lead in group work and discussions. Where appropriate, students can guide teaching when asked.
- Teacher feedback for HA students could be in the form of questions rather than instructions, in order for students to reflect on their learning and draw their own conclusions on how to develop their writing.
- Teachers should always encourage students to "think hard" – this may include a synoptic overview of texts and/or writer's purposes.

Immeasurable and more difficult to quantify goals for these students

- Mature, interesting views or will offer a voice of dissent articulated in a way that all can understand and relate to. Perceptive and assured in their opinions – regardless of the opinions of their peers. Able students tend to prefer to work on their own, or want to lead group activities.

Mathematics

Students who are High Achievers are likely to show some or all of the following characteristics

- Learn and understand mathematical ideas quickly.
- Reason logically: can verify (sense check), justify and prove.
- Work systematically and accurately.
- Are analytical.
- Recognise patterns easily and see the formal structure of a problem in a way that leads to ideas for action.
- Use mathematical symbols accurately and confidently as part of the thinking process.
- Make jumps in reasoning.
- Think flexibly, adapting problem-solving approaches.
- Demonstrates curiosity and enthusiasm for mathematical problems – able to get lost in a problem.
- Make connections between concepts they have learned.
- Can take creative and strategic approaches to solving mathematical problems.
- Reverse their direction on thought.
- Communicate their reasoning and justify their methods.
- Sustain their concentration throughout longer tasks and persist in seeking solution.
- Pose their own questions and lines of enquiry.
- Enjoys mathematical puzzles and problems.
- Produces efficient and elegant solutions to mathematical problems.

Important:
Gifted students may not necessarily come out on top in tests or exams. Some students who are highly able in mathematics perform at levels that are unusually advanced for their age. However, we believe it is important to challenge the student with broad and challenging enrichment rather than acceleration.

Strategies (and resources) to challenge High Achievers

- Use of 'low threshold high ceiling tasks'. For example, how many pennies in the pyramid? (http://blog.mrmeyer.com and nrich.org)
- Use of questioning – how did you…? Why does…? What if…? Give me an example of…? Is it always, sometimes or never true that…?
- Plan lessons which develop mathematical thinking, so that one of the following mental activities is at the heart of every learning episode; exemplifying, completing, correcting, sorting, changing, reversing, generalising, explaining, verifying, refuting, specialising, deleting, comparing, organising, varying, altering, conjecturing, justifying and convincing. (Mason, J., Burton, L. and Stacey, K. (2010)

Thinking Mathematically and Watson, A. and Mason, J. (1998) *Questions and Prompts for Mathematical Thinking*).

- Relentless focus on mathematical conceptual understanding – High Achievers are challenged when they are asked to explain *why* something works, for example, why do you multiply by the reciprocal when you are dividing by a fraction? Where does the differentiation technique come from? We encourage students to unpick or discover other methods to the way they initially approached something. (Southall, E. (2017) *Yes*, but why? Teaching for understanding in mathematics).
- Adaptation of tasks or standard questions from a textbook (see Prestage, S. & Perks, P. (2007) Developing teacher knowledge using a tool for creating tasks for the classroom.

Journal of Mathematics Teacher Education, 10 (4-6), p.381 – 390 and Prestage and Perks, *Adapting and Extending Secondary Mathematics Activities*).

There is no substitute for high quality teaching which allows **all** students to make progress in their learning.

Science

A High Achiever in Science may have the following characteristics

- The ability to draw conclusions from observations.
- Curious – asks questions such as 'What if…?'
- Can synthesise knowledge from different areas of science.
- Use understanding to explain scientific phenomena.
- Good mathematical ability applied to different contexts.
- Rapidly absorbs new concepts.
- Can make valid predications using deep understanding.
- Easily sees relationships between variables and explain why that pattern exists.
- Good at extrapolating data and making inferences from the data.
- Reluctant to accept simplified explanations.
- Comfortable working independently.
- Readily sees links between new material and prior knowledge.
- Can apply knowledge accurately in different contexts.
- Can write valid methods when given an investigation title.
- Is able to reflect on practical techniques and suggest improvements.
- Can write concise explanations using scientific language.

Strategies for teaching and challenging High Achievers

- Always offer extension tasks that promote deeper scientific understanding or develop science skills. These could be higher order thinking challenge questions to facilitate synthesis of information.
- Ensure that more able students are not just given 'extra work' and the questions promote a deeper learning of the topic. This could be through A-Level questions or asking to link the topic to other areas of science.
- Ensure that long answers are proof read and re-drafted if necessary before handing them in.
- To encourage resilience and independence give students multiple resources, some of them irrelevant, to answer questions or perform research. Journals are an excellent resource to stretch the highest ability students where appropriate.
- Give praise for effort to build students' confidence and support resilience in their working habits.
- Have them explain/act as T.As for fellow class mates to encourage explanations.
- Creative writing and longer answer questions to facilitate deeper understanding of topic. Such as writing a letter to the council regarding the issues with quarrying etc.
- To develop holistic understanding, give pupils a set of labelled axes and a pattern. Students must then use their understanding of science to describe and explain the pattern along with how the science could be used in a practical application.
- If SSA support is available ask the SSA to question more able students to facilitate a high level discussion of the science being studied.
- In some cases our more able students struggle to recall definitions for key scientific terms. To aid recall we have found that key word/definition tests help retention.
- Extra-curricular activities – Science society for selected students.
- Use of questioning e.g. how did you…? Why does…? What if…? Give me an example of…?

Art & Design

A High Achiever in Art & Design may have the following characteristics

Skills

These students shows evidence of operating above the average student in the key elements of knowledge, understanding and skill using materials and techniques. These students will show distinctive skills in their ability to make, record, and manipulate visual and/or tactile form; have a very good knowledge and understanding of the subject area (or an aspect of it); are able to interpret, critically appraise, problem solve, take risks and develop information, materials, thought and ideas; and show the tenacity and ability to imagine, create and express in visual and/or tactile form in order to make a unique and original contribution to art and design.
This level of skill will be very evident in KS4 and 5 students however aspects of it will be identifiable in KS3 HA students but will be less evident. Students at this level will normally excel in the skills and materials aspect and will be able to show a goof degree of critical understanding.

General approaches

Those identified as HA need maximum opportunity to acquire and increase their skills, knowledge and understanding of the subject. These students must be provided with an opportunity to choose their materials, their methods of work and sub-projects within the themes given. These studies benefit from experiencing art from direct contact like exhibitions or observe professional art and design practitioners. These students should also be exposed to ongoing opportunities of increasing their subject knowledge with an emphasis of the whole school experience and therefore with cross-curricular opportunities.

Teaching strategies for HA students

- Guide students to explore themes, artists and ideas that are of personal interest to them.
- Ensue that teachers challenge these ideas with aspects that are out of these students' comfort areas (new materials, alternative artists, ideas…)
- Provided them with open ended questions and guide them in exploring various aspects that may fulfil the answer.
- Create opportunities to learn from experimentation.
- Teach and promote unexpected results instead of mistakes.
- Promote and encourage refection on unexpected results as a way of developing new learning.
- Ensure they approach the topic from a variety of angles.
- Promote writing that reflects their sophisticated thinking processes.
- Ensure they explore and use vocabulary and punctuation that reflects their ideas accurately and creatively.
- Allays encourage students to justify their choices.
- Mark their work in the format of questions.

Business and Economics

A high achieving student in Business and Economics demonstrates several of these attributes:

- understands abstract / difficult concepts quickly e.g. supply and demand graphs
- is highly articulate in the expression of understanding both orally and in writing
- discusses in detail, elaborates, processes information rapidly, processes case study information and applies knowledge, experience and insight to unfamiliar situation (AO2, AO3 & AO4 skills)
- makes complex links across different topic areas, especially in the A Level and GCSE synoptic courses
- develops and initiates own ideas in class discussions
- shows a thirst for knowledge, an intellectual curiosity and questioning approach, for example, reading the Business / Economics news daily and using that real life knowledge to support arguments within their work
- is an independent thinker who enjoys learning and engaging seriously and creatively with business and economic themes
- shows analytical thinking and high powers of reasoning, is able to discuss the impact of a situation on different stakeholders
- transcends the confines of the work set, demonstrating a passion or fascination for Business and / or Economics

Computer Science

Students who are High Achievers are likely to show some or all of the following characteristics

- Reason logically: Can verify (sense check), justify and prove.
- Work systematically, accurately and analytically
- Persistence.
- Ability to work independently
- Being self-motivated.
- Think flexibly, adapting problem-solving approaches.
- Demonstrates curiosity and enthusiasm for problems.
- Make connections between concepts they have learned.
- Can take creative and strategic approaches to solving problems.
- Communicate their reasoning and justify their methods.
- Ability to sustain their concentration throughout longer tasks and persist in seeking solutions.
- Produces analyse, design and develop efficient and elegant solutions to problems.

Strategies (and resources) to challenge High Achievers

- Ask students who have produced a working solutions to refine the code and search for unnecessary code.
- Provide code for a working solution and ask them to reverse engineer it.
- Allow students to enhance their own working code in a way they see it.
- Relentless focus on programming concepts. These need to become a second nature to computer scientists.

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Design & Technology

As a department we have a broad range of subjects and these all require different skills. However for simplicity we have broken them down into two main categories – **creative** (Fashion, Graphics, 3D design, resistant materials) and **vocational** (construction, carpentry, catering).

Pupils who are High Achievers in the creative subjects are likely to

- Immediately start thinking of creative responses to design briefs.
- Be independently motivated and self-driven
- Demonstrate high levels of technological understanding and application.
- Display high-quality making and precise practical skills.
- Have flashes of inspiration and highly original or innovative ideas.
- Demonstrate different ways of working or different approaches to issues.
- Be sensitive to aesthetic, social and cultural issues when designing and evaluating.
- Be capable of rigorous analysis and interpretation of products.
- Get frustrated when a teacher demands that they follow a rigid design-and-make process
- Work comfortably in contexts beyond their own experience and empathise with users' and clients' needs and wants.

Pupils who are High Achievers in the vocational subjects are likely to

- Have well developed motor skills
- Be able to follow processes or procedures
- Have attention to detail
- Be able to work accurately
- Have good time management
- Be willing and able to refine work

Expressive Arts

A High Achiever in Expressive Arts may have the following characteristics

- An aptitude to perform with confidence.
- A demonstration of technical proficiency.
- Imaginative and insightful decisions when devising and choreographing.
- An able and confident leader in any situation (emotional intelligence / inter personal skills).
- Natural timing and instinct in performance.

We have discussed as a department that to be a High Achiever in our subject is not about behaviour or even effort, it is not even the theoretical aspect of each of the courses and key stages that we have considered, instead it is a gift, a natural talent that makes a student stand out from the rest. We believe that it is only the above criteria that really determines such students in our subject.

We have discussed that it is our professional responsibility to ensure that in our lessons these students are pushed in a way that accelerates their understanding of drama and dance and that may mean introducing complex concepts for devising or choreographing, introducing key practitioners and their style, technique and form that can then be applied to the classwork. It also means offering enrichment opportunities with guest artists, theatre trips, inviting colleagues from centres of advanced training to “scout” these students. These students are and will be invited to join one-off workshops, clubs and participate in whole-school performances.

Geography

A High Achiever in Geography may have the following characteristics

- Understands complex concepts clearly so that they can apply this understanding to new situations in order to make interpretations, develop hypotheses, reach conclusions and explore solutions.
- Communicates effectively using either or both the written and spoken word.
- Reasons, argues and thinks logically, showing an ability to manipulate abstract ideas and recognise patterns and sequences.
- Innovative use of graphs, charts, maps, diagrams and other visual methods to present information.
- Is confident and contributes effectively when taking part in less formal teaching situations.
- Appreciates and understands others' views, attitudes and feelings.
- Has a more highly developed value system than most students their age.
- Has a wide-ranging general knowledge and curiosity about geographical issues.
- Is creative and original in their thinking, frequently going beyond the obvious solution to a problem.
- Is able to transfer knowledge from one subject to another.
- Identifies links and interactions between the different areas of Geography.
- Spatial awareness
- Understanding and application of sustainability in all areas of Geography.
- Confident in the collection and handling of primary and secondary data.
- Able to successfully integrate topical issues/current views into lesson content/discussion in class.
- Can present confidently and expertly on topics covered in class/outside of lessons.
- Uses curriculum as a starting point independent research and discussion outside of school.

Strategies used in the department

Strong, differentiated teaching is the main strategy used in the department. We embed challenge throughout. Teachers know their more able student within weeks of meeting a class and teaching in a dynamic way gets the best out of all our students (including the more able).

Examples that we have used this year below

- Challenging homework e.g. 4 and 6 figure grid references at GCSE, types of rainfall in Year 7, use of place when explaining processes.
- Literacy and numeracy – the use of statistics and data manipulation is evident through all schemes of work.
- We challenge the more able to think critically. Differing sources (photos, videos, news articles) are pulled apart by our more able.
- Geographical key words and skills from the GCSE curriculum are introduced as early as in Year 7.
- Command words are used throughout all schemes of work. The more able are asked to assess, justify and evaluate.
- Students are introduced to journals such as The National Geographic and Geographical Review where they have the opportunity to take them home.
  Students are given additional reading material on current events that are relevant to what they are currently learning, e.g. a recent tectonic or weather hazard.
- During fieldwork investigations there is less structure provided for the more able allowing them to think creatively and design their own methods of investigation and analysis.

Health & Social Care

A High Achiever in Health & Social Care may have the following characteristics

- They may have a clear interest in pursuing a career in a related industry and learns from experience.
- They demonstrate outstanding and employability, social or learning skills.
- They show a high level of SMSC and emotional awareness.
- They can demonstrate a good imagination, curiosity and questioning skills.
- Show respect for others and their points of view.
- Is able to articulate and provide evidence for their points of view verbally an in writing.
- Participates well in class and group discussions.
- Is supportive of others.
- Makes links between units and to work experience.
- High projections/prior attainment.
- Uses literacy skills to explain complex ideas clearly.
- Able to research independently and evaluate evidence/reach conclusions.
- Able to apply K&U of key topics in practice.

History

A High Achiever in History may have the following characteristics

- Develop with ease a chronological framework within which to place existing and new knowledge.
- Demonstrates a strong sense of period as a result of study.
- Is able to draw complex generalisations and conclusions from a range of sources of evidence.
- Seeks to identify patterns and processes in what she studies, while being aware of the provisional nature of knowledge.
- Recognises how other disciplines can contribute to the study of History and draws readily on what she learns in other subjects to enhance her historical understanding.
- Produces sophisticated and complex arguments.
- Selects the appropriate level of detail to support their argument.
- Produces written work which has clarity, style and precision.
- Asks questions which challenge accepted views.

Linking

- Evaluating
- Prioritising
- Justifying choices

Verbally/Aurally

- Able to consider alternative viewpoints
- Able to substantiate assertions
- Able to change their existing viewpoint

Strategies

- Open questions – linking back to previous knowledge/learning.
- Transferring concepts across time periods and asking them to apply what they know, to a new/different scenario.

Modern Foreign Languages

A High Achiever in Modern Foreign Languages may have the following characteristics

- Ability to spot patterns easily
- Ability to grasp grammatical concepts quickly and be able to apply these with ease
- Refer to previous knowledge and be able to transfer this in order to create new language
- Enjoyment of literacy and already have an interest in literacy in their own language
- Ability to expand their vocabulary and knowledge independently
- Seek opportunities inside and outside the classroom to use learnt language and attempt to create new language
- Imitate the sounds of language accurately
- Identify similarities between languages
- Willingness to take risks with their use of language and learn from any mistakes made
- Share their knowledge and understanding of language with others

Activities which we use in Languages to stretch and challenge High Achiever students

- Stretch students with authentic resources from the Hispanic world (literacy texts, magazines, newspaper articles, audio clips). Little adaptation if necessary.
- Stretch students with resources above their academic year (e.g. give A-level work in a GCSE class).
- Get students to teach the class or individual students, could also organise a club or tuition sessions.
- High order questioning in class.
- Encourage students to transfer language knowledge to different topics / contexts.
- Set independent projects to present to the rest of the class.
- Set extension / challenge activities in class.
- Encourage these students to work out grammatical concepts independently.
- Set cultural research homework to motivate and enthuse these students.
- Encourage these students to use synonyms to widen their vocabulary.
- Speak to these students in target language to develop their ability to speak spontaneously.

Music

A High Achiever in music may have the following characteristics

- Easily identify a pulse
- Copy or play back rhythms based on various degrees of difficulty
- Show a greater degree of control over pulse and rhythm
- Demonstrate a natural ease and flair for playing on time with an ensemble or accompaniment
- Sing back a melody with ease
- Recognise differences in pitch
- Identifies higher and lower pitch
- Sing with musical expression and with confidence
- Sing and play music with natural awareness of the musical phrase
- Memorise music quickly without any apparent effort
- Repeat more complex rhythmical and melodic phrases given by the teacher
- Show strong preferences, single mindedness and sustained inner drive in music making
- Compose with imagination
- Show a greater degree of control or imagination in composition and performance
- Perform with confidence and a sense of occasion
- Listen and appraise with knowledge and understanding
- Lead others with clarity and confidence
- Use music specific vocabulary to express their opinions and respond to different genres of music
- Build on their musicianship skills through critical practice
- Further develop creative and problem skills
- Apply knowledge of style, feature and structure to new work
- Show perception and sensitivity when responding to music
- Build on their musicianship skills through critical practice.

Physical Education

A High Achiever in Physical Education may have the following characteristics

Range of skills

- Demonstrates all core skills and nearly all advanced skills for the activity in isolation and under competitive pressure in authentic performance situations.

Quality of skills

- Core skills are performed consistently with an excellent standard of accuracy, control and fluency.
- The advanced skills demonstrated are performed consistently with an excellent standard of accuracy, control and fluency.

Physical attributes

- Demonstrates appropriate levels of physical fitness and psychological control to perform very effectively.

Decision making

- Successfully selects and uses appropriate skills on nearly all occasions.
- Applies appropriate team strategies/tactics/compositional ideas demonstrating an excellent understanding of the activity.
- Demonstrates excellent awareness of the rules/regulations of the activity during performance.
- Demonstrates excellent regard for the safety of themselves and others.
- Demonstrates excellent awareness and response to the strengths, weaknesses and actions of other player(s)/Performer(s) (team activities only).
- Communication with other player(s)/performer(s) is excellent (team activities only).

There are a variety of strategies that we deploy when supporting the needs of our High Achievers, they are as follows.

- Higher order structured questioning using question stems from T&L walks next to teacher desks.
- Use of advanced vocabulary filtered down from GCSE and teaching GCSE specification in KS3.
- Planning of tactics, strategies and coaching sessions to enhance and advance self and others skill set.
- Challenge through a range of roles the pupil plays in sport (performer, coach, umpire etc.).
- Starting to set teaching groups (when able to) in by PE ability.
- Modified activities including organisation (grouping in by ability to extend self-expectation), space (smaller/larger to increase pressure/stimulate innovative thought), a range of teaching styles (Q & A, pupil demonstration, group discussion, verbal feedback, analysis of performance), resources.
- Provision of specialist coaches to teach specialist sports.
- Leadership and Coaching provision e.g. Sports Leaders Level 1.

Personal, Social and Health Education

A High Achiever in Personal, Social & Health Education may have the following characteristics

- Demonstrate outstanding employability, social or learning skills
- Show a high level of SMSC awareness
- Demonstrate a good imagination, curiosity and questioning skills
- Shows respect for others and their points of view
- Is able to articulate and provide evidence for their points of view
- Shows a high level of emotional awareness
- Participates well in class and group discussions
- Is supportive of others

Religious Education

A High Achiever in Religious Education may have the following characteristics

- Operating above the average student in the key elements of knowledge and understanding and philosophical and ethical thought.
- They will also have a wider general knowledge of religious characters and events than the majority of the class.
- Recall of important ideas, events and personalities will be apparent.
- They will demonstrate an ability to 'think outside the box', explore ideas and go beyond the obvious.
- They will be able to make synoptic links across programmes of study, in Religious Education and other subjects and between ideas.
- They will be able to identify flaws of logic and elements of bias in verbal and written argument.
- They express understanding and sensitivity when examining the daily lives of religious believers, identifying questions of belonging and identity.
- An HA student will relish opportunities to address ultimate philosophical questions and will offer meaningful responses only when they have had time to consider their thoughts.

Creativity

The evidence for creativity in Religious Education will be in the way the student handles the key elements of historical enquiry and organisation and communication.

Students who are talented in Religious Education will understand that there are different sources for religious knowledge and will be more able to criticise them. They will use higher order thinking to analyse and synthesise the information they are given, providing oral or written responses to class tasks that show original thought. They may ask searching questions. They will not concern themselves with always finding the <u>right</u> answer.

Commitment

The HA student will have read theological and philosophical reference books and used other resources at home as well as in school. They may have used the class teaching to 'scaffold' their own investigation into a theological project of their own, unrelated to the school study.

This will be apparent in their reading records, comments about other sources of media they have encountered or if they are invited to bring a 'project' to school or present to the class on a chosen topic – e.g. my experience of being a Muslim. A parent's viewpoint would be informative.

Teaching strategies for HPA students

- Use A level questions – scrutinise the 'A' level syllabus for topics or questions with a connection to topics at KS3. Use the Mr men planning sheet to 'scaffold' the students to that level.
- Ensure that teacher subject knowledge is excellent and that teachers have an understanding of topics offered higher up the school and across the curriculum in order to use skilful questioning to deepen understanding and encourage synoptic thinking.
- Introduce elements to the lesson which have no right answer – to then enable students to expand their ideas (e.g. random pictures at the end of a lesson and students have to connect them to the lesson topic).
- Use mysteries and investigate learning to encourage students to us inference and deductive skills.
- Use 'thunks' for homework/starters.

- Encourage higher level reading skills by offering extension homeworks-university articles/higher level newspaper pages.
- Use synoptic links sheets as starters to enable students to see connections between ideas.
- Avoid 'jumping in' to help – give students a task and time and resources to finish it by themselves.
- Use of Pinterest 'secret' boards – place higher level resources for students over the age of 14.
- Differentiate teacher comments – use higher level vocabulary and complex sentences when giving verbal and written feedback.
- Ask questions which may have no answer.
- Ensure that thinking time is permitted, following a difficult situation.
- Assess their written work for academic writing skills and insist these are employed in the redraft.
- Mark their redrafted work to advise them as to how to improve even further.

Sociology/Psychology

A High Achiever in Sociology or Psychology may have the following characteristics

- Seeks out material outside of lesson content e.g. documentaries, books etc.
- Makes effective use of key terms
- Uses examples to support their points
- Can interpret data effectively
- Can apply theories to everyday examples
- Can motivate others to learn
- Can coherently argue both verbally and in a written format
- Can identify the difference between AO1, AO2 & AO3