

Gifted Able and Talented (Academic)

Reviewer: Graham Moir; February 2026

Approved by SMT: February 2026

1. The Aim of the Policy

The aim of this policy is to enrich and support the learning of those identified as academically 'gifted', 'able' and 'talented', so that they can achieve their personal best and continuously make progress.

2. Whole School

At Hurst that the primary area for academic stretch, challenge, enrichment and extension is the classroom. Additional provisions are intended to complement stretch and challenge in ordinary lessons – the expectation is that challenge and extension are a consistent element of Hurst lessons.

3. Junior and Senior Prep Schools

Within the Junior and Senior Prep Schools, pupils identified as 'gifted', 'able' and 'talented' are found on the gifted and talented register. The purpose of the register is to help teachers identify pupils requiring stretch and challenge within lessons.

In the Junior Prep School, pupils are identified using nationally standardised Verbal Reasoning (VR), Non-Verbal Reasoning (NVR), Progress Tests in Maths (PTM) and English (PTE) alongside our own internal exam data. In the Senior Prep School, pupils are identified using nationally standardised VR, NVR and MidYIS scores, alongside our own internal exam data.

Pupils with a MidYIS, VR, NVR, PTM or PTE score of 130 or higher are placed on the register. Pupils who score in the top 10% of the year group in the end of Year 7 and 8 exams are also placed on the register. The Head of Junior Prep, Head of Senior Prep, HoYs and tutors monitor the progress of the individuals on the register as well as identifying those not currently on the register who may warrant inclusion. Pupils are not informed that they are on the register.

Beyond the classroom, specialised Masterclasses take place throughout the year, the nature of which will either be intellectually demanding to challenge the most able, or more inclusive to stimulate interest and enjoyment in all pupils across multiple areas of the curriculum.

4. Senior School

Middle School

Within the Middle School, pupils identified as 'gifted', 'able' and 'talented' are found on the gifted and talented register. The purpose of the register is to help teachers identify pupils requiring stretch and challenge within lessons.

Pupils with nationally standardised MidYIS, VR or NVR scores of 130 or higher are placed on the register. Other pupils who score in the top 10% of the year group in the end of year Shell and Remove exams are also placed on the register. The Head of Middle School and HoYs monitor the progress of these pupils, most commonly after Challenge Grade Reviews, with a specific focus on any underperformance. Pupils are not informed that they are on the register.

Beyond the standard GCSEs, our bespoke Explore programme offers a 'no ceiling curriculum' to all pupils, with academic award holders automatically enrolled onto the programme to help ensure they are appropriately stretched throughout their middle school journey.

Sixth Form

Within the Sixth Form, pupils identified as 'gifted', 'able' and 'talented' are found on the gifted and talented register. The purpose of the register is to help teachers identify pupils requiring stretch and challenge within lessons.

The register consists of those with ALIS score in the 95th percentile or higher, or in the 95th percentile or higher in VR or NVR, alongside any other pupil who scored an 8 higher average GCSE grade. The Head of Sixth Form and HoYs monitor the progress of these pupils, most commonly after Challenge Grade Reviews, with a specific focus on any underperformance.

Beyond the classroom, the Futures team provide a programme to enable access to world class Universities, as well as other vocational routes. Students will be offered bespoke preparation for application to Highly Selective Universities. To identify such candidates, students are asked to come forward and complete the "University Challenge", a short presentation task that acts as an interview to sign up to the programme.

Once signed up, HSU candidates meet to experience different subjects in new lights on a weekly basis, starting in the January of Lower Sixth year. Students are welcome to attend these sessions until December of the Upper Sixth. If they are Oxbridge candidates, or students likely to be interviewed, sessions in the Upper Sixth focus on preparation for admissions tests and interviews. The college aims to secure each student who will be interviewed with three formal practice interviews. Academic staff, including members of the Senior Management Team, interview alongside teachers from other schools where appropriate.

Specific provision for applicants to Medicine, Veterinary Science and Dentistry is provided in weekly sessions.

In addition to the above, entrance into Olympiads and similar competitions provide opportunities for the most able pupils across the Senior School to shine. An inter-house, academic quiz competition along the lines of University Challenge (at Hurst called Top House) is also held each term to allow academic students to contribute positively towards house competitions. "Academic" player or teams of the moment awards are also given out regularly by the Deputy Head (Academic) in Monday morning assemblies to celebrate excellent pieces of work of an academic nature.