

## **FAQs**

### **How are More Able learners identified at Torpoint Community College?**

In order to ensure that we have an accurate and inclusive identification procedure at the College we draw on a wide range of information sources. These include:

- Teachers work with young people most intensively and are often the first to identify learners who have the potential to achieve highly. Staff nominate using departmental identification check lists which outline the characteristics of a More Able learner within each curriculum area. These nominations are based on evidence gathered in class or during extracurricular activities;
- Other staff – including those from outside the College – may identify areas of strength that are less evident in curriculum time;
- Parents and carers are encouraged to liaise with the College to share information about their child's abilities and talents. This information will help us to better tailor provision;
- Key Stage 2 data and other information passed on and used at transition points;
- Internal assessment and examination data;
- Young people themselves are encouraged to share details of their achievements and talents with everyone at the College;

More Able learners can be identified at any stage of their time at TCC. Young people often develop at different rates as they progress through the College. Approximately 10% of learners at our College will appear on our More Able Record of Need at any one time.

### **How do we support More Able learners at Torpoint Community College?**

TCC strives to offer outstanding support to all young people at the College. Specific support is tailored to the needs of our More Able young people. This includes:

- The More Able Record of Need is updated termly and is used by staff members to differentiate provision. This ensures that there are a range of opportunities for all students to be challenged and extended;
- Challenge is an important feature of teaching and learning at TCC. The development of critical thinking skills and independent learning is enhanced through lesson design
- Identified students meet with the More Able Coordinator to develop an understanding of their individual learning characteristics where there is potential for underachievement. These are used by staff to inform the teaching and learning;

- Enrichment and extension are an exciting aspect of life at the College. There are a variety of extra-curricular clubs which run all year round to enable the development of a range of skills including sports, arts, music and practical and academic skills;
- The vertical tutoring system provides the opportunity to discuss social and emotional issues that may impact on learning. The College pastoral system is used to resolve any such concerns that may arise;
- Staff members are provided with guidance for how to stretch More Able students within the curriculum;
- Projects and activities targeted at different groups of students e.g. Student Takeover Day and Escape Rooms, Plymouth;
- Progress of the More Able cohort is monitored by the More Able Coordinator who regularly meets with students and staff;
- Additional mentoring and interventions are made available where appropriate;
- Students attend university and careers events in order to familiarise themselves with the requirements of higher education and possible career paths and raise aspirations;
- Provision for More Able learners is under constant review and development and we always welcome feedback from parents and carers. We maintain good contact with all stakeholders through Academic Review Days and Parents Evenings;
- We encourage and celebrate the expression of special ability – including musical, sporting, theatrical performances and artwork – through assemblies, presentations, awards, certificates etc.

Your support and encouragement play a vital part in helping your child fulfil their potential. If you have any questions concerning the College's More Able policy please contact Mr B. Loughran – More Able Coordinator. Additionally, if your child is involved in activities that extend and enrich their education out of school, we would be delighted to hear about them.

### **What does a More Able learner look like? How do I know if my child is More Able?**

Identifying More Able learners is a complex process. Many factors combine to enable a young person to work at a level above their peers. Below is a list of the characteristics that help to identify More Able young people – or those who have significant potential. Learners will often display a range of these in their school work and their everyday life. A More Able learner may:

- be a good reader;
- be very articulate or verbally fluent for their age;
- give quick verbal responses (which may appear cheeky);
- have a wide general knowledge;
- need to work with learners of similar ability in / out of College;

- communicate well with adults – often better than with their peer group;
- have a range of (lifelong) interests, some of which can appear to be obsessions;
- show unusual and original responses to problem solving activities;
- be able to deal with abstract tasks;
- be self-taught in his / her own interest areas;
- have a good memory that they can access easily;
- be artistic / be musical / excel at sport;
- have strong views and opinions;
- have a lively and original imagination / sense of humour;
- be socially adept;
- appear bored, arrogant or socially inept;
- be easily bored by what they perceive to be routine tasks;
- show a strong sense of leadership;
- question reasons for rules that are in place / authority;
- take risks in their learning;
- spot logicalities or inconsistencies;
- have a keen sense of justice;
- display growing self-determination;
- display exceptional powers of concentration and / or stamina

It is important to note the subtle differences between 'bright' learners and those that are 'gifted':

Bright learner	Gifted learner
Knows the answer	Asks the questions
Is interested	Is highly curious
Has good ideas	Has wild / 'silly' ideas
Answers the question	Discusses in detail / goes off topic in their answer
Listens with interest	Shows strong feelings / opinions
Learns with ease	Already knows
Copies accurately	Creates a new design
Absorbs information	Manipulates information
In pleased with own learning	Is highly self-critical

If you are interested in discussing this further please do not hesitate to contact Mr B. Loughran – More Able Coordinator

**What happens if a More Able student is not making good progress? Can a student be removed from the More Able register?**

Where a student is not making good progress that has been targeted for them at College a variety of interventions are utilised. Mentoring sessions with Mr B. Loughran – More Able Coordinator – are complemented with a range of peer mentoring approaches. Each approach is specific to the individual student's needs and is designed to overcome their barriers to learning.

Relative ability changes over time and learners may move on and off the register where appropriate. The More Able Record of Need is reviewed termly and the composition of the register will vary from year to year. It is not uncommon for a student to be taken off the register and this is not a reflection of their ability. Suitable interventions and strategies are used prior to, and after, a student being taken off the register to ensure that they are able to achieve their potential.

**Who should I contact if I have any concerns about my child's progress?**

**Subject Teacher**

For individual concerns about progress, or any specific needs in a curriculum area, it is advisable to contact the subject teacher. They are responsible for the progress of each student in that subject and in identifying, planning and delivering any additional help that students may need in the classroom setting to be suitably challenged and extended

**Tutor/House Leader of Learning**

If you have wider concerns regarding the progress of your child in a range of subjects or you feel there are reasons why your son or daughter may have some concerns in College the tutor and/or HLOL will be able to identify areas of support and communicate with all their teachers

**More Able Coordinator**

The More Able Coordinator is Mr B. Loughran. He is responsible for developing and reviewing the College's More Able policy, coordinating enrichment and extension opportunities More Able students, co-ordinating relevant support and interventions, and ensuring that everyone involved in the progress of the students is kept informed about the support the students are receiving and the progress they are making. Specialist support is also provided for teachers and support staff in the college, so that they can support More Able students in the school to achieve the best progress possible

**How can I support my child at home when they are disappointed with their progress? How can I support my child when they are underachieving?**

The underachievement of more able young people concerns both parents and teachers. Too often, students who show great academic potential fail to perform at a level commensurate with their

abilities. Some underachieving students may lack self-efficacy or self-regulation skills (Siegel & McCoach, 2001); other low achievers may suffer from either obvious or hidden barriers to their learning such as dyslexia. Others may underachieve in response to inappropriate educational conditions or environments.

### Identifying underachievers

More Able underachievers may display the following characteristics:

- Low self-esteem;
- Incomplete work;
- Lack of concentration or effort;
- Emotional frustration;
- Boredom; or
- Find inadequacy in others or systems

They may fall into any of the following categories:

- Invisible – afraid of being labelled by their peers and becomes reluctant to contribute to class;
- Inconsistent – shows ability and skill in some lessons but picks and chooses;
- Skills or knowledge deficit – working at grade 6 but capable of grade 8/9 and doesn't know how to get there;
- Disaffected – doesn't want to be in education; has perhaps not been extended earlier in their education; effort levels low or boredom level high

Helping More Able learners to avoid underachievement: developing a growth mind-set (Dweck, 2006)

Many More Able learners have a 'fixed mind-set' where they avoid challenges as they fear that failure will mean they are not 'gifted'. This can lead to underachievement and a lack of learning skills essential for continued success. We need to help them to develop a 'growth mind-set' to combat this.

	Fixed mind-set	Growth mind-set
<b>What does the student want to achieve?</b>	To look smart even at the cost of sacrificing learning by avoiding challenging tasks	To learn new things even if they are hard or risky
<b>How is failure seen?</b>	Failure is seen as an indication of low intelligence	Failure is seen as an indication of low effort and / or poor strategy
<b>How is effort seen?</b>	The need to apply effort to a task is seen as a sign of low intelligence	Effort activates and uses intelligence
<b>Typical response after difficulty</b>	Less effort	More effort
<b>Defensiveness</b>	High – not willing to risk mistakes	Low: eager to learn and open to feedback about mistakes
<b>Performance after difficulty</b>	Impaired	Equal or improved

Encouraging a growth mind set is vital to ensuring that all young people are able to achieve their potential in the face of challenge or adversity.

### **How is my child involved in the provisions for SEN and in their education?**

When a student has been identified for an intervention they will be involved in a discussion about the intervention, why they are involved and what it aims to do. We will discuss with them and take account of their attitude to school, learning and their ability. This is reviewed alongside their academic progress.

We expect all students to take responsibility for their learning and they are expected to take an active part in our Academic Review Days and parents' evenings.

### **What are the arrangements for assessing and reviewing my child's progress towards their targets, and are there opportunities available for them and for me, as parents or carers, to be a part of this process?**

All interventions – whether they are to address academic, social or emotional needs – are measured against targets set. A baseline or starting point is always established at the start of an intervention and progress against this is carefully measured so that we can all see what progress is being made. Students are an integral part of this process as it is vital that they can celebrate their successes, big and small. The progress of the students will be relayed back to parents and carers so that you can also share in your child's success.

### **What are the arrangements for supporting pupils moving between phases of education and preparing for adulthood?**

All students when they are joining us from Year 6 will be a part of the extensive transition programme in place so that by the time they join us in Year 7 we will have built up a picture of who they are based upon the information shared with us by the student, their previous school and you – the parents and carers.

As the students move from KS3 to KS4 and begin their GCSEs we run a supportive programme of assemblies, information evening's and one to one interviews to ensure they embark on an exam programme that meets their individual needs.

Throughout Years 10 and 11 the students are exposed to the wealth of opportunities for their post-16 education. They are given advice about the best routes to their chosen career or to higher education.

The above is provided by knowledgeable and supportive tutor teams, House Leaders and members of staff with responsibility for work experience and careers guidance; all of whom are able to provide pastoral care and advice on choosing the right pathway for each individual.