

**P** **A** **R** **K** **L** **A** **N** **E**

International School

# **Challenge and Potential Policy**

November 2017

Park Lane International School admits pupils with a wide range of abilities. We are committed to giving all students an equal opportunity to maximise their potential, regardless of each child's starting point.

The school encourages a growth mindset in both student attitudes to learning, and in staff attitudes towards the abilities of students. It is felt that labelling a child as 'gifted' can sometimes be detrimental to the progress of that particular individual, and other learners around them. Undoubtedly, we all have different strengths and talents, but the school believes that the overriding message to students should be one of maximising potential. In the words of Emile Zola, "the artist is nothing without the gift, but the gift is nothing without work."

Teachers know all too well that differentiation is a regular part of classroom life, but that, like teaching in general, it is not an exact science; our practice is an ongoing learning process, and we learn by doing. Thus, teachers are encouraged to keep the importance of differentiation in mind, and to try new techniques where possible, which may or may not be successful.

### Higher Learning Potential (HLPs)

Higher learning potential (HLPs) are defined as those pupils with one or more abilities developed to a level significantly ahead of their year group, or with potential to develop those abilities.

This refers to the upper end of the ability range in most classes. It's important to recognise that high learning potential pupils are individuals, with their own unique strengths and weaknesses. We use the term "higher learning potential" to mean those pupils who are capable of excelling academically in one or more subjects such as English or Maths. It also refers to those pupils who may excel in practical skills such as sports, leadership, or the arts.

We also recognise those pupils with particular talents who have developed skills beyond school level such as sport at county, national or international level, high grade music examinations or local, national or international competitions in a wide range of activities.

At Park Lane International School we recognise that all children, regardless of ability, benefit from being challenged and encouraged to think and question.

### Aims

To enable more able children to achieve their full potential by:

- Close attention to the needs of the individual pupil through differentiation of tasks
- Careful monitoring of every child's progress
- Ensuring there are high expectations of what pupils can achieve
- Encouraging children to think for themselves, to ask questions and to contribute ideas

### HLP Register

The school keeps a register of pupils who have been recognised as having 'higher learning potential' (HLP) for a particular subject or skill, within the context of their peers. This list is collated and maintained by the **DHoP in Primary** and the **SENCo in Secondary**. Much of the data comes from the **Rising Stars Assessment results in Primary** or from the **MIDYIS results in Secondary**.

The Primary HLP register, found [here](#).

The Secondary HLP Register [here](#).

It should not be viewed as a definitive list; pupils can both be added and removed at any point, under the agreement of the DHoP/SENCo.

Ultimately, the HLP Register should be used as a guide for teachers who are perhaps new to the school or

teaching a particular HLP student for the first time. Many teachers will choose not to make use of the register, and use their own judgement. Ultimately, the best indicators of a child's potential in a subject is the teacher's - the subject expert's - judgement. Teachers are able to nominate students for the HLP Register at any time.

The school recognises that pupils who have HLP do not always show their ability. Teachers are encouraged to engage with such students, and to further develop strategies to encourage these students to maximise their potential. The HLP Register contains a 'notes' section where teachers can detail any issues with motivation and/or achievement.

### **Creating challenge and maximising potential**

Park Lane International School endeavours to establish a culture of challenge both within and external to the classroom, in order to maximise the potential of **all** of our students. Teachers should aim to challenge students in terms of content **and** thinking skills.

In Secondary, the IB learner profile is a useful resource for teachers in achieving this endeavour; it can be used as a way of ensuring that their lessons are challenging pupils enough, and in a **variety of ways**.

The school focuses on celebrating the effort put in by a student to further develop his or her potential, rather than praising the student's innate ability in a subject. That said, opportunities are created for students who have notable academic potential. Subject leaders are encouraged to develop their own curricula to provide a stimulating and academically rigorous programme for students.

All staff are encouraged to establish links with external providers. Activities such as Model United Nations and Duke of Edinburgh provide opportunities for students to take their learning out of the classroom, discover new skills and collaborate with like-minded students from other schools. Looking forward, there is every intention to forge links with world-leading universities, and organise an educational visit to such an institution.

The DHoP, SENCo and SLT recognises the need to increase teacher awareness of and provision for HLP learners. Strategies used to achieve this include, but are not limited to:

- CDP sessions and staff surveys
- Teacher observations with a focus on differentiation, where good practice is shared
- Use of pupil voice to gauge effectiveness of strategies
- Provisions of extension tasks that may include trips, competitions and other activities

The needs of staff in relation to CPD is reviewed on a yearly basis.

The SENCo can work with KS3 and KS4 coordinators, subject leaders and the SLT to identify underachieving students on the HLP register and provide strategies to engage and motivate them. The SENCo's involvement with this varies given the nature of the issue.