



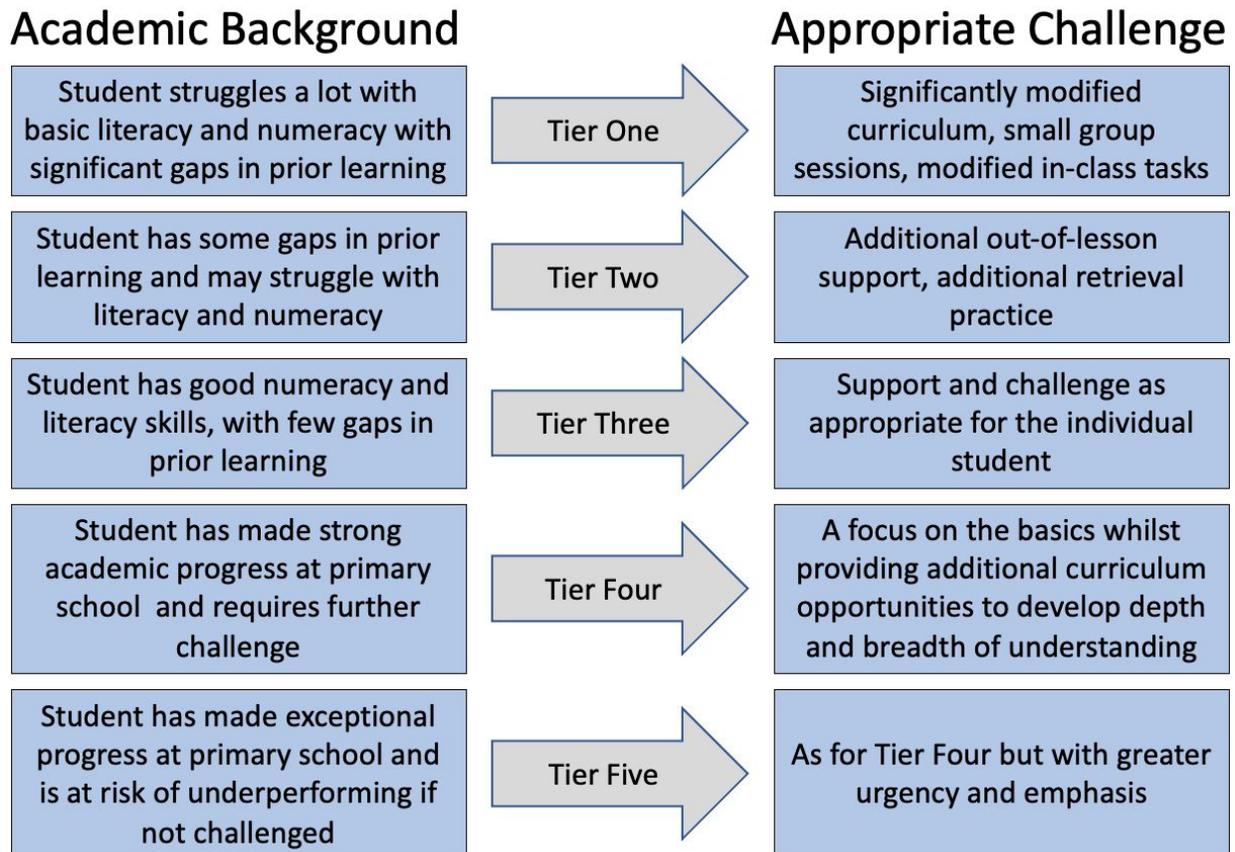
TRINITY
ACADEMY

Appropriate Challenge Policy

Name of policy	Appropriate Challenge Policy
Date approved	November 2020
Date to be reviewed	September 2022

Introduction

At Trinity Academy, we recognise that children arrive at secondary school with differing academic potentials. In order to support all children, we need to provide support and challenges that are appropriate to each child's potential. These are broken into five different tiers, as outlined in the diagram below.



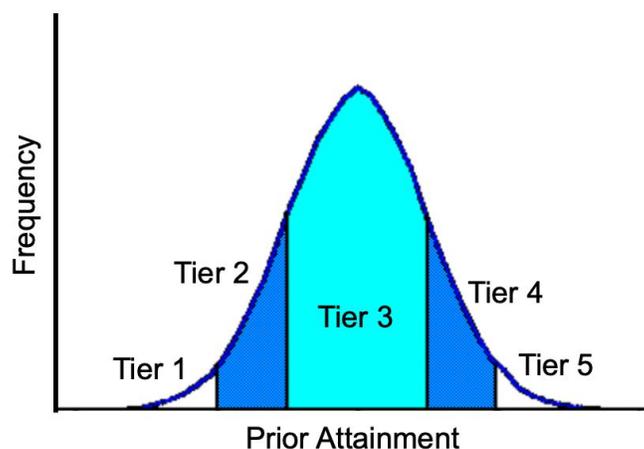
Principles

At Trinity we believe that our rigorously planned curriculum, delivered by exceptional teaching, ensures accessibility and challenge for all learners, irrespective of attainment. However, students at the extremes of the general cognitive ability spectrum – typically those with very low or very high prior attainment – may require more support and challenge beyond typical classroom practice. Traditionally in schools this has led to discussions about differentiation. We feel that this has become a loaded term, often misunderstood and misused in schools. To avoid this, we understand the term differentiation as meaning:

The pedagogical decisions made by teachers in order to ensure that all students are able to access learning with the degree of challenge appropriate for their attainment and ability. It is never reductive and viewed as a process and nor does it ever place a ceiling on a student's potential to learn.

How we identify students who may require more support:

- We recognise that children starting secondary school come with a variation in general cognitive ability. This variation tends to be normally distributed in large enough populations.
- We treat prior attainment (KS2 scores) as the least imperfect proxy for general cognitive ability. When KS2 scores are not available, we use standard age scores (SAS) generated by the GL suite of assessments.
- We believe that students at the extremes of the prior attainment distribution are most at risk of underperforming. They therefore have the greatest need for additional support to ensure they are appropriately challenged.
- We categorise likely need into five ascending tiers. These can be visualised on a distribution of prior attainment as shown below:



- Students with the greatest need for support (Tier One) typically have an average KS2 score of below 90. Those with average scores of between 90 and 98 (Tier Two) are also likely to require significant support to ensure our curricula are accessible.
- Students with the greatest need for further challenge (Tier Five) typically have average KS2 scores of above 115. Those with average scores of between 109 and 114 are still likely to require additional challenge beyond the typical classroom experience (Tier Four).

Supporting Students of Tiers One, Two, Four and Five

Tier One

Students in Tier One are likely to need lots of intervention focussed on basic numeracy and literacy. These students typically have extremely low prior attainment, struggle to read and write and have difficulty accessing much of the curriculum content. There may be as few as three or four students in a typical year group (approximately 3 to 5% of the cohort) with these characteristics. Depending on the school's assessment of need, support for Tier One students may include some or all of the following::

- Significantly modifying curriculum content and aims. This is because students are most likely to benefit from a tailored curriculum which places greater emphasis on basic skills – such as number bonds, times tables and basic vocabulary and grammar.
- Intense sessions of basic knowledge recall. These are delivered through one-to-one sessions from highly skilled members of our learning support team. These interventions take place during the timetabled day and, as a result, these students are likely to take fewer subjects. As a result Tier One students may take fewer subjects at GCSE, with an aim to achieve higher grades in fewer subjects (especially in core subjects).
- Teachers focussing students on mastering basic subject-specific knowledge and skills in class. Students will likely require extremely high levels of retrieval practice, the simplification of explanation and the breaking down of learning into mini-steps. Teachers will need to judge how specific tasks can be made accessible and when a different task is required.
- Other subject-specific support as outlined in Department Handbooks.

Tier Two

Students in Tier Two are likely to have significant gaps in knowledge, numeracy and literacy – although markedly less severe than for those in Tier One. Typically we would expect between 10 and 15 students to fall into this category of need (representing approximately 10 to 15% of the cohort). Depending on the school's assessment of need, support for Tier Two students may include some or all of the following:

- Numeracy and literacy interventions that do not occur at the expense of curriculum time in other subjects.
- Increased subject-specific retrieval practice, possibly in the form of modified class or homework tasks, targeted questioning or through additional activities outside of the lesson.

In lessons these students would benefit most from high expectations and from mixed ability setting (as occurs throughout Phase One). We do not expect teachers to significantly modify lesson content for these students.

Tier Four and Five

Students in Tier Four and Five (typically 15 to 20 students in a year group, or 15-20%) have performed well academically in the past, but are at risk of having insufficient challenge in lessons. Those in Tier Five are particularly at risk. However, this is not to say that students in Tier Four and Five do not need to learn the fundamental content of a subject. They are simply more likely to grasp (or already know) fundamental content more quickly than other students. In lessons, teachers should maintain pace of learning by moving the students who have clearly mastered content onto the next area of learning (breadth), or provoking them to develop a more nuanced understanding (depth). This being said, the approach to appropriate challenge for these learners does not assume mastery of basic knowledge and competency, until this has been evidenced to the satisfaction of the teacher. Each department provides planned opportunities to challenge these students – and in particular Tier Five students. Details are outlined in department handbooks and are monitored as part of the school's quality assurance process.

Monitoring of Progress

Because tiering of need is based on prior attainment, only, it is fixed until the next nationally standardised assessment point – GCSEs. This means a child with low prior attainment and found in Tier Two will remain so until the end of Year 11. This does not mean that they will receive the same level of support during this time. Student progress is carefully monitored to ensure they receive appropriate support and challenge. Monitoring will take many forms – including production of work in lessons, speed of recall. However, careful analysis of progress at summative assessment points and external moderation of work is particularly important. In essence, whilst tiering is fixed – and Trinity teachers are aware of student prior attainment as a proxy for ability –, current attainment and emerging aptitude will also be closely scrutinised by teachers to ensure that the level of challenge present in learning is appropriate in empowering students to make exceptional progress.

Policies Linked to the Appropriate Challenge Policy

- Assessment Policy
- Teaching and Learning Policy
- Children in Care Policy
- Pupil Premium Policy

Monitoring and Review

The school will review this policy annually at the start of the new Academy and then bi-annually once embedded, assessing its implementation and effectiveness. The policy will be promoted and implemented throughout the school.