



# Otumoetai Intermediate School

## Children With Special Abilities

### Worrying how your gifted and talented child will cope in the future?

*While all individual students have strengths and abilities, gifted and talented students have exceptional abilities. They have certain learning characteristics that give them the potential to achieve outstanding performance.*

*Ministry of Education 2002*

Giftedness and talent can be seen in the following areas:

- **Intellectual/Academic** refers to students with exceptional abilities in one or more of the essential learning areas (i.e. language and languages, mathematics, technology, health and physical education, social sciences, science, the arts).
- **Creativity** refers to students with general creative abilities as evidenced in their abilities to problem-find and problem-solve, and their innovative thinking and productivity.
- **Expression through the visual and performing arts** refers to music, dance, drama and visual arts.
- **Social/Leadership** refers to students with interpersonal and intrapersonal abilities and qualities which enable them to act in leadership roles.
- **Culture-specific abilities and qualities** refers to those valued by the student's cultural or ethnic group, including traditional arts and crafts, pride in their cultural identity, language ability and service to the culture.
- **Expression through physical activity/sport** refers to students with excellent physical abilities and skills, as evidenced through sport and/or health and physical education programmes.

At Otumoetai Intermediate School we are committed to ensuring all students reach their full potential. This includes an awareness and recognition of the social and emotional needs of gifted and talented students. This includes a student's emotional development, their level of perseverance, resilience and inter-personal skills within a typical group of peers.

We also recognise that some identification methods and isolating gifted and talented students from their peers, could potentially have negative effects upon their social and emotional development in the long term.

This is why we have developed a range of approaches including our **Incredible Minds Programme** for educating gifted and talented students (CWSA) that are tailored to their needs. Students who are identified as having advanced ability, are clustered together and placed in a class that includes other clusters of students. This provides groupings representative of the wider community but also enables these CWSA students to have advanced learning in a differentiated class room. Our gifted students, as well as having their needs met, also have the opportunity to develop leadership skills and work collaboratively with a wide range of students while not being labelled as 'different'.

Emphasis is on developing each student's emotional IQ alongside academic targets.

Each student identified as gifted and talented will experience a personalised learning path where their interests, participation and achievement are closely monitored.

Students are also able to apply to our **Friday Incredible Minds Programme** which includes the academic Mansfield and Rutherford classes, the Arts Academy, Sports Academy, Multimedia class and Leadership Centre.

## **Description**

Giftedness is a complex phenomenon and because of this our identification process is multidimensional. We draw upon a selection of objective and subjective sources to gather the information. These include using valid and reliable instruments such as P.A.T. results, Australian Examination results, Specific selection tests, teacher observations and parents' knowledge. Creativity is a key characteristic of giftedness and this is valued and nurtured at our school.

All students who meet the criteria will be involved in our specialised programmes. Information gathering is also on-going to ensure we have detailed and accurate information that assists in planning suitable strategies and curriculum adaptations to enhance the learning of these students. We also appreciate the Maori perspective when collecting data on Maori students.

We have staff who have been identified as having skills and being passionate about working with gifted students. They are continuously involved in professional development with the Waikato University Gifted and Talented Advisory Service to ensure they remain up to date with the latest research findings and curriculum delivery methods. This team meets regularly to discuss and debate issues and ideas and to share successful innovations. We are aware of the vulnerability of highly gifted students in areas such as: uneven development, adult expectations, self-definition, inappropriate environments, perfectionism, alienation, intense sensitivity and role conflicts, and ensure that the environment is supportive in order to assist students to cope with these vulnerabilities.

Programmes are provided in a variety of ways. As students with ability are clustered, acceleration in numeracy and literacy occurs as part of the daily programme. Students are also withdrawn on a regular basis to have quality time to work with others of similar ability. It allows in-depth discussion/debate about topical issues and opinions to develop the skills that will enable them to maximise their learning. Students are taught critical thinking and problem solving skills/tools and given information about their own learning styles to maximise progress. They are taught to accurately self-assess and be reflective about themselves as learners. They are taught meta-cognition skills (learning about their learning).

We have a close interaction with our secondary schools and other educational providers. This allows us the opportunity to accelerate students in subjects that would otherwise be difficult for us to cater for. They are given the opportunity to participate in programmes provided at the secondary level. Acceleration is shown by research to be the most beneficial method of meeting Gifted and Talented students' needs.

All students are given the opportunity to learn a second language (French, German, Japanese, Spanish or Mandarin).

Other extension opportunities may include: Music Composition, Visual Arts, Dance and Drama, Design, Computer Skills such as web page design and presenting, Photography, Robotics, Debating, Public speaking, Science, Philosophy, Mathematics, Journalism, Technology and Leadership.

Students gifted and talented in the area of psychomotor aspects of education such as athletics, dancing/mime and sporting disciplines are given the opportunity to participate in elite skill opportunities and activities.

## **Academic Accelerate Classes (Friday Programme)**

In 2015 the school will have two accelerate classes in year 7 and two accelerate classes in year 8. The Rutherford classes cater for students who are gifted and talented in the sciences and mathematics and the Mansfield classes cater for students gifted and talented in literacy. These classes operate on Fridays and complement the home class differentiated learning in the CWSA student clusters.

Entry is by application on enrolment for the following classes:

- **Year 7 Rutherford class**
- **Year 7 Mansfield class**

The timeframe for selecting these students is as follows:

- **12 September 2014:** Applications close as all enrolments are also due.
- **15 September 2014:** Letters of receipt of application sent home with invitation for applicant to sit an entry test.
- **19 September 2014:** Applicants to sit a selection test designed to identify high achieving students. The test will be held at 9.00am here at Otumoetai Intermediate and will take approximately 25 minutes.
- **26 September 2014:** Parents of applicants advised in writing of the outcome for their son or daughter's application.

For year 8, entry is by application at the end of year 7 to the following classes:

- **Year 8 Rutherford class**
- **Year 8 Mansfield class**

Students will be selected based on their commitment, attitude and performance at year 7. Entry is not automatic and students will need to show they are able to meet the expectations of the year 8 programme.

Application forms for these classes are available from the office or in the school information packs.

Students accepted for these classes will not usually be able to participate in the other Friday academies, however, they will have many opportunities to become involved in sports, digital learning and the arts outside of the Friday programme.

## **Programme**

The programme for the Mansfield classes will be a combination from: creative writing, an advanced second language, young enterprise, media studies, philosophy, public speaking and debating.

The programme for the Rutherford classes will be a combination from: science, mathematics, engineering, web development, electronics and robotics.

Once the applicants have been selected for each class, there may be a need for some students to cross over in areas such as robotics, public speaking or debating to meet their particular needs.

## Multi Media Class / Group



It is anticipated we will continue to provide an opportunity for students to apply for advanced multimedia learning in 2015. This develops the students' ability to animate, create films and use advanced software.

## Sports Academy

The Sports Academy provides opportunities for two different groups of school athletes, namely those identified through individual learning pathways as being our top achieving elite athletes and those students selected to represent the school at selected tournaments. There will of course be many students who fall into both of these categories.



The Academy will provide a programme of seminars and practical training sessions for those identified through individual learning pathways. Seminar and workshop topics will include:

- Fitness and training.
- Nutrition.
- Professional sports career pathways.
- Sports physiology.
- Tertiary training options.
- Sport BOP.
- Guest speakers.
- Skills workshops.

The core group of students selected for this academy will be mainly drawn from year 8 with students having demonstrated their ability during year 7. Students will be invited to apply for the Sports Academy early in term 1, 2015.

Other students will have the opportunity to benefit from intensive training for specific events. The makeup of this group will vary depending on the event being prepared for. Events will include:

- Multi-sport.
- Touch Rugby.
- Winter Tournament.
- NZCT AIMS Tournament.
- Athletics.

- Volleyball.
- Sports camp at Totara Springs.

Students selected for these tournaments would be involved in four week intensive training blocks utilising Intermediate staff and outside coaches.

## Arts Academy



The Arts Academy provides opportunities for three different groups of students in the disciplines of Visual Art, Dance/Drama and Music. The Arts Academy programme runs in conjunction with our school's Incredible Minds programme and involves students who have been identified as being our top gifted and talented students in these three disciplines.

Selection to the visual arts, music and performing arts classes in this academy will be by application in the first weeks of term 1, 2015. Students will be invited to complete an application form followed by auditions. Students will be selected from these auditions and all applicants advised of the outcome of their application.

Successful applicants will spend each Friday involved in extension activities in either; visual arts, drama/dance or music.

Programmes include:

- Advanced tutoring individually and on a group basis.
- Workshops with experts from the community.
- Out of school visits and tours.
- Entry to a variety of competitions and productions.
- Individual coaching towards career opportunities.
- Guest speakers and mentors.

## Leadership Centre



The Leadership Centre will provide opportunities for students identified as having potential in this area. Selection to the Leadership Centre is carried out at the end of year 7. Students can nominate themselves or are nominated by their teachers to participate in a series of activities. Based on the outcome of these activities, student leaders are selected to lead the school in year 8.

Each student will have an individualised learning pathway and there will be development days where outside experts in this field will work with the students.

The content of these development days will encompass:

- Exploring what leadership is.
- Looking at themselves as leaders. Each student will discover more about themselves as leaders and what style of leadership they tend to demonstrate.
- Looking at communication. The different styles that different leaders demonstrate and the effect this has on the outcomes.
- Working with a group of students with similar abilities to achieve an identified outcome.
- Discovering how they as individuals react in different situations.

Student leaders are also able to attend a leadership camp with students from other intermediate schools.

Students will also have responsibilities to perform around the school. These activities will be subjects for discussion groups at regular intervals throughout the year as part of a school council. These will include:

- The running of school assemblies.
- Acting as school ambassadors on such occasions as orientation days for our contributing schools etc.
- Taking responsibility for environmental issues that impact on the school.
- Being the student voice as part of the school decision making process.
- The organisation of discos, Year 8 social, etc.
- Year 8 students will be used to mentor Year 7 students who need support with transition into our school.
- Communication of school notices.

The aim of this centre is to empower Otumoetai Intermediate students who demonstrate leadership attributes and skills. It will give them the opportunity to mix with other students who also demonstrate these skills and to provide outcomes that will assist them to demonstrate excellent leadership knowledge and skills in their future.