

# National Academy for Gifted and Talented Youth Evaluation

ACL Consulting



**Research Report No  
DCSF-RW078**

---

*National Academy for Gifted and Talented Youth  
Evaluation*

---

*ACL Consulting*

The views expressed in this report are the authors' and do not necessarily reflect those of the Department for Children, Schools and Families.

© ACL Consulting 2009

ISBN 978 1 84775 324 3

**Contents**

Contents ..... 1

Executive summary

1 Introduction and background ..... 8

2 Methodology ..... 13

3 Overall impact of NAGTY - “whole organisation” objectives and KPIs ..... 16

4 Overall impact of NAGTY - The Student Academy and related objectives/KPIs ..... 22

5 Overall impact of NAGTY - The Professional Academy and related objectives/KPIs ... 33

6 Overall impact of NAGTY - the Research Academy and related objectives/KPIs ..... 37

7 Overview of impact ..... 41

8 Organisational effectiveness ..... 43

9 Value for money ..... 52

Annexes

## Executive summary

### Background

*acl consulting* were contracted by the Gifted and Talented Education Unit (GTEU) of the then Department for Education and Skills (DfES), now the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF), to undertake an evaluation of the National Academy for Gifted and Talented Youth (NAGTY) in October 2006.

Following a competitive tendering exercise, NAGTY was established at the University of Warwick (Warwick) in 2002 to help deliver the Government's programme for gifted and talented learners, in particular by developing, promoting and supporting educational opportunities for gifted and talented children up to the age of 19 and by providing support for parents and educators. Its initial target was to work with 20,000 learners (10% of the "top 5%" of the cohort; this was subsequently increased to 200,000.

The Department re-tendered for an organisation to assist it in taking forward its work with gifted and talented young people in Autumn 2007; Warwick decided not to bid. CfBT was contracted to develop a new service for gifted and talented learners - "Young Gifted and Talented" (YG&T) in Spring 2007. Warwick's contract with the Department - and therefore NAGTY as an organisation - came to an end on 31<sup>st</sup> August 2007.

### The evaluation

Fieldwork for this project comprised desk-based research and interviews with NAGTY staff, NAGTY "stakeholders", staff in local authorities and schools and with NAGTY members. The evaluation effectively ran from February 2007 (when initial meetings were held with NAGTY) to February 2008 (when the draft report was presented to DCSF).

The evaluation comprised *inter alia* assessments of:

- i The overall impact of NAGTY in terms of its progress against the range of objectives and key performance indicators (KPIs)
- ii The impact of each of NAGTY's three academies<sup>1</sup>
- iii The effectiveness of NAGTY's organisational processes
- iv The added value (and any disbenefits) of locating NAGTY in an HEI; and
- v Value for money in NAGTY's undertakings.

Points i. to v. above provide the basic structure for this summary, and for the main sections of the report upon which the summary is based. In relation to points i. and ii. above, some of the objectives / KPIs can be clearly linked to the work of only one of the academies - where this is the case, the academy and related objective(s) / KPI(s) are considered together here; others are more universal/"whole organisation" in nature - and, therefore, considered separately.

---

<sup>1</sup> Over the five years that Warwick held the contract, NAGTY developed a three "academies" structure: the Student Academy; the Professional Academy and the Research Academy.

## **Impact of NAGTY - “whole organisation” objectives and KPIs**

The objectives and KPIs that related to the organisation as a whole (or that are more difficult to attribute to the work of only one academy) were as follows:

- Secure gifted and talented education within national public policy
- Map the quality of, and track improvements in, gifted and talented provision
- Improve attainment at Key Stage 4 and post-16.

Our conclusions in respect of these three objectives / KPIs are that:

- Significant progress was made, principally by NAGTY, in relation to securing gifted and talented education within national public policy
- Limited progress was made by NAGTY in relation to mapping the quality of and tracking improvements in gifted and talented provision
- It is impossible to say what impact was made by NAGTY in relation to improving attainment at KS4 and post-16.

Of the three objectives / KPIs, we consider that the second was not really appropriate for NAGTY - it was never really in a position to map the quality of and track improvements in gifted and talented provision. The third, to identify the “NAGTY effect” in relation to attainment at KS4 and post-16, was difficult to demonstrate but, to some extent, might have been do-able had NAGTY put the necessary methodologies in place at an early stage; this was not done.

## **Impact of NAGTY - The Student Academy and related objectives/KPIs**

The objectives and KPIs that were of particular relevance to the Student Academy were:

- Identifying, tracking and supporting the “top 5%”
- Securing access to high quality schooling opportunities for all talented and gifted young people
- Improving aspirations, motivation and self-esteem, especially among those from disadvantaged backgrounds.

Our conclusion in relation to the Student Academy is that it was a partial success. On the plus side:

- NAGTY developed a way of identifying the top 5%
- By the end of its contract, NAGTY had reached - in terms of membership numbers for the Student Academy - a significant proportion of the cohort (c70%, though it is unclear whether this represented “identified” or “enrolled” members)
- By the end of its contract NAGTY was offering a not inconsiderable programme of out of school learning opportunities to its members through the Academy

- Aspirations, motivation and/or self-esteem were generally increased, particularly for disadvantaged learners and their parents, once young people were identified as being in the top 5%.

However:

- There was still some resistance among schools to identifying and/or telling NAGTY who was in the top 5% - many schools focus their attention on their top 10% rather than those in the top 5% nationally
- The proportion of members who were active (i.e. who actually did activities through the Student Academy) was unclear but almost certainly small
- There was relatively little for the talented (as opposed to the gifted) - both in terms of how they were identified and the activities that were available to them - and for those in non-schools-based learning post-16
- The support that NAGTY offered its members (and their parents / responsible adults) was limited
- Whether it is simply identifying a young person as being in the top 5%, as opposed to giving them NAGTY membership and access to a range of additional opportunities, which makes the difference in terms of aspirations and motivation is unclear.

### **Impact of NAGTY - The Professional Academy and related objectives/KPIs**

The objective / KPI that was of particular relevance to the work of the Professional Academy was to secure a high quality *core* education for gifted and talented learners.

Our conclusion is that, admirable though much of the work of the Professional Academy was, it was on too small a scale and NAGTY was too distant from the professionals in the classroom for it to have anything more than a peripheral impact on the core education of the gifted and talented.

Much of the Professional Academy's provision (the same point could be made in relation to the Student Academy) resembled a series of pilots - PGCE+; the think tank process; Nutshells etc. Some of this provision may well have had sufficient merit to warrant being rolled out to a wider audience. However, this did not appear to be part of the plan; nor was there funding to support it.

Trialling new ideas and then passing those that had merit on to organisations that were better-placed than it to run them on a wider basis might have offered a better way forward for NAGTY's Professional Academy activities. However, NAGTY seemed to be focused on building its own profile with the profession rather than acting as a development house for the sector.

### **Impact of NAGTY - The Research Academy and related objectives/KPIs**

The objective / KPI that was of particular relevance to the Research Academy was for NAGTY to become the focus for national and international expertise in gifted and talented education.

NAGTY did become a UK centre for international expertise on gifted and talented education - we do not have sufficient evidence to say that it became *the* centre.

The evidence does not in our view suggest that NAGTY established itself as *the* key point of reference for the English gifted and talented community.

NAGTY assembled an effective research team which, for those in the know, produced some valuable work. The problems were that: relatively few people were “in the know”; the research team was open to criticism for being too close to NAGTY; and that some of the research it conducted did not appear to be directed at the “big issues” (at least as perceived by others) in gifted and talented education.

### **NAGTY’s organisational processes**

#### *Management of the contract*

Management of the NAGTY contract appeared to cause difficulties for both sides (i.e. the Department and NAGTY) throughout the duration of the contract. We would attribute this to: an inability to agree deliverables; staff changes in NAGTY and the Department; and the HEI culture, which is perhaps used to operating with more independence than the Department was willing to concede in this instance.

#### *Business planning*

NAGTY had thorough business planning processes - possibly to the point at which they were over-elaborate and consumed too much senior management time. However, resources were limited and a thorough planning process helped safe-guard what NAGTY had and enabled NAGTY to respond to changes in its environment - most obviously the substantial increase in membership targets with no increase in income from the Department.

#### *Leadership of NAGTY*

NAGTY was, through the Director, well-led academically and professionally. However, for much of the time when the contract was live, a gap does appear to have existed in relation to the more internally focused role that a Chief Operations Officer might have performed.

#### *Finance*

NAGTY was tied in to the University’s own accounting policies, procedures and systems. Operational staff all had a good understanding of the cost of their activities; all activities were properly budgeted for and expenditure monitored.

#### *ICT and communications*

There were three major elements to the NAGTY IT system: the Academy Management Information System (AMIS); the web site; and an intranet.

Generally NAGTY’s ICT systems worked well and were broadly fit for purpose given the stage NAGTY had reached, although their scalability for a larger operation is open to question. However, there was a lack of automation in the booking system for Student Academy activities and opportunities to use member log-ins as a means for customisation - for example in terms of “future events in your area” - were not being exploited. NAGTY appeared to make no use of information collected from members at the time they registered - in particular their age, indications of subject areas and Student Academy

categories of activity that they would be interested in and their email addresses - to target information on current activities at members who might be interested in them. Similarly it appeared to make little or no use of the school-related information it had (e.g. from the member identification forms) to send information direct to school-based gifted and talented co-ordinators.

Those who had direct contact with NAGTY were generally very positive about the way that they were handled by NAGTY staff. However, the “prior to the day” administration of activities was frequently criticised.

#### *Programme development*

NAGTY experimented extensively in terms of product/service development in both the Student Academy and the Professional Academy (e.g. Extended Day Summer Schools; Experts in Action; the GOAL Programme; Nutshells; PGCE+; Ambassador Schools).

The organisation was relatively open in terms of listening to staff with ideas - but, by some accounts from our stakeholder interviewees, not that interested in ideas that originated from outside the organisation. Interesting though some of the ideas that were developed may have been, their development seemed to take place without any real consideration of “What happens next?” and consideration of who might be best placed to take them forward (see also comments on the Professional Academy).

#### *Monitoring and evaluation*

NAGTY was strong on the immediate, post-activity, evaluation and on external evaluation of key activities (e.g. the summer schools). However, we saw no management information or reports that would suggest that there was much in terms of more strategic monitoring of the work of NAGTY. The fact that there was a delay in agreeing KPIs did not help in establishing a structure for monitoring and evaluation.

### **Locating NAGTY within an HEI**

Locating NAGTY in Warwick enabled it to utilise the full range of support services offered by a university.

Presentationally, locating NAGTY in a prestigious HEI gave it: credibility with, and an understanding of, the sector - important given the central role that HEIs played in delivering the Student Academy’s programme of activities; considerable status within the wider gifted and talented world, particularly on an international stage, thereby helping to build the brand; and access to the University’s fund-raising expertise.

Whilst stakeholders reported concerns that locating NAGTY at Warwick meant that the University enjoyed a more favoured relationship with NAGTY than other HEIs had, the fieldwork provided absolutely no evidence of this.

If there are doubts about locating NAGTY in an HEI, they relate to whether this type of work - more about service delivery and less (as originally envisaged probably not at all) about research and professional development of staff within the sector - sat comfortably within an HE environment. The fact that no HEI bid for the new service in 2007 may be significant in this respect.



## Value for money

NAGTY received core funding of £4.75m annually from the DfES - this amount had been fixed since 2004/05 whilst NAGTY's remit had expanded considerably. To put this sum into context, it is about the same amount of money as a 1,100 pupil secondary school would receive annually - or rather less than an average London borough would spend on what is more traditionally seen as special needs provision.

NAGTY topped this funding up with income from activity fees and philanthropic donations; these sources of income grew significantly in the second half of NAGTY's contract to around a quarter of their overall income. In addition DfES pledged to match contributions to NAGTY's "Next Generation Fund" to support the gifted and talented from disadvantaged backgrounds.

NAGTY's total income was over £6.5m by the final year of its contract. In broad terms, approximately half of this was spent on staffing and operating costs; 10% was paid to Warwick to cover the costs of centrally provided services. The balance was paid to service providers - primarily HEIs - for the programme of activities they delivered to Student Academy members.

Seen as a "pilot", able to try out many approaches and evaluate which best delivered the gifted and talented agenda, NAGTY had some real successes. For example, if one sets aside the limited numbers of individuals involved (due largely to financial constraints), the GOAL programme and the PGCE+ programme, for pupils and teachers respectively, showed promise and have the potential to address major issues surrounding the education of gifted and talented pupils. More generally, our understanding of effective management and delivery of out of hours learning has been also considerably enhanced. We also now have the raw data to assess just how much it is likely to cost to roll out the kind of gifted and talented provision we know is effective to the proportion of young people who could benefit from it.

However, NAGTY did not see itself as - nor did the wider sector view or treat it as - a "pilot". And if NAGTY is regarded as a pilot, then it has demonstrated that the cost of rolling out its work nationally would be huge. To make an impact through external direct intervention using approaches piloted by NAGTY, a fifty-fold increase in resources (to £200M per year or £250 per pupil in the top 10%) might be a reasonable target - though still much less than is spent on traditional special needs. There is no sign that such levels of investment are pending. Given this, our sense at the moment is that - apart from on-going benefits from the raised national profile that gifted and talented education enjoyed (which we have attributed largely to NAGTY), the method to identify the gifted (which was formulated by NAGTY and is still in use) and some of the outputs (e.g. Nutshells) - the legacy appears to be thin and value for money therefore limited. There is of course still time to recover this position but to do so will, we suggest, require further investment by DCSF.

# 1 Introduction and background

101 *acl consulting* were contracted by the Gifted and Talented Education Unit (GTEU) of the then Department for Education and Skills (DfES), now the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF), to undertake an evaluation of the National Academy for Gifted and Talented Youth (NAGTY) in October 2006.

## What is NAGTY?

102 The aims of the Government's national programme for gifted and talented education are to:

- i. Achieve significant measurable improvements in the attainment, aspirations, motivation and self esteem of gifted and talented pupils and students, especially those at risk of underachieving, including those from disadvantaged backgrounds
- ii. Improve the quality of identification [of and], provision and support [for gifted and talented pupils and students] in schools, colleges and LEAs/partnerships, and develop robust quality standards to support this, targeting the weakest LEAs/partnerships
- iii. Develop tools and identify and use levers to help ensure that every maintained school and college in every LEA is equipped to differentiate their teaching and learning to meet individual needs at the upper end of the ability range.

103 The contract to host and develop what became NAGTY was put out to tender and awarded to the University of Warwick (Warwick).

104 NAGTY was established at Warwick in 2002 to help deliver the national programme for gifted and talented, in particular by developing, promoting and supporting educational opportunities for gifted and talented children up to the age of 19 and providing support for parents and educators.

105 Over the five years that Warwick held the contract, NAGTY developed a three "academies" structure to deliver its services; the first of these, the Student Academy (primarily focused on national programme aims i. and ii.) was closely followed by the Professional Academy (focused on aims ii. and iii.) and finally the Research Academy (which it was intended would under-pin all of the national programme's aims by providing an evidence base for development of the NAGTY service).

106 NAGTY viewed the three academy structure as critical - seeing the work of one academy informing and / or under-pinning that of the others.

## The Student Academy

- 107 The Student Academy was a membership-based organisation for the “top 5%” of the target cohort - defined as those young people in secondary and further education, aged 11 to 19<sup>2</sup>. Young people applied for membership, using test scores in the main to demonstrate that they fell within the top 5%<sup>3</sup>.
- 108 NAGTY was initially required to work with only a small proportion (around one in ten) of the “top 5%”; approximately halfway through its five-year contract, it was asked to provide a service for all those in the top 5% (estimated at 200,000 learners).
- 109 Membership of the Student Academy brought with it, amongst other benefits, the opportunity to access a range of out-of-hours learning experiences, intended to broaden the educational experience of the gifted or talented learner. Chief among these activities, at least in terms of the proportion of NAGTY’s resources it consumed, was the annual programme of two- to three-week long residential summer schools for NAGTY members, hosted by a small number of higher education institutions across the country; NAGTY was originally set up with the delivery of this activity as its main *raison d’etre*.
- 110 Places at summer schools were generally limited (to around 1,200 per annum). As its membership grew, and particularly once it was charged with working with the entire gifted and talented cohort, NAGTY therefore sought to develop a wider range of activities in order that more of the membership could engage in some form out-of-hours learning; the activities developed included shorter and/or non-residential out-of-school activities and various on-line learning opportunities.

## The Professional Academy

- 111 The focus of the Professional Academy was on working with the education profession to improve the everyday education of gifted and talented learners in the classroom. It sought to do this primarily by working with/through a number of partners (e.g. local authorities; subject associations and NAGTY-commissioned working groups; national bodies; regional gifted and talented groups) to develop materials (e.g. Nutshells and various subject-/topic-specific “think pieces”) and approaches (e.g. Ambassador Schools; PGCE+) that would be of use to the teaching profession.

---

<sup>2</sup> NAGTY’s remit extended to the primary phase, however the work it undertook at this level tended to be through the Professional rather than the Student Academy.

<sup>3</sup> Though other ways of demonstrating ability were possible they were used infrequently.

## **The Research Academy<sup>4</sup>**

- 112 NAGTY was keen to underpin its activities with evidence drawn from the field and therefore established what amounted to an in-house research team and a research programme with the aim of providing this evidence.
- 113 There were five strands to this research activity:
- A longitudinal study of the Student Academy cohort
  - Exploration of international practice in relation to the education of the gifted and talented
  - Exploration of innovative practice in English schools
  - Support for practitioner research
  - An open strand for more *ad hoc*, occasional, research.
- 114 Research findings were published through a series of “occasional papers” and otherwise disseminated through the Professional Academy and articles for journals, conference presentations etc.

## **Recent history**

- 115 The Department re-tendered for an organisation to assist it in taking forward its work with gifted and talented young people in Autumn 2007. The services that were put out to tender differed in key respects from the services that NAGTY had developed during the five years of its contract; Warwick therefore decided not to bid.
- 116 CfBT was contracted to develop a new service for gifted and talented learners - “Young Gifted and Talented” (YG&T) in Spring 2007.
- 117 Warwick’s contract with the Department - and therefore NAGTY as an organisation - came to an end on 31<sup>st</sup> August 2007.

## **Aims and objectives of the evaluation**

- 118 The DCSF commissioned the evaluation in order to enable it to:
- “Get a fuller picture of the progress NAGTY has made to date against the objectives set for it by Government; and
  - “Implement successfully changes to the delivery infrastructure for the national programme [for gifted and talented education], including a new national contracting body for gifted and talented education, to be introduced from early 2007.”

---

<sup>4</sup> Also known as the “Centre of Expertise”.

- 119 At a more detailed level, the following aims were set for the evaluation of NAGTY:
- i. Evaluate NAGTY's performance and impact against the outcomes and objectives set out in its contract
  - ii. Assess NAGTY's general impact, looking at each of its three sections and each of its six strategic priorities in the context of national programme objectives
  - iii. Confirm the baseline positions for each of NAGTY's key performance indicators (KPIs) and evaluate progress made against them during the remaining period of the NAGTY contract
  - iv. Offer formative advice on action NAGTY might take within the remaining term of the contract to improve further its impact and better achieve its strategic priorities
  - v. Inform business planning and contractual negotiations with the new contracting agent and its various delivery partners, helping to ensure that these new arrangements build on the foundations set in place by NAGTY
  - vi. Inform the future strategic direction and development of the national programme for gifted and talented education.
- 120 The original timetable for the evaluation had envisaged work commencing in September 2006 and the project being completed by Easter 2007. For various reasons, work on the evaluation did not begin until February 2007.
- 121 The delayed start meant that a number of the objectives originally set for the evaluation of NAGTY were no longer relevant - objectives iii., iv. and v. - and that timescales for conducting the work that remained had to be revised. In practice the evaluation ran from February 2007 to February 2008.

### **Structure for this report**

- 122 The Department proposed a seven-part structure for the evaluation, comprising assessments of:
- The overall impact of NAGTY in terms of its progress against the range of objectives and key performance indicators (KPIs)
  - The impact of each of NAGTY's three academies
  - The effectiveness of NAGTY's organisational processes
  - NAGTY's reputation and relationship-building
  - Value for money in NAGTY's undertakings
  - The added value (and any disbenefits) of locating NAGTY in an HEI
  - The implications of the evaluation findings for the new arrangements for external support in the delivery of the Department's programme for gifted and talented young people.

- 123 We have used this seven part structure to provide the basic structure for this report.
- 124 Section 2 briefly reviews the methodology used for the evaluation.
- 125 Sections 3 to 6 focus on the impact of NAGTY, looking at this in terms of its objectives and KPIs and its three academies.
- 126 We have sought to distinguish between those objectives and KPIs that “apply to” (or “would have been delivered by”) only one of the academies and those that “apply to” the organisation as a whole (or that are more difficult to attribute to only one academy). Section 3 covers the second group, Sections 4 to 6 the former, as follows:
- Section 3 - non-academy-specific objectives / KPIs - i.e.:
    - Securing gifted and talented education within national public policy
    - Mapping the quality of, and track improvements in, gifted and talented provision
    - Improving attainment at Key Stage 4 and post-16
  - Section 4 - the impact of the Student Academy and related objectives / KPIs - i.e.:
    - Identifying, tracking and supporting the “top 5%”
    - Securing access to high quality schooling opportunities for all talented and gifted young people
    - Improving aspirations, motivation and self-esteem, especially among those from disadvantaged backgrounds)
  - Section 5 - the impact of the Professional Academy and related objectives / KPIs (i.e. securing a high quality core education for gifted and talented learners)
  - Section 6 - the impact of the Research Academy and related objectives / KPIs (i.e. becoming the focus for national and international expertise in gifted and talented education).
- 127 Thereafter, we have structured the rest of our report as follows:
- An overview of NAGTY’s impact (Section 7).
  - The effectiveness of NAGTY’s organisational processes, including the added value (and any associated disbenefits) of locating NAGTY in an HEI (Section 8).
  - Value for money in NAGTY’s undertakings (Section 9).
- 128 We highlight any implications of our findings for the infrastructure changes that were introduced from early 2007 at the end of each of sections 3 to 8 under “Implications for the new contract”. Further work on this aspect of the evaluation will take place during the Autumn Term of 2008.

## 2 Methodology

### Introduction

201 Fieldwork for this project comprised the following elements:

- Desk-based research
- Interviews with NAGTY staff
- Interviews with NAGTY “stakeholders”
- Interviews with staff in local authorities and schools and with NAGTY members.

### Desk-based research

202 Desk-based research focused upon the documentation contained in the resource room at NAGTY -the organisation maintained an extensive archive that covered most, if not all, of its activities.

203 All files contained in the archive were reviewed for material of relevance to the evaluation with notes and/or copies being taken where appropriate.

204 This work took place during February 2007.

### Interviews with NAGTY staff

205 We interviewed a wide range of NAGTY staff -essentially all those at Programme Director level or above plus a number of programme managers and staff in Senior Academy Assistant and Officer grade posts. A list of our NAGTY interviewees is attached as Annex A.

206 Almost all of these interviews were “double-headed” by the *acI* team. A checklist of the issues to be discussed was circulated to the interviewees in advance of the discussions. A copy of the checklist is attached as Annex B.

207 These interviews took place between 20<sup>th</sup> April and 24<sup>th</sup> May 2007.

208 By the time the project commenced -though, we believe, not at the time it was commissioned - Warwick had decided not to tender to deliver the new arrangements. The NAGTY contract - and, therefore, the employment contracts of all NAGTY staff - were terminated on 31<sup>st</sup> August 2007. Under the circumstances we considered it to be important to interview as many NAGTY staff as possible as soon as possible - before their knowledge and experience was lost to the organisation (and the evaluators).

209 It is important to place on record that we received a good level of cooperation from NAGTY staff - indeed the level of commitment to NAGTY displayed by those we interviewed in what must have been personally and professionally difficult circumstances was invariably extremely impressive.

### **Interviews with NAGTY stakeholders**

- 210 DCSF and NAGTY agreed a list of stakeholders that we should approach for interview. A list of those interviewed is included as part of Annex A.
- 211 These interviews took place in August and September of 2007. We are grateful for all of the contributions made.
- 212 A copy of the checklist used to guide these discussions is attached as Annex C to the report.

### **Interviews with staff in local authorities and schools and with NAGTY members**

- 213 Finally we undertook a series of interviews with staff with responsibility for gifted and talented education in a sample of local authorities and schools. In those schools we visited we also held group discussions with young people who were NAGTY members<sup>5</sup> and interviewed members of the teaching staff and / or the senior management / leadership team.
- 214 In brief the selection process for local authorities and schools seen was as follows:
- Each regional gifted and talented coordinator (there are nine in total) was asked to nominate two local authorities in their region that we could approach for fieldwork
  - Each nominated local authority was asked to nominate up to three schools that we could approach for a visit - ideally the schools would represent different levels of engagement with NAGTY
  - Each school was asked to arrange discussions with: the gifted and talented co-ordinator / lead teacher; a member of the senior management / leadership team with responsibility for gifted and talented education; other members of staff as appropriate; and NAGTY members.
- 215 In theory, for any given region, it was therefore possible for interviews to be held with:
- The regional co-ordinator
  - Two local authority gifted and talented co-ordinators
  - Six school-based gifted and talented co-ordinators
  - Other, non-gifted and talented specific, staff in six schools.
  - NAGTY members in six schools.

---

<sup>5</sup> At the time of the interviews (Autumn Term, 2007) the NAGTY contract had ended so the young people seen were no longer technically members of the Warwick-based NAGTY Student Academy. At the time of the interviews all former NAGTY members were unclear as to what, if anything, they continued to be members of.



- 216 In practice some regions did not nominate any local authorities; some local authorities did not nominate schools and some schools proved unwilling to participate.
- 217 Those we interviewed were promised anonymity, however we have given an indication of the fieldwork that took place as part of Annex A.
- 218 The various checklists used to guide these interviews are attached as Annex D. Again, we are grateful for all of the contributions made.
- 219 This is a diverse group of interviewees upon which to base our conclusions. In broad terms, whilst not uncritical, the NAGTY staff we interviewed were generally (and understandably) positive about the impact that the organisation had had; stakeholders, whilst seeing positives, tended to be more critical.
- 220 Our local authority and school-based interviewees were generally somewhat perplexed as to why we were seeing them at all as, apart from individual learners who had been to an event, they often felt they had been largely “untouched” by NAGTY.
- 221 In coming to a view on the impact of NAGTY we have applied our own judgments to the views expressed to us by the diverse group that were involved in the evaluation.

### **3 Overall impact of NAGTY - “whole organisation” objectives and KPIs**

#### **Introduction**

301 In this Section we review the overall impact of NAGTY, focusing on those objectives and KPIs that “apply to” the organisation as a whole (or that are more difficult to attribute to only one academy) - these were to:

- Secure gifted and talented education within national public policy
- Map the quality of, and track improvements in, gifted and talented provision
- Improve attainment at Key Stage 4 and post-16.

302 The remaining objectives and KPIs are considered alongside the relevant academy in Sections 4 to 6.

#### **Securing gifted and talented education within national public policy**

303 At a more detailed level, through this objective NAGTY aimed to:

- Ensure that all national education initiatives gave the gifted and talented cohort the consideration that they deserved
- Act as the guardian of / champions for the needs of the gifted and talented
- Ensure that good guidance was given to policy makers in relation to gifted and talented education.

304 There was general agreement among our interviewees that NAGTY had largely delivered against this objective.

305 Pre-NAGTY, in terms of the mainstream, gifted and talented education was almost exclusively an Excellence in Cities issue. Whilst there were organisations working for the gifted and talented (the National Association for Able Children in Education - NACE - and the National Association for Gifted Children - NAGC - in particular), the experience of the gifted and/or talented child in most schools would not have been substantially different to that of their less gifted peers.

306 This contrasts markedly with the position “now”:

- Gifted and talented education has a high profile across the sector - from Ministers to the classroom
- Gifted and talented education receives an appropriate emphasis in most policy documents and pronouncements
- Professionally it is more acceptable / respectable to be concerned about meeting the needs of gifted and talented learners

- Provision for the gifted and talented has been institutionalised - in the sense that the gifted and talented are recognised as an important sub-group by the sector and that they have additional educational needs that should be being met by it
- (Following on from the previous point) The education of the gifted and talented is now perceived to have value - and therefore to be something worth investing both careers and resources in.

307 Other organisations and initiatives have certainly played a role in what has been achieved - in some instances working with NAGTY to make progress. However, those we interviewed were generally happy to give the bulk of the credit for the profile that gifted and talented education now has to NAGTY. We see no reason to dissent from this view.

“Without NAGTY there would not be a national focus on gifted and talented education.”  
 “Pre-NAGTY we had nothing; now we have a real focus on the gifted and talented. NAGTY spearheaded this shift in attitude.”

### **Why were NAGTY responsible for securing gifted and talented education within national public policy?**

308 Whilst there was appreciation for what NAGTY had achieved here, there were concerns (and surprise) that NAGTY - rather than the DCSF / GTEU - were apparently taking the policy lead for gifted and talented education. This led to some confusion within the sector as, on one hand:

- Discussions that GTEU should have been having, or at least have been a party to, were apparently being held by NAGTY without GTEU input

... whilst on the other:

- GTEU were involved in the detail instead of leaving it NAGTY
- GTEU were taking various parts of the gifted and talented agenda forward, apparently without reference to or the involvement of NAGTY.

309 The contract between Warwick and the Department gives the overall co-ordination of the national programme, the determination of priorities within it and the allocation of resources between priorities to the Department. To the extent that NAGTY was putting itself forward as the policy lead, it was therefore acting beyond the intended scope of its activities.

310 When GTEU sought to get more involved in discussions, NAGTY interpreted this as GTEU interfering with what had been agreed to be its brief. GTEU's view was that it was simply seeking to manage its contractor and was entitled, under the terms of the contract, to provide policy input and implementation support - particularly during the early stages, when the contract envisaged “full partnership and detailed involvement”, but also, potentially, beyond this if “the University is [not] successfully meeting the conditions” imposed by the contract.

311 To the extent that it continued to intervene in the work of NAGTY, this could be taken to be an indication that the Department never had the necessary confidence that would have enabled it to allow NAGTY to operate with “an increasing degree of independence and flexibility”, as envisaged by the contract.

312 Finally in this context, NAGTY clearly saw itself as the Government's arm for "all things gifted and talented", and, as a result, appeared to have doubts about the value of any G&T-related business going elsewhere. The Department's contract with Warwick is generally clear that NAGTY is but one element of the Government's G&T strategy and that it will be contracting with others for G&T related activities.

### **Mapping the quality of and tracking improvements in gifted and talented provision**

313 This objective is focused on obtaining a better grasp of the state of gifted and talented education across the country; the picture that emerges in relation to NAGTY's achievement - or otherwise - of it is mixed.

### **Mapping the quality of NAGTY's own provision for the gifted and talented**

314 In relation to its own provision, NAGTY generally scores well - most if not all activities were subject to monitoring and evaluation in some form.

315 The major area of NAGTY expenditure - summer schools - was particularly closely watched from a quality perspective ("how to run it" guidance; support from NAGTY during delivery; NAGTY staff attending the schools; post-event evaluation etc). The value attached to these events by those pupils and students (and sometimes staff) who attended them was, on the basis of our work, invariably high; this in itself is testament to the quality of what was delivered.

316 The quality of NAGTY's other, non-summer school, activities was more mixed. This was probably inevitable to some extent - as the number and range of events grew and the duration of these events fell, so the ability of NAGTY to keep the same degree of monitoring in place as it used for summer schools reduced. The ability to map the quality of what NAGTY was delivering was therefore compromised.

### **Mapping the quality of everyone else's provision for the gifted and talented**

317 In relation to other, non-NAGTY, provision, NAGTY was handicapped in any attempt to map and track quality in a number of ways.

318 Firstly, NAGTY was not always able to influence the quality of what was produced. Although Institutional, Classroom and now Local Authority Quality Standards (IQS, CQS and LAQS respectively) covering provision for the gifted and talented have been produced, and NAGTY had an input into them<sup>6</sup>, it appears that NAGTY was initially not especially supportive of their development. Indeed the lead on the quality of non-NAGTY provision for gifted and talented was assumed by DfES and the work to develop the necessary quality standards contracted elsewhere. As a result, subsequently NAGTY did not have a natural role in promulgating the use of the Standards.

319 The Standards are now starting to gain currency with schools and local authorities - and therefore to provide the clear definition of what constitutes high quality provision for the gifted and talented that would have enabled NAGTY to map the state of that provision and to track improvements in it, thereby working towards the achievement of this objective.

---

<sup>6</sup> Not that this input was always recognised by our non-NAGTY interviewees - see below.

320 Secondly, NAGTY operated at some distance from where most delivery takes place - i.e. in schools. To the extent that it was able to get data on the quality of what was being delivered, it had to rely on limited information:

- Obtained at a relatively high level from pre-existing surveys (e.g. Guardian Headspace; MORI Teacher Omnibus)
- Gleaned from Ofsted reports
- Derived from its own surveys of school co-ordinators, local authorities and Student Academy members.

321 At best this provided data that was partial and/or at a relatively high level; it did little to indicate the quality of what was being delivered.

322 In these circumstances it would have been difficult for NAGTY to demonstrate much progress against this objective.

“NAGTY never defined what quality provision for the gifted and talented looked like - it was therefore difficult for them to make progress against this objective.”

### **Improving attainment at KS4 and post-16**

323 There are a number of practical difficulties in demonstrating any NAGTY effect in relation to this objective:

- Baselines were never established
- No attempt was made to define a counterfactual/base case position
- Control groups were not set up.

324 With regard to control groups, whether or not those in the “top 5%” are NAGTY member, their level of academic ability is such that the vast majority are likely to score high grades at GCSE and GCE / A Level, IB etc anyway, with or without NAGTY. As a consequence, any differences in terms of the grades achieved by NAGTY members and non-members are likely to be extremely difficult to verify empirically.

325 Assuming that improvements in attainment could be identified, isolating the NAGTY-effect from the myriad of other factors that might impact on attainment would be difficult other than in the most superficial / qualitative fashion in most cases.

326 The principal exception to this would potentially have been in respect of the more disadvantaged groups - the GOAL programme cohort - where it should have been easier to identify a matched control group; as far as we have been able to determine this was never done. In part the lack of follow-up here may have been due to the relatively short period of time that the GOAL programme operated under the NAGTY contract<sup>7</sup>.

---

<sup>7</sup> We understand that GOAL is still continuing in modified form under the auspices of Warwick.

- 327 Where NAGTY might have been in a better position to demonstrate its impact in terms of achievement was in relation to progression to HE. In broad terms the hypothesis that could have been tested was that NAGTY has an impact on the type of HEI that a learner in the top 5% goes to - i.e. more go to Russell Group HEIs. This could have been tested by a member survey and / or by identifying a control group of non-NAGTY members in the top 5%.
- 328 Whilst NAGTY did produce material celebrating the HE destinations of its alumni - and there is plenty of qualitative feedback, including from our own fieldwork, that NAGTY was raising aspirations in the manner envisaged in the preceding paragraph - NAGTY did not develop the necessary methodologies that would have allowed it systematically to demonstrate the value it was adding in this way.
- 329 Whilst it would have been difficult for the impact of NAGTY to be comprehensively demonstrated against this objective / KPI, it is possible to argue that such opportunities as there were to demonstrate impact in this area were generally not taken.

## **Conclusions**

- 330 Our conclusions in respect of the three objectives / KPIs reviewed here are that:
- Significant progress was made in relation to securing gifted and talented education within national public policy
  - Limited progress was made in relation to mapping the quality of and tracking improvements in gifted and talented provision - broadly speaking NAGTY was only able to do this to some extent with its own provision
  - It is impossible to say what impact was made by NAGTY in relation to improving attainment at KS4 and post-16.
- 331 Of the three objectives / KPIs, we consider that the second was not really appropriate for NAGTY - it was never really in a position to map the quality of and track improvements in gifted and talented provision - and the third, to identify the “NAGTY effect” in relation to attainment at KS4 and post-16, whilst it would have been difficult to demonstrate, might have been do-able had NAGTY put the necessary methodologies in place at an early stage; this was not done.

## **Implications for the new contract**

- 332 Ensure that responsibilities are clearly allocated - in particular that there is clarity about:
- Who is responsible for providing the strategic lead
  - Who is responsible for commissioning provision
  - Who is delivering that provision
- 333 Encourage take-up of the IQS, CQS and LAQS as an effective means of ensuring the quality of what is delivered locally.
- 334 Ensure that inspections pay sufficient regard to provision for the gifted and talented.

- 335 Ensure that all objectives and KPIs that are agreed are reasonable and fall within the scope of the contractor's role and remit.
- 336 For the objectives and KPIs that are agreed, ensure that appropriate research methodologies are in place to demonstrate impact.

## 4 Overall impact of NAGTY - The Student Academy and related objectives / KPIs

### Introduction

401 In this and the following two sections we review the impact of each of NAGTY's three academies.

402 For each academy we also consider the progress that has been made against those NAGTY objectives and KPIs that are of particular relevance to the work of that academy.

403 The focus in this section is on the Student Academy; the objectives and KPIs that were of particular relevance to its work are:

- Identifying, tracking and supporting the "top 5%"
- Securing access to high quality schooling opportunities for all talented and gifted young people
- Improving aspirations, motivation and self-esteem, especially among those from disadvantaged backgrounds.

404 The role of the Student Academy was to:

- Recruit members from the most able 5% nationally within the key stage 3 and 14-19 strategies
- Provide opportunities for the most able 5% nationally within the primary strategy, though without recruiting them as members<sup>8</sup>
- Develop identification strategies for those within its target population
- Develop systems for profiling the academic progress of gifted and talented pupils to assist universities in the UCAS admissions process
- Work with providers to increase the range and quality of learning opportunities available to eligible pupils and students
- Provide opportunities for eligible pupils and students to celebrate their achievements, interact and develop supportive networks
- Support the parents and carers of eligible pupils and students
- Develop and publish statements of the minimum offer for eligible pupils and students.

---

<sup>8</sup> As noted in Section 1, engagement with the primary phase was primarily through the Professional Academy.



## **The Student Academy**

405 Those who attended activities run by the Student Academy were invariably positive about the experience; this applied to all NAGTY events (not just the summer schools). From feedback, the 'inspiration factor' could be huge and long-lasting. This message came from students themselves and from schools and local authorities reporting feedback over the years from students and parents / carers. This is important and should not be lost sight of in what follows.

### **Why join?**

406 Those young people we spoke to during our school visits were generally instructed or otherwise persuaded to apply to NAGTY by an adult - usually by a member of staff at their school.

407 Most applied because they were told it would look good on their UCAS form - implying that most, if not all, were already considering going to university (a point to bear in mind when considering any impact that NAGTY might have had on pupil aspirations, self-esteem and motivation).

408 We saw no evidence of "self-driven/self-motivated" decisions to apply to NAGTY being taken by young people.

### **How many members attended Student Academy events? Why?**

409 A common concern raised in almost all interviews was that only a relatively small proportion of NAGTY members were able to attend Student Academy activities - and therefore to benefit in any practical way from NAGTY membership.

410 In part this is a straightforward capacity-related issue - if every NAGTY member had wanted to attend an event then there was simply not sufficient capacity in terms of the number of places available to enable this to happen (nor was it ever likely that there would be).

411 Capacity was a particular issue for summer schools, which were routinely over-subscribed, but generally not so significant for other activities. However, there were other barriers to attendance - in particular:

- The total cost of activities
- The timing of activities
- Travel to the venue.

### **The cost of events was often prohibitive**

412 The cost of attending a NAGTY activity comprised the cost of the activity (most Student Academy activities were not available free of charge) and the cost of travelling to the venue.

413 The cost of the activity itself broadly increased with the duration of the event - the longer the event the more expensive it was to attend. The fee for a summer school was over £600; that for a half day event could be as little as £10 (some activities were offered free of charge).

- 414 The cost of travelling to an activity could often amount to more than the cost of the event itself - activities were generally held at HEIs; even attendance at one's "local" HEI could involve a considerable amount of travel across the region for some learners.
- 415 In theory support was available for costs incurred in attending NAGTY events:
- From the members' school
  - From Regional G&T Groups (funded, in turn, directly by the Department)
  - From NAGTY's own bursary scheme
  - From the GOAL programme.
- 416 In practice school and regional budgets were generally limited, such that contributing any reasonable sum of money towards the cost of one member attending a NAGTY event significantly reduced the per capita funding available to support other gifted and talented activities. This meant that, for most schools and regions, the economics of making a contribution simply did not add up - for the cost of supporting one NAGTY member to attend a summer school, the school / region could bring in experts to deliver input to many more gifted and talented learners.
- 417 Whilst discretionary bursaries from NAGTY were available, they were limited in number and had to be applied for on an activity by activity basis, with proof of parental income required for each application. The process for securing a bursary was therefore not straightforward, carried no guarantee that "ticking all the boxes" would produce any financial assistance and had to be repeated for each event that the individual member wished to attend: our expectation is that many would have been put off using it.
- 418 Numbers on the GOAL programme were limited in relation to NAGTY membership as a whole - around 0.1% of the total cohort. Although valuable for those who were on it, the programme therefore did little to help the bulk of members to access NAGTY activities.

### **The timing of events was not attractive to many members**

- 419 NAGTY activities tended to run in the learner's own time - weekday afternoons/ early evenings; weekends and during holiday periods. For many of those we spoke with, the prospect of giving up significant amounts of their own time for "more school" was not viewed as particularly appealing.
- 420 Whilst the value of the summer schools was recognised, there was a general preference for activities that were less demanding of young people's time - particularly during holiday periods when they were likely to have other commitments.
- 421 Although other gifted and talented providers are able to run their programmes at alternative times, the possibility of running activities other than out-of-school time was not properly tested by NAGTY.

### **Travel to the venue**

- 422 Because activities tended to be based in HEIs, the practicalities of getting to an event were often difficult. Public transport options were often limited and, for shorter events, could not be guaranteed to get the member there on or in time.
- 423 As a result parental support - in terms of willingness to drive the member to the activity, and to wait around all day or, in some cases, stay overnight before driving back - would often be critical in enabling members to attend events. Those lacking the necessary social/cultural capital therefore saw their opportunities to engage with NAGTY activities reduced.

### **The approach adopted to promote Student Academy activities was problematic**

- 424 Promoting Student Academy activities relied on the NAGTY web site - members were expected to log on regularly to view the activities that were available: on the basis of our interviews, most did not do this - going on-line intermittently if at all. Of course, those who were unable to access the internet were immediately disenfranchised. Unmediated on-line shopping for activities by NAGTY members did not appear to work particularly well.
- 425 The most successful ways of promoting events to members involved adult intervention - either the school gifted and talented co-ordinator regularly checking for new events and encouraging those they thought would benefit to apply or, for more locally organised (non-NAGTY) activities, the local / regional co-ordinator emailing the school-based coordinators with a programme of events and in some cases mailing hard copy to each school staffroom. The key was to get school staff involved in promoting activities and not to rely solely on the membership to identify what they wanted to do.
- 426 Routing information through school-based leaders and co-ordinators also had the advantage of enabling them, as budget holders, to confirm upfront the level of financial support that the school would be able to offer (thereby removing uncertainties related to cost) and potentially to identify others from the school who would benefit from the event (thereby removing social/interpersonal uncertainties re attending activities).

### **The commissioning process did not always help**

- 427 Whilst the need for a relatively tight commissioning process for summer schools was generally understood and appreciated, those involved in delivering other Student Academy activities were "frustrated" at the "top-down" style of commissioning that continued to be used for these events too. Those with direct experience of the commissioning process felt that the top-down model stifled innovation and prevented deliverers from running activities that they had identified a local demand for.
- 428 The relatively narrow range of organisations from whom activities were commissioned (almost exclusively HEIs) was also criticised - particularly by talented rather than gifted learners. The view was that other providers (e.g. major arts and sporting organisations) could offer a potentially more valuable - and certainly a different - experience than an HEI could put on in these areas and that major employers could have played a delivery role in relation, for example, to science- and engineering-based activities.

429 Interviewees also complained that - perhaps as a result - the dominant learning styles on programmes offered by NAGTY tended to be auditory, and then to a lesser extent visual. Needs of kinaesthetic learners (and many talented learners fall into this group, especially those attracted to performing arts) were less frequently met.

### **Feedback to schools was limited or non-existent**

430 Schools were critical of the lack of communication that they received from NAGTY regarding activities that their pupils had undertaken - this meant, for example, that most schools experienced difficulties in setting up our discussion groups because, whilst they knew which pupils were NAGTY members, they did not know who had and had not been on NAGTY activities (we wanted to speak to both groups).

431 This lack of knowledge of who had done what meant that schools were unable to build on what their pupils had covered at a NAGTY event and that any momentum / enthusiasm that the pupil(s) came back from the activity with could not be maintained.

432 The position in relation to NAGTY events was contrasted with locally / regionally run activities where schools:

- Knew the programme of activities in advance
- Knew which members were going to which events
- Could plan lessons to build momentum prior to the event and maintain it after the event
- Were often also able to arrange for members of staff to attend events, thereby enabling feed back to colleagues to take place and, post-event, the momentum to be maintained in school.

433 It is important to note that locally organised activities were sometimes criticised for being of a lower standard than those offered by NAGTY. However, this does not mean that local events were of no value (they were not of a less than satisfactory standard, simply “not as good”); many pupils we saw still expressed a preference for them over NAGTY-run activities.

434 Our conclusion is that pupils would prefer to go to something locally that is not “perfect” in every respect than to have the possibility - which for many will be unrealised or unrealisable - of travelling some distance (and paying) for what might be a higher quality national event. A case of “good enough” actually, from the consumer’s perspective, being “good enough” or “better than the best”.

### **The content of activities could have been improved upon in some cases**

435 Although feedback on activities attended was overwhelmingly positive - often, as we have noted, with an inspirational impact on those attending - the content was occasionally criticised for being:

- Poorly presented - lecturers in HEIs did not always appear to be fully up to speed with latest thinking on personal learning styles and alternative methods of delivering the material

- Inappropriately targeted - in general this was because the event was targeted at too wide an age range and / or because insufficient attention had been paid to what was expected from the participants in terms of their base level of knowledge
- Unclear on the target audience - for example was the activity for subject specialist or for those with a more passing / casual interest?

### **Student Academy related objective #1 - identifying, tracking and supporting the “top 5%”**

#### **Identifying the top 5% was not NAGTY’s role**

436 The phrasing of this objective does not reflect the reality of the situation: in practice NAGTY did not “identify the top 5%”; it produced a means through which others (i.e. the schools) could identify those of their pupils who were among the “top 5%” if they chose so to do. Importantly, there was never a requirement on schools to identify this group of learners and supply the details to NAGTY - schools were free to opt in or out.

437 As a result, “all” NAGTY was able to do was to offer:

- Schools an approach through which to identify their gifted and talented pupils
- NAGTY membership to those young people who met the criteria for membership **and** who put themselves forward for membership via their school.

438 Unfortunately many schools were initially unwilling to provide NAGTY with details of their pupils who were within the “top 5%”. Although this resistance was gradually eroded over time, there was doubtless still a substantial core of schools unwilling to play their role in the process.

439 It is interesting to speculate on the cause of this unwillingness. If it is because of a misunderstanding of the place of special support for gifted and talented young people - perhaps a confusion of “élitism” with “special needs” - then that is arguably not NAGTY’s fault: however it would then indicate an important development need that many schools (and their senior managers) should look to address.

#### **The identification “process” had flaws**

440 The approach that NAGTY settled on in order to identify the “top 5%” was essentially based on performance in tests or external examinations (CATS, SATS or MIDYS scores or GCSE results) - score above a certain level and you would have been eligible for NAGTY membership. In theory it was possible to apply to join the Student Academy on the basis of teacher references, however the vast bulk of members were admitted on the basis of test scores.

441 Whilst generally appreciative of the certainty that this approach brought to the identification process, a number of concerns were raised about it:

- It was not effective in identifying the talented (generally interpreted as those who excel at sport or the performing arts) as opposed to the gifted (see also above)
- There were no “shades of grey” - the young person either achieved the required score (and was in) or did not (and was excluded)

- It offered little for the young person who, whilst they had great potential, was currently performing below what they were capable of - a common concern voiced to us was that NAGTY was for the “bright and diligent” rather than the “brilliant but demotivated”
- It was biased towards those with “cultural capital” - and therefore against those, for example from lower socio-economic groups and ethnic minority groups and children in care. The GOAL programme attempted to address this, but numbers were relatively small compared to the size of the task
- It offered nothing for those who, whilst they may be brilliant at a particular subject (e.g. history) or group of subjects (e.g. languages or sciences) were not sufficiently good across the board to get in.

“NAGTY sharpened up thinking around the identification of the gifted but did not come up with the complete answer.”

“I know lots of smart kids who don’t do very well in tests.”

### **The support NAGTY offered the top 5% was limited**

- 442 With the important exceptions of the GOAL programme, financial bursaries and “Aspire” magazine, we found little evidence of NAGTY supporting the more rounded development of those of the “top 5%” that opted to join the Student Academy - a careers advice service was offered at one stage but dropped due to lack of use.
- 443 Of course members may have developed their own peer support network - though we found little evidence of this from our discussions with NAGTY members and, to the extent that it happened, other than initially creating a community of like-minded individuals capable of interacting with each other, it was probably not due to the efforts of NAGTY.
- 444 There was some evidence that a peer network developed from participation in mixed residential/online events (e.g. the “Gaia Island” event). These events may have supported the creation of informal online communities that then transferred to commercial “hosts” e.g. MSN Messenger, FaceBook, etc.

### **The tracking undertaken was limited**

- 445 Once registered, NAGTY members were only tracked in terms of the NAGTY-run activities that they attended - these were recorded on the Academy Management Information System (AMIS). Some work on tracking post-16 destinations was started, however, given that membership was initially slow to take off and that the vast majority of those who joined were still in school when NAGTY’s contract ended, any work on tracking was perforce limited.

### **Student Academy related objective #2 - securing access to high quality wider schooling opportunities for all gifted and talented young people**

- 446 There is no doubt that NAGTY increased the volume and range of *nationally provided* out of hours learning opportunities for gifted learners - the identification of, and therefore progress on provision for, the talented was far more limited. From an initial 1,000 places on residential summer schools, by the last year of its contract NAGTY was offering in excess of 14,000 places on a broader range of wider schooling

opportunities. The vast majority of these were run on an “attend an HEI” basis. Whilst, on the face of it, the increase in activities is impressive, the rate of growth in what could be done (i.e. the activities) barely kept pace with the rate of growth in NAGTY membership and was never sufficient to offer all members a reasonable chance of doing something during the period of their membership.

447 We have commented elsewhere about the significant impact that summer schools had on those able to access them. Indeed, students often came to more than one summer school - although priority was given to people who hadn't attended before - demonstrating ongoing enthusiasm. This is indicative of the impact of summer schools (i.e. it was sufficient to make students want to go again), but also that access to the full range of students was not being secured. Put simply, with limited places, and priority given to those without previous attendance, a genuine spread of demand would tend to prevent repeat attendance.

448 The extent to which the activities on offer were actually accessed by NAGTY members is unclear. For example we were not provided with any data on the proportion of members that did at least one activity during the course of any given year or on whether those activities that were run were fully booked. Anecdotally, from our fieldwork in schools and from general discussions with regional co-ordinators and others, the indications are that:

- Most NAGTY members did nothing
- Some activities were cancelled due to lack of numbers
- Activities were opened up to non-NAGTY members in order to make them viable. Whilst this enabled the events to run it reduced their value to NAGTY members - some of those attending did not have the level of ability that would have enabled them to contribute effectively to the activity.

449 Our fieldwork with schools and local authorities highlighted a number of issues for those seeking to access NAGTY's provision - some of which have already been explored in detail in the preceding paragraphs:

- Cost - notionally schools are supposed to contribute to the cost incurred by their gifted and talented learners when attending a NAGTY event; in practice this happened infrequently; most schools perceived that their budgets for gifted and talented activities were inadequate on a per capita basis and that better value for money could be secured by bringing activities for its gifted and talented learners to the school rather than sending one or two NAGTY members to the activity
- Travel - even within a region, activities were often inaccessible, particularly for activities that lasted a day or less, when the trip was often not possible (or perceived as not worthwhile)
- Lack of knowledge of what was available - members checked the web site infrequently (if at all) and there was no targeted marketing of events at areas of known member interest, whether directly to the member or via their school gifted and talented coordinator

- A pool of local activities was more readily available - generally members had access to a pool of local activities for the gifted and talented that were sufficient for their purposes; set against this, the prospect of travelling any distance for a national event was not attractive
- Fear of the unknown - members were more likely to go somewhere local with those they knew than somewhere further removed with total strangers. Even when events were offered locally, some respondents noted that low levels of confidence and self-esteem prevented access by some pupils.
- Overload - parents and / or the members themselves were concerned about "school-life" balance. Once in-school enrichment and locally based out of school activities are taken account of, there is probably little if any additional time available for further learning, particularly if any amount of travelling is required in order to access it.

450 For a variety of reasons, whilst the opportunities for wider schooling were increased in absolute terms, we therefore have doubts about the extent to which they were taken up by NAGTY members.

**Student Academy related objective #3 - improving aspirations, motivation and self-esteem, especially among those from disadvantaged backgrounds**

451 On the basis of our fieldwork - in particular our work with schools and local authorities - we are persuaded that being identified as part of the "top 5%" across the country makes a difference to young people's aspirations, motivation and self-esteem. This was often translated into an expressed desire to read a different subject at university or to go to a different HEI (e.g. to a Russell Group university as opposed to any other university).

452 This effect is particularly marked for those learning in less advantaged schools and those from less advantaged backgrounds - in relatively crude terms, whilst they may have realised that they were more academically gifted (or talented) than their immediate peers, invariably, because their frame of reference was relatively narrow, they did not realise quite how much more gifted (or talented) they were.

453 However, whether it was simply the fact of being identified as gifted or talented that mattered - or whether there is additional benefit to be had from officially recognising that fact through membership of NAGTY - is a moot point.

454 For those who did nothing - in terms of accessing the activities available - with their membership, it is hard to make the case that it is membership of NAGTY rather than simply identifying them as gifted that makes the difference.

455 Those who accessed NAGTY activities may have experienced further improvements to their aspirations, motivation and / or self-esteem - for example through seeing a particular HEI, interacting with a wider group of gifted learners or experiencing different learning-related challenges. It is of course possible that similar benefits may be gleaned from more local activities and from visits to HEIs organised in the normal course of events rather than as part of a NAGTY activity.



456 However, we are convinced that telling a young person that they have been identified as being in the “top 5%” nationally - a fact that they will probably be ignorant of - has more impact on them in terms of aspirations, motivation and self-esteem than telling them that they are in the “top 10%” in their school - a fact that most will already be perfectly well aware of.

457 Although the discussion under this objective has focused on NAGTY members, it is important to note that during the course of our fieldwork interviews schools often cited the beneficial impact that identifying a young person as eligible for NAGTY had on the school’s relationship with that young person’s parents. This was particularly marked for those from a less advantaged background and was reflected in a significant increase in parental interest in their child’s education. There was also an impact on parental aspirations for their child.

## Conclusions

458 Our conclusion in relation to the Student Academy is that it was a partial success. On the plus side:

- NAGTY developed a way of identifying the top 5%
- By the end of its contract NAGTY had reached - in terms of membership numbers for the Student Academy - a significant proportion of the cohort (c. 70%, though we are unclear as to whether this was identified or enrolled members)
- By the end of its contract NAGTY was offering a not inconsiderable programme of out of school learning opportunities to NAGTY members through the Student Academy
- Aspirations, motivation and/or self-esteem were generally increased, particularly for disadvantaged learners and their parents, once young people were identified as being in the top 5%.

459 However:

- There was still resistance among some schools to identifying and/or telling NAGTY who was in the top 5% - many schools focus their attention on their top 10% rather than those in the top 5% nationally
- The proportion of members who were active (i.e. who actually did activities through the Student Academy) is unclear but almost certainly small
- There was relatively little for the talented (as opposed to the gifted) - both in terms of how they were identified and the activities that were available to them - and for those in non-schools-based learning post-16
- The support that NAGTY offered its members (and their parents/responsible adults) was limited
- Whether it is simply identifying a young person as being in the top 5%, as opposed to giving them NAGTY membership and access to a range of additional opportunities, which makes the difference in terms of aspirations and motivation is unclear.

## **Implications for the new contract**

- 460 Ensure that events are run on a more local basis whenever possible.
- 461 Experiment with running events other than in the young person's own time.
- 462 Communicate direct to gifted and talented coordinators at school and local authority level as well as to young people.
- 463 Encourage co-ordinators to mediate young people's access to activities.
- 464 Provide feedback to schools on activities that their pupils have booked to do and have undertaken.
- 465 Ensure that activities are clearly and appropriately targeted at their audience - age; level; prior experience requirements etc.
- 466 Ensure that those delivering activities are presenting the material in ways that are likely to engage the target audience.
- 467 Provide a means through which young can people can indicate an interest in activities that they would like to see run that are not currently available.
- 468 Require all schools to identify their gifted and talented learners and to place them on a national register for the gifted and talented.
- 469 Develop a means through which those who are talented (as opposed to gifted) and those who are "brilliant but demotivated" can be identified.
- 470 Reflect different learning styles in the way in which activities are delivered.
- 471 Develop arrangements with arts and sporting organisations and appropriate employers to support provision, rather than relying primarily on HEIs.
- 472 Develop a means of supporting families with gifted and talented students - including those in the arts and sporting areas - facing considerable regular costs of travel to distant events. This support could be provided by organisations other than those active in the specifically gifted and talented field (e.g. Sports England; the Arts Council; the Engineering Council).
- 473 Monitor take-up of activities - who is doing what and where.
- 474 Monitor the impact that being identified as gifted or talented has on young people over time, particularly at key points of transition (i.e. post-16 and on to higher education), and try to establish what makes the difference - i.e. is it simply being identified as gifted/talented or does membership of a national group and/or attending activities with other gifted and talented learners make a difference?

## 5 Overall impact of NAGTY - The Professional Academy and related objectives / KPIs

### Introduction

501 Our focus in this section is on the Professional Academy and the objective / KPI that was of particular relevance to its work - i.e. securing a high quality core education for gifted and talented learners.

502 The role of the Professional Academy was to:

- Lead, support and inform the work of the full range of educators<sup>9</sup>
- Improve educators' knowledge, skill and understanding of those gifted and talented by enabling the provision of differentiated professional development
- Shape and influence the range and quality of provision on the supply side
- Encourage and support innovation, so extending the boundaries of best practice, especially in school-based teaching and learning
- Stimulate the market so that the minimum offer of professional development opportunities is available to all educators who request it.

### The Professional Academy

503 The role of the Professional academy is to support and inform those working with gifted and talented learners.

504 On the basis of our fieldwork, teaching professionals' experiences of the Professional Academy are almost identical to pupils' experiences of the Student Academy - i.e. it and its products / services were valued by those with direct experience of them; however, relatively few members of the profession appear to have come into contact with it.

### Limited means of communicating with the profession ...

505 The principal problem was that NAGTY was not geared up to have direct contact with the teaching profession and was therefore not an automatic port of call for information for those working within the profession with gifted and talented-related responsibilities - let alone mainstream classroom teachers.

506 However good the material was - and some of it (Nutshells and the work of some of the think tanks in particular) was viewed by many as being very good - the probability was that it was never going to have widespread circulation or impact among the profession.

### ... meant limited impact

---

<sup>9</sup> Including paraprofessionals, students undertaking initial teacher training, serving classroom teachers, G&T co-ordinators, schools managers and managers in clusters, partnership and local authority G&T staff

507 On the basis of our school- and local authority-based discussions, the impact of the main work strands of the Professional Academy can be summarised as follows:

- Nutshells - generally seen as being of value, however very few teaching staff accessed them. Concerns were also raised with us that there may have been some duplication between what NAGTY produced as Nutshells and what surfaced elsewhere as either e-modules to support the National Strategies and / or locally commissioned materials
- Think tanks and Expert Advisory Groups - some useful material produced but much will have never been seen by the profession and therefore will have had limited impact
- PGCE+ - a good programme for developing the skills of those new to the profession, however the numbers involved were minuscule and the overall impact therefore negligible
- Ambassador Schools - there were relatively few; the selection process seemed fairly arbitrary and the programme was relatively short-lived; its impact was therefore limited
- The NAGTY web site - seen as a resource for pupils; few staff accessed it and it was not really promoted as a resource for teachers
- Training events - tended to be for gifted and talented co-ordinators; limited impact on class-based professionals
- Termly conferences - seen as valuable by those attending (e.g. in helping to develop and maintain the gifted and talented 'community'), but relatively few were able to attend.

**For those that wanted them, alternative, better-known, sources of support were available**

508 Staff should have welcomed having a resource to which they could turn for advice on teaching and resources to be used with gifted and talented pupils. However, NAGTY was not a natural place for them to turn to for that advice.

509 The most important sources of advice and development opportunities for teaching professionals in some cases were the local and regional networks to which they belonged, over which NAGTY had no or only limited influence. Beyond this, staff were more likely to turn to those with a high reputation for, experience of and a focus on professional development in the field of gifted and talented education (e.g. Oxford Brookes University, who have the contract for co-ordinator training and a more general name in relation to professional development in this area) than to NAGTY.

510 For those that had had some contact with the Professional Academy over a period of time, there was recognition that the level of service had improved in the last eighteen months of NAGTY's contract. Even so it still had an impact on a relatively small proportion of the teaching profession.

**Professional Academy-related objective - securing a high quality core education for gifted and talented learners**

- 511 This objective is central to the “English Model” - the vast majority of formal education is delivered through school and every teacher is therefore a teacher of gifted and talented learners. The key need is therefore to:
- Help all schools to become more effective in meeting the needs of their gifted and talented learners
  - Enable every teacher and educational leader to access the training and support that will enable them to teach the gifted and talented more effectively.
- 512 NAGTY was immediately handicapped in seeking to deliver against this objective:
- It was set up and resourced to deliver - and its main activity continued to be delivery of - wider schooling activities (principally summer schools) that took place out of school. It was not specifically set up to engage directly with the teaching profession
  - Teachers were not generally involved in NAGTY activities therefore the scope for building on out of school experiences back in the classroom was limited
  - NAGTY had no means of directly influencing what happened in the vast majority of schools
  - Others had the remit - Excellence Clusters and subsequently local authorities and regional partnerships were focused on improving in-school provision for the gifted and talented whilst NAGTY was focused on out of school activities.
- 513 NAGTY was able to identify a range of activities that would have had some influence on the quality of the core education of the gifted and talented, much of it delivered through its Professional Academy (see above for a summary). However, the numbers involved are invariably extremely small - i.e. NQTs following the PGCE+ programme; schools working with NAGTY’s Ambassador Schools and, notwithstanding their popularity in some quarters, the number of teachers using the Nutshells. Any impact of these activities on the typical gifted and talented learner’s core education must, of necessity, therefore have been limited.
- 514 As already noted, to the extent that they looked externally for support, schools tended to rely on their local authority and regional partnership networks. NAGTY had relatively little involvement in these networks and the events they offered - which often tended to involve teachers more and therefore had a more direct feedback into the classroom than NAGTY events.

“Overall gifted and talented initiatives have improved school-based practice; however it is difficult to ascribe any part of this to the activities of NAGTY.”

## **Conclusion**

- 515 Admirable though much of the work of the Professional Academy was, it was on too small a scale and NAGTY was too distant from the professionals in the classroom for it to have anything more than a peripheral impact on the core education of the gifted and talented.
- 516 Indeed much of the Professional Academy's provision (the same point could be made in relation to the Student Academy) resembles a series of pilots - PGCE+; the think tank process; Nutshells etc. Some of this provision may well have had sufficient merit to warrant being rolled out to a wider audience. However, this did not appear to be part of the plan; nor was there funding to support such a roll out.
- 517 NAGTY seemed to be focused on building its own profile with the profession rather than acting as a development house for the sector. Trialling new ideas and then passing those that had merit on to organisations that were better-placed than NAGTY to take them forward on a wider basis might have offered a better way forward.

## **Implications for the new contract**

- 518 Continue to ensure that the need for support, materials and professional development for those teaching the gifted and talented is met.
- 519 Retain and develop with key players in teacher training and CPD those parts of the Professional Academy's activities that NAGTY piloted and which proved to be valued by the profession.
- 520 Use existing networks and providers to support those involved in educating the gifted and talented wherever possible. It is only through this means that key elements of the English Model will be delivered in schools.

## 6 Overall impact of NAGTY - the Research Academy and related objectives / KPIs

### Introduction

601 Our focus in this section is on the Research Academy and the objective/KPI that was of particular relevance to it - i.e. becoming the focus for national and international expertise in gifted and talented education.

602 The role of the Research Academy / "centre of expertise" was to:

- Offer advice in response to requests from the Department on the national programme for gifted and talented education
- Commission, undertake and disseminate research into effective identification, provision and support for gifted and talented learners
- Improve access to and understanding of international approaches to educating gifted and talented learners
- Undertake internal evaluations of Academy products and services
- Promote the academic study of gifted and talented education and giftedness and talent
- Provide advice and information to policy makers and practitioners
- Support the community of practitioners and policy makers
- Feed the views of practitioners into policy development.

### The Research Academy

603 Reflecting what has become a common refrain throughout this report, the work of the Research Academy was often valued by those who knew about it - again the problem was that relatively few people were "in the know".

604 NAGTY assembled an effective multi-disciplinary research team that, for those in the know, produced some valuable work - the teacher-led research projects were viewed in a particularly positive light by those professionals who had seen the outputs.

605 Whilst there is nothing to suggest bias, a degree of separation between NAGTY and the Research Academy would have ensured greater transparency and perceived objectivity. Viewed from outside, to some the Research Academy appeared to be too close to NAGTY. The concerns expressed by some of our interviewees in this respect might also have been addressed if NAGTY had worked more in partnership with others.

606 Questions were also be raised as to the limited range of the research that was conducted - there were many comparative studies - and some of the major issues that the wider community might have been interested in seeing addressed (e.g. identification of the gifted learner who is currently under-performing) were not picked up on.

607 Questions were also raised regarding how much of the research was funded by NAGTY rather than by external agencies. This was viewed by some as having a negative impact on perceptions of the research that NAGTY had conducted - i.e. that there was kudos to be had in securing funding from outside bodies.

608 Finally, the link between research undertaken and the impact of that research on schools and classroom practice was often not clear.

### **Research Academy-related objective - becoming the focus for national and international expertise in gifted and talented education**

609 This objective involved NAGTY working with and through others to develop understanding of the needs of gifted and talented learners and disseminating this knowledge.

610 The assessment of NAGTY's performance against this objective divided our interviewees more than any other; those who were adamant that NAGTY had achieved the objective nationally and / or internationally being counter-balanced by those holding the contrary opinion.

### **A centre for international expertise?**

611 Our assessment is that there is more evidence to support the case for NAGTY being *a* (but not *the*) centre for international expertise than there is for it being *a* (again not *the*) centre for national expertise:

- NAGTY's position as a key agency for the Government's approach to gifted and talented education certainly made it a key reference point for anyone wishing to understand the approach to gifted and talented education in England
- NAGTY had, through study visits, attendance at conferences and the delivery of papers, developed an international profile as an English-based centre for expertise in gifted and talented education
- Through this and other work, NAGTY has established a wide range of collaborative links with other countries
- NAGTY's location - at a major UK university with a strong education department and a reputation for high quality research - certainly helped to build its international profile.

612 NAGTY's hosting of the 17<sup>th</sup> Biennial World Conference on behalf of the World Council for Gifted and Talented Children during August 2007 reflected very well its international profile.

### **A centre for national expertise?**

613 Nationally the position is less positive and we are not persuaded that NAGTY has established itself as a key point of reference for the English gifted and talented community:

- Within England, NAGTY is but one of a number of foci for expertise (e.g. Oxford Brookes University; London Gifted and Talented, NACE, NAGC and the Villiers Park Educational Trust, to name but a few) - indeed the Department has, through



its contracting out of gifted and talented-related work, apparently been at pains to develop expertise across a number of organisations rather than to see expertise consolidated in a single organisation (see further below)

- The focus on delivery through HEIs meant that in its delivery of key programmes NAGTY's pedagogy often followed "what the host HEI usually did", and did not necessarily reflect what practitioners consider to be current best practice in how to teach the gifted and talented
- There is a widespread view, justified or otherwise, that NAGTY often sought to distance itself from - rather than work with - experts from the wider gifted and talented community
- Whilst NAGTY did consolidate elements of the research community and, through them, developed a body of material in relation to gifted and talented education, the extent to which this material was actually utilised by professionals working in the area would, on the basis of our work, appear to be limited (though we recognise that the transfer of research findings to classroom practice is widely recognised as being difficult).

614 Whilst NAGTY could point to certain areas where it felt it had had a demonstrable impact - the development of the leading teacher role for gifted and talented (where EAG input had been influential) and its local authority conferences (though local authority participants we spoke to tended to feel that these were more about NAGTY picking practitioners' brains than NAGTY disseminating information to the sector) - our view is that these are not sufficient to make NAGTY "the focus for national expertise".

"We would not go to NAGTY for 'the latest' on gifted and talented education - nor for guidance on 'how to do it'."

615 At the national level it is clear that the Department wanted a dispersed model rather than a single centre of expertise - its interest was more in building capacity regionally and locally than in establishing a more centralised model based on NAGTY.

616 Indeed NAGTY was itself charged with "building capacity" in the system rather than within NAGTY - it was only to become involved in the direct delivery of services outside of its core remit once it had thoroughly tested the market need for any new service and established that there was a clear and persistent failure on the part of the market to supply those services.

## Conclusions

617 We consider that NAGTY did become a UK centre for international expertise on gifted and talented education - we do not have sufficient evidence to say that it became *the* centre.

618 However, the evidence does not in our view suggest that NAGTY established itself as *the* key point of reference for the English gifted and talented community.

- 619 NAGTY assembled an effective research team which, for those in the know, produced some valuable work. The problems were that:
- Relatively few people were “in the know”
  - The research team was open to criticism for being too close to NAGTY
  - Some of the research it conducted did not appear to be directed at the “big issues” (at least as perceived by others) in gifted and talented education.

#### **Implications for the new contract**

- 620 The commissioning of research should continue to be a priority, but may not require that a separate research organisation is established. Research should instead be commissioned from existing research institutions.
- 621 The Department may need to be more proactive in terms of identifying the areas that it wants researched - e.g. social inclusion; approaches to identifying the gifted and talented and developing the pedagogy relating to gifted and talented learners.

## 7 Overview of impact

- 701 As will be apparent from the concluding sub-sections of sections 3 to 6, NAGTY is something of a curate's egg.
- 702 Although they are not free from concerns, the parts that are generally "good" relate to what we would regard as its core focus - providing opportunities for out of school learning for gifted and talented children and keeping the profile of the gifted and talented and their needs in the minds of Ministers and those working in the sector.
- 703 The parts that are "less good" are found where NAGTY sought to depart from this core focus and / or had ideas beyond its remit about what it could achieve with the relatively limited resources that were made available to it.
- 704 We have not been able to establish precisely how and where this "mission creep" began.
- 705 We are however reasonably clear that what the Department thought it was commissioning in 2002 - basically an organisation that ran a Student Academy based on a membership list and arranged out of school learning opportunities (principally summer schools) for its membership - was not seen by NAGTY as sufficient to address the issues associated with G&T education as it perceived them and that NAGTY wanted a bigger role for itself in addressing these issues.
- 706 The written record confirms that there was for a period of time a "negotiation" between NAGTY and the Department about how wide or narrow its role should be. The outcome of this discussion was, apparently, "victory for NAGTY" - it was allowed to develop the wider range of activities that it saw as necessary to address the issues in gifted and talented education as it saw them - i.e. the work of the Professional Academy and the [Research Academy] centre of expertise.
- 707 However this "victory" was somewhat pyrrhic:
- At the same time that NAGTY was setting out its wider agenda, the size of the core task given to it grew substantially - NAGTY was asked to increase the Student Academy by a factor of 10 in terms of membership (and to develop its member services as part of this expansion).
  - There was effectively no additional resource from the Department to cover the non-Student Academy-related activities - and no commensurate increase in the resource to cover the work required of a larger Student Academy in the way NAGTY wanted to run it
  - A framework for NAGTY to develop a range of objectives and KPIs was agreed. However, this was "unfinished business" and the KPIs that did emerge in our view were generally either inappropriate, unachievable and/or unprovable<sup>10</sup>
  - The Department was not precluded from contracting key elements of its gifted and talented programme other than through NAGTY - nor should it have been

---

<sup>10</sup> It is for this reason that, as noted in Section 1, we were unable to address one of the objectives set for the evaluation - i.e. to confirm the baseline positions for each of NAGTY's KPIs and evaluate progress made against them during the remaining period of the NAGTY contract.

- Key elements of the gifted and talented community were distanced from rather than drawn to NAGTY
- Relations between the Department and NAGTY were clearly affected by the experience.

708 Whilst we emphatically would not say that NAGTY was set up to fail, we would say that the position that NAGTY found itself in mid-way through its five year contract made failure in some respects almost inevitable - hence the mixed picture presented by this evaluation.

709 Whilst speculating on “what might have happened if ...” is not really the role of this type of evaluation, our view is that had NAGTY continued to pursue its original narrower remit it would not have been materially more successful. This is primarily because NAGTY was required by Government to run a programme of summer schools.

710 Although summer schools were valued by those who went on them, running them consumed far too much of NAGTY’s resource, leaving comparatively little resource to work with the vast majority of the membership who would be unable to attend. The concept of the “summer school” - certainly a summer school of the length proposed by NAGTY - was at the time also largely alien to our culture, although it is perhaps more common now.

711 The requirement to run summer schools should have been removed when the client group for NAGTY was increased from 20,000 to 200,000. This could have enabled NAGTY to use the resources available to it more effectively - potentially making NAGTY membership mean something for all of the “top 5%” rather than just a relatively small sub-group of it.

## 8 Organisational effectiveness

### Introduction

801 In this section we review the effectiveness of NAGTY's organisational processes. We cover:

- Contract management
- Business planning
- Management and leadership
- Financial management
- ICT
- Fund-raising
- Communications
- Policy / programme development
- Monitoring and evaluation
- Customer relationship management

802 We have omitted certain areas that were identified as key organisational processes in the invitation to tender but which we feel have been covered in sufficient detail elsewhere in this report (e.g. quality assurance and relationships with others in the gifted and talented community)

803 NAGTY was based at Warwick and was therefore able to make use of many of the University's functions. This section therefore also addresses the added value (and any potential disadvantages) of locating NAGTY in an HEI.

### Contract management

804 Management of the NAGTY contract appeared to cause difficulties for both sides throughout the duration of the contract. We would attribute this to the following reasons:

- An inability to agree deliverables - this coupled with objectives which, in some cases (as discussed above), appeared to be difficult for NAGTY to demonstrate any progress against, meant that the measures that would have enabled fully effective contract management were not in place
- Staff changes - in NAGTY but also below project manager level in the Department meant that continuity of relationships was not maintained and that interpretations of the contract were perhaps not always consistent over time

- Chairmanship of key bodies (i.e. the strategy and implementation group) - these were held by NAGTY rather than the Department; this meant that the agenda were largely shaped by NAGTY and that meetings therefore did not necessarily cover what the Department might have hoped would be covered
- HEI culture - HEIs are used to acting with considerable independence; this may have clashed with the degree of control/closeness of the relationship that the Department was aiming for over its sub-contractor in this instance
- NAGTY's closeness to Ministers - some interviewees felt that this undermined what should have been the key relationship between NAGTY and GTEU.

805 The view that the relationship between GTEU and NAGTY was problematic was widely held among our stakeholder interviewees (i.e. those generally best-placed to express a view); we would concur with this.

“NAGTY and GTEU never really understood each other”

### **Business planning**

806 NAGTY had thorough business planning processes - possibly to the point at which they were over-elaborate and consumed too much senior management time. However, resources were limited and a thorough planning process helped safe-guard what NAGTY had.

807 NAGTY had:

- An overview - five year - plan
- Extensive consideration and approval processes for new developments and for what should happen “this year” with existing products/services to help deliver the five-year plan
- Thorough budgeting
- Clear and transparent procedures for contracting
- Good systems for monitoring contracts for delivery - from drafting of the initial terms to completion, sign-off and payment.

808 Whilst we were not required to, and therefore did not, “test” any of these systems as part of our work, they appeared to be perfectly “fit for purpose”.

809 In this context, it is important to note that NAGTY was able to respond to changes in its environment - most obviously the substantial increase in membership targets: this is indicative of the thoroughness of its planning processes.

## **Management and leadership**

- 810 On the basis of the fieldwork, it is important to distinguish between [operational] management and [academic / professional] leadership.
- 811 The general consensus is that NAGTY, through the Director, did the latter - academic / professional leadership - well. This assessment was made notwithstanding the apparent difficulties that were experienced in building relationships with others in the gifted and talented field.
- 812 Equally, the general consensus from those outside NAGTY was that operational management was probably not done well for the bulk of the contract. This was primarily attributed to the lack of someone to perform the role of operational lead – the distinction that people were most often trying to draw was between the role of Chief Executive (which in this context is external and academic/professional in focus and which the Director performed) and Chief Operating Officer (which would be more internal looking, focusing on the running of NAGTY and the relationship with the Department).
- 813 Whilst the Chief Operating Officer role was done periodically - including at the start of the contract and then during the final months of the contract, where the COO role was primarily focused on the implications of terminating the contract and the process of winding-down NAGTY - no one really seemed to be in place to carry it out for the bulk of the time the contract was live.
- 814 Additionally there was a great deal of staff turnover at senior level - especially in the Professional Academy; it seemed to take a while to recruit the desired / required team. A number of interviewees commented on the lack of stability in the second and third tiers and the negative effect that this must have had on the management and leadership of the organisation.
- 815 It is important to note that the staff we interviewed that were in post at the end of the contract were invariably positive about the way in which their organisation was led – both professionally and operationally. All felt able to contribute and that their views mattered.

## **Financial management**

- 816 The core budget was fixed from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2004 to the end of the contract; as the range of activities undertaken by NAGTY grew, this clearly placed a premium on sound financial management.
- 817 NAGTY had the services of one of Warwick's accounting staff on a part-time (effectively half-time) basis for the duration of the contract.
- 818 NAGTY was linked in to the University's own accounting policies, procedures and systems, which seemed to be perfectly fit for purpose.
- 819 There was the potential for confusion to arise around year end reporting (different year ends for NAGTY and the University), however this seemed to be coped with.

820 The operational staff we interviewed all had a good understanding of the costs associated with their particular activities; all activities were properly budgeted for and expenditure closely monitored. Additional support was available from the financial manager for those who needed it - and for him from the main University finance team if required.

### **Information technology**

821 There were three major elements to the NAGTY IT system:

- The Academy Management Information System (AMIS) - this was a bespoke system that held data on Student Academy-related activity (data on members, schools and providers)
- The web site - this was a tool for communicating with members (in the main about forthcoming events) and, to a more limited extent with professionals (e.g. Nutshells were available through the site) and the wider public (about NAGTY in general terms)
- An intranet - to provide staff with access to information that would assist them to do their work and more generally to build organisational capacity.

822 Generally these worked well and were broadly fit for purpose given the stage NAGTY had reached.

823 The principal difficulties related to the lack of automation in the booking system for Student Academy activities. From registration for membership onwards, there was generally no capacity to register on-line; this resulted in considerable human intervention being required - to check paper-based applications for membership and events; to re-key information; to send communications back to learners etc. NAGTY was already struggling to cope with the volume of work generated and the system would not have been scaleable to any higher level of activity. This is an area that would have required addressing had NAGTY continued to run the Student Academy.

824 Similarly, opportunities to use member log-ins as a means for customisation - for example in terms of "future events in your area" - were not taken advantage of.

825 The high level of moderation of messages in the fora was also criticised.

826 The level of service provided by the Warwick server was claimed to be not as good as it should have been (or might have been had NAGTY been able to opt for an external provider). The main criticism was that the level of support offered at times when NAGTY members were most likely to want to use the system (i.e. from early evening onwards) fell outside "core hours" for HEIs and was therefore not available in the event of a problem with the system.

### **Fund-raising**

827 Around 10% of NAGTY's income (over £600K) was derived from fund-raising activities. The funds raised were generally used for the development and delivery of specific programmes (PGCE+ and GOAL in particular). Whilst this may have been "a good thing", in that it enabled developments to happen, in the medium term outside funding may have simply served to distract NAGTY from its core task by enabling it to



develop areas of business that the Department was not particularly interested in seeing it develop.

828 A clear benefit of NAGTY being located in an HEI was the access it afforded to Warwick's corporate fund-raising team.

829 During the course of the fieldwork concerns were raised regarding the apparent need for NAGTY to raise funding from any outside source(s) to support its work - it was felt that this sent unhelpful signals regarding the level of importance that Government attached to the gifted and talented in comparison to other groups of young people. For example, it would be unthinkable for the more traditional areas of additional/special needs provision be left to the market in the same way.

## **Communications**

830 In addition to a significant number of members, NAGTY had a wide range of stakeholders and others with whom it was necessary to communicate on a regular basis. This complicated the communications task considerably.

831 Those who had direct contact with NAGTY were generally very positive about the way that they were handled by NAGTY staff.

832 The "prior to the day" administration of activities was frequently criticised for:

- Events not being put onto the website in plenty of time
- Information getting out to members very slowly - including instances of members phoning NAGTY up the day before the event to find out if they had a place
- Information on who was attending activities being sent through to providers late
- Activities being cancelled at short notice.

833 NAGTY appeared to carve out an "activity facilitation" role for itself that it proved hard to deliver. It was possible for providers to run the administration of events themselves, however in practice NAGTY tended to do this - it is hard to see why. Events could, subject to their meeting the necessary quality standards, have been badged as "a NAGTY event" and offered to the membership but been run entirely by the providers.

834 NAGTY appeared to make no use of information collected from members at the time they registered - in particular their age, indications of subject areas and Student Academy categories of activity that they would be interested in and their email addresses - to target information on current activities at members who might be interested in them

835 Similarly NAGTY appeared to make little or no use of the school-related information it had (e.g. from the member identification forms) to send information direct to school-based gifted and talented co-ordinators.

## **Policy / programme development**

- 836 NAGTY experimented extensively in terms of product/service development in both the Student and Professional Academies - for example:
- Student Academy - Extended Day Summer Schools; Experts in Action; the GOAL Programme
  - Professional Academy - Nutshells; PGCE+; Ambassador Schools.
- 837 The organisation was relatively open in terms of listening to staff with ideas - indeed some of those listed above were based on ideas from NAGTY staff - but, by some accounts from our stakeholder interviewees, not that interested in ideas that originated from elsewhere.
- 838 Interesting though some of the ideas that were developed may have been, development seemed to take place without any real consideration of “What happens next?” For example, there seemed to be no ideas for how PGCE+ would be taken forward and Ambassador Schools appeared largely to “wither on the vine”. It is difficult not to draw the conclusion that these were potentially good ideas that NAGTY had but that there was no consultation with key stakeholders about their development - if there had been then, we presume, post- any initial NAGTY-led “piloting” there would have been a clear strategy for what happened next (assuming that the results of the pilots were positive).
- 839 The extent to which NAGTY was supposed to be engaging in policy development - as opposed to being an agent for programme delivery - was by no means clear to many in the gifted and talented field. Our understanding is that the development of policy was (indeed must have been) the Department’s responsibility - the contract between Warwick and the Department is clear on this point.
- 840 NAGTY’s role in relation to policy was intended to be limited to providing the Department with advice, which it was free to accept or decline. We are not clear that this was always fully understood or accepted by NAGTY.

## **Monitoring and evaluation**

- 841 NAGTY was strong on immediate, post-activity, evaluation and on external evaluation of key activities (e.g. the summer schools).
- 842 However, we saw no management information or reports that would suggest that there was much in terms of more strategic monitoring of, for example:
- Participation in events
  - The proportion of the membership that was active
  - Which schools had active memberships - and which inactive
  - Which activities were popular - and which were under-subscribed
  - The longer term impact of being a member of NAGTY.

843 Such information as was gathered through monitoring and evaluation activity was not fed back to schools - though local authorities did receive information from NAGTY at school level and found this helpful in indicating to them which schools were and were not engaging, as measured by participation in NAGTY activities.

### **Customer relationship management**

844 One of the core issues that NAGTY failed to address properly was what, in a commercial context, would be termed client or customer relationship management.

845 Most of the points we would wish to make here have already been highlighted - for example:

- Not mining the Academy database for information on members and using that information to target marketing materials
- Not using member log-in to tailor the information that each member received when they visited the site (e.g. forthcoming events in their area or of potential interest to them)
- Not tracking the take-up of events - for example to identify popular activities and locations; schools that were doing a lot - or very little - in terms of pupil involvement in NAGTY
- Not sharing information with the “sales team” - i.e. in this context, school- and local authority-based co-ordinators - giving them the information that might have stimulated more involvement.

846 It would, in our view, be legitimate to criticise the NAGTY team for being too educational in focus and experience; the organisation would have benefited from having staff that were experienced in managing membership schemes.

847 Equally, this is perhaps not an area that loomed large in the minds of the Department either - for example it was not included in the list of key organisational processes that we were asked to review contained in the tender documentation (we have had to add it).

### **Locating NAGTY within an HEI**

848 As the preceding sub-sections have demonstrated, locating NAGTY in Warwick enabled it to utilise the full range of support services offered by a university - embracing most if not all of the areas covered in this section, and finance, contract management, human resources/personnel, communications and fund-raising in particular. Of course, NAGTY paid for this - around 10% of its income went to Warwick as a “contribution for [the use of] University services”. It was beyond the scope of this evaluation to determine whether or not this represented a fair charge for the services received. It is very low in terms of general overhead rates within the sector; however, NAGTY did provide many of its own support services and supplemented some of those that the University provided.

- 849 It was also suggested to us that being part of an HEI may, on occasion, have:
- Restricted NAGTY's ability to act as quickly as it might have wished or been required to - the "bureaucracy" that comes with an HEI allegedly stifling innovation. Specific examples were, however, not forthcoming either from our external interviews or from within NAGTY and we would not press this point
  - Required it to use services/facilities that were not necessarily of a standard that it would have wanted or accepted had it be free to go to market (the University's server and associated support service were specifically mentioned in this context). However, this is not of major significance.
- 850 Presentationally, locating NAGTY in a prestigious HEI gave it:
- Credibility with the sector - important given that HEIs were key in delivering services to members of NAGTY's Student Academy. Also important for the work of the Professional and Research Academies
  - An understanding of the sector - also important given the central role that HEIs played in delivering the Student Academy's programme of activities
  - Considerable status within the wider gifted and talented world, particularly on an international stage, thereby helping to build the brand.
- 851 Interviewees from other HEIs, and external interviewees generally, voiced concerns that locating NAGTY at Warwick meant that the University enjoyed a more favoured relationship with NAGTY than other HEIs had: the fieldwork provided no evidence that would support this.
- 852 The risk of Warwick being perceived as gaining an advantage from hosting NAGTY was clearly a concern to the Department - a requirement of the contract was that NAGTY activities should not be seen to benefit the University. Our view is that NAGTY were scrupulous about "not preferring Warwick" and were careful to ensure that any marketing advantage to Warwick arising from those NAGTY programmes held "at home" was not greater than that gained by any HEI hosting a NAGTY event.
- 853 Although the fact that NAGTY events were often held at Warwick may have helped in persuading members to go there (Warwick was third in the list of NAGTY alumni university destinations), Warwick is a major university with a high reputation and many NAGTY members are likely to have opted to go there anyway.
- 854 More fundamentally, from a Departmental perspective, locating NAGTY within an HEI may have contributed to what we have characterised elsewhere as the "mission creep" that took place - i.e. the development of the Research and Professional Academies may have been, at least in part, a bid to make the service more acceptable for an HEI, particularly one with a high reputation for research such as Warwick, to run.
- 855 The fact that no HEI in the UK put in a bid for the new service may be indicative of a general view that the sector would regard simply running a delivery operation (e.g. the Student Academy), without the opportunity to develop and implement policy, to research and to provide professional support for that delivery, as an inappropriate activity.

856 Although HEIs are regularly commissioned by Government to do independent research, NAGTY was a different animal - more about service delivery and less (as originally envisaged probably not at all) about research and professional development of staff within the sector. The type of service that was being commissioned may never have sat comfortably within an HE environment.

### **Implications for the new contract**

857 The development of policy needs to underpin the delivery of services, and G&T education is no exception to this rule. The Department needs to be clear on where the *locus* for gifted and talented research and policy development now sits, how it is to be funded and how the lessons from research and policies developed are used to support the development of good practice in delivery.

858 The Department should retain leadership of key accountable bodies.

859 The relationships that NAGTY developed through its fund-raising activities should be retained and built upon.

860 Opportunities to improve communications with the membership (e.g. to target the marketing of gifted and talented activities at an individual member's areas of interest and age) should be taken advantage of.

861 There should be collection and analysis of data to enable strategic monitoring of activities to take place on a regular basis.

862 Proper provision needs to be made for the customer relationship management role to be performed.

## 9 Value for money

### NAGTY finances

- 901 NAGTY received core funding of £4.75m annually from the DfES - this amount had been fixed since 2004/05. To put this sum into context, it is about the same amount of money as a 1,100 pupil secondary school would receive annually - or rather less than an average London borough would spend on what is more traditionally seen as “special needs provision”.
- 902 NAGTY topped this funding up with income from activity fees and philanthropic donations; these sources of income grew significantly in the second half of NAGTY’s contract to around a quarter of their overall income. In addition DfES pledged to match contributions to NAGTY’s “Next Generation Fund” to support the gifted and talented from disadvantaged backgrounds.
- 903 NAGTY’s total income was therefore over £6.5m by the final year of its contract.
- 904 In broad terms, approximately half of NAGTY’s income was spent on staffing and operating costs; 10% was paid to Warwick to cover the costs of centrally provided services. The balance was paid to service providers - primarily HEIs - for the programme of activities they delivered to Student Academy members.
- 905 A range of “takes” on whether the investment in NAGTY represents value for money are possible. We offer five different critiques. All are based on arguments made to us during our fieldwork. All, we suggest, have their merits: the choice one makes between them depends on the weights one attaches to the different activities NAGTY undertook.

### Value for money - “Take 1”

- 906 NAGTY’s income was small and, given this, what it was able to achieve is impressive - particularly when so much had to be spent on running summer schools for so few members.
- 907 Additionally, activity providers felt that they were really “screwed down” on the fees they received from NAGTY given what they were required to deliver - indeed schools were mystified as to how two week residential summer schools could be run for c£650 per head.
- 908 All things considered, NAGTY covered a lot of ground and tried many things (most of which worked at least for those who participated in them) with comparatively little money; those young people and professionals who had direct experience of NAGTY generally found this to be positive - this must mean that NAGTY was value for money.

### Value for money - "Take 2"

- 909 Regardless of how good the deals were, summer schools represented poor value for money in terms of "what you could do to best effect with over £1m for gifted and talented pupils" because so few Academy members were able to benefit from them.
- 910 More generally, particularly after its membership targets were increased, NAGTY failed to adapt the way it worked to the level of funding it received. More could have been achieved had it tried to work with and through others and other initiatives / programme structures (Excellence in Cities; Education Action Zones; Aim Higher; Excellence Challenge, the regional partnerships etc).
- 911 For example, rather than run its own summer schools, NAGTY could have sought to work through:
- Aim Higher - this would have enabled them to address the needs of the disadvantaged gifted and talented learner far more effectively and efficiently than the GOAL programme.
  - Regional partnerships - many ran popular programmes of activities during the summer for gifted and talented learners on a far more cost-effective basis.
- 912 NAGTY tried to do too much itself therefore it did not maximise the value that could have been extracted from the money it received.
- 913 However it should be noted that NAGTY was *required* to work in this way: it was envisaged as a "delivery" rather than an "influencing" organisation. It was also required by the Department to generate income.
- 914 Given the hand it was dealt, NAGTY did a reasonable job.

### Value for money - "Take 3"

- 915 A lot of money went into running the Student Academy on a membership basis. NAGTY regarded itself as being required to work in this way. The case for doing this - as opposed to simply identifying who the gifted and talented were and letting schools and local authorities provide events (potentially quality assured by NAGTY as being at an appropriate level) for them at a more local level - was never made.
- 916 Whilst we need to know who our gifted and talented children are at school level, having identified them the need is then to monitor what schools and local authorities are doing for them through inspection - we do not need them to belong to or access events through a national Academy.
- 917 NAGTY was never going to be close enough to schools to make the Professional Academy viable.
- 918 There was a perfectly good research community for the sector; we did not need NAGTY to add another group to the mix.
- 919 Partly through the way it chose to develop and partly through what it was required to do by the Department, NAGTY was basically built around things that were not needed; it was therefore poor value for money.

### **Value for money - “Take 4”**

920 Whatever NAGTY achieved during the five years of its contract, there is almost no legacy being passed on, no sense of continuity through the transition and no evidence that we have learnt anything from the NAGTY experience. For example:

- We understand that YG&T has entirely discarded NAGTY’s membership list, citing various data-related concerns
- The focus is no longer on the “top 5%” nationally - working with the “top 10% in each school” represents a radically different challenge and the extent to which lessons from NAGTY are transferable may be limited
- Any momentum that there was has been lost in what will, on current timescales, effectively be a full year between the demise of NAGTY and the launch of the full YG&T service
- Much of the work of the Professional Academy appears to have been lost (though Nutshells have now been made available again)
- The NAGTY brand is not continuing.

921 All in all it feels like we are starting from scratch with YG&T.

922 The Departments investment in NAGTY has therefore been wasted; NAGTY was poor value for money.

### **Value for money - “Take 5”**

923 Whatever NAGTY achieved during the five years of its contract, the sense of there being a gifted and talented community that was coming together and broadly pulling in the same direction - which had existed pre-NAGTY - has been lost. This is entirely due to the way NAGTY chose to operate.

924 There is no NAGTY legacy going forward.

925 We are no further forward - indeed in many respects we are further back than we were in 2002; NAGTY was therefore poor value for money.

### **Conclusions**

926 There are elements of truth in most of the above:

- Yes - NAGTY did cover a lot of ground with the resources it had
- Yes - it probably could have done even more had it worked in different ways, however its contract was fixed and it probably felt under pressure to deliver “now” rather than to build relationships for a future that it might not survive to enjoy
- Yes - the added value of having the Student Academy is not clear and the Professional Academy was always going to struggle to engage



- Yes - significant elements of the potential legacy do appear largely to have been lost.

- 927 We did not see sufficient evidence to suggest that we are further back than we were in 2002 (the "Take 5" position) - indeed, providing that relationships between the regional partnerships and Excellence Hubs can be sorted out satisfactorily, the picture, at least at regional level, seems positive. There are active regional gifted and talented communities; each is working with the gifted and talented young people in their area.
- 928 Seen as a "pilot", able to try out many approaches and evaluate which best delivered the gifted and talented agenda, NAGTY has had some real successes. If one sets aside the limited numbers of individuals involved (due largely to financial constraints), the GOAL programme and the PGCE+ programme, for pupils and teachers respectively, showed promise and have the potential to address major issues surrounding the education of gifted and talented pupils.
- 929 Our understanding of effective management and delivery of out of hours learning in this context is also considerably enhanced.
- 930 Finally we now have the raw data to assess just how much it is likely to cost to roll out the kind of provision for the gifted and talented that we know is effective to the proportion of young people who could benefit from it.
- 931 However, NAGTY did not see itself as - nor did the wider sector view or treat it as - a pilot. Even if this were the case, the cost of rolling out its work nationally would be huge. There are 8.1m pupils in school in England in 2006/07 (including primary schools - not a major part of NAGTY's remit but included in YG&T's) and NAGTY's annual budget represents 58p per head. Concentrated on the top 10% of pupils (however defined), the figure is £5.80 per head; double that for the "top 5%". To make an impact through external direct intervention using approaches piloted by NAGTY, a fifty-fold increase in resources (to £200M per year or £250 per pupil in the top 10%) might be a reasonable target - though still much less than is spent on traditional special needs.
- 932 There is, however, no sign that such levels of investment are pending. Given this, our sense at the moment is that we are probably closest to the "Take 4" position - apart from on-going benefits from the raised national profile that gifted and talented education enjoyed (which we have attributed largely to NAGTY), the method to identify the gifted (which was formulated by NAGTY and is still in use) and some of the outputs (e.g. Nutshells), the legacy appears to be thin and value for money therefore limited. There is of course still time to recover this position - but to do so will require further investment.

## **Annex A - Interviewees**

### **NAGTY interviewees**

Kully Bains	Senior Assistant, Student Academy
Rosie Beach	Programme Director, Professional Academy
Joe Bickley	Business Systems and IT Manager
Lyn Bull	Programme Director, Professional Academy
Jim Campbell	Director of Research
John Carter	Consultant, Professional Academy
Peter Corker	Senior Manager, Student Academy
Angela Deavall	Transition Director
Justine Doe	Programme Manager, Professional Academy
Deborah Eyre	NAGTY Director
Eileen Hailey	Contracts and Compliance Officer
Ruth Hewston	Senior Research Fellow, Research Academy
Gemma Knight	Senior Assistant, Student Academy
Clare Lee	Programme Director, Professional Academy
David Mason	Finance Manager
Barry Meatyrd	Programme Director, Professional Academy
Nicholas Miller	Programme Manager, Student Academy
Elizabeth Munro	Head of Corporate Services
Caroline Peck	Project Manager, Student Academy
Martin Ripley	Student Academy Director
Rosalind Roberts	Programme Manager, Student Academy
Alison Rowan	Press and Publications Manager
Sue Sargent	Business Development Officer
Louisa Shorland	Programme Manager, Professional Academy
Matt Thomas	Web Developer

### **Stakeholder interviewees**

Jane Austin	University of York
Richard Bailey	Roehampton University
Ken Bore	Mouchel Parkman
Arthur Chapman	University of Lancaster
Philippa Cordingley	Centre for the Use of Research and Evidence in Education
Connie Cullen	University of York
Nicola Dockerill	University of Durham
Tim Dracup	DCSF
Richard Gould	Villiers Park
Sandra Howard	DCSF
Doug Jennings	University of Bristol
Peter Limm	HMI
Hilary Lowe	Oxford Brookes University
Elizabeth Manning	The Open University
Liz McNeil	University of York
Sue Mordecai	National Association of Able Children
Marina Mozzon	University of Hull
Ceri Morgan	HMI
Jonathon Neelands	University of Warwick
Jon Nichol	University of Exeter
Geoff Parks	University of Cambridge
Richard Pring	University of Oxford

Samrah Rizvi	Queen Mary University, London
Trevor Sheldon	University of York
Liz Stock	DCSF
Stephen Tommis	National Association of Gifted Children
David Wood	University of Warwick

### Regional, local and school-based interviewees

Region	Regional interviewees	Local interviewees	Schools interviewed
South West	1	2	
South East	1	2	5
London	n/a - covered by London G&T		
Eastern	1	2	3
West Midlands	2	2	3
East Midlands			2
North West	1	2	5
Yorkshire and the Humber		2	3
North East	1	1	2

## **Annex B - Checklist of issues for NAGTY interviewees**

**DfES / DCSF**

### **Evaluation of the National Academy for Gifted and Talented Youth (NAGTY)**

#### **Interview checklist - NAGTY interviewees**

1. Job title; job description.

#### **NAGTY strategic priorities**

2. Which of NAGTY's Strategic Priorities and other KPIs are of relevance to you (see below)?
3. What progress has NAGTY made towards achieving them? On what do you base this judgment?
4. What has your / your areas contribution towards achieving them been? On what do you base this judgment?
5. What remains to be done?

#### **NAGTY organizational processes**

6. Which of NAGTY's organisational processes do you have an involvement in (see below)?
7. How effective do you consider these processes have been? On what do you base this judgment?
8. Do you have any comments on the effectiveness of those processes that you are not directly involved in? On what do you base these judgments?
9. Is the NAGTY organization "fit for purpose" in the sense that it has had sufficient staff of the right calibre and experience to do the job required?

#### **NAGTY value for money**

10. What budget are you responsible for?
11. Do you have unit cost data for the key elements of your activities?
12. Do you consider that your part of NAGTY offers value for money? On what do you base this judgment?
13. Do you have any views on whether NAGTY as a whole offers value for money? On what do you base this judgment?

### **NAGTY internal inter-dependencies**

14. Which of the other parts of NAGTY impinge on what you do? How?
15. Which of the other parts of NAGTY rely on you? For what?
16. What are the advantages and disadvantages of locating NAGTY in an HEI?

### **NAGTY external interdependencies**

17. Which external organizations do you work with? For what purpose?
18. Are there other organizations active in the gifted and talented field with whom NAGTY has no working relationship? Does this matter?

### **National programme objectives**

19. How would you summarise NAGTY's contribution to the national objectives that were set (see below)?
20. What remains to be done?
21. Has the resource available to NAGTY been commensurate with the objectives set for it and the size of the client group?
22. Has NAGTY genuinely changed learners' lives? On what do you base this judgment?
23. Has NAGTY had an impact across the full range of society (gender; ethnicity; social class; disability; gifted and talented)? On what do you base this judgment?

### **Future**

24. What mechanisms are in place to transfer your part(s) of NAGTY to CfBT? Are they sufficient?
25. What are the key lessons that you would wish to pass on to the new contractor?
26. Do you have any concerns regarding the future of gifted and talented provision post-August 2007? If so what are they?

### **NAGTY strategic priorities and other KPIs:**

- a. Securing gifted and talented education within national public policy.
- b. Mapping quality and tracking improvements.
- c. To become the national and international focus for expertise in gifted and talented education;
- d. Securing high quality core education for gifted and talented young people.
- e. Identifying, tracking and supporting the top 5%; and.

- f. Securing access to high quality wider schooling opportunities for all gifted and talented young people.
- g. Improving attainment at KS4 and post-16.
- h. Improving aspirations, motivation and self-esteem.

**NAGTY's organisational processes:**

- a. Contract compliance
- b. Business planning
- c. Quality assurance
- d. Management and leadership
- e. Financial management
- f. IT
- g. Fundraising
- h. Communications
- i. Policy development
- j. Monitoring and evaluation

**NAGTY's national objectives:**

- a. To improve the attainment, aspirations, motivation and self-esteem of gifted and talented learners, including underachievers, especially those from disadvantaged backgrounds;
- b. To contribute to that outcome by:
  - Improving the quality of identification, provision and support in schools, colleges and local authorities; and
  - Helping schools and colleges to better personalise the gifted and talented education they provide.

## **Annex C - Checklist of issues for stakeholder interviews**

**DfES / DCSF**

### **Evaluation of the National Academy for Gifted and Talented Youth (NAGTY)**

#### **Interview checklist - stakeholder discussions**

##### **Background**

The Department for Children Schools and Families (formerly DfES) has commissioned *ac/consulting* to conduct the above evaluation.

The evaluation seeks to do two things:

- Assess the impact that NAGTY has had on the gifted and talented and their education.
- Assist in the development of the new Young, Gifted and Talented service that CfBT has been contracted to deliver from 1<sup>st</sup> September 2007.

Discussions will be treated as confidential - specifically we will not directly attribute points made to named individuals in any report or other form of feedback to the Department - or anyone else concerned with this project.

##### **General information**

What is your role within your current organisation? How did this bring you into contact with NAGTY and its staff?

What is the nature of your involvement with NAGTY?

- Student Academy activities
- Professional Academy activities
- Research Academy activities
- Other activities

##### **Aims and objectives**

NAGTY had the following “strategic priorities” and key objectives. \*What progress do you consider that NAGTY made towards achieving them and what remains to be done?

- Securing G&T education within national public policy.
- Mapping quality and tracking improvements in G&T provision.
- Becoming the national and international focus for expertise in G&T education.
- Securing high quality core education for G&T young people.
- Identifying, tracking and supporting the “top 5%”.

- Securing access to high quality wider schooling opportunities for all G&T young people.
- Improving attainment at KS4 and post-16.
- Improving aspirations, motivation and self-esteem [of the G&T cohort], including under-achievers, especially those from disadvantaged backgrounds.
- Improving the quality of identification, provision and support in schools, colleges and local authorities [for G&T learners].
- Helping schools and colleges better to personalise the G&T education they provide.

### **NAGTY organizational processes**

Have you any comments to make in relation to any of NAGTY's organisational processes - i.e. contract compliance; business planning; quality assurance; management and leadership; financial management; ICT; fund-raising; communications; policy / programme development; monitoring and evaluation.

Was NAGTY "fit for purpose" in the sense that it has had sufficient staff of the right calibre and experience to do the job required?

Did the three academy structure adopted by NAGTY "make sense" to you?

NAGTY was located within an HEI - the University of Warwick. What are the advantages and disadvantages of locating NAGTY within an HEI?

### **Value for money / impact**

NAGTY spent around £6m per annum (80% from government grant with the balance from fee income and philanthropic giving) to deliver its activities. \*Does this represent good value for money?

\*Was the resource available to NAGTY commensurate with the objectives set for it and the size/nature of the client group?

\*Has NAGTY had an impact across the full range of society (gender; ethnicity; social class; disability; gifted and talented)? On what do you base this judgment?

What value has NAGTY added/brought to the G&T field? How has NAGTY changed the learning experience for G&T learners?

### **The future**

What contact have you had with CfBT?

Do you have any recommendations for the future of G&T provision? What part of NAGTY's activities should be preserved? What more could be done in future? Do you have concerns regarding the future of G&T provision post-August 2007?



## **Annex D - Checklist of issues for local authority and school discussions**

### **DfES / DCSF**

#### **Evaluation of the National Academy for Gifted and Talented Youth (NAGTY)**

#### **Interview checklist - Regional and LA Gifted & Talented Co-ordinators**

##### **Background**

The Department for Children Schools and Families (formerly DfES) has commissioned *ac/consulting* to conduct the above evaluation.

The evaluation seeks to do two things:

- Assess the impact that NAGTY has had on the gifted and talented and their education.
- Assist in the development of the new Young, Gifted and Talented service that CfBT has been contracted to deliver from 1<sup>st</sup> September 2007.

Discussions will be treated as confidential - specifically we will not directly attribute points made to named individuals in any report or other form of feedback to the Department - or anyone else concerned with this project.

##### **General information**

Interviewee's current role and involvement with G&T education.

Overview of the regional / local approach to G&T.

Copies of any G&T policy statements, coordinator job descriptions etc would be good to have if available.

##### **Approach to G&T**

How is responsibility for G&T provision allocated among the staff in the LAs/schools in your area? Where approaches differ, which appears to work best?

Do the schools in your area generally have a G&T policy? \*How seriously are G&T policies treated in practice?

What characterises a school that handles G&T learners well? \*What proportion of your schools would fall into this category?

## **Student Academy**

What data did you have access to re Student Academy membership in your local area / region? How useful to you was the data to which you had access? Would it be useful to have more information on Academy members in your area?

What evidence, if any, do you have to suggest that pupil attainment has been boosted through NAGTY membership?

What evidence, if any, have you seen of any other impact(s) that either (a) NAGTY membership and / or (b) NAGTY activities have had on pupils?

Did local schools tend to contribute towards costs of NAGTY events? Which events? Were contributions available for all students? Were contributions means tested?

Are you aware of any difficulties over attendance at NAGTY events - for example due to: cost (to the pupil, their family or their school); accessibility (location, timing, transport); religious, ethnic group, social group or gender issues etc.

To what extent and how did colleagues use information and ideas provided through NAGTY to tailor their learning programmes for G&T pupils within this school?

To what extent and how did information and ideas provided through NAGTY impact more generally on the practice of learning and teaching in the school?

To what extent were NAGTY members from your area involved in NAGTY activities outside of the school? How effective do you believe that these activities has been in developing the G&T cohort?

What involvement have you had in the GOAL programme? How does the experience of GOAL-members differ from non-GOAL-members? What evidence of benefit is there for this particular group of pupils?

## **Work with other NAGTY academies**

To what extent have you and your colleagues utilised NAGTY resources / the support available through the Professional Academy? Please provide details of activities / programmes used.

To what extent does the support you receive from other, non-NAGTY, sources contribute to improving the learning outcomes for G&T pupils in your area/school? Please provide details of the support provided.

Are you aware of the work of the Research Academy ("Centre of Expertise")? If so, what aspects of its work? To what extent has its work impacted on what you do?

## **The G&T regional partnership network**

What are the partnership's key tasks? How effective has the partnership been in delivering against them?

What difference has the regional partnership made - both to you and more generally?

## **Overall assessment**

To what extent and how has NAGTY had an impact on G&T policy of schools in your area?

NAGTY's budget from DfES was approximately £4.75m per annum. How would you rate NAGTY in terms of its value for - i.e. what it has been able to deliver with the resources made available to it?

Given your experience of with working with pupils, teachers and possibly other schools and organisations to support G&T pupils, what are main pieces of advice you would offer in order to ensure that support for G&T pupils is enhanced and improved under the new contract with CfBT?

How should good practice in relation to G&T education be identified, recognised and disseminated?

Are there any other key points or feedback which you think should be captured in this evaluation?

What progress has NAGTY made towards achieving its key priorities (see below)?

- Securing gifted and talented education within national public policy.
- Mapping quality and tracking improvements.
- To become the national and international focus for expertise in gifted and talented education;
- Securing high quality core education for gifted and talented young people.
- Identifying, tracking and supporting the top 5%
- Securing access to high quality wider schooling opportunities for all gifted and talented young people.
- Improving attainment at KS4 and post-16.
- Improving aspirations, motivation and self-esteem.

How would you summarise NAGTY's contribution to the Gifted and Talented Education Unit's national objectives (see below)?

- To improve the attainment, aspirations, motivation and self-esteem of gifted and talented learners, including underachievers, especially those from disadvantaged backgrounds;

To contribute to that outcome by:

- Improving the quality of identification, provision and support in schools, colleges and local authorities; and
- Helping schools and colleges to better personalise the gifted and talented education they provide.

Ref: DCSF-RW078

ISBN: 978 1 84775 324 3

© ACL Consulting 2009

**[www.dcsf.gov.uk/research](http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/research)**

Published by the Department for  
Children, Schools and Families