

# Effective Provision for Gifted and Talented Students in Secondary Education

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## Foreword

It is now over five years since schools were asked to pay particular attention to gifted and talented students – to identify them and to ensure that their learning needs were met. This request resulted from continuing evidence of underachievement amongst the most able students in secondary schools. Considerable progress has been made during that period and schools should be congratulated on their achievements. The HMCI Annual Report (2005/2006) notes that teaching and learning for this cohort is at least satisfactory in the very large majority of the secondary schools inspected and in six out of ten they are good or outstanding. However, there is work still to be done. The two main areas of significant weakness are the use of assessment for learning and in planning challenge in the classroom. Pupils often revealed that they found their work too easy or were bored by having to listen passively to teachers for long periods.

The greater emphasis on personalisation at both KS3 and 14-19, offers considerable potential for gifted and talented students: greater choice in both what and where to study, access to virtual learning environments, and a more individual approach. For schools, it is a real challenge to create the structures that will realise this agenda. Provision for gifted and talented students does not usually need to be separate from overall classroom provision; many of the approaches necessary to challenge the most able will also be of value to the rest of the class. For example, the use of probing questions to encourage young people to think more deeply, will benefit all learners. This is why in good schools, we see the 'rising tide' effect. Another indicator of good provision for G&T however, will be that it is not 'single-school' based; gifted and talented students will be amongst those most likely to benefit from partnership arrangements with neighbouring schools and colleges, businesses and the local community.

Identifying the gifted and talented continues to be a voyage of discovery for schools. Some students will already have been identified as gifted or talented in their primary schools and so will be recognised at the point of entry to secondary school, but others will only emerge later and only in response to challenging opportunities offered by the secondary curriculum. Schools need to take a thoughtful and sensitive approach to identification, resisting the temptation to assume that all gifted and talented students are 'school smart' and easily recognised. Education is about helping students to uncover their strengths as well as providing for those that are already obvious. Remember:

**potential + opportunities/support + personal drive = high achievement (giftedness)**

In thinking about gifted and talented provision in the secondary school it is useful to consider the exit point. What do you want to have achieved for these students prior to their move to post school destinations? An important part of the answer here of course, relates to achievement but some also relates to learning dispositions and to emotional development. Aim for high achieving, well-rounded, thoughtful learners, ready and confident to take on new challenges and new opportunities.

*Deborah Eyre*

Deborah Eyre

National Academy for Gifted and Talented Youth

# Introduction

This guidance has been produced jointly by the National Academy for Gifted and Talented Youth and the Department for Children, Schools and Families and sets out general principles for schools and colleges to use in their planning and delivery of effective provision for gifted and talented students. It follows the publication of *'Effective Provision for gifted and talented children in Primary Education'* and *'Identifying Gifted and Talented Pupils – Getting Started'*.

The document will be of interest to all providers of education for 11-19 year old students in England, including governors, headteachers/principals and senior managers who are responsible for demonstrating a whole school approach to meeting the needs of the gifted and talented. The guidance also provides support for all staff in identifying gifted and talented students and providing them with an appropriately personalised education.

Good provision for gifted and talented students is an important component of the personalisation and equal opportunities agendas driving recent government initiatives:

Every Child Matters (2003), maximising opportunities for young people, setting out 'enjoying and achieving' as one of the key aims.

Higher Standards, Better Schools for All (2005) establishing a system which is designed around the needs and aspirations of the individual, with schools responding in a wide variety of ways to personalise the curriculum and ensure that young people fulfil their potential.

The Leitch Review of Skills (2006) setting out the need for the UK to raise achievements at all levels in order to maximise productivity and economic competitiveness and become one of the world leaders in skills by 2020. Recommendations include:

- Ensuring 'appropriate stretch and breadth in A levels'.
- Parity of esteem of the vocational route; and improved links and transition between pre and post-16 education.

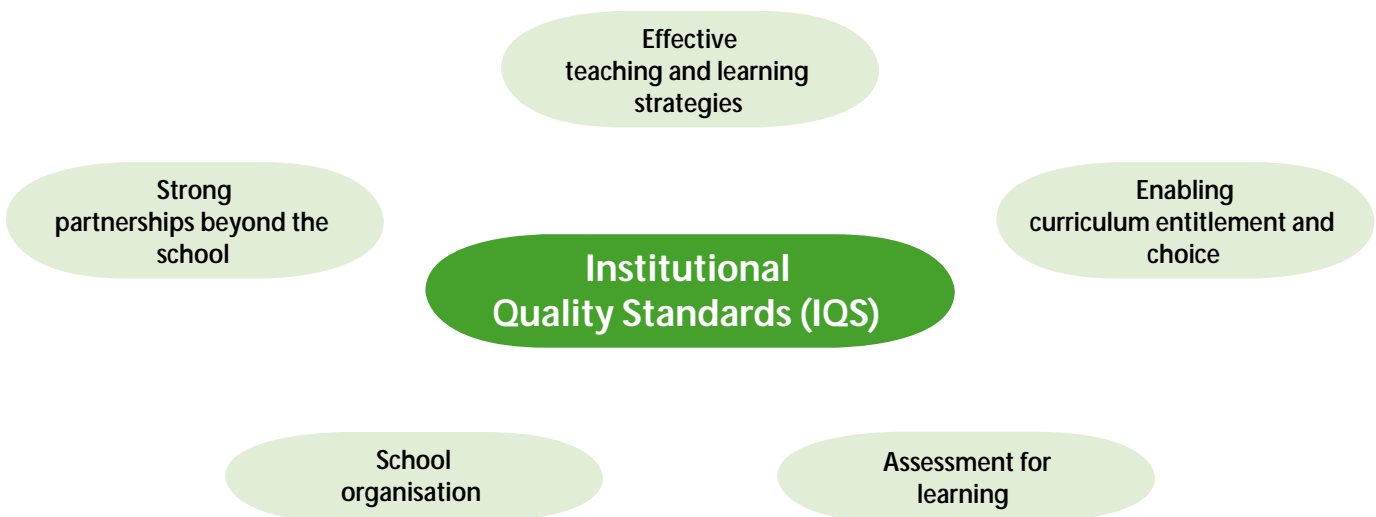
**20-20 Vision (2007) presenting a vision for personalising teaching and learning for children and young people aged 5-16:**

*“Personalising learning means, in practical terms, focusing in a more structured way on each child’s learning in order to enhance progress, achievement and participation. All children and young people have the right to receive support and challenge, tailored to their needs, interests and abilities. This demands the active commitment from pupils, responsiveness from teachers and engagement from parents”.*

The Secondary Curriculum Review (2007) proposing programmes of study which will give teachers a more flexible, less prescriptive framework for teaching, creating more scope to tailor the curriculum to meet the needs of each individual student. The change of focus within the curriculum will provide a firm foundation for education post 14, and includes specific transitional material to ensure smooth progress to Key Stage 4 and beyond.

## Institutional Quality Standards (IQS)

This guidance is set out under the same five headings used for the Institutional Quality Standards in Gifted and Talented Education (IQS) which represent the key components of personalised learning:



The IQS have been developed as a self-assessment tool for schools in auditing and developing their provision. This guidance, used alongside the standards, will help schools to demonstrate both in the ongoing dialogue with School Improvement Partners (SIPs), and through inspection, that they are meeting the needs of different groups of students as required by the New Relationship with Schools (NRwS).

## What do we mean by gifted and talented?

In every school and college there are students with a range of abilities. Gifted and talented is the term applied to those young people who are achieving, or who have the potential to achieve, at a level significantly beyond the rest of their peer group. This refers to the upper end of the ability range in most classes/cohorts.

It's important to recognise that gifted and talented students are individuals, with their own unique strengths and weaknesses. A student may be very able in some areas, but may appear on the Special Educational Needs (SEN) register in recognition of behavioural, social, physical/sensory or specific learning difficulties.

For more information see *Guidance on preventing underachievement: a focus on dual or multiple exceptionalities (DME)* Ref: 00061-2007BKT-EN [www.standards.dfes.gov.uk](http://www.standards.dfes.gov.uk)

The terms 'gifted' and 'talented' were used in a specific way through-out the period of Excellence in Cities. We now use them more broadly:

**Gifted** describes students who have the ability to excel academically in one or more subjects such as English, Drama, Technology;

**Talented** describes students who have the ability to excel in practical skills such as sport, leadership, artistic performance. These students may well follow a vocational training pathway to accreditation and employment.

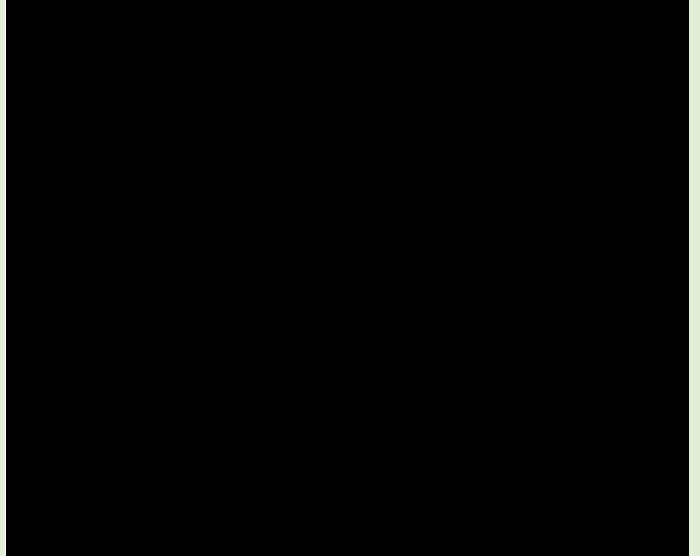
In comparison with their peers, when engaged in their area of expertise, gifted and talented young people will tend to:

- show a passion for particular subjects/ areas of interest and seek to pursue them;
- master the rules of a domain easily and transfer their insights to new problems;
- analyse their own behaviour and hence use a greater range of learning strategies than others (self-regulation);
- make connections between past and present learning;
- demonstrate intellectual curiosity;
- show intellectual maturity and enjoy engaging in depth with subject material;
- actively and enthusiastically engage in debate and discussion on a particular subject; and
- produce original and creative responses to common problems.

In addition, gifted and talented students may develop particular characteristics as they progress through the secondary/tertiary phase, such as:

- a tendency to question rules and authority;
- a well-developed sense of humour; and
- growing self-determination, stamina and powers of concentration.

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## Maximising Potential

Providing for the gifted and talented students in our schools is a question of equity – as with all other students, they have a right to an education that is suited to their particular needs and abilities. A school's gifted and talented population will be broadly representative of the whole school intake, in terms of gender, ethnicity and socio-economic background. However, some young people can 'slip through the net' and particular groups have been identified as more at risk, for example young people:

- from low socio-economic groups;
- from BME groups with a record of underperformance (including Black African, Black Caribbean, Pakistani, Bangladeshi, mixed heritage);
- who need support to learn English as an additional language (EAL);
- in small rural schools, where they may be perceived as the 'only one';
- who have special educational needs;
- who are poor attenders, with low aspirations and/or motivation;
- with medical conditions;
- who act as carers in the home;
- from families under stress;
- who are at risk of disaffection and exclusion;
- in public care or who belong to traveller families;
- who have a mismatch between their cognitive ability and their basic skills.

Direct intervention is particularly critical for these students because giftedness may only emerge when the appropriate opportunities are provided. Young people may have a certain predisposition to excel in one or more areas, but only demonstrate and develop those predispositions, or 'potential' if they are encouraged to do so.

The main focus in secondary settings should be to create the right opportunities, with support and encouragement, to help the student to develop a desire to learn and sustain the personal drive that is required to fulfil one's potential. This will be achieved by presenting students with work that challenges, stretches and excites them on a daily basis, in an environment that celebrates excellence.

potential + opportunities/support + personal drive = high achievement

Teachers also need to act as 'talent spotters', recognising indicators of outstanding ability as and when they begin to emerge. The precociously gifted and the talented 'star performers' usually identify themselves, but there are other, less obvious, indicators of giftedness such as intense interest in a particular subject and an 'intellectual playfulness' that hints at a student who may excel in years to come. Curriculum departments need to work out their own sets of criteria for the identification of gifted and talented students, and establish ways of planning suitably challenging learning opportunities as part of every lesson. This will involve:

- effective assessment for learning that informs the planning of challenging curricular targets and differentiated learning objectives;
- additional stretch being provided through a combination of enrichment, extension and acceleration;
- opportunities for independent learning;
- support in specific areas; and
- integrated learning in settings beyond the classroom.



*"We give every student every opportunity to achieve – right through the school. It's important to understand that some gifted and talented individuals are slow to emerge. Sara is a good example: she came to us with average SAT scores, a quiet and polite girl who wasn't outstanding in any way. But we spotted and nurtured her potential, gave her lots of encouragement and built up her confidence. At last year's summer school for gifted and talented students, Sara's contribution (at the age of 16) was deemed to be 'the equivalent to a 2:1 at first year undergraduate level.'"*

*Des Fagan Headteacher, BMCS*

Every teacher needs to know how to recognise and teach the gifted and talented, and to be familiar with the techniques for creating high levels of intellectual challenge in their curriculum area. They also need to offer or facilitate access to opportunities for students to excel in broader intellectual pursuits, sports and the arts. This forms the basis of a vigorous gifted and talented programme which increases performance across the board, lifting the aspirations of students, teachers and support staff and promoting an environment where working to the very best of one's ability is celebrated.

# 1 Effective teaching and learning strategies

This section describes how:

- the identification of gifted and talented students should be an ongoing, fair and transparent process;
- self-evaluation, including the use of the National Quality Standards for Gifted and Talented Education, is a means of improving standards; and
- effective provision for gifted and talented students develops from good class teaching.

## 1.1 Identifying the gifted and talented population

Gifted and talented students can be found in every school and college (the DCSF assumes a norm of around 10% of pupils per school/college population). Schools will determine the size of their own gifted and talented 'pool', but as ability is evenly distributed throughout the population, this should be broadly representative of the whole school intake, in terms of gender, ethnicity and socio-economic background.

Schools are asked to indicate whether students are gifted and talented as part of their schools census return and this data will be incorporated into the National Register for gifted and talented students. The National Register will help schools identify and track students' progress so ensuring successful progression through school and into higher education.

Identification of gifted and talented students should be a continuous, whole-school process which:

- is fair and transparent;
- acknowledges the full range of abilities;
- does not discriminate against particular groups; and
- is flexible enough to include students who join the school part way through the academic year, or are late developers.

Schools have the discretion to decide how best to identify their gifted and talented students, but are likely to obtain the best results by drawing on a wide range of information:

- a) Quantitative data including available test data and results of teacher assessment (including SATs, CATs, GCSE, and performance grades for music, dance etc);
- b) Qualitative information, including staff assessment, student, peer and parent/carer nomination and examples of students' work; and
- c) Rate of progress, including value-added data and reference to prior attainment/achievement (as recorded on *Raiseonline*).

Schools need to be particularly vigilant for the 'hidden gifted' (see p9). Young people's talents and abilities emerge when they are given appropriate opportunities, but at times, learners can be excluded (or effectively exclude themselves) from these opportunities.

*"We had been using drama as a way of getting under the skin of characters in literature and Claire showed real talent. I suggested that she joined the Drama group run by our HoD after school on Tuesdays. She seemed to like the idea but I was disappointed when she didn't attend. She also passed over the chance to join a group of Y8 enthusiasts who organised a theatre trip to a Saturday matinee performance at the Birmingham Rep.*

*It was only on talking with her form tutor that I discovered Claire was responsible for collecting her younger sisters from school and looking after them until Mum got home from work at 9pm. Money was in short supply and so the cost of the theatre trip prohibitive. Once we knew about the problems, we took steps to overcome them – with help from a neighbour who was also a teaching assistant in school, and a small allocation of money from a funding grant identified by the bursar."*

*Y8 English Teacher*

The key principles of identification are that:

- It is a continuous process. Some students will be easy to identify on entry to the school, while others will emerge later. It's important to remember that students not identified as gifted and/or talented in the primary school may develop an interest and expertise in new subjects offered in the secondary phase. Conversely, some students who were identified as gifted and talented in their primary school may not stand out in the 'bigger pool' of a secondary setting. This is an issue for schools to recognise and address sensitively in order to avoid students losing self-esteem and becoming demotivated.
- It should be based on a portfolio approach, utilising a range of qualitative, quantitative and value-added measures. Observing students systematically in a range of learning contexts, will enable teachers to identify those who demonstrate 'harder to quantify gifts' such as social or leadership skills, an aptitude for problem solving or acute listening skills;
- Identification should be systemised within the school so that it becomes part of school life, rather than a battery of specific tests at a particular time of year;
- Emphasis should be on providing an appropriate, challenging and supportive environment where young people can fulfil their potential. In tightly constrained classrooms for example, students may not have opportunities to 'shine'.

- There should be open communication between educators, students and parents/ carers as part of the identification process – with parents being engaged as partners in their children’s learning. In this way, a student’s achievements in extra-curricular activities and outside school can also be discovered, celebrated and developed.

[For more information see *Identifying Gifted and Talented Pupils – Getting Started*, Ref 04071-2006BKT-EN, [http://www.ygt.dcsf.gov.uk/FileLinks/312\\_DFES%20identification%20document.pdf](http://www.ygt.dcsf.gov.uk/FileLinks/312_DFES%20identification%20document.pdf)]

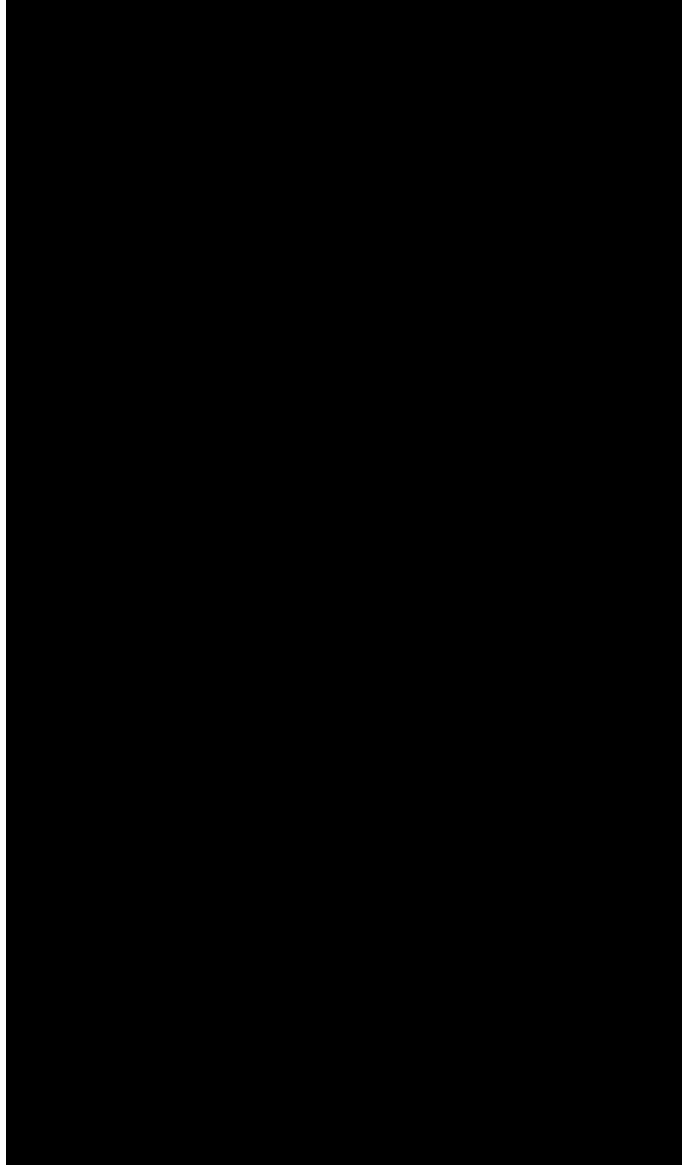
Most subject departments refine the generic identification criteria to produce more specific guidance on young people who may be gifted or talented within a particular curriculum area e.g. students with talent in art and design will show evidence of exceptional ability in:

- Using artistic media to record accurately what has been observed.
- Recording observed three-dimensional forms in two dimensions, using appropriate perspective.
- Controlling an artistic medium and related tools and equipment.
- Demonstrating expressive use of an artistic medium such as paint or clay.
- Understanding the use/manipulation of the visual elements of art and design.
- Using originality and imagination in the development and interpretation of visual ideas.
- Engaging confidently in the process of visual enquiry, and selecting from a range of stimuli to incorporate elements imaginatively in their finished work.
- Critical engagement with the work of artists and designers, which may positively influence their own creative endeavours.

[[www.qca.org.uk](http://www.qca.org.uk) ‘Identifying gifted pupils’ sections in the subject-specific guidance on this site may help subject teams, departments and faculties to develop their practice in identification. There is also useful information at [www.creativegeneration.org.uk](http://www.creativegeneration.org.uk) (arts) and [www.talentmatters.org](http://www.talentmatters.org) (sport).]

In some situations, students choose to hide their ability in order to ‘fit in’ with their peer group or avoid being singled out for praise. Creating a learning environment which nurtures gifted and talented behaviours is part of the teacher’s professional skill and is the key to effective identification.

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## 1.2 Effective provision

### Excellent teaching

The principles of good teaching for all young people provide a foundation for effective provision for the gifted and talented. The Classroom Quality Standards (<http://www.ygt.dcsf.gov.uk/Content.aspx?contentId=332&contentType=3>) in G&T provide support for teachers in reflecting on how well they present appropriate challenge and support for gifted and talented students in all lessons and in homework. Excellent teaching will be characterised by:

- lesson plans which accommodate the needs of gifted and talented students, recognising and building on what learners already know, avoiding unnecessary repetition and setting out appropriate objectives (HOTS – higher order thinking skills, not MOTS – more of the same);
- a classroom culture of high expectations and aspirations, in which it's 'cool to be clever' and where all sorts of talents and abilities are valued;
- presenting the curriculum as a series of problems to be solved rather than a body of knowledge to be absorbed;
- the use of varied teaching approaches to make learning an enjoyable and challenging experience, matching tasks to learners' maturity and preferred learning styles:
  - encouraging independent thinking and open inquiry;
  - selecting and using questions that stimulate higher order thinking;
  - encouraging and supporting students in asking their own questions;
  - promoting and modelling a variety of thinking skills;
  - modelling and requiring the students to use effective problem solving techniques; and
  - using class discussion effectively;
- the development of young people's confidence, self discipline and understanding of the learning process (metacognition): helping them to think systematically, manage information and learn from others;
- the use of peer and self assessment to make young people partners in their learning, help them to assess their work, reflect on how they learn and inform subsequent planning and practice;
- stimulating and paying attention to the student voice; and
- linking out of class experiences with day to day learning.

Schemes of work: To ensure that activities in schemes of work meet the needs of the gifted and talented learners, one school uses a tick-box scheme where departments can show:

- which of the seven intelligences or learning styles each unit or group of lessons covers; and
- where there are opportunities to use higher-order thinking skills.

The tick boxes help ensure that the full range of learning styles and thinking skills is covered within a unit of work.

## Learning environment

Much of what gifted and talented students need is exactly the same as for other young people: they need challenge and support, expectations of appropriate behaviour and recognition of every kind of ability.

Gifted and talented young people need to:

- have a stimulating environment, with access to high quality resources;
- know that they can ask searching questions and get a considered response (even if it's 'I don't know, how can we find out?');
- receive appropriate encouragement and praise;
- be recognised as individuals with strengths and weaknesses; and
- be able to hold meaningful discussions with the teacher, other adults, other able young people.

These conditions will be achieved in schools and colleges where teachers respond directly to students' learning preferences and their strengths/weaknesses, to personalise the way in which teaching and learning are organised. A school that is effectively personalising learning will have most or all of the following characteristics:

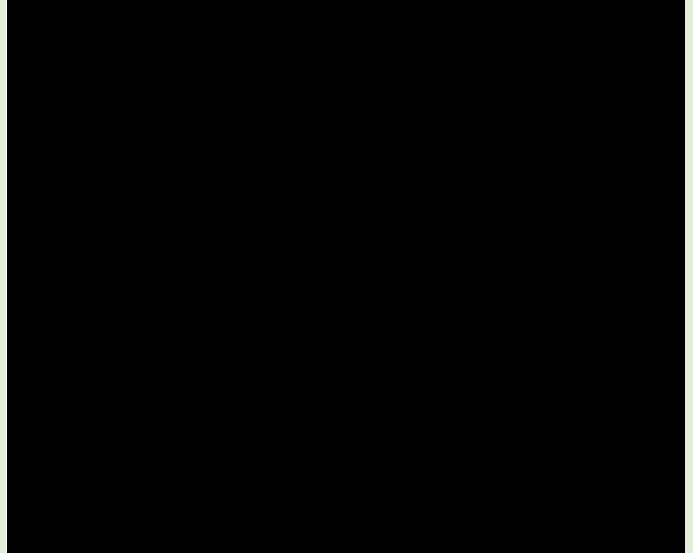
- high levels of student engagement;
- student independence, with students having control over learning and assuming responsibility for learning and behaviour;
- student confidence in their own abilities, with high self-esteem and strong social skills;
- maturity in student relationships and the development of mutual respect for staff and peers; and
- co-construction by students and staff of effective teaching and learning.

## Learning dialogue

Helping gifted and talented students to understand how learning takes place and what they can do to get the most out of learning opportunities, is an important part of every teacher's role. This will involve:

- establishing a culture in which wrong answers are seen as learning opportunities rather than failure; gifted and talented students should be taking risks and 'getting it wrong' some of the time. It's important that they are able to cope with less than 100% success;
- modelling the process of talking about how learning takes place, rather than just what is learned and teaching the language needed to discuss the processes of learning;
- engaging students in discussion about what helps them to learn effectively and responding to what they say; and
- helping learners become more aware of their preferred learning styles while also providing opportunities for them to practise styles that they find less accessible.

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## Task planning

Effective planning is crucial in meeting the needs of gifted and talented learners. Long, medium and short term plans should specify how appropriately challenging activities will be built into lessons and identify opportunities for students to perform beyond the level expected for their age (see p25 Depth, breadth and pace). Learning objectives should be ambitious and clear, and involve young people in their own target setting.

Tasks should:

- be designed to develop the learning behaviours we would like to nurture in all young people, especially those who are gifted and talented. These include:
  - greater reflection;
  - exploration of diverse viewpoints;
  - consideration of difficult questions;
  - formulation of opinions;
  - problem solving and enquiry;
  - connections between past and present learning;
  - regular use of higher order thinking skills (analysis, synthesis and evaluation); and
  - independent thinking and learning;
- be effectively differentiated. Teachers can employ a number of strategies for effectively differentiating work in the classroom and match tasks to the needs of gifted and talented students by providing:
  - a common task that invites different responses and outcomes;
  - tasks that vary in difficulty (as in graded exercises) so that able young people can begin at an appropriate level and progress further;
  - separate tasks linked to a common theme; and
  - opportunities for gifted and talented students to design tasks for themselves.

Having provided appropriate tasks for gifted and talented students, teachers can help them to achieve their potential by:

- negotiating challenging goals, encouraging young people to set some of their own;
- emphasising investigation, problem solving and exploration, which can possibly be sustained over a number of lessons (and for homework);
- providing opportunities for students to learn techniques for expressing their views, for posing questions and for interrogating the views of others, sometimes people with greater levels of knowledge and expertise than themselves – adults or older students;
- ensuring that there is a variety of assessment opportunities, and that students present work in a variety of forms;
- avoiding overloading students with work; and
- providing appropriate support and encouragement.

Gifted young people should be amongst the first to start to become critical, independent thinkers, capable of articulating their personal, considered viewpoint.

Strategies for developing challenge for gifted and talented students might include moving from:

- concrete → abstract (materials, ideas, applications)
- simple → complex (resources, research, issues, skills needed, targets set)
- basic → transformational (information, ideas, materials and applications)
- single → multi-faceted/divergent (making connections within or across subjects)
- structured → open-ended (decisions, approaches and solutions become the learner's responsibility)
- little → greater independence (planning, monitoring, evaluating)
- small → larger steps (in imagination, insight, application)

## Questioning

Appropriate questioning is a useful way of differentiating for gifted and talented students and teachers need to understand the technique. Most teachers use closed questions to good effect, confirming that a student understands or remembers something, but make less use of open questions which prompt new thinking, probe levels of understanding and promote discussion and debate. Rather than accepting an initial answer, teachers can probe further by asking young people to explain how and why.

Good questions:

- are based on learning objectives;
- are interesting and engaging, challenging students and encouraging diverse responses;
- are planned – they only rarely 'just happen';
- provoke discussion, encourage speculation and reflection;
- encourage formulation and expression of personal opinion;
- stimulate the use of existing knowledge in order to create new meaning;
- focus thinking (and therefore talk) on key concepts and issues;
- promote reasoning, problem solving, evaluation and the formulation of hypotheses;
- explore and expose potential misconceptions; and
- allow the teacher, and the students themselves, to assess what the next steps in learning should be.

Give students time to think (and sometimes to discuss with peers) before expecting an answer and make sure that they use the thinking time by not allowing 'hands up' before the agreed time, if at all.

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## Questions that stimulate higher order thinking

Thinking Skill	Explanation	Key words	Key Questions
Analyse	The learner breaks down learned information into its component parts, makes inferences and finds evidence to support generalisations	conclude, contrast, classify, divide, discover, examine, group, infer, inspect, simplify, sort, test for	Why do you think ...? What conclusions can you draw? How would you categorise ...? What is the function of ...? Can these ideas be grouped into three categories? What motive could there have been to ...?
Synthesise	The learner creates new information and ideas from previous learning	choose, compose, construct, develop, devise, imagine, improve, modify, predict, propose, solve	What would happen if ...? How could you change ...? What facts can you compile? Can you predict the outcome of ...? How could you estimate the result of ...?
Evaluate	The learner makes judgements about learned information on the basis of established criteria	agree, assess, choose, compare, criticise, defend, determine, interpret, justify, recommend, review	What is your opinion of ...? Would it be better if ...? How would you justify ...? How would you compare ...? Why did [Name] choose ...? How would you prove that ...?

## Individual young people

At the heart of the personalisation agenda is the individual learner. Gifted and talented students have considerable strengths, but may also have areas of weakness or difficulty.

Effective provision involves seeing beyond the obvious and addressing individual needs in a way that removes barriers to achievement by engaging, motivating and inspiring the learner.

Matthew was undoubtedly a bright boy but his dyslexia meant that he had problems with sequencing and organisation. By Year 8, feeling frustrated by this mismatch between ability and skills, he was beginning to mess about in lessons and generally be 'switched off' to learning. A mentor was identified from Year 10, who was also dyslexic and could empathise with Matt and understand his difficulties. He taught Matt how to use mindmaps, initially as a way of organising his thoughts before writing an essay. This proved so successful that Matthew adopted his own kind of visual mapping for many aspects of his school work, and for organising himself in general terms. His grades went up, leading to improved self esteem, better motivation and behaviour and a good chance of fulfilling his true potential.

Dewaine was adopted and had a history of behaviour problems. He seldom wrote a word and never did homework. He scored low marks in assessments, including SATs, and showed no interest in whether he did 'well' or not. However, teachers recognised and reported on his outstanding social skills and conceptual abilities in class discussions; easy empathy with contrasting viewpoints; strong sense of values; enthusiastic absorption of current events and ideas; and his ability to refine and develop thinking 'off the cuff'. Dewaine was included on the school's gifted and talented register and as a result, was a voracious consumer of enrichment opportunities which undoubtedly kept him in school and 'engaged'.

High achievers can stand out, and sensitive young people may not welcome the attention, especially at a time in their lives when being accepted by their peer group is very important to them. Some students learn to hide their ability and purposely underachieve in order to remain unnoticed; others need help in managing their ability so that they don't continually show off and outperform their peers, perhaps resulting in them becoming socially ostracised. How students are grouped together can play an important part in their personal development.

*"There was a general feeling that at the Summer School we could be something other than what we are at school. Everyone could be him or herself and still be accepted. It's not that I don't like school; I do. I fit in and I get good marks. But the fact that I try makes me stand out; it makes me somehow different. At the Summer School though, it wasn't like that. Nobody treated you differently because of your grades; everyone understood what it was like... there was a feeling that we didn't have to pretend in order to be accepted, everyone just got along and was accepted for who they are."*

*Summer School Student*

Education for the gifted and talented, as for all young people, should focus on both their intellectual development and their social and emotional needs, and include key aspects of learning such as: social skills, self-awareness, managing feelings and empathy. Schools may cover these areas as part of their PSHCE curriculum, but teachers should be aware that some academically gifted young people can feel uncomfortable with their ability and different from other young people of the same age. For these young people, positive intervention may be appropriate and a mentor or 'peer buddy' can provide valuable support.

One LA has a multi-level scheme for African-Caribbean boys in which students from the sixth form and from university are used along with entrepreneurs, as mentors to motivate and inspire confidence in underachieving able students. Choosing mentors from a similar cultural background is essential for success. Students who achieve can become mentors themselves in future years.

One student with Asperger's Syndrome was allocated a 'Circle of Friends': eighteen volunteers from his year group received training on time management, personal organisation and 'smart learning' in order to support him effectively. The group was supported by the SENCo who met with them regularly to discuss progress and any issues that had arisen.

## Self-esteem and motivation

*"Genius is one percent inspiration, ninety-nine percent perspiration"*: Thomas Edison's quote reminds us of the importance of personal drive in achieving success, and learners who believe in themselves and can persevere, are those most likely to excel within their chosen field. Motivation, high aspirations and good self esteem are key to fulfilling potential, and whole school approaches (such as Secondary SEAL), should implicitly promote the social and emotional skills that underpin effective learning, positive behaviour, and the emotional health and well-being of gifted and talented learners.

The student - teacher relationship plays an important part in the development of students' self esteem: a partnership based on mutual respect recognises the strengths and abilities of each individual while at the same time acknowledging each other's limitations. It is perfectly acceptable, in fact desirable, for the teacher to sometimes admit that s/he 'doesn't know', but this should be followed up with attempts to 'find out', so modelling good learning behaviour. Positive feedback is also essential for developing and maintaining motivation and self esteem and the National Strategies' Assessment for Learning (AfL) materials suggest useful ways of incorporating this in lessons. There are three stages to consider:

1. suitability of task: success should not be too easy, or too difficult, to achieve;
2. standards to aim for: students should know the criteria by which their work will be judged; and
3. appropriate reinforcement and reward: praise should be specific and relate to both effort and achievement.

The best sort of motivation is intrinsic and stems from young people's belief in themselves and what they do: feedback should reinforce the image of the student as an effective learner capable of taking risks, making good choices and reviewing their own progress:

- Motivation to succeed is partly based on knowing that what you have accomplished so far is valued and partly on knowing that you can cope with what comes next, even if it may take effort.
- Some high achievers have low self-esteem because the gap between their self image and their 'ideal self' is too big – often the result of little or poor quality feedback.
- If students always succeed then they may become complacent and not develop the 'hard work' ethic that makes the best of every gift and talent.
- All students can have 'next steps' to take in their learning, gifted and talented students should be offered them in the same way as everyone else.
- Learning starts when the work is difficult and mistakes happen. Gifted and talented students must not expect to find everything easy but helped to persevere so that they experience the satisfaction of success against the odds.
- Gifted and talented learners can be hampered by perfectionism and benefit sometimes from opportunities to produce notes and drafts rather than 'neat' final versions of work .

## Classroom grouping

Schools and colleges which have good provision for gifted and talented students use a variety of grouping approaches, including those outlined below:

**Grouping by ability:** most secondary schools use setting to some extent, particularly for core subjects, and this can help in providing appropriate enrichment and extension for gifted and talented students, ensuring intellectual stimulation and accelerating progress. Teachers should be aware however, that even in such groups, there will be a spread of ability and a variety of preferred learning styles to cater for. Setting may also lead to 'curriculum polarisation' where upward movement between sets is difficult because the same syllabus is not used by all sets.

Where subject setting is used as the main form of grouping, schools should also provide opportunities for students to learn alongside peers with different types and levels of ability.

Extended day activities can be a good way of offering opportunities for groups of mixed-age students to work together on an area of particular interest, for example music, chess, sport. Gifted and talented young people enjoy and benefit from working with others of like ability and this should be part of a child's entitlement, even in rural schools where imaginative approaches are needed to make this possible.

Mixed ability groups provide opportunities for late developers and learners with potential to progress to the highest levels. They reflect the society in which we all live, and help gifted and talented students to develop patience and understanding with those less academically gifted or less talented than themselves. Sometimes, working with a less able student helps to clarify thinking and find a clear way to explain a concept; being in the role of 'tutor' or 'coach' can also be very good for self esteem. However, gifted and talented students should not be asked to devote significant amounts of time to assisting other students at the expense of their own learning.

Collaborative work helps to demonstrate the wide range of different abilities that young people have, and ensure that this is acknowledged and valued. Working together to produce a school newsletter for example, or setting up a mini-enterprise will provide opportunities for students to demonstrate understanding and skills in a number of areas on different levels.

Individual work forms an important part of effective provision for gifted and talented students. Sometimes, a student will be ahead of his peers and working independently is the only way for him to achieve appropriately. In fact, able young people often like to get on by themselves. Care should be taken however, to avoid situations where a student becomes isolated from his peers and outside his teacher's 'radar'.

## Classroom resources

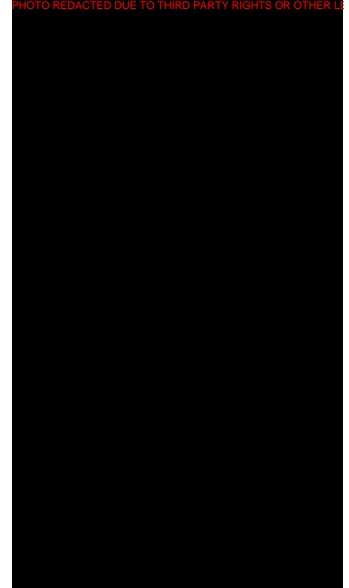
A school's staff is its most important resource, a fact that is well understood by gifted and talented students. They may enjoy the attention of older and more experienced individuals and will tend to gravitate towards the teacher and other adults in the classroom. Effective provision will include adequate interaction between student and teacher or teaching assistant (TA), in one-to-one and small group situations as well as part of the larger class.

How far individual teachers develop their skills in providing for gifted and talented students will depend to some extent on the support they receive from senior managers and colleagues. If they are to be adventurous and creative in their teaching, and flexible in the organisation of their classroom and timetable, they will need the cooperation and support of other staff, as well as opportunities for relevant continuing professional development (CPD).

High quality, sophisticated resource materials can considerably enhance learning and enjoyment for all young people, including those who are gifted and talented. They facilitate effective differentiation in the classroom and can play a specific role in enabling gifted and talented students to reach the highest levels of attainment. Such resources include multimedia equipment and software, artefacts, books, original source material, photographs, art materials, musical instruments and sports equipment.

Schools maximise their access to resources by:

- sharing with other settings, resource centres and school library services;
- setting up an efficient and accessible storage system for activity sheets, lesson plans, etc. specifically designed for gifted and talented young people;
- sharing details of useful websites, interesting journal articles, information about newly published material etc. with all staff, sometimes utilising a specific notice board in the staffroom; and
- providing access and signposts to on-line resources.



## 1.3 Standards

### Self-evaluation

Gifted and talented students thrive in schools which encourage excellence for all.

Under the new Ofsted inspection arrangements, schools are expected to use self-evaluation to assess their own progress and standards and the Self-Evaluation Form (SEF) includes a number of questions relating explicitly or implicitly to provision for gifted and talented learners.

The Institutional Quality Standards for Gifted and Talented Education provide a second-level self-evaluation tool, to help schools deliver effective whole-school provision for gifted and talented students and accumulate evidence to feed into their SEF (<http://www.ygt.dcsf.gov.uk/Content.aspx?contentId=347&contentType=3>).

*"We have been using the Quality Standards throughout the school, with a focus on 'standards' and 'assessment for learning'. I gave each subject department a copy of the chart and asked them to indicate with a highlighter pen where they thought they were – red for 'not happening', amber for 'on the way' and green for 'well developed'. The exercise was effective in bringing best practice to the fore, and we organised CPD sessions to disseminate amongst departments – something which we don't always make time for. The History department for example, is exemplary in communicating to students, in lots of different ways, exactly how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve."*

*Deputy Head of Curriculum*

### Levels of attainment and achievement

As part of self-evaluation, all schools should analyse their students' performance and progress. This performance should be tracked over time and the information gathered, used to inform planning.

The levels of attainment and achievement of those students on the gifted and talented register can be extracted, analysed and compared with those of G&T students nationally to establish whether or not a school has made a significant positive impact on its students' progress. Performance data can also be used to identify schools where achievement could be better in some subjects or for some sub-groups of the gifted and talented cohort, or where there is evidence of a school underperforming or 'coasting'.

The main source of analyses is RAISEonline (Reporting and Analysis for Improvement through School Self-Evaluation), a web-based interactive tool developed by Ofsted and the DCSF to replace the PANDA report and PAT. RAISEonline is a significant step forward in the provision of data analysis for schools, SIPs and local authorities, governors, inspectors, and all those working to support self-evaluation and school improvement, and provides a single convenient point of access to data and analyses. More information about RAISEonline can be found at: [www.ofsted.gov.uk/schools/dataandinformationsystems.cfm](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/schools/dataandinformationsystems.cfm)

## 2 Enabling curriculum entitlement and choice

This section describes:

- students' entitlement;
- the importance of considering functional skills; and
- enrichment as a way to create breadth of opportunity.

### 2.1 Entitlement

The Secondary Curriculum Review defines the essential elements of National Curriculum subjects to which all students, including the gifted and talented, are entitled. The programmes of study allow schools to be flexible in the way they develop and implement their curriculum and create 'education with character'; personalising teaching, offering catch-up lessons in the basics and creating opportunities for pupils to deepen and extend their learning in areas where they have particular interests and aptitudes.

A clear set of aims, focusing on the qualities and skills learners need to succeed in school and beyond, should be the starting point for any curriculum design. The national curriculum aims should inform all aspects of curriculum planning, and teaching and learning at whole-school and subject levels, enabling all young people to become:

- successful learners who enjoy learning, make progress and achieve;
- confident individuals who are able to live safe, healthy and fulfilling lives; and
- responsible citizens who make a positive contribution to society.

Consideration of breadth and balance is important in designing the curriculum and they remain underpinning principles. However, as the 14-19 curriculum becomes more diverse, breadth and balance need to be considered within individual student programmes and not solely at the level of whole-curriculum design, to ensure the:

- promotion of the spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical development of students; and
- preparation of young people for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of later life.



The new national entitlement enhances the diversity of secondary education for older students, with every school having a distinctive mission and ethos and offering a range of routes to developing knowledge, understanding and skills through a mixture of general and applied education. This will usually involve access to more than one learning environment, enabling learners to combine courses and different types of learning (e-learning for example) and access to a range of qualifications.

All young people will have the option to choose a progression pathway which best suits their interests and needs. Schools and colleges will maximise the effectiveness of a 'pathways curriculum' when they:

- provide high quality advice and guidance for students;
- ensure that students can access a range of subjects from each pathway;
- enable students to move between pathways at transition points;
- ensure that each pathway can lead to progression in other pathways/do not limit progression to other pathways;
- present the pathways as 'equal but different';
- avoid labels and curriculum displays that reinforce a hierarchy;
- stress where the curriculum is common as well as where it varies; and
- emphasise the positive aspects of each pathway and the students for whom it is appropriate.

A flexible and differentiated 14-19 curriculum will impact on the guidance that gifted and talented students need when making their choices at 14 and 16 (or even earlier in some cases). They, and their parents, need information and guidance based on thorough knowledge of them as individuals, particularly where students are asked to choose between programmes or pathways intended to have different outcomes for different groups of students. Where young people demonstrate particular talents, the choice of pathway may not be straightforward and guidance should be moderated by judgements of a student's emotional needs, maturity level, social skills and ability to cope with a particular pathway as well as issues about limiting career options.

## 2.2 Functional skills

English, maths and ICT are the building blocks that open the door to high levels of attainment. Teachers should anticipate exceptional performance and systematically plan to scaffold its development using assessment for learning techniques to identify the learning needs of individuals.

A minority of cognitively gifted young people (often boys) find it difficult to master the basic skills of literacy and numeracy and this can hold them back. They need opportunities to practise and develop basic skills, possibly within catch-up provision, within cognitively challenging tasks.

These young people also benefit from being able to use alternative methods of recording at times, allowing them to circumvent problems with writing, spelling, setting out of work etc. for example, voice recognition software, predictive text software, the use of a scribe, and diagrammatic representations such as 'mindmapping'.

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## 2.3 Enrichment

Challenge for gifted and talented students can be achieved by adding breadth, depth or pace, depending on the task in hand. The best provision incorporates a balanced mix of these.

- Breadth (sometimes called 'enrichment') involves the introduction of additional material beyond the core curriculum, enabling students to compare and contrast, to locate their learning in a wider context and to make connections between different areas of learning; it can result in a more complete understanding of the focus area. In adding breadth to the curriculum however, there is inevitably a risk of overload; be guided by students' interest and curiosity and don't expect them to work harder and longer than others.
- Depth (sometimes called 'extension') is achieved by asking students to delve deeper into a given subject or topic and may come as a result of working closely on one text/problem/artefact or by introducing additional knowledge/concepts/skills. For example, one group of students in Year 9 investigated how a particular product was made in different countries. They found out about the different materials used, why they were used and how they led to differences in design, development and use of the product. This knowledge was used to create a design and production process for a 'superior' version of the product. Another way of introducing depth is to bring experts into the classroom; this will be of interest to the whole class, but perhaps some time could be spent with gifted and talented young people, developing high level skills or exploring more advanced concepts.
- Pace refers to speed in covering the curriculum and can result in achievement at a level exceptional for the age range. This is sometimes termed 'acceleration' and involves students moving ahead of their peers in the formal curriculum, often in one specific area, and often taking relevant exams earlier than their peers. This course of action requires careful planning, with due consideration for a student's social and emotional needs.

In one school, the curriculum has been designed to allow students to complete their Key Stage 3 tests in the core subjects at the end of Year 8. All students continue with the three core subjects in Year 9 but are also able to choose from a range of options, giving more or less weight to each subject over the next two or three years. The choices include: GCSEs in Mathematics, Statistics, English, English Literature, Drama, Media Studies, and single, double and triple Science. In year 11, those who have attained GCSEs in the core subjects are able to study further in English or mathematics, or to take up courses in new curriculum areas.

As well as building breadth into the curriculum, schools and colleges should offer a range of enrichment opportunities outside the normal classroom, which enable young people to widen their experience and develop specific skills. Some of these opportunities will be linked to the curriculum, whilst others will be 'one-off' events and visits; in the second situation, the objectives of any activity, and why it is being offered should be made clear.

Whilst activities of a cognitive nature such as chess, may be particularly attractive to gifted young people, others such as residential courses and community activities, are equally important in developing the rounded individual. Enrichment activities often focus on developing talent and facilitating the sustained activity necessary for acquisition of high level skills. A child who shows athletic potential for example, might be encouraged to join a local athletics club where specialist coaches will help them to develop their particular abilities and provide opportunities to train and compete with young people at a similar level.



Students who are talented in areas which are not particular strengths of the school, need encouragement and support to develop their talents: this may mean flexibility in timetabling to allow for rehearsals, coaching and trials/auditions or exams, with appropriate strategies in place for catching up on course work missed as a result. Schools should also be able to direct talented young people to appropriate local and regional contacts within their chosen field. The Youth Sport Trust's JAE Mentoring Scheme provides a framework for supporting such students. [www.youthsporttrust.org](http://www.youthsporttrust.org)

Naadia and Taab, supported by their school, successfully applied to be members of the Youth Opportunities Fund Panel for their area. This involved considering local needs and circumstances before allocating funding (totalling £338,000) to different projects designed to improve provision for young people. They attended training days and after-school sessions to equip them for the role, which involved processing and assessing applications, allocating grants, designing and managing the paperwork and later on, delivering presentations about the various projects. Naadia said: *"It's definitely given me confidence and leadership skills as well as making me a better team member. I also feel that my personal and social skills have been developed and of course, my understanding of other people's needs."*

Schools should offer a regular, varied and on-going programme of enrichment activities as a key component of their provision for gifted and talented students. Many of these can be provided at low-cost, particularly if good use is made of the special interests and skills of teachers, governors, parents/grandparents and members of the local community.

Such a programme might include:

- competitions;
- visits;
- productions;
- field trips;
- visiting experts;
- interest groups – art, drama, dance etc.;
- sports training;
- book club; maths investigations; chess; philosophy group;
- language classes after school;
- enrichment days – the timetable is temporarily suspended for special activities;
- business and/or community projects;
- mini-enterprises; and
- enterprise days and events.

## 3 Assessment for learning

This section describes:

- the role of assessment in recording and planning for exceptional performance;
- how data can be used to track the progress of the cohort and the individual;
- the role of assessment for learning in matching learning experiences to the needs of gifted and talented students;
- how effective procedures can ease the process of transfer and transition within and between schools for gifted and talented students.

### 3.1 Assessment

#### Assessment policy

Assessment policies should differentiate between two different but vitally important roles of assessment:

Assessment of learning – assessment events that happen from time to time in order to measure and monitor progress over time.

Assessment for learning – assessment that happens within day to day learning episodes so that the next learning experience can be modified to match the students' learning needs more closely.

#### Assessment of learning

Assessment policies will have guidelines for gathering summative information about individuals, groups and cohorts of students, so that it can be used to monitor student progress, look for successes and problems and inform school and department strategic planning. Part of responding to the needs of gifted and talented students is to offer them the opportunity to attain the highest levels in Key Stage assessments. Data from summative assessments will be a large element in decisions about which students should be offered such learning opportunities. The Leadership Team should review provision annually to take account of individual cohorts as they move through the school and ensure a match between their curriculum offer/resources and needs.

As with all students, gifted and talented students should be tracked as they progress through the school. Individual tracking records progress and helps decide next steps in an individual's learning journey. Schools are required to identify their gifted and talented students in their school census return. This will aid the tracking of these students, ensuring that information is transferred from year to year and that learning pathways are logged.

Tracking data is essential in achieving smooth transition within and between schools. School clusters/partnerships can facilitate this process through the use of commonly-agreed documentation, electronic packages and cooperative transfer arrangements. The National Strategies range of materials on transfer can be helpful to schools in planning for transition.

### Assessment for Learning

*"Assessment for Learning is the process of seeking and interpreting evidence for use by learners and their teachers to decide where learners are in their learning, where they need to go and how best to get there."*  
Assessment Reform Group, 2002a

Good quality assessment for learning is crucial to effective provision for all students, including those who are gifted and talented. Assessment for learning must be part of everyday classroom practice;

- helping teachers to help students to take the next steps in their learning;
- helping students to help each other to take the next steps in their learning; and
- helping students to help themselves to take the next steps in their learning.

### Effective feedback

*"Feedback that is specific, genuine, attributable, accurate and true, from teachers, but also peers, can raise self-esteem."*

Assessment Reform Group, 2002a

Research has shown that gifted and talented students value quality feedback, both oral and written. They want to know where they are with their learning and it is important to be specific about what they have done well, but above all they want direction about how to carry on improving.

When asked, gifted and talented students commented that they appreciated constructive feedback from those teachers who gave it but were less enthusiastic about those who wrote 'good' or even 'excellent' in their books with no explanation about why or in what way they had performed well. They all emphasised how much they valued advice on improvement.

Feedback will help gifted and talented students to make good progress if it is:

- specific about what has been done well
- clearly based on learning objectives and success criteria that have been shared earlier
- challenging them to improve
- in language that is appropriate to their age and stage
- part of a shared dialogue about learning

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Gifted and talented students are, by definition, likely to be ahead of their peers and therefore need challenging learning objectives and success criteria that ensure they are really making progress. Failure to do this can result in boredom and disengagement and even disruptive behaviour. Gifted and talented learners, benefit significantly when planned lessons have:

- challenging learning goals;
- clear assessment criteria that students understand;
- opportunities for feedback that identifies what has been learned well and the next steps to take;
- opportunities to take part in assessing their learning;
- clear routes to further progress;
- exemplification of the quality of outcome that they are pursuing.

In this way, students are enabled to be more independent, take responsibility for their learning and recognise the importance of their involvement in the teaching and learning process

### Peer and self-assessment

*“Pupil self assessment has as a consequence that they are more motivated and conscious in relation to their work. They are more responsible and their efforts are more long term and goal centred.”*

*Testing Friend or Foe, Black and Aitken 1996*

Peer and Self-Assessment is important to gifted and talented students because it encourages and empowers them to:

- become more involved in, and responsible for their learning;
- use criteria to comment on others’ work through which they can come to a better understanding of those criteria;
- listen to one another;
- extend their repertoire of ways to tackle a task and learn more effective strategies;
- ask questions about what counts as high quality work;
- access others’ work which may contain a wide range of imperfections and misconceptions through which a student can explore their own;
- become more conscious of what they are trying to achieve because they have to explain to other people;
- develop objectivity, which they can then apply to their own work; and
- establish better and more productive relationship with peers and teachers.

Peer and self-assessment skills are crucial to achieving high standards, and need to be explicitly taught. Students can be helped to develop these skills by assessing anonymous exemplar pieces of work on which a consensus opinion can be reached, and by assessing other students’ work against specific criteria, and offering advice on improving it. In this way, students learn to evaluate work objectively and determine their own priorities for improvement.

## 3.2 Transfer and Transition

Poorly managed transfer and transition within and between schools can be damaging for student's progress and engagement. This is particularly relevant to gifted or talented students who may be progressing rapidly in their area of expertise only to stall or become disengaged if they are not presented with appropriate learning opportunities in their new year group, school or college. Where communication between settings, staff, parents and students is less than effective, a receiving school may waste valuable time in recognising the child's ability and making appropriate provision.

Schools will have a register of gifted and talented students to inform planning, assessment, monitoring and evaluation processes and this will be a key document at point of transfer. When transfer is between schools, the members of staff with responsibility for gifted and talented should liaise to ensure that all relevant information related to students on the register is transferred and disseminated. Opportunities for cross-phase training on gifted and talented provision, and observations of lessons in feeder/receiving schools and colleges can help to establish consistent and high expectations of learners at transition points.

Some of the challenges for the receiving school include:

- finding out about a student's particular abilities – in whatever way they manifest themselves;
- not expecting gifted and talented students to start from the same baseline as students of average and below-average ability;
- supporting students who find they are no longer the most able of their peers once they move to the next Key Stage;
- not mistaking maturity for high ability;
- understanding that a 'dip' in performance during the settling-in period does not necessarily mean the student is no longer a high achiever; and
- lack of continuity in terms of teaching style.

### Strategies relating to transition points

KS2 to KS3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• collect information from primary schools on G&amp;T pupils (quantitative and qualitative) and share with relevant Department Heads to help to ensure that teachers know who their most able pupils are;</li> <li>• begin liaison work as early as possible - face-to-face visits are best and can involve teachers, learning mentors and/or pupils;</li> <li>• arrange visits by pupils from feeder schools to the secondary school for after-school activities or longer periods of subject-based learning;</li> <li>• establish a mentoring and/or buddying scheme; and</li> <li>• engage in cross-phase moderation of pupil outcomes, and criteria for gifted and talented identification.</li> </ul>
Within KS3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• establish systems for tracking pupils' progress in all subjects, ensuring that outcomes of assessment are used to inform planning;</li> <li>• plan induction programmes for transition into each new year; teachers make explicit, in schemes of work and to the pupils themselves, what is special about learning in each year (helping to avoid a 'slump' in Y8);</li> <li>• recognise the increasing maturity of students, adapt reward systems as appropriate and provide opportunities for pupils to take additional responsibilities and to benefit from more privileges as they get older. Schemes of work should demonstrate higher learning demands and higher expectations;</li> <li>• organise grouping to allow young people to move between groups/sets without jeopardising their learning;</li> <li>• encourage pupils to reflect on past success and use transitions as opportunities for a fresh start in learning and/or behaviour;</li> <li>• provide clear and detailed information about Key Stage 4 courses, including subject content, teaching and assessment methods, location, and possible progression routes; and</li> <li>• set up taster sessions.</li> </ul>
14-19	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• establish links with:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• colleges: students who are talented in vocational areas may opt for courses which include a vocational element, modern apprenticeship or work placement. Many colleges' vocational departments have established links with employers to inform and ease this transition and to make students more aware of the challenges they will face;</li> <li>• Higher Education Institutions (HEI): to extend students' skills and understanding related to their courses and to raise their awareness of the demands, expectations and patterns of university life; and</li> <li>• commerce and industry: to provide students with an insight into a range of opportunities and career paths;</li> </ul> </li> <li>• ensure that students have an accurate and up-to date picture of themselves, their achievements, interests and gifts/talents so that this can be used alongside guidance, when considering the suitability of opportunities;</li> <li>• provide accurate course and placement information including entry requirements, location, working practices, group size, assessment approaches and progression routes; and</li> <li>• be as generous as possible with the amount of time you can give to listening to students and helping them to make important decisions about their future.</li> </ul>

Many gifted and talented students will progress to higher education at 19. Local Aimhigher Partnerships support young people aged 14-19 by providing opportunities which encourage gifted and talented students and those from socially disadvantaged backgrounds to participate in higher education and provide information about different progression routes. [www.aimhigher.ac.uk](http://www.aimhigher.ac.uk)

All of one school's Year 9 students take part in a ten-week GNVQ taster course as part of a wider carousel. The course enables students to challenge themselves in a more applied setting and there are opportunities for independent research, team activities, and presentations to peers and visitors. All students are encouraged to find innovative ways of presenting their work, often through mixed media, and some endeavour to achieve the assessment requirements for the qualification. As a result, the school has attracted students of a much wider ability range to GNVQ courses in Year 10. It has also been able to provide talented students with opportunities to pursue the courses in less time than their peers, and so to maintain a wider range of optional subjects.

The curriculum for students at one school includes one of the new GCSEs in vocational subjects. As part of the course, all students undertake a link course in a further education college and those aiming for the highest grades participate in a number of workshops and seminars at a university. This contributes to their assessment for the GCSE and gives them insight into the higher-level learning, skills and demands of the vocational sector.

A 'student apprenticeship' scheme offers school and college students the opportunity of day release into a company, on a weekly basis, for one to two years. A training plan, negotiated by employer and student, sets out what the students will learn and the job roles they will experience. The majority of students attain an NVQ at level 2, alongside their school/college-based qualifications, attesting to their workplace competence. At the end of the scheme, students have the opportunity to progress to a Modern Apprenticeship with the company or to a higher education course.

## 4 Organising the school

This section describes:

- how leadership at every level is critical in developing effective provision for gifted and talented students;
- the need for coverage of gifted and talented provision in all school and college policies;
- the importance of developing a positive ethos that celebrates success and ensures that the social and emotional needs of students is given priority;
- a focus on staff development as being absolutely essential; and
- how monitoring and evaluation helps a school or college to judge the success of its approach.

### 4.1 Leadership

Schools and colleges which have effective provision for gifted and talented students characteristically have a headteacher/ principal and senior managers who strive for excellence and who motivate their staff to embrace a shared responsibility for their students. The lead of the head teacher and senior managers is critical in setting the school's policy and encouraging a whole school approach to meeting the needs of these young people. All schools should have a named governor who is responsible for gifted and talented education and a governing body that plays an active role in:

- setting the school's strategic aims in relation to gifted and talented students;
- agreeing plans and policies; and
- monitoring and evaluating the school's performance in relation to gifted and talented students.

Subject teachers and tutors are responsible for both identification and provision, therefore the Leadership Team needs to ensure that staff are supported, through a variety of strategies including professional development, to acquire appropriate skills and expertise. The Leadership Team also needs to ensure that budgets are deployed to best effect to meet the needs of gifted and talented students and actively monitor and evaluate progress on implementing a gifted and talented policy across the school or college.



The 2005 White Paper, *Higher Standards: Better Schools for All*, sets out the Government's aim to build on and extend the successes of gifted and talented coordinators by ensuring that every secondary school appoints and trains a 'Leading Teacher' in gifted and talented education.

The leading teacher in gifted and talented education will drive forward the development of a whole-school approach to establishing excellent provision for gifted and talented learners by:

- further developing expertise in the field of G&T education;
- acting as an advocate for the needs of gifted and talented students;
- ensuring that the gifted and talented receive appropriate recognition, support and challenge throughout the school/group of schools;
- exemplifying effective strategies to use with gifted and talented students in their own professional practice, and providing coaching/peer mentoring support for colleagues;
- initiating the professional development of colleagues to improve the school's capacity to personalise learning for gifted and talented students; and
- accessing a direct communication route to the Leadership Team.

Local Authorities are working with schools to establish the leading teacher role. Differentiated training, according to need and previous experience, is being provided for leading teachers through the National Strategies to ensure they are fully equipped to carry out their role effectively. The training includes development of an improvement plan based on the Institutional Quality Standards in Gifted and Talented Education.

## 4.2 Institutional policy

It is vital that a school or college's provision for the gifted and talented is coherent and consistent:

- across subjects and programme types;
- across year groups and phases; and
- for each gifted and talented learner.

Coherence needs to be achieved through consultation between staff, parents, students and the wider community. Schools and colleges will need to use the IQS when developing/updating their policy for gifted and talented provision and set out how:

- the various threads of provision operate coherently and relate to each other (including teaching and learning, extracurricular enrichment, pastoral support and community links);
- the components of teaching and learning make sense as a coherent package, rather than being a disparate collection of initiatives (including classroom provision, study support, workplace learning and enrichment opportunities);
- study support complements classroom provision effectively – it should not simply be a bolt-on extra that bears no relationship to the curriculum; and
- acceleration, extension and enrichment is planned coherently across the institution and within subject areas.

## Departmental policy

At the subject level, schools and colleges should ensure that there is consistency between departments in provision for the gifted and talented. For example, some subjects lend themselves more easily to approaches such as acceleration, but there is no reason in principle why a school's policy on the balance between acceleration, extension and enrichment, should not be followed by all subject departments.

Curricular flexibility is an important dimension of effective provision and care should be taken that the overall teaching and learning package makes sense for each individual student. All of this needs to be done with an eye to short and longer-term progress. For example, if acceleration is part of the package in Year 10, the consequences for Year 11 and beyond need to be planned as part of each individual's learning path.

Subject policies for gifted and talented learners should be set in the context of the institution's approach to teaching and learning, but give focus to subject-specific provision and describe how it contributes distinctively to the academic and personal development of gifted and talented students.

## 4.3 School ethos and pastoral care

Successful schools and colleges have a distinctive ethos that gives them their special character and promotes a vision that is shared by staff, students and the local community. A school ethos that sets high expectations, recognises achievement and celebrates success and effort is important for all young people, including those who are gifted and talented.

The school ethos should:

- support the development of every learner's intellectual and emotional development;
- create an environment where young people are listened to and their views taken into account;
- encourage risk taking; and
- foster an awareness of individual students' needs and celebrate diversity.

Good pastoral support can be an important feature of provision for gifted and talented students. Academic ability can sometimes be far in advance of emotional and social maturity and young people may need support in managing peer relationships so that high achievement does not alienate classmates and lead to social isolation (schools will also want to ensure that their anti-bullying policy and procedures address the needs of gifted and talented students and counteract any negative peer pressure). The explicit teaching of social skills and emotional literacy can be effective in helping able young people to understand themselves, and how others see them, and mentors (peer and adult) can contribute to the development of a rounded personality and healthy self-esteem.

Task avoidance and poor behaviour will sometimes ensue when gifted and talented learners are bored in lessons, and feel undervalued by teacher; an educational programme that excites and challenges them is often at least part of the solution.

All staff should understand how giftedness may affect students so that a whole-school approach can be adopted, with parents and carers fully engaged, in addressing the particular emotional and social needs of gifted and talented young people alongside their academic progress.

## 4.4 Staff development

Effective professional development raises the quality of learning and teaching in all institutions: it should be available for all members of the school/college workforce and tailored to their individual needs.

Schools and colleges need to ensure that every teacher has the skills and the confidence necessary to teach the gifted and talented students in their classes. This may involve providing professional development which will enable teachers to be:

- clear about what constitutes high level performance;
- familiar with higher-order thinking skills and how to develop them in different contexts; and
- able to set tasks which challenge gifted and talented learners.

Using the Institutional Quality Standards and Classroom Quality Standards as a starting point, schools should plan to increase staff expertise in gifted and talented education as a continuous process, linked to performance management. Continuing professional development (CPD) can take a wide range of forms, for example, observing a colleague, attending a course or taking part in, or delivering INSET. The Leading Teacher for gifted and talented education within the school will advise teachers and other staff on CPD opportunities to help them develop and extend their knowledge in relation to meeting the needs of gifted and talented learners, and highlight relevant resources as appropriate. The commitment to training and development in relation to gifted and talented education also needs to accommodate the specific needs of newly appointed/ newly qualified teachers.

The Leading Teacher on gifted and talented education will themselves need relevant, high quality CPD to build up expertise, keep up to date with the latest research and good practice and be able to take the school forward in developing excellent G&T provision.

## 4.5 Resources

Schools and colleges are best placed to know the learning needs of their students and must use their own professional judgement to personalise learning in their school. However, it is important that budgets are deployed so that appropriate resources are made available to support gifted and talented young people.

Teaching Assistants and other support staff can be a valuable resource in the provision for gifted and talented students. They are frequently tasked with supporting students experiencing difficulties with learning and achieving, but less often deployed in a way that:

- frees the teacher to spend more time with gifted and talented students;
- provides encouragement and moral support for students engaged in challenging work;
- extends gifted and talented learners through discussion and exploration of ideas; and
- provides stimulating tasks/materials to act as starting points for students' learning.

Mentors can also provide support and encouragement to gifted and talented students, acting as a confidante and in some cases, helping students to broaden their horizons and 'aim higher'.

Support for gifted and talented young people can come in many forms and this is an area where schools can and should take the initiative. In developing their approach to meeting the needs of gifted and talented learners, schools will benefit from drawing on the expertise available locally through the Local Authority Adviser with responsibility for teaching and learning and through the regional partnerships for gifted and talented education.

## 4.6 Monitoring and evaluation

Schools are responsible for evaluating the effectiveness of their provision for gifted and talented students and the National Quality Standards provide a useful tool to assist with this process. The School Improvement Partner will use the school's own evaluation along with evidence from other sources to identify the needs of the school and offer support and challenge. Schools will want to monitor the effectiveness of all elements of their gifted and talented policy and in particular, concentrate on assessing its impact on the performance of individuals. The named governor will have a key role in supporting the school in its monitoring and evaluation of provision for this cohort and may be able to access training for this through the local authority.

Schools will be expected to demonstrate the effectiveness of their approach to providing for gifted and talented students during school inspection and will want to provide evidence to illustrate how their approach has had a positive impact on young people's performance. The National Quality Standards for Gifted and Talented Education provide a useful framework against which schools can accumulate evidence with a view to demonstrating good practice during inspection.

## 5 Strong partnerships beyond the school

This section describes:

- how schools should engage with parents and carers and wider Children's Services to ensure support for gifted and talented students;
- the role of extended services and activities in the personalisation agenda; and
- how opportunities available locally should be exploited by schools in providing for their gifted and talented students.

### 5.1 Engaging with the community, families and beyond

It is important that schools acknowledge the crucial role that parents and carers play in their children's development and well-being, listen to the information they offer, and actively encourage their support as partners in their children's education.

Some parents may need specific guidance on how to support their gifted or talented teenager: school staff may be able to provide this, or help parents to access information and guidance from wider Children's Services, the voluntary or community sector. The Every Child Matters agenda with its emphasis on the welfare of children and young people, sets out the framework for local authorities, social care, health services and other partners to work collaboratively in ensuring that students have the support they need.

This is particularly important in the case of young people who are looked after by a local authority. Whatever the reason for being placed in care, being separated from friends and family and having to adapt to changing neighbourhoods and lifestyles can make it much harder to succeed at school. Although some do well, many looked after children underachieve. Schools can help to alleviate the difficulties sometimes created by this situation by:

- increasing their time spent in school: smoothing the admissions process, monitoring attendance and encouraging students to stay in education after the age of 16;
- helping with schoolwork : more individual support tailored to the individual; good communication with carers and guidance in how they can help; and

- improving health and wellbeing: teachers, social care staff, health workers and carers working together in the interests of the young person.

Teachers and tutors should also endeavour to ensure that these young people are able to participate in enrichment and extension activities which take place outside the school day and necessitate special arrangements, e.g. transport.

The National Association for Gifted Children (NAGC) is a registered charity which aims to help parents, schools, LAs and health professionals to work together to provide the best all-round education for gifted students. It provides an open access website as well as a members only area with useful help, advice and activities including a 'YouthCafe' for 11-18 year old members. NAGC is currently developing a toolkit to complement the IQS, funded by the DCSF, which may be useful for schools to use in considering how they engage with families. [www.nagcbrtain.org.uk](http://www.nagcbrtain.org.uk)

## 5.2 Learning beyond the classroom

Research shows that schools and colleges which open their doors to students, parents and local people outside of traditional hours, can expect improvements in performance (Evaluation of Full Service Extended Schools Initiative, Second year: Thematic Papers 2006). Ofsted has also found that young people and their families benefit from enhanced self-confidence, raised aspirations and better attitudes to learning where schools provide access to extended activities.

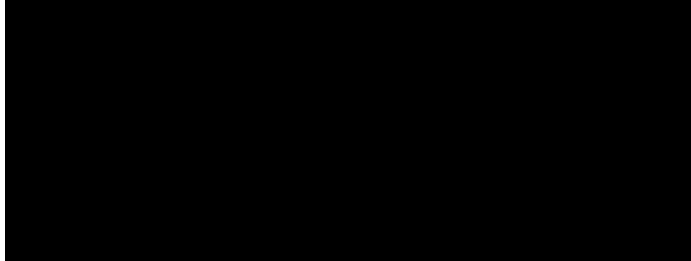
Regional Excellence Hubs provide opportunities for G&T learners, including those from disadvantaged backgrounds, to access a variety of challenging activities, e.g. non-residential summer schools.

[www.cfbt.com](http://www.cfbt.com)

The National Academy for Gifted and Talented Youth (NAGTY) at the University of Warwick was the DCSF's core partner in the national G&T programme. The university's contract with the DCSF finished in August 2007 and CFBT Education Trust run the Young, Gifted and Talented programme (YGT) on behalf of DCSF. [www.dcsf.gov.uk/ygt](http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/ygt)

The development of extended services in or through every school by 2010 will increasingly offer opportunities to students, including those who are gifted and talented, for learning beyond the classroom. Through extended services, all students will have access to a varied menu of enrichment activities, including homework clubs and study support, sport, music tuition, dance and drama, arts and crafts, special interest clubs such as chess and volunteering, business and enterprise activities.

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In addition, there may be other opportunities available to gifted and talented young people outside the school environment, for example:

- Advanced Learning Centres.
- Local Authority summer schools.
- Master Classes (often linked to an HEI).
- University of the First Age (UFA) projects.
- Talent activities – for example in visual, performing or creative arts – available through the Arts Council England, the National Endowment for Science, Technology and the Arts and other regional arts groups.
- Sports clubs and activities available locally and regionally.
- Business links and work related mentoring.

The best enrichment activities will complement teaching and learning in the school day and tracking their impact will enable teachers, tutors and coaches to maximise the benefits of this type of work.

Wider schooling for the gifted and talented can help students to:

- discover areas of personal aptitude/talent;
- learn advanced skills; and
- develop a more sustained engagement with areas covered in school.

Schools should ensure that all gifted and talented students have access to suitable opportunities before and after school, as well as at week-ends and during school holidays. Wherever possible, these should include a residential experience and schools should play an active role in ensuring greater equity of opportunity so that young people from all backgrounds are able to benefit.

These activities offer opportunities for young people to learn in a different setting from the classroom. This may be a more informal setting within school or college, or a completely different setting such as a field centre, a theatre/museum, a university or 'on-line'. Students who have access to these kinds of opportunities have been shown to demonstrate increased self-confidence and self-esteem, increased love of learning and personal satisfaction, improved motivation, higher aspirations and ultimately, better school attainment.

Schools should make gifted and talented students and their families, aware of the full range of activities available. Working with G&T Regional Partnerships and Local Authorities, schools and colleges can signpost external providers as part of their endeavours to match talent with opportunity.

Teachers should be aware however, that the take-up of these opportunities is not always easy for some families; financial constraints, caring commitments, working hours, transport difficulties, health problems – any number of issues can result in reasons 'not to do it'. Active support and encouragement, together with some creative problem solving, may be needed to provide a student with an opportunity that could make all the difference.

# References and further information

## Effective teaching and learning strategies

- Ofsted's interactive site on Self-evaluation Forms is at visit [www.ofsted.gov.uk/schools](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/schools)
- National Quality Standards for Gifted and Talented Education [www.dcsf.gov.uk/ygt](http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/ygt)
- Secondary SEAL <http://bandapilot.org.uk/secondary>
- Information about RAISEonline [www.ofsted.gov.uk/schools/dataandinformationsystems.cfm](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/schools/dataandinformationsystems.cfm)
- Information about PLASC [www.teachernet.gov.uk/management/ims/datacollections](http://www.teachernet.gov.uk/management/ims/datacollections)

## Enabling curriculum entitlement and choice

- Secondary National Strategy information [www.standards.dfes.gov.uk/KS3](http://www.standards.dfes.gov.uk/KS3)
- Subject specific teaching materials [www.teachernet.gov.uk/teachingandlearning/subjects](http://www.teachernet.gov.uk/teachingandlearning/subjects)
- YGT: Provides a catalogue of resources and easy access to some of the best material in the field [www.dcsf.gov.uk/ygt](http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/ygt)
- National Curriculum gifted and talented guidance is available at QCA's website [www.nc.uk.net/gt/index.html](http://www.nc.uk.net/gt/index.html) or [www.qca.org.uk/10012.html](http://www.qca.org.uk/10012.html)
- London Gifted and Talented has developed innovative e-resources and CPD opportunities as part of the London challenge [www.londongt.org](http://www.londongt.org)

## Assessment for learning

- Assessment of students [www.teachernet.gov.uk/teachingandlearning/afL](http://www.teachernet.gov.uk/teachingandlearning/afL)
- Managing Assessment for Learning [www.aaia.org.uk](http://www.aaia.org.uk)
- Assessment Reform Group's interpretation [www.qca.org.uk/7659.html](http://www.qca.org.uk/7659.html)
- Assessment for Learning (AfL) [www.standards.dfes.gov.uk/personalisedlearning/five](http://www.standards.dfes.gov.uk/personalisedlearning/five)



## Organising the school

- NCSL [www.ncsl.org.uk](http://www.ncsl.org.uk)
- Support on developing a school policy on gifted and talented provision [www.nc.uk.net/gt/general/02\\_wholeschool.htm](http://www.nc.uk.net/gt/general/02_wholeschool.htm)
- Young, Gifted and Talented (YGT) provides access to the Learner Academy and professional resources and materials including links to partnersites [www.dcsf.gov.uk/ygt](http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/ygt)
- Oxford Brookes University has provided training for EiC gifted and talented coordinators and provides resources for staff development [www.brookes.ac.uk/schools/education/rescon/cpdgifted](http://www.brookes.ac.uk/schools/education/rescon/cpdgifted)
- National Association for Able young people in Education (NACE) [www.nace.co.uk](http://www.nace.co.uk)
- Brunel Able young people's Education Centre (BACE) [www.brunel.ac.uk/about/acad/sse/ssesub/education/bacehome](http://www.brunel.ac.uk/about/acad/sse/ssesub/education/bacehome)
- Information about the New Relationship with Schools [www.teachernet.gov.uk/newrelationship](http://www.teachernet.gov.uk/newrelationship)

## Strong partnership beyond the school

- Increasing Parental Involvement in Education [www.standards.dfes.gov.uk/parentalinvolvement](http://www.standards.dfes.gov.uk/parentalinvolvement)
- Every Child Matters [www.everychildmatters.gov.uk](http://www.everychildmatters.gov.uk)
- Extended Services [www.teachernet.gov.uk/wholeschool/extendedschools](http://www.teachernet.gov.uk/wholeschool/extendedschools)
- Support for Parents with gifted and talented young people [www.nagc.org](http://www.nagc.org)
- CfBt Education Trust [www.cfbt.com](http://www.cfbt.com)

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You can also download this publication at [www.dcsf.gov.uk/ygt](http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/ygt)

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