



The Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead Policy and Guidance to Promote Good Practice in Gifted and Talented Education

Statement of Policy

We believe that all schools have gifted and talented pupils. The Royal Borough is committed to offering each pupil a curriculum which extends their knowledge, skills and understanding as well as their potential for independent learning. The Royal Borough will act in partnership with schools, parents, and other local and national support agencies for the benefit of all gifted and talented pupils within the context of the National Curriculum inclusion statement.

Statutory National Curriculum Inclusion Statement

'Schools have a responsibility to provide a broad and balanced curriculum for all pupils. This statutory inclusion statement sets out three principles for developing an inclusive curriculum which provides all pupils with relevant and challenging learning.'

Schools must:

- set suitable learning challenges;
- respond to pupils' diverse learning needs, and
- overcome potential barriers to learning and assessment for individuals and groups of pupils.

'Teachers should aim to give every pupil the opportunity to experience success in learning and to achieve as high a standard as possible. The National Curriculum programmes of study set out what most pupils should be taught at each key stage – but teachers should teach the knowledge, skills and understanding in ways that suit their pupils' abilities. This may mean choosing knowledge, skills and understanding from earlier or later key stages so that individual pupils can make progress and show what they can achieve.'

'For pupils whose attainments significantly exceed the expected level of attainment within one or more subjects during a particular key stage, teachers will need to plan suitably challenging work. As well as drawing on work from later key stages or higher levels of study, teachers may plan further differentiation by extending the breadth and depth of study within individual subjects or by planning work which draws on the content of different subjects.'

The following nationally-accepted definitions are used throughout this policy and guidance:

Gifted: high attainment in more than one academic subject

Talented: pupils have evident high attainment in a creative or expressive art or sport

More Able: high potential ability in areas that can be developed by successful teaching

The term 'school' refers to all maintained educational settings with pupils aged 4-19 years.

The Royal Borough will support schools in:

- producing a school policy for gifted and talented pupils;
- developing procedures for identification;
- designing an appropriate curriculum;
- understanding each of the sections of the Institutional Quality Standards;
- monitoring and evaluating the impact of gifted and talented initiatives;
- intervening and challenging schools to address the needs of gifted and talented pupils;
- ensuring that support for gifted and talented education aligns with all other priorities within the Royal Borough's Outcome improvement Plan, i.e. achievement of vulnerable pupils;
- developing and supporting gifted and talented provision through teacher networks;
- ensuring an inclusive approach to gifted and talented provision through the advisory service, and
- engaging key stakeholders including: school governors, School Improvement Partners and senior leaders.

Schools should:

- identify a senior leader who has oversight of gifted and talented policy & provision;
- establish a policy for gifted and talented pupils which recognises the collective responsibilities of all;
- identify gifted and talented pupils and keep a regularly updated register which broadly reflects the whole school population;
- inform parents / carers when their children have been identified as gifted and talented;
- provide an appropriate curriculum and differentiation for gifted and talented pupils;
- develop gifted and talented provision in line with the national agenda for personalisation;
- work in partnership with communities and other organisations to provide enrichment and extension activities;
- monitor and evaluate the implementation of the policy to ensure that it has a positive impact on pupil outcomes.

In addition to their academic needs, schools should be aware of the social and emotional development of gifted and talented pupils. In general, it is not recommended to accelerate a pupil beyond their chronological year group. This may create difficulties with peer interaction as well as disrupt statutory arrangements for transition.

Documents to support the implementation of gifted and talented provision (Appendices)

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| Appendix 1 | Institutional Quality Standards
One way of auditing and developing provision
Full suite of quality standards matrices are available at:
http://ygt.dcsf.gov.uk/Content.aspx?contentId=83&contentType=1 |
| Appendix 2 | Guide to Useful Websites including:
Young Gifted and Talented
Training resources for teachers and other stakeholders
Learner academy – highest achievers can apply to become part of an online community
Professional development National Strategies e-modules, self-supported study modules |
| Appendix 3 | Identification Chart |
| Appendix 4 | Personalisation Chart
Links the School Self Evaluation Form, Quality Standards and personalisation headings to support implementation |
| Appendix 5 | Personal, Learning and Thinking skills Framework in the National Curriculum |

Guidance on Gifted and Talented Provision

This guidance is issued to support schools in developing their policy and practice with regard to gifted and talented provision. The following should be read alongside the Institutional Quality Standards (appendix 1). The Institutional Quality Standards for gifted and talented education provide a self-evaluation tool to help schools deliver effective whole-school provision for gifted and talented pupils and accumulate evidence for their self-evaluation form.

Section 1

Identification of Gifted and Talented Pupils

“Identification and provision are inseparable, because identification includes spotting potential through participation in learning opportunities.”
Department for Children, Schools and Families, 2006

Identification has been called ‘an imprecise science’; hence each school should develop a ‘best fit’ approach that draws on a range of qualitative and quantitative data.

- The most effective form of identification is classroom provision that offers opportunities for all forms of ability to be demonstrated.
- When carried out according to National Curriculum inclusion principles, the process of identification will uncover pupils with potential as well as those already performing at a high level.
- Effective identification will use information from a wide range of sources, including parents and pupils.
- The process must be transparent and used consistently within and across schools.
- The best practice in identification involves a cyclical review rather than a one-off process.

Once identified a gifted and/ or talented pupil should be named on a register to support provision. This should not be seen as a list but as a tool for inclusion. Schools need to ensure that:

- there are gifted and/or talented learners in every year group in every school;
- talented pupils are included and given equal recognition with gifted pupils;
- outstanding leaders are identified and given opportunities to develop and share their skills;
- the register is a ‘live’ tool and pupils may be moved on and off the register according to need;
- the register reflects the whole school population in terms of gender, ethnicity, looked-after status, and socio-economic background;
- pupils showing high level potential in relation to their peers, and able underachievers are included;
- they are open about the purpose and nature of the register with pupils and parents.

The following methods of identification are by no means an exhaustive list, but might be useful:

- assessment of children’s work;
- teacher nomination;
- specialist teacher nomination;
- parent nomination;
- checklists (general or subject specific);
- testing: achievement, potential curriculum ability and/or creativity testing;
- previous year teachers’ reports/assessments;
- psychological findings;
- peer group nomination;
- discussion with children;
- nomination from outside agencies ie sports clubs.

Staff should be looking for evidence of high achievement or the potential to achieve highly. A pupil with neat handwriting, good behaviour and regularly completed work is not necessarily exhibiting the characteristics of a very able pupil. However, a pupil who is responding to high-level creative demands and who has the ability to invent, design, present, speculate and solve problems should be considered even if conventional test results are not consistently high.

Gifted and/ or talented pupils may exhibit some or all of the following characteristics:

- extensive specialist knowledge;
- outstanding memory and recall;
- sees the same as others but thinks differently;
- extensive general knowledge;
- is inquisitive and asks many searching questions;
- analyses and responds to questions in diverse ways;
- possesses a wide range of vocabulary and verbal fluency;
- is a keen and alert observer;
- is original, imaginative and creative;
- can leap from the concrete to the abstract;
- recognises connections and forms hypotheses;
- works quickly and accurately;
- learns easily;
- can work with intense concentration;
- devises own methods and strategies;
- may not conform to accepted standards of behaviour;
- can make generalisations;
- is versatile;
- likes collecting things;
- daydreams;
- has an unusual sense of humour.

List by courtesy of Joan Freeman ,Ofsted review of research (1998)

Identifying Able Underachievers

Since current definitions of high ability include the importance of assessing potential and are not limited to performance in tests, there are likely to be discrepancies between occasional signs of potential and consistent performance. Hence it is important to keep developing a dynamic curriculum with opportunities to achieve in many different ways and an ongoing register of gifted and talented pupils so that the internal processes of identification and provision become more rigorous over time. Some schools find that the very fact of being included on the gifted and talented register gives an underachiever the kind of recognition that he/she needs to gain momentum. Positive interventions by mentors or teachers which are intensive, planned and goal-orientated are the most likely routes to success, with progress shared by staff and teachers. Conversely, stereotyping of underachievers as 'less able' or continued low expectations will not help. So pro-active policies to promote high aspirations may lead to less crisis management later on.

Dual/Multiple Exceptionalities

The term 'dual and multiple exceptionalities' refers to those educationally vulnerable pupils whose profiles are often underrepresented on registers for gifted and talented pupils. Pupils with dual and multiple exceptionalities tend to feature in both the special educational needs and the gifted and talented registers. It is important to focus on learning strengths in order to provide challenging materials as well as identifying and overcoming the barriers which have led to the pupil's additional or special educational needs profile.

Section 2

Effective Provision in the Classroom

Teaching and Learning

"I forget what I was taught. I only remember what I have learnt."
Patrick White, author

Most teaching strategies which facilitate development of gifted and talented pupils will support all learners, and are considered part of an outstanding lesson. These include:

- breadth – placing learning in a wider context;
- depth – delving deeper into a topic to increase specific knowledge and understanding;
- pace – speed in covering a broad and rich curriculum;
- self-assessment – choice of personalised learning routes;
- reflection by pupils on progress against targets;
- emphasis on skills which cross subject disciplines;
- widespread use of thinking skills and problem-solving;
- gifted and talented learners leading and teaching others;
- gifted and talented learners working together as a group;
- pupils devising questions instead of the teacher;
- acceleration – where appropriate within lessons.

Enrichment & extension opportunities for some pupils to progress at a faster pace than others through aspects of their learning and to gain recognition for their achievements is one aspect of differentiated provision. The National Curriculum's flexibility allows schools to use material from later key stages without changing a learner's class. Pupils may function cognitively above their chronological age in some areas, however this may not be matched by increased maturity. Pupils' social and emotional needs must be considered carefully before accelerating a child to an older class.

Section 3

Standards

John Stannard, the Department for Children, Schools and Families' National Champion for gifted and talented learners, has described the "persuasive case for positioning gifted and talented as a leading edge of a wider school improvement policy at school and local authority level".

Evidence suggests that there will be an impact on standards for all as a direct result of schools developing a systematic focus on providing successfully for Able Gifted and Talented learners.

The benefits include:

- Lifting standards and expectations for all;
- More optimistic and challenging learning and teaching;
- Increased opportunity through curriculum enrichment;
- Positive and creative impact on school climate;
- Increasing parental commitment.

In light of this, provision for gifted and talented pupils needs to be considered part of the drive to narrow attainment gaps.

In the context of gifted and talented, 'narrowing the gap' means the gap between what schools and individuals actually achieve and what they might achieve given the right motivation, access and opportunity to maximise their potential.

Department for Children, Schools and Families (2009)

Within the school's tracking system the progress of gifted and talented learners should be highlighted and analysed.

Performance data can be used to identify subjects where pupils are making more or less progress. Gifted and talented learners should be included in school intervention programmes to address underperformance. Schools could also track gifted and talented pupils as they move into higher education.

In their drive to raise standards for gifted and talented learners, the Royal Borough encourages and supports schools to:

- Use the Institutional Quality Standards, supplemented by the Classroom Quality Standards to monitor and evaluate the development of their provision for gifted and talented learners
- Base their plans on the outcomes of the self evaluation process
- Seek appropriate continuing professional development where this is identified as a need
- Ensure that most sections of the Self Evaluation Form include reference to gifted and talented learners

Section 4

Enabling Curriculum Entitlement and Choice

"I believe in standardising automobiles, not human beings."
(Einstein)

Flexibility and choice are important in creating personalised learning pathways for gifted and talented pupils. This involves the development of a wide range of opportunities for learners to develop skills and expertise and to learn in different ways.

Gifted and talented learners need to be supported in making appropriate choices throughout their education, so that they do not limit their options. The pupil's own voice is central to developing understanding of their needs and aspirations.

The increased flexibility of the 14-19 curriculum will impact on the guidance that gifted and talented pupils need. They, and their parents, need information, advice and guidance based on thorough knowledge of individual strengths and areas of excellence. Where pupils demonstrate particular talents, the choice of pathway may not be straightforward. Guidance should be moderated by judgements of a student's emotional needs, maturity, social skills and ability to cope with a particular pathway, as well as issues about limiting career options.

Pupils 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 auditions or exams. There needs to be appropriate strategies for catching up on other work missed as a result.

Alongside the curriculum, schools should offer a varied programme of enrichment activities as part of their provision for gifted and talented pupils. For example:

- competitions;
- museum visits;
- theatre productions;
- field trips;
- visiting experts;
- sports training;
- additional language classes;
- debating societies;
- business and enterprise clubs.

Section 5

Assessment for Learning

Assessment for learning is integral to effective classroom provision, and the strategies identified in Section 2 will complement good assessment. Assessment for learning is especially appropriate for gifted and talented learners as it stimulates independence and self management.

In promoting an understanding of objectives and success criteria, care should be taken that limits are not imposed on the achievements of gifted and talented learners.

The aim should be to move towards an ethos where “classroom practice regularly requires pupils to reflect on their own progress against targets, and engage in the direction of their own learning.” Self reflection and management are key elements of the personal learning and thinking skills framework in the National Curriculum (Appendix 5).

Assessment for learning strategies particularly relevant to gifted and talented learners:

- challenging learning objectives that ensure that they will make progress;
- specific feedback on what they have done well;
- advice on how to improve, even when the work is of an excellent standard;
- identification of their own success criteria;
- explaining to others what they are trying to achieve;
- explicit teaching of peer and self assessment skills;
- opportunities to participate in peer and self-assessment activities.

Section 6

Transfer and Transition

It is particularly relevant for gifted and talented learners who may have been 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 school.

Gifted and talented learners should be fully involved in the management of their transitions. It is possible that a pupil identified as a gifted and/or talented learner at one school may not be at the next. It is important that the learner's needs are met, regardless of whether or not they are on the register. This may include supporting pupils who find that they are no longer the most able of their peers once they have moved.

All receiving schools i.e. junior, middle and secondary should receive information about pupils on the gifted and talented register including why they were listed and how well they have progressed.

One of the biggest challenges is ensuring that any information received actually informs planning for learning and teaching. Where communication between settings is less than effective, a receiving school may waste valuable time in recognising a child's ability and making appropriate provision.

Strategies particularly pertinent to supporting transition for gifted and talented learners:

- information shared upon transfer is both quantitative and qualitative;
- Gifted and talented mentoring or buddy schemes at the receiving school;
- early information, advice and guidance to pupils and parents about enrichment and extension opportunities that are available in the school and wider community;
- ensuring that gifted and talented pupils, particularly those from socially disadvantaged backgrounds have appropriate information, advice and guidance and the opportunity for taster sessions to encourage progression into higher education.

Section 7

Leadership

A whole-school approach is needed to implement a gifted and talented policy effectively. A senior leader should have oversight of gifted and talented, alongside a coordinator who may have an operational role. In addition, a gifted and talented leading teacher may be nominated who has the role of being an expert in and champion for gifted and talented provision.

The Role of Co-ordinator and/or Leading Teacher

The roles of gifted and talented coordinators/leading teachers may be clarified as follows:

A **Co-ordinator** is a manager; therefore the responsibilities will be whole-school and strategic. For example:

- mainstreaming gifted and talented provision through Quality–First Teaching;
- using the Institutional Quality Standards to develop provision;
- ensure that gifted and talented priorities are reflected in the school development plan;
- monitoring and evaluation;
- updating registers;
- keeping evidence;
- organising continuing professional development;
- liaising with parents and governors.

The **Leading Teacher** needs to become:

- an expert in the pedagogy associated with gifted and talented education;
- a model of outstanding teaching;
- a coach for other teachers.

Where the Co-ordinator and Leading Teacher are different people it is advisable for them to work together on:

- initial audit;
- action plan;
- decisions on which aspects of the Institutional Quality Standards to prioritise and address.

The role of **Governors** is crucial to effective and strategic leadership in provision for gifted and talented learners, for example:

- agreeing and understanding of what constitutes gifted and talented;
- reviewing the gifted and talented policy at regular intervals;
- actively supporting provision for gifted and talented;
- deploying resources to support gifted and talented;
- ensuring all groups are represented within the identified gifted and talented population in school;
- evaluating gifted and talented provision;
- celebrating achievements of gifted and talented pupils;
- responsibility for gifted and talented lies with a named governor.

Section 8

Policy

Each school will have its own template for policy documents, but the following areas should be addressed:

- identification;
- classroom provision;
- standards;
- curriculum entitlement and choice;

- transfer and transition;
- leadership;
- ethos and pastoral care;
- staff development and resources;
- monitoring and evaluation;
- partnerships and learning beyond the school.

Schools may have a separate policy explicitly for gifted and talented provision. Alternatively, it might be an integral part of the policies for inclusion or personalised learning, to reflect the understanding that gifted and talented support is an aspect of mainstream provision. Additionally it should be acknowledged that gifted and talented learners are one group of many who might need specific intervention to ensure that they make good progress.

Different subjects lend themselves to particular gifted and talented strategies, but any departmental- specific policy must be consistent with the whole school approach.

Section 9

School Ethos and Pastoral Care

“In the effective school, the social and emotional needs of gifted and talented pupils are addressed in the same way as they are for other pupils. Their needs are not necessarily greater, but they do exist and intellectual progress should not be at the expense of social and emotional development”
(Eyre, 2007)

It is important for schools to develop policies that place gifted and talented provision in the context of a whole school ethos of achievement and success, including a celebration of excellence wherever it is found. At the ‘exemplary’ level of the Institutional Quality Standards (equivalent to OFSTED grade 1) there will be opportunities for gifted and talented pupils to ‘use their gifts to benefit other pupils and the wider community’.

Pastoral care systems should be used to address emotional needs in personalised ways. This can be done in consultation with pupils, parents and carers. gifted and talented pupils are just as likely to be underachieving for emotional reasons as any other pupil and being an advanced learner may bring some specific issues which warrant urgent attention. gifted and talented learners are not a homogeneous group and individual and specific needs require consideration.

Academic ability can sometimes be far in advance of emotional and social maturity. Young people may need support in managing peer relationships so that high achievement does not alienate classmates and lead to social isolation. Schools should ensure that their anti-bullying policy addresses the needs of gifted and talented pupils and counteracts 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.

“What really matters for success, character, happiness and lifelong achievements is a definite set of emotional skills – your emotional quotient – not just purely cognitive abilities that are measured by conventional intelligence quotient tests.”
(Goleman, 1995)

Section 10

Staff Development

As effective gifted and talented provision is a whole-school responsibility, it should be part of continuing professional development for all staff. One possible pitfall is that the gifted and talented Coordinator/Lead Teacher receives all relevant training and other staff remain unaware of local and national developments.

Much of the specific training for gifted and talented will be relevant to the wider learning agenda as inclusive approaches are advocated.

It is important that all staff have a shared understanding of terminology, purpose and principles with respect to gifted and talented provision. To complement whole school continuing professional development, each subject area should be aware of subject-specific exemplification and guidance, for example the classroom quality standards, *knowledge of subjects and themes*.

The gifted and talented Leading Teacher is a champion for gifted and talented provision in school and will be able to advise staff on continuing professional development opportunities.

Section 11

Resources

Research clearly shows that the most important resource is the teacher. gifted and talented learners benefit most from quality interventions, questioning and rich personal relationships, so human resources need to be nurtured first and foremost.

Teaching assistants, although more-often tasked with supporting pupils who experience difficulty in learning, can be a valuable resource in gifted and talented provision. For example:

- providing stimulating tasks and extension activities;
- providing qualitative assessment data;
- extending gifted and talented learning through small group discussion.

Mentoring can also provide support and encouragement to gifted and talented pupils, acting as confidante, and in some cases, helping pupils to broaden their horizons and aim higher.

Section 12

Monitoring and Evaluation

School Improvement Partners challenge and support schools with respect to progress and standards of gifted and talented pupils, thereby ensuring that gifted and talented learners are not an underperforming group. They monitor and evaluate whole-school gifted and talented provision, and agree appropriate steps for improvement. The named governor will have a key role in supporting the school in its own monitoring and evaluation.

As representatives of the Local Authority, School Improvement Partners have a role in monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of the Local Authority's gifted and talented policy.

Section 13

Engaging with the Community, Families and Beyond

Engaging families goes beyond the sharing of information – parents and carers have a right to know about the detail of the provision being made to meet the needs of their child and to be involved in major decisions.

The overall aim should be to move to a point where parents/carers are actively engaged in supporting and complementing provision, such as:

- involvement in discussions about provision;
- overcoming barriers to achievement;
- complementing school provision;
- celebrating progress and success.

The Every Child Matters agenda emphasises the importance of emotional health and wellbeing; social care and health service professionals working collaboratively can ensure gifted and talented learners have the support they need.

Section 14

Learning Beyond the Classroom

Enrichment activities help to build a broad and deep curriculum complementing classroom provision. However they should not be seen in isolation. Enrichment activities should be followed up to ensure a long-term impact on classroom experiences and that the new skills learnt can be applied regularly in the future.

Opportunities for enrichment may come via the school, local community, the local authority, regional or national networks, or higher education establishments. An effective enrichment policy for gifted and talented pupils will be part of an overall school policy which seeks to match enrichment opportunities to the pupil's needs, for example, gifted and talented pupils often benefit from access to specialisms and expertise not available in the classroom. It is important that gifted and talented pupils benefit from the extended services offer.

Uptake of additional opportunities may be hindered if pupils come from socially disadvantaged backgrounds. Consideration should be made of financial circumstances and support offered where appropriate.

Bibliography

Evaluating gifted and talented education: the school improvement partner's role in engaging the school, Department for Children, Schools and Families (2009)