



CASE STUDY REPORT

Establishing a whole school approach to G&T at a Medway secondary (non-selective) school

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This study was originally published in 2010 as part of the 'What Works Well' initiative, part of the National Strategies for Education in England.

Abstract

Background: The purpose of the study was to identify and provide for G&T learners in Walderslade Girls' School, measure progress towards success criteria such as increased motivation and achievement, staff inclusion and training, and fund raising, and to explore the impact of G&T students on the school community, including their leadership roles and multiple intelligences.

Aims: The main aim of the development work was to raise the aspirations of G&T learners by providing opportunities to compete with G&T pupils from other schools, embedding G&T in all aspects of the school curriculum, and encouraging leadership amongst students through prefectship and other activities.

Methods: The participants in this case study are the Headteacher, Assistant Head, teachers, support staff, parents, pupils, governors, LA advisers, National Strategies consultants, and former G&T students who are now on the staff as fully qualified teachers, as well as G&T and non-G&T students who have demonstrated leadership in sports, music, drama, art, and the prefect system.

Methods used to measure progress towards success criteria included CVA data comparison of cohorts, periodic teacher assessment, test results, IQS audits, lesson observations, pupil interviews, literature, policy documents, and staff training. Support was provided by the Local Authority, Senior Management, and external agencies, as well as student-led initiatives such as prefectships, sports, music, drama, and art. Multiple intelligences were taken into account when selecting prefects, with criteria including good attendance, the will to help the school community, and the willingness to embrace leadership.

Findings: The main findings are that staff training and whole-school approaches to AfL and literacy have helped develop G&T practice, and that staff commitment and healthy competition have been essential for success. Pupil tracking and cross-stage information, attendance monitoring, and parental/pupil feedback have also been important.

Implications: The findings imply that staff training, monitoring, and planning are essential for successful G&T provision, as well as providing opportunities for talented pupils and involving parents and leadership in the process.

This abstract was generated by Camtree using a large language model (LLM) and added to the original report in 2023.

Keywords: Secondary education

Introduction

What were your reasons for doing this type of development work?

The G&T journey at Walderslade Girls' School began some years ago when usually only pupils with Special Educational Needs were specifically provided for in lessons. Under the leadership of the Headteacher and the Assistant Head with responsibility for G&T, the school culture has been changed. Initially, identifying G&T pupils and highlighting their lack of progress was undertaken with sensitivity but now the needs of this group of learners are firmly embedded in the school and departmental systems and policies and most importantly, in the minds of teachers. As part of the same journey, the Assistant Head has used every opportunity provided by the Local Authority and Universities to raise the aspirations of G&T learners by enabling them to mix and compete with G&T pupils from other areas.

Walderslade Girls' School is a non-selective secondary high school within a grammar school area in the Medway LEA. There are three girls' grammar schools locally, as opposed to two boys' grammar schools. Whilst the free school meals ratio is below the national average, the proportion of students on the SEN register is significantly above. The school has a very local intake, with over 90% of students white British, predominantly from households without adults who have been through higher education, as well as a lower than the national average of high social class households, however, the school deprivation factor is below the national average and the percentage stability is above it. (School SEF, April 2010)

Who might find this case study useful?

- Support staff
- Assistant headteacher
- Carer
- Children's services staff
- Deputy headteacher
- Early years foundation stage practitioner
- Governor
- Head of school improvement
- Head of year
- Headteacher
- LA adviser
- Leading teacher
- Middle leader
- National Strategies consultant
- Parent
- Phase leader
- Pupil
- School leader
- Senior leader
- Senior leadership team (SLT)
- SIP (School Improvement Partner)
- Subject leader
- Teacher
- Teaching assistant
- Year group leader

Description

What specific curriculum area, subject or aspect did you intend to have impact on?

- All aspects
- All subjects

How did you intend to impact on pupil learning?

We began by developing the will to extend pupil horizons and to encourage pupils to realise that the sky was the limit, provided that they worked hard. We began by establishing a G&T register after pouring over a great deal of KS2 data, both qualitative and quantitative. We began by explicitly expressing our goals from the outset. Within these aims, we met with and talked with parents/carers and staff to set out our future goals. Listed below is a range of actions taken to impact on learning.

- Inform pupils they were on the G&T register and why; inform parents/carers
- Make explicit the expectations of entry scores to pupils, staff, parents
- Exploit ways to provide out of classroom learning, especially those in which pupils competed with G&T pupils from other schools, including grammar schools
- Provide opportunities to compete in challenges with G&T boys. (In a single sex, non-selective school we wished to reduce gender stereotyping)
- Provide cross- school and in-school competitive challenges involving cross-curricular skills such as problem-solving, effective team-work, effective communication, mostly verbal, public speaking, interaction with a range of adults beyond home and school
- Increase pupil motivation and achievement towards higher KS3 levels/ GCSE grades and eventually A level, HE if appropriate and desired by students
- Staff inclusion and training: provide internal and fund some external training for staff specifically in G&T
- Instil the notion that high staff expectation amongst G&T learners was the responsibility of all staff, not just one or two although initially it was just that, the brief of one
- Encourage high-level teaching across the school with particular reference to the top sets

What were your success criteria?

Defined success criteria were not established initially as a finite goal in terms of numbers of pupils raising attainment levels partially or wholly; however, whenever NC levels came up, or indeed entry to HE, as a school management team we were clear about our aims. What was required was a medium and long term plan to embed G&T in all aspects of the school curriculum and to use every extra curricular opportunity that we could afford, to enhance the G&T provision. The two-prong, simultaneous programme worked well even though as a school we had no budget at all for G&T. Some success criteria are listed below:

- Evidence of pupil enthusiasm to be on the register, to participate in G&T events, to share their experience with peers, staff, parents and governors
- Evidence of departmental planning to include G&T; evidence of some budgetary expenditure over two years (Two years were allowed as department heads could not be rushed into planning for G&T in the early days.)
- Evidence of reference to G&T in departmental meeting accounts; (departmental screening and monitoring of G&T did not happen quickly but took several years to embed. It is something that needs to be revisited regularly. For a time the author chose to provide detailed analyses of G&T pupil

attainment in end-of-year exams, for example, to present to Heads of Department for perusal and action.)

- Accounts of G&T events for inclusion in reports to the Governing Body, for example, attendance at dance events, sports events, art competitions, academic prowess
- Evidence of G&T attendance and behaviour
- Liaison with pupils and parents/carers
- Participation by the G&T cohort in the programme of events
- Evidence of G&T motivation in class and in home study
- End of key stage evidence of reaching or surpassing expected levels and of the same at GCSE
- Fund raising

In order to support events, the author and committed colleagues, parents and pupils chose to undertake fund-raising and that was a whole, other area of work that went on for some years - we were greatly helped by committed and skilled parents and we formed a committee for G&T. The committee of parents and staff agreed at the end of each year to carry any funds forward to assist with the next year's programme. For example, whilst attendance at the university summer schools was desirable, it could not be part of our success criteria as some students could not afford the costs. With fund raising ourselves, we managed to cover rail or even coach fares and went some way to covering the costs of the residential accommodation. No pressure was put on parents or students to attend any event involving costs, but somehow, through sponsored events, boot fairs, school quizzes organised by the school publicity committee, we managed to raise funds having been unsuccessful in attracting funding for our ventures through more conventional means. I mention fund raising because, for us, it was essential to the overall achievement of our success.

Change in the school culture can be attributed to a large extent to the pupils themselves. They attended school functions, they had a stand and spoke to other students and parents about their university residential experience. They became the spokespeople.

Success criteria were gradually honed. With regard to staff, their attendance at the LEA organised G&T twilights became a 'must' as far as possible, monitoring of the attendance of the G&T cohort was regularly undertaken, administrative help built up to assist with notifying parents of G&T events through the school web-site and VLE. All these additional areas became part of our success criteria. Staff training did not solely include teaching staff. Under the duress of having insufficient time and plenty of other areas of responsibility the author chose to lead two administrative staff into the management of G&T. Together we built up systems for monitoring G&T pupils and for informing parents of the programme.

What information or data did you use to measure progress towards your success criteria?

- CVA data
- Data comparison of cohorts
- Periodic teacher assessment
- Test results

Describe the CPD approaches you used

The commitment of Heads of Departments has been instrumental in progressing the G&T agenda in the school. They carry out annual audits of practice and report specifically on G&T provision and achievements. In recent years audits have used Institutional Quality Standards (IQS) to benchmark practice and feed into the school self-evaluation and planning process. At the same time, Senior Leaders use lesson observations and pupil interviews to determine the level of challenge provided for the most able and discuss outcomes with department

heads.

There is a rigorous system in place and all staff are responsible for monitoring the progress of their pupils on a termly basis. In particular, Pupil Progress Managers (PPMs, formerly Heads of Year) and/or the G&T lead teacher/co-ordinator have a duty to meet with G&T pupils and their parents annually and to discuss what needs to be done for targets to be met. Pupil data and their progress history is available to all teachers and is used successfully to support transfer and transition, with KS2 pupils' work received and reviewed and with KS4 data passed on to the Heads of the joint VI Form.

As a result of the use of IQS a Governor was designated for the G&T cohort from 2009.

Literature relating to G&T was important in supporting staff development. Not initially, but about one year after the G&T impetus, a policy document was written and relayed to all teaching and support staff, although in the early days there was not the number of support staff currently employed and those who were on the payroll had nothing whatsoever to do with G&T. The publication of an in-school policy statement had a big impact. It was as if the whole school personnel accepted that G&T was part of school development now and for the future. What may have appeared to some staff as a series of disparate events involving a few able pupils became a whole-school focus involving all staff. Staff cannot be expected to keep in mind a plethora of policy documents at all times, however, the creation of a whole school policy statement enabled Heads of Department to write into their departmental practice plans for and methods to meet the needs of G&T pupils.

This was important also in recruitment. For the first time and for ever after, we could legitimately refer to a G&T policy, ratified by the Governing Body and approved by the local authority and therefore seek the views of potential newcomers as well as observing their approach to G&T pupils in the interview process and thereafter.

Policy update is always a problem for busy teachers who write them or, even better, form interested groups to formulate them. But in this school as likely everywhere else, there is a rolling programme of governor review and update of policies. It is always a concern that our policy document is only up-to-date for a while, however, it is present; part of the whole school ethos and referred to annually in many ways.

Later on the national agenda to improve secondary, particularly in our case, non-selective high school, results, greatly helped our cause. What we had been trying to achieve was lent national credence and any staff who had felt that the most able pupils would achieve well anyway, regardless of teaching or learning content, were brought into the realisation that the G&T pupils were just as important as the LAC, (looked after children,) travellers or ethnic minorities. Perhaps not for everyone but certainly for those charged with promoting G&T in a non-selective high school, such a development could not have been bettered. In this particular school there was no 'whip' aspect. Rather, staff were led increasingly down the G&T path through staff development, performance team leadership, heads of department committed to the cause and teachers of real calibre, many existent, several new.

Who provided you with support?

- External agency
- Other
- Senior management

How were you supported?

Local Authority support was invaluable in forwarding G&T through its Strategy Group which met termly, through the Lead Teacher training programme and via the twilight meetings that incorporated a range of subjects, speakers and skills. The Strategy Group, chaired by the LA adviser for G&T, is cross-phase and includes a range

of LA personnel, Headteachers, Lead Teachers, Regional Partners from HE, G&T experts and, at times, parents. This group decided the themes for the G&T annual Summer Schools and those for the twilight meetings.

Twilight meetings provide the vehicle for staff from different departments to meet, exchange ideas and be kept up-to-date with G&T developments locally and nationally.

National developments such as the IQS and CQS provided a template of tools through which school practice could be evaluated. In WGS an in-depth survey was conducted to measure our progress against the IQS. Results gained were used to inform the School Development Planning for subsequent years.

In-school training included all staff as well as governors. The Head and Lead Teacher maintained commitment to G&T, whilst every opportunity was exploited to advance pupil leadership in G&T, for example, in prefect training and School Council organisation.

Howard Gardiner's work on multiple intelligences was used in staff training as well as Bloom's Taxonomy.

Impact

What has been the overall impact on pupil learning?

The journey has been long, but we have moved from being a school with a preponderance of interest in SEN to a school with a fair balance of interest, the scales now at least equal, at all times including G&T in lessons in all areas of the curriculum.

Early, November entry in GCSE English has proved very successful for the most and more able students over several years. In November 2009, early entry in maths proved very successful for the most able candidates with outstanding results in January 2010.

Pupils in KS3 are aware of their level in all subjects and of what they need to do to improve, although, of course, they do sometimes forget that they are aware of their level. This is where it helps if the Lead Teacher for G&T has a good knowledge of the whole school curriculum. It only takes a few pointed reminders of subject assessments to open up the 'level' conversation.

The VI Form is joint, between WGS and the adjacent Greenacre boys' school. The last five to seven years have shown a steady, successful increase in HE entry with students completing degree courses, some of whom are pleased to come back to school to relay their experience.

A number of former G&T students are now on the staff as fully qualified teachers.

Leadership amongst students is important in WGS and this has been demonstrated in the advance in sports prowess, music, drama and art as well as through the excellent prefect system. Whilst nearly all G&T students apply for prefectship in year 10, for year 11, academic ability or specific talent are not criteria. Therefore over more than ten years we have had a prefect team drawn from the whole year group, the only criteria being good attendance, the will to help the school community including, most importantly, oneself, the will to embrace leadership in all its guises and the willingness to do duty on a wet day. Multiple intelligences are ever apparent within the prefect team whose renown stretches far beyond the school gates. In a school such as this, one would be ill-advised to keep G&T to a narrow brief. Some of our least able pupils have been extremely proficient school prefects, using good interpersonal skills frequently to good effect as well as sound, common-sense leadership skills. The all-ability concept of the prefect team has benefited all its members annually. Learning and motivation have been enhanced as confidence has been raised through leadership roles.

Thoughts you think are relevant to overall impact on learning

- The journey has imperatively demanded an acute 'knowing' of everyone on the register, please note, not knowledge of, but knowing personally. This in itself is a pleasure, but somehow time has to be found to know names, personalities, little idiosyncrasies in learning styles, and to be the supportive arbiter in all discussions with many staff.
- 'Knowing' also means being aware of family circumstances to some extent, as much as families are willing to convey. This may not be to do with solely one aspect of the pupil's life, such as financial constraints, but other social and emotional aspects of the pupil's life both in and out of school. Not infrequently pupils on the G&T register may be the first in their families to be so classed. In other cases families are more than keen to participate in and support initiatives. The maintenance of our most able is worth sensitive handling and we have found that time invested in parental/ pupil meetings is time well spent.
- We are fortunate not to have faced the 'boffin' syndrome - it is difficult to see how we did not. However, three pupils on the autism spectrum who were also G&T faced peer derision and disdain that was incomprehensible to them but extremely upsetting. The fact that these pupils also became prefects in year 11 may have added to their problems, but they had chosen their path and successfully gone through the selection process. All survived more than adequately and two are now in HE. Our well-established SEN department was able to support these pupils socially and emotionally. Again, the Lead Teacher needed to be available to listen, sometimes commiserate and offer encouragement.
- Keeping the staff up-to-date in G&T developments, in AfL, literacy, numeracy - that is essential. Never let G&T fall to a 'back burner.' Keep it in the School Development Plan, in the SEF, everywhere.
- Specialist Schools and Academies Trust. We were fortunate to achieve specialist status in English, humanities and performing arts. Since that, two awards for school achievement in 2010 were received for 15 points over the past three years within the 5 A* - C range and 10 points value added on 5 A* - C. Such awards have a beneficial effect on staff, students and parents.

Quotes you think are relevant to overall impact on learning

"Building a roof on that house was really difficult, but the maths helped. We had to work out angles for real, not just pretend." (Year 10 set 1 maths student in a project involving technology and maths and incorporating the Royal Engineers, Build A Barracks competition, July 2008)

"It was awesome. I was chosen to sing Nancy's song in the final production. I was terrified but it was great. I walked over an hour there and back every day and wouldn't have missed a minute." (year 10 student at the end of a Gifted and Talented, LA organised two-week music and drama summer school, July/August 2007)

"I never realised geography had such practical application. I just took it because I liked it. But this visit has made me realise that I could study it at university and it would be useful - I would be doing something practical." (Year 12 G&T student after geography visit to the Olympics site, June 2008. Visit included meetings with site organisers such as surveyors and civil engineers)

"We're definitely going to university now, miss. Can we go back next year? We didn't know what living in 'halls' meant and meeting loads of different people." (Year 9 and 10 students after residential summer school at University of Leicester)

"I know we didn't win, but I think we did okay, considering the boys are so clever. Still, we used the (few) resources best." (Comment after Medway Education and Business Partnership organised competitive school event of rescue team drafted into area after natural disaster to Build a Shelter. The boys referred to are boys

from a prestigious local grammar school.

"It was great. You got to see all the places you could go to university near home. I had no idea there were so many opportunities in Medway." (Student and parent after attending 'Learning Together project at the University of Kent, Medway campus, organised through Aim Higher and school partnership)

"I was really pleased that my poem won. I didn't think when I wrote it that it would win." (Year 11 student after her poetry competition entry won a local award)

"It's good we're on the G&T register. I didn't know. I'm not worried about it; I think it's good." (Year 7 pupils in one of the annual department audits)

"I'm so glad I went on that university summer school visit. It really gave me a clear idea of what campus university was like." (Year 13 student who went on to study law at the University of Glamorgan, after spending a week's residential course in year 10)

"What I like is having things in lessons that stretch you and problem solving. I wouldn't say that in class." (Year 9 pupil in small group, G&T interview in one of the annual departmental audits)

"I was a bit scared about being a prefect but after the training course I'm glad I was picked. You learn so much about problem-solving and how best to approach people." (Year 10 student after two-day prefect training course in team-building and leadership skills)

Quantitative evidence of impact on pupil learning

- CVA data
- Data comparison of cohorts
- Periodic teacher assessment

Qualitative evidence of impact on pupil learning

- Logs or interviews
- Observation outcomes
- Pupil consultation data
- Pupils' work

Describe the evidence of impact on pupil learning

Within the 'impact' description it is important to remember that we are a non-selective high school within a LEA grammar school area, in which, locally, there are three girls' grammar schools as opposed to two boys' grammar schools. Such a situation inevitably skews the ability profile of our intake towards the lower end, (RAISEonline.) With that as a given, the G&T cohort have performed extremely well over several years and their performance has had a beneficial effect on whole school performance.

From 2007 - 2009 CVA was significantly high with the school being placed in the 8th, 10th and 14th percentiles nationally. In 2009, 100% of the G&T cohort achieved five A* - C grades including English and maths.

Consistency of achievement resulted in our being one of the the 633 schools nationally to win an award for the 'Most Improved Specialist School and Academies' in March 2010.

In terms of CVA our results have been good over several years, particularly from KS2 TO KS4.

The G&T cohort are monitored regularly and for most, attainment is raised.

There has been a steady increase in HE entry over five to seven years.

GCSE results were the best ever in 2009, with 75.6% A* - C including English and maths.

In 2008 - 2009, FFTD** data indicated that five of the sixteen G&T cohort should achieve Grade A in GCSE English, one in maths and one in science. In November entry in English, five students achieved grade A whilst in the summer, English Literature entry, five achieved A*, six achieved grade A, three grade B and two grade C.

Human stories should not be ignored. Of this cohort, one student missed year 10 completely to be educated at home due to a range of difficulties, returning only after the start of year 11 and making sufficient progress to be entered, late, for the November English language exam. Another struggled with her behaviour and frequent fixed-term exclusion, well merited within the school disciplinary policy in a school of low rate fixed-term exclusion.

In maths, there was no early entry in 2008 - 2009. FFTD indicated one grade A, ten grade B. Actual results were one grade A, seven grade B, five grade C and one grade D, (she of the frequent fixed-term.) What is miraculous is that the student was there to take the exam, treated it seriously and achieved a near C. That is cause for celebration in a High School such as this. As referred to earlier in this case study, November 2009 was the first year that early maths entry was undertaken. In January 2010 results were: 9 x grade A, 15 x B, 35 x grade C. In English there is always the 'other exam' to concentrate on after successful early entry; in maths, an energetic and innovative HOD has looked to providing a range of opportunities to suit all candidates, such as preparation for A level, retakes if C was not sufficient or if D was gained, or a course in statistics or financial capability.

In science, FFTD indicated one grade A, seven grade B and eight grade C. In science core and additional, five grade As were attained, with three Bs and nine Cs.

Colleagues will know that, despite all rational analyses, results vary with year groups. We had not expected the 2008 - 2009 G&T cohort to do so well, nor even surpass the attainment of 2007 - 2008, whose behaviour as a year group was a great deal less problematic than that of 2008 - 2009. Peer behaviour, even amongst the most able, has an effect upon all others.

Of the G&T cohort in 2007 - 2008, four of twenty-one attained more than ten points above KS2 results, from KS2 to KS3. Of the same cohort, many more attained more than ten points above from KS2 - KS4. What was exciting about that year's results at GCSE was that many more students than expected attained more than ten points above indications. Arguably, our systems and strategies for G&T were bearing fruit. Far more students attained more than ten points above indications than those who did not. Two students on the most and more able G&T register suffered extremely difficult circumstances during year 11, through personal bereavement and loss of home, another's attendance was low due to caring for a sick parent. How unrealistic to imagine that such trying circumstances might not unnerve young people and how courageous their achievement, even if it was below expectations in some cases.

** FFTD = Fischer Family Trust Type D estimates are based upon the progress made by schools in the top 25% percentile of value-added scores nationally.

What has been the impact on teaching?

All staff are aware of the need to extend the most able pupils. For new staff, the CPD manager includes Gifted and Talented in her training programme. For existing staff, G&T is a regular component in staff training sessions. As in all busy secondary schools there is pressure on staff development time and initiatives and therefore the Lead Teacher has to work hard to ensure that G&T is kept to the forefront at all times.

The message and import of G&T to all staff has not been patchy; there has been a consistent message for some years, however we have found that impetus needs to be maintained as a constant theme. This is not because

staff are unwilling but rather that our high school is made up largely of pupils who are not on the G&T register and who require/demand a great deal of staff time.

Annual audits ensure that staff are acutely aware of the need to teach to the highest level and ensure learning caters for the highest level of the G&T or beyond. But it is not just a matter of audits. Many staff now do this a matter of course and are proud of results.

Ofsted inspections, LA monitoring, audit observation results, pupil interviews, all attest to high level teaching for G&T. High level questioning, peer reflection, the insistence on using exam vocabulary in speaking and writing, having food technology as a cross-curricular themed day, insisting on the literacy techniques across all subjects - teachers embracing such ideas and implementing them means that G&T flourish as well as, of course, all others. The range of success is extensive and includes talent just as much as giftedness.

The challenge is to ensure an adequate degree of momentum annually with a major impetus preferably at the start of the school year and drip-feed approach through the year. Annual review and targets for departments are a necessary component. Above all, perhaps, a sympathetic, humane approach to reviewing targets both with pupils and staff through PTL/departmental audits/ pupil and parent interviews is essential. No-one can predict what may happen in a child's life that may have a major impact on their learning, attendance and attainment.

Quotes you think are relevant to the impact on teaching

'My set one are really getting on to solving A grade questions. If I could get them off the subject of boys I think I'd really nail it.' (Second year male maths teacher, year 11, set 1)

'If only they'd do some proper home study they'd be brilliant. How do they think they can be successful at A level without working at home?' (Comment regularly delivered from both GCSE and A level teachers)

'If only they would read more widely. We explain the exam questions in class and constantly reinforce study at home in groups or alone. But how do you counter clubbing?' (Frequent complaint by A level and GCSE staff.)

'Do you know what she did? She made her family eat nothing but her recipe for days. No wonder she got it perfect for the Future Chef contest.' (Year 10 LSA after sweating over many hot stoves.)

'I finally got some of the G&T of the set to reach the highest level in this project, not without making them review their work again and again. To make them reach level 6a + was a challenge. The thing is, they get bored with reviewing work they feel they've done.' (Comment from KS3 RE teacher, having made the most able review and reflect on their work, with copious feed-back)

'The VLE has really helped.' (Many staff who use VLE as a means of setting and reviewing home study.)

'I feel we've been kept up-to-date with G&T developments in the school and we now have a greater understanding of G&T.' (Governor, after G&T joint staff and governor training session.)

Evidence of impact on teaching

- Evidence from observation and monitoring
- Evidence from planning
- Improvements in curriculum documentation
- Teacher perceptions

Describe the evidence of impact on teaching

English, maths and science staff are keenly aware of the need to extend the G&T cohort. All three departments have led staff training sessions in assessment and AfL techniques that they have found useful. Other departments have emulated or adapted some of the techniques for use in their departments.

All departments include G&T learning extension tasks in departmental documentation. Several departments have deployed some of their budget on specifically G&T materials.

Creative and Performing Arts, which includes music, dance, drama and art, and the PE department, provide a list of talented pupils which is appended to the school G&T register. The progress of these pupils is monitored through specific performances or sports matches and, latterly, PE leadership courses. The school is fortunate to have staff willing to organise events and pupils willing to display their performing and sports prowess. Both departments/faculties have greatly enhanced opportunities for talented pupils.

In each top set lesson, staff will be looking to extend the most able. Observers will expect to see this in progress. Opportunities provided will include a range of activities, but, the underlining theme will be present. Realistically, how can one expect such extension to be present in every lesson? What we have found is that with regularly referring to the G&T message in whole and group staff training, extension becomes part of the normal process in lessons, for example, higher level questioning, group work specifically designed for G&T, the insistence of the use of exam vocabulary in pupil spoken answers - all help to reinforce improvement in the student mind.

What has been the impact on school organisation and leadership?

The school has been fortunate to have a Headteacher with a clear belief in forwarding the development of G&T pupils and key leadership staff with the determination to generate change. In some schools there may be a selection process for the personnel to lead the changes, but in our case it was a matter of establishing staff through appraisal, which preceded Performance Management.

The leadership of G&T became the brief of the author and was a lonely business to begin with. As time progressed and as alluded to earlier, the first and overriding impact was to get the pupils on board. Thereafter it was a relatively simple process to create systems and structures involving staff and parents, with regular briefings to the senior management team. Then SMT became fully involved, largely by dint of reference to and dealings with G&T at that stage. So what did we do? A huge number of tasks that schools now will be entirely used to completing every year, such as pouring over the new year 7 entry scores, listening to parents at new entrant parents' evenings, hearing staff views of year 7 achievements, therefore both quantitative and qualitative considerations went into the creation of a G&T register. A rider here: admissions to all years. It is so important for staff admitting pupils to keep an eye as to whether they are G&T and if so, to add them on the register. That can be so easily forgotten in the melee of admissions that fall outside usual arrangements.

Over the years of our G&T journey school leadership has monitored the progress of the most able annually, through Lead Teacher reports and through annual departmental audits. SMT has written G&T into both the SEF and the School Development Plan. In practice, this means that the leadership team are required to report back on the progress of and provision for G&T when they conduct departmental audits across all departments. In addition, in the pupil interview aspects of audits, the leadership team member will usually choose to include pupils on the G&T register so that their views are heard with regard to lesson and out of lesson learning.

School leadership team members support each and every staff initiative to enhance the provision for the G&T cohort, provided that it can be afforded. As a leadership team we have been committed to ensuring that the person responsible for G&T is a key member of the team and that the Lead Teacher reports regularly in

leadership team meetings.

Evidence of impact on school organisation and leadership

Gradually Heads of Year, now Pupil Progress managers (PPMs), were embedded in the process of knowing and monitoring G&T pupils. They were brought into the process of termly monitoring. They were required to meet with the G&T cohort within their year annually and to invite parents/ carers. 'Required' seems a 'hard' term to use. In fact, these staff were not directed or ordered, rather, through training, sharing and being at one with the sheer interest of their pupils and knowing the extent to which some of their year group could achieve, these were the factors that motivated the PPMs, although of course there is always an element of wanting to do the job to the best of ones ability in the fullest sense. They were keen to take part in the work. Forms were devised for reporting back and included parental/pupil comments. Such information was relayed to the next KS and the Lead Teacher so that there was a co-ordinating process with a voice to the leadership group. Pupil tracking and cross-stage information has long been part of our High School as is attendance monitoring, so these continue. The Lead Teacher led annual training to PPMs so that the process continued from year to year.

A whole-school approach to AfL and literacy has helped develop G&T practice as has the whole-school approach enshrined in the Teaching and Learning policy. In-house and LEA training in literacy and AfL have assisted all staff and the Learning Support team in advancing learning activities for the most able.

Summary

What is the crucial thing that made the difference?

We would not have managed had the vast majority of the staff not been on board. There were a few who were reticent but the vast majority embraced change and wanted to inspire in their lessons. They still inspire and our huge problems have not changed. Somehow, the staff took well to the introduction and continuity of G&T, not as if they were in competition with the range of three girls' grammars on our door-step, but that they were entirely interested in and committed to what they knew our pupils could do. The younger staff were readily committed to meeting every challenge in their lessons whilst many of the established staff, already good teachers, adapted their ways in favour of G&T. In this non-selective school, established teachers had been used to trying to push the most able and had lived through the times of CSE, (some readers will not remember that!.) with 'O' Level as an additional option.

It would be easy to think that, in adversity, surrounded by grammar schools, we had a clear task. The complexity of the demography of our pupils would negate such a view. That the staff became committed to the G&T cause and its continuity, is all. That the new staff are quickly inducted to our aims is imperative as is the on-going requirement for in-house training - the impetus must be maintained.

Staff leading the change must be genuine and totally committed themselves. It will help if that person or those persons are inspired themselves. Perfectly good and competent staff may not react well to being 'told,' but may react well to someone who is respected for their own dealings with pupils and families as well as their commitment to high level teaching, despite the difficulties.

Healthy competition intra-department is a good thing. GCSE and AS/A2 are great levellers. Therefore when one begins to accept that intelligence levels can change with age and opportunity and are not set in stone, staff begin to see the endless possibilities of their classes' progress and the sky becomes the limit. In this High school we constantly struggle against the lack of sufficient home study as a factor in GCSE/ A level success. We have tried almost every method known to man and still we struggle. If any reader has cracked the problem, we would be pleased to hear from you.

Belief in pushing the students always further is essential. As a staff, we accept that no-one has yet reached their limit of achievement, although much praise is given for high achievement in whatever group of students, from lowest to highest - all are applauded.

Attendance. At the same time as a huge concentration on G&T, attendance at school became a 'big issue.' Therefore whilst whole school attendance was monitored weekly, within that, groups such as G&T were monitored. Regular correspondence with parents/carers, meetings with them and pupils/students, pressure to improve and surpass national expectations, weekly bulletins to form tutors - all helped raise attendance figures so that G&T pupils were in lessons and learning.

Getting the pupils out to compete with others schools, getting them involved in HE open days, getting the parents on board in the 'Learning Together' opportunities - all helped to reinforce in the cohort the realisation that they could and should, if they wished, access HE.

What key resources would people who want to learn from your experience need access to?

DCSF publications:

- Gifted and talented education guidance on preventing underachievement, 2007
- Helping to fund and support children with dual or multiple exceptionalities
- Making good progress at KS3 English, 2008
- Handbook for Lead Teachers, revised 2008
- National Challenge Raising Standards: supporting schools G&T pilot programmes elements 1 and 2

What CPD session and resources were particularly useful?

- National Conferences and G&T courses, LA and national
- LA and in-school CPD
- SE regional hub conferences
- Formal NQT training in G&T

If another individual or school was attempting to replicate this work, where would they start and what would the essential elements be?

- Speak to staff who have shown inspiration in their lessons and who are committed to extending the most able; it does not matter which department they are in; they could become the G&T co-ordinator and future lead teacher. Through performance management, assess their direction
- Have one member of the leadership team responsible for G&T across the school
- Do most of what is recommended/statutory, but particularly, go with 'best fit' for your particular school
- Monitor the G&T register progress assiduously - it can't be done every day but termly, build time to review with formal review at least once annually, that is progress, attainment, attendance, behaviour, social and emotional development, over and above usual monitoring. If your school already has excellent systems for monitoring then you will be helped: not all schools do.
- We have always found that talk is best with our G&T. Electronic monitoring is all very well but is insufficient on its own
- Documentation from the LA and DCSF
- Defining terms and creating a gifted and talented register DCSF documentation, examples of case studies, IQS, CQS
- SEF, SIP, DIP and SOW
- National Strategies, literacy, numeracy and improving attendance and behaviour

- Contact authors if they feel that might help

What further developments are you planning to do (or would you like to see others do)?

- Specific training for LSAs for work with G&T
- Closer links with grammar schools in teaching and learning practices in years 12 and 13
- Increased mentoring by years 12 and 13 to provide good role models
- Within specialist status, offer of Saturday master classes to year 6 over a range of departments
- Increasing the support of departments by welcoming Advanced Skills Teachers into school, specifically to work with subject leaders to further develop teaching and learning for G&T

Supplementary Materials

This report is accompanied in the library by the following supplementary material:

- Able pupils monitoring form July 2004
- G&T concerns - letter to parent
- G&T memo to staff re monitoring outcomes
- Monitoring form for staff to log information on G&T pupils
- Monitoring letter to student
- Most able pupils monitoring form 2009
- G&T Policy updated June 2007
- G&T Policy updated Oct 2007
- IQS school review Dec 2007
- Memo to staff re National G&T Quality Standards
- PPMs mtg and sample letter to parents Nov Dec 2007
- Year 10 Mock exams 30 April 09
- Year 10 Mock exams 30 April 09 with FFTD sheet 1
- Year 10 Mock exams 30 April 09 with FFTD sheet 2

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About 'What Works Well'

This case study was originally published as part of the 'What Works Well' section of the National Strategies for Education in England. The National Strategies were professional programmes aiming for improvements in the quality of learning and teaching in schools in England. 'What Works Well' involved teaching practitioners from all phases and areas of education sharing accounts of real developments which had improved learning and teaching, and made a difference to pupil progress. 'What Works Well' case studies were designed to support practice transfer and include sufficient detail and resources to enable others to implement the effective practice described. They were reviewed by experts prior to publication as 'User Generated Content' (UGC) under a licence which encouraged reuse and derivative works, but which precluded commercial use.

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