

Gifted and Talented newsletter

Spring 2010

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Message from the Programme Director

Welcome to the spring edition of the Gifted and Talented (G&T) e-newsletter.

Being able to articulate thoughts and interact verbally with others at all levels and in a range of contexts is, for many learners, a passport to greater self-confidence, progress and achievement. However, not all learners have the language skills to support them in achieving their potential.

“ When the mind is thinking it is talking to itself ”

Plato

This newsletter offers updates on opportunities and new resources, linking them where relevant to pupil talk. One such new resource is [Excellence for All – A Gifted and Talented approach to whole-school improvement](#) (DCSF ref: 01019-2009PDF-EN-02) – of interest to all readers, whatever role or phase. While this is outlined in detail in section 3, it is interlinked to other sections of the newsletter. We have also included some ‘Talking points’ for your mind to consider when talking to itself (or with colleagues, of course!).

You will no doubt already have noticed that we are



entering an exciting new phase of development of the support provided for Gifted and Talented education, where responsibility for meeting the needs of gifted and talented learners rests firmly with schools. New National Strategies resources developed as part of the National Challenge G&T project will support schools in doing this, and they have already been notified via the school e-mail of additional funding to support the achievement of disadvantaged gifted and talented learners. In addition, the rolling programme of transfer of useful resources from the Young, Gifted and Talented website to the G&T pages of the National Strategies web area is already underway.

All new National Strategies publications for Gifted and Talented will be solely web-based from April 2010 with added benefits to the user. Firstly, registered users can access a wider range of resources and opportunities, for example, the Classroom Quality Standards and the new G&T national discussion group (see section 5). Secondly, you can keep up-to-date by signing up to the email alert for updates to the site. The email alert is located on the G&T home page of the National Strategies web area once you are logged in.

With best wishes

**Carol Singh,
Programme Director,
Gifted and Talented**

Narrowing the Gaps

Narrowing the Gaps: from data analysis to impact – A practical guide

“ Without continual growth and progress, such words as improvement, achievement, and success have no meaning. ”

Benjamin Franklin

Building on from *Narrowing the Gaps: from data analysis to impact – the golden thread*

(DCSF ref: 00792-2009PDF-EN-01), the new publication *Narrowing the Gaps: from data analysis to impact – A practical guide* (DCSF ref: 00912-2009PDF-EN-07) offers data workshops providing staff development materials that can be used to shape whole-school training, dedicated sessions for middle leaders and cross-phase workshops for families of schools.

This resource is aimed at senior and middle leaders in primary and secondary schools and is supported by the following six slide presentations that can be found along with the booklet on the National Strategies web area:

- *Workshop 1: Narrowing gaps – setting the scene* (DCSF ref: 00912-2009PPT-EN-01)
- *Workshop 2P (Primary): Using RAISEonline to examine attainment data* (DCSF ref: 00912-2009PPT-EN-02)
- *Workshop 2S (Secondary): Using RAISEonline to examine attainment data* (DCSF ref: 00912-2009PPT-EN-03)
- *Workshop 3P (Primary): Analysing progress data* (DCSF ref: 00912-2009PPT-EN-04)
- *Workshop 3S (Secondary): Analysing progress data* (DCSF ref: 00912-2009PPT-EN-05)
- *Workshop 4: Planning next steps* (DCSF ref: 00912-2009PPT-EN-06)

The guide also provides a comprehensive approach to using data and will be particularly useful to school-based professionals wishing to identify patterns of underachievement in groups of potential gifted and talented pupils.

Talking point

25 per cent of learners nationally already make four levels of progress between Key Stage 2 and Key Stage 4. How many gifted and talented learners fall short of this? Should gifted and talented learners be expected to make five levels? What about potential gifted and talented learners who have underachieved in Key Stage 2 and reached level 4?

Who, amongst your colleagues, needs to be aware of these resources and the links to G&T pupils?

The National Challenge G&T project

“ Good provision for G&T pupils is good provision for all pupils. ”

Excellence for All – A Gifted and Talented approach to whole-school improvement
(DCSF ref: 01019-2009PDF-EN-02)

Excellence for All – A Gifted and Talented approach to whole-school improvement (DCSF ref: 01019-2009PDF-EN-02) is based on the premise that good provision for gifted and talented (G&T) pupils is good provision for all pupils. It explores the characteristics of successful G&T learners and considers how those characteristics can be developed in underachieving or potential G&T pupils, particularly those from a disadvantaged background.

The guidance will help to support the development of teaching skills through a systematic approach to ‘enquiry into practice’. It proposes that teacher enquiry groups can create a school-level evidence base of what works well in a specific context. This in turn makes it much easier for teachers in the same school to make the link to their own classroom teaching and to their own pupils. It will also help schools to clarify

and define what Quality First teaching looks like in their own specific context. It will enable schools to demonstrate improvement through the Institutional and Classroom Quality Standards (IQS and CQS) for G&T.

Comprising a toolkit of materials for continuing professional development, these materials also include a range of useful resources and references. These are supplemented by **Excellence for All in practice** – a growing bank of school-level cameos linked to the G&T quality standards.

The National Challenge G&T project – talk

Using a discussion framework to develop learning awareness in gifted and talented pupils

A discussion framework provides key questions and prompts to support anyone who wishes to develop learner awareness. This guidance explains why it is important to improve pupil self-awareness as learners (metacognition) and offers a simple and easily adaptable framework that can be used in a variety of ways with pupils, teachers and parents.

Talking point

What’s your definition of Quality First teaching? Do others share your view?

Leading teachers for G&T education

“ How well are teaching and learning skills and resources deployed to extend, inspire and challenge learners? ”

*Classroom Quality Standards, Layer 1
Engagement with Learners and learning*

Promoting talk across the curriculum

Among the ten characteristics identified as important factors in academic achievement and longer-term success in *Excellence for All – A Gifted and Talented approach to whole-school improvement* (DCSF ref: 01019-2009PDF-EN-02), four are inextricably linked with the development of talk:

1. Sophisticated vocabulary and good command of academic English.
2. Self-confidence and motivation.
3. Good speaking, listening and critical thinking skills.
4. Good social skills.

In order for learners to develop as confident talkers, we need to be explicit about the language we want them to know, as well as providing opportunities for them to use it. Here is a small selection of strategies the leading teacher might use to promote talk in all classrooms:

- Use an academic word list to check pupils' understanding and use of key words.
- Teach subject-specific technical language.
- Identify, teach and expect pupils to use appropriate language and register when agreeing, disagreeing, persuading, negotiating and so on.
- Teach debating skills and language, and provide opportunities for debate.
- Ensure planning and lesson observation pro-formas highlight opportunities for pupil–pupil talk.

- When using the Classroom Quality Standards to audit and improve provision in subject areas, make explicit the links to talk in each feature.

There are a number of excellent resources available on the National Strategies web area to support classroom talk, for example, *Understanding and using types of interactive talk*. There is also a [speaking and listening research library](#) dedicated to speaking and listening resources where you can search by title, unit or type.

Talking point

Do all adults in the classroom use a level of language appropriate to stretch the potentially more-able learner? How do you know? How do you ensure that they do?

G&T discussion groups

Gifted and Talented National online discussion group

All leading teachers for gifted and talented education are invited to join the G&T national discussion group, a forum for sharing ideas, resources and strategies to improve gifted and talented provision.

The group now has over 400 members with many lively discussion threads, for example, the 'First thread of the week... Classroom provision – simple ideas that can make a massive difference'.

Pupil and parent guarantees – your questions needed

Beginning with an initial post asking for questions about the G&T pupil and parent guarantees in the White Paper, the National Strategies are collecting the questions via the discussion group in order to inform what the DCSF should include in forthcoming guidance. Here are some example questions:

- What constitutes 'written confirmation' (format)?
- What should the content cover?

- Could it be short with supplementary documents to give more detail?
- Will there be some suggested wording?
- How often does it need to be updated?
- How does this fit in an inclusive school / with Every Child Matters?
- How does it fit with external (talent) agencies which might recognise or provide for the individual child?
- How specific to the individual child does it need to be?
- Is it about specific actions or principles which guide the decisions about provision?
- What can parents do if schools are not making any provision for a child who has been identified as G&T in most subjects at secondary school?

To join the group, please register to the National Strategies web area and e-mail giftedandtalented@nationalstrategies.co.uk stating your school and local authority. Alternatively you can contact your local authority G&T lead.

Talking point

How could you use the discussion group to help enhance provision in your school(s)?

Quality Standards 1

Using the Classroom Quality Standards (CQS) – a pupil focus 1

“ The mind is not a vessel to be filled but a fire to be kindled. ”

Plutarch

Interesting, innovative and effective ways in which the Classroom Quality Standards (CQS) are being used directly with pupils are now emerging as the examples below show.

Strategy 1

Why not try a learning walk by pupils based on CQS and Institutional Quality Standards?

1. Discuss with a group of pupils the element of the quality standards you want to focus on to explore and extend their understanding.
2. Get them to discuss what they would look for if this was exemplary in the school. They create a checklist.
3. Pupils go off in pairs to investigate, noting down where/when they see instances of good practice, where they see nothing.
4. Pupils discuss findings together and agree recommendations to school for improvements.
5. Pupils feed back findings and recommendations to the senior leadership team.

(Adapted from a post on G&T national discussion group)

Strategy 2

.....the leading teacher had translated the Classroom Quality Standards into language which Year 8 pupils could relate to. Each subject area used the main categories – creative thinker, reflective learner, effective participator, independent enquirer, self-manager and team worker – and identified what these meant and what pupils might be expected to do as a result. In English, creative thinkers were expected to ‘think creatively, making connections for themselves and with others’ and pupils might expect to ‘get to think creatively a lot’, ‘always be learning new terminology’, ‘undertake things they had not done before’ and ‘work out problems in groups’. The audit was valuable as it showed where some elements had not been addressed. The lead teacher said that this process had made heads of departments much more conscious of the needs of the gifted and talented pupils and the changes that could be made in terms of planning and pedagogy to enable them to make faster progress.

(Adapted from [Gifted and talented pupils in schools](#), Ofsted, December 2009, p.9, Reference no: 090132)

Quality Standards 2

Using the Classroom Quality Standards (CQS) – a pupil focus 2

Below are three more examples of ways in which schools are using the CQS with pupils.

Strategy 3

A cluster of local schools jointly planned a pupil conference for Year 9. A keynote motivational speaker inspired them to be more ambitious for their futures. They were tasked with learning about learning. An Ofsted inspector (good at communicating with young people) talked to them about what he looked for in an excellent lesson and an excellent school. They were then put into groups to discuss and re-write sections of the Gifted and Talented (G&T) CQS in their own words.

Pupils were 'wowed' by being in a conference environment and being treated professionally. They rose to the challenge, listened to the presentations and set about the task very positively. As a result the school was able to set up pupil-led lesson observations where both positive and constructive criticism was fed back to the teachers. In many cases this has led to changes to lessons. Some of the target pupils are now leading starters or plenaries and feel more confident about contributing to lessons.

(Excellence for All – A Gifted and Talented approach to whole-school improvement (DCSF ref: 01019-2009PDF-EN-02))

And this is what you tell us you are doing

'I am setting up a G&T student voice group to discuss G&T provision across the curriculum. The group will discuss the CQS highlighting areas where effective provision is in place and these findings will then be shared with staff making recommendations for school improvement.'

'I have been working with Year 2 students for a couple of years now – and using the evidence from their discussions, questionnaires to support

action planning – they certainly are honest and see things happening that we as teachers miss!'

(Posts on the G&T national discussion group)

What's new in gifted and talented education?

The CQS and the new Ofsted framework

The CQS and the new Ofsted framework (DCSF ref: 00029-2010DWO-EN-01) is a useful document mapping the Classroom Quality Standards against the new Ofsted framework and is now available. Schools and local authorities have reported its use, for example, to support interviews and classroom observations. The document is published as an appendix in **Excellence for All – a Gifted and Talented approach to whole-school improvement** (DCSF ref: 01019-2009PDF-EN-02).

Updated e-learning modules

The **Gifted and Talented e-learning modules for leading teachers** provide opportunities to reflect, individually and with colleagues, on G&T issues, to consider effective strategies to address them, and to develop action plans for the local context. The modules also provide links to a range of resources and exemplification.

The three core modules have recently been revised and, in the case of Module 1, shortened:

- **Module 1: Teaching and learning** (DCSF ref: 01015-2009EPD-EN-01) With a focus on classroom based practice this module includes practical strategies to increase challenge for G&T pupils within an inclusive context of improvement for all pupils.
- **Module 2: Identification** (DCSF ref: 01003-2009EPD-EN-01) Examining the challenges, issues, principles and processes behind identifying G&T pupils in school this will support leading teachers in working with colleagues on identification.

- *Module 3: Taking the lead in G&T*
(DCSF ref: 01013-2009EPD-EN-01) This module leads the learner to a consideration of all aspects of leading on G&T within their school, including quality standards, building capacity through colleagues, effective use of data and policy.

The updated modules are now available on the National Strategies web area.

Other modules look at working with parents and carers, transfer and transition, learners with particular needs, learning beyond the classroom, career development, Early Years Foundation Stage, Key Stages 1 and 2, primary science, English, mathematics, secondary science, music, PE and sport, and English as an additional language.

Audience: Local authority Gifted and Talented leads and regional partnership chairs

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