Developing Expertise: School-based Case Studies

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**Section 1: Glossary of Abbreviations Used**

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<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AST</td>
<td>Advanced Skills Teacher</td>
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<tr>
<td>CS1</td>
<td>Case Study 1</td>
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<td>CS2</td>
<td>Case Study 2</td>
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<td>CS3</td>
<td>Case Study 3</td>
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<tr>
<td>DfES</td>
<td>Department for Education and Skills</td>
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<td>EiC</td>
<td>Excellence in Cities Initiative</td>
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<tr>
<td>G&amp;T</td>
<td>Gifted and Talented</td>
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<tr>
<td>HoD</td>
<td>Head of Department</td>
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<td>ILP</td>
<td>Individual Learning Plan</td>
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<td>INSET</td>
<td>In Service Training</td>
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<td>ITT</td>
<td>Initial Teacher Training</td>
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<td>KS2</td>
<td>Key Stage 2</td>
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<td>KS3</td>
<td>Key Stage 3</td>
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<td>KS4</td>
<td>Key Stage 4</td>
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<tr>
<td>LA</td>
<td>Local Authority</td>
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<tr>
<td>NAGTY</td>
<td>National Academy for Gifted and Talented Youth</td>
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<tr>
<td>NFER</td>
<td>National Foundation for Educational Research</td>
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<tr>
<td>OFSTED</td>
<td>Office for Skills in Teaching and Education</td>
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<tr>
<td>PSHE</td>
<td>Personal Social and Health Education</td>
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<tr>
<td>SAT</td>
<td>Statutory Attainment Test</td>
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<tr>
<td>SEN</td>
<td>Special Educational Needs</td>
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<td>SMT</td>
<td>Senior Management Team</td>
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Section 2: Rationale and Methodology

The broad purpose of this first round of case studies on developing expertise in gifted and talented (G&T) education, was to identify, illustrate and understand effective practice for G&T students within a whole school context and to draw appropriate lessons for policy and practice.

Two of the initial case studies are drawn from the Academy's ambassador schools and one from the OFSTED database. The Academy's ambassador schools were identified by NAGTY in 2003 on the basis of their existing national expertise in the area of G&T education, as reported in OFSTED data. (Further details of the Ambassador School scheme are provided in the Appendix). These two schools were selected to represent a diverse geographical spread and school type. Another school was identified because of its distinctive approach to differentiation within a comprehensive framework and its reputation for excellence. The case study schools will remain anonymous in this report. In brief, CS1 is a mixed 11-18 City Technology College on the outskirts of an industrial town in the East Midlands. CS2 is a small girls' CE comprehensive school for 11-18 year olds in an inner-city London borough, and CS3 is a large urban mixed comprehensive in the South West. More detailed profiles for individual case study schools are elaborated later in the report.

Against a critique that much of the existing case material on school-based G&T education tends towards a celebratory rather than critical approach, the research design for these studies was developed to try to capture as wide a range as possible of contextualised material gathered at various stages during the school year. With consistency of research personnel and a schedule of regular visits to the case study site over a twelve month period, the research design was intended to familiarise the researcher with the life and work of the school and to ensure a breadth and depth of understanding.

Drawing from models of school effectiveness research, the research design developed a multi-layered approach to investigating in depth the interaction of a range of school-wide factors (such as leadership, school climate, school policies, curriculum design), with classroom factors (such as teaching methods, teacher expectations, classroom organisation and use of classroom resources), with individual pupil factors, (including self-concept, engagement, and performance). (Brookover et al, 1979, quoted in Campbell, Kyriakides, Muijs and Robinson, (2004) p.7) Whilst the focus was primarily on how these levels of interaction connected in terms of the G&T agenda, a challenge for the study was both to look at the case as a whole, in which G&T education played one part in a much bigger arena, and to deconstruct the case as it impacted at the different levels and for the different players involved, such as individual pupils, teachers, senior managers and school governors.

As a basis for all case studies, factual information, most of which was available in the public domain, was gathered including school location, catchment area, free school meal data, number on roll, type of school, funding, whether or not in EiC, other 'badges' or positions, staffing profile, recent OFSTED reports, position in league tables. A further three data strands, or 'layers' were then identified as the main focus for each study visit;

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1 See NAGTY Occasional Paper 5, 'A Baseline Review of the Literature on Effective Pedagogies for Gifted and Talented Students'.
Whilst it was initially envisaged that there would be three separate visits of one to two days, in addition to a preliminary familiarisation visit to the case study sites, over the course of the academic year, it was not intended that the three data strands would be dealt with entirely chronologically because of the obvious operational interrelationship between them. Under each of the data strands, a series of broad inquiry headings was identified which included for example:

**Data Strand One: A whole school approach**
- Senior management – interest, support, key priories, agendas, whole school planning, grouping/setting policy
- Deployment of expertise within the school, e.g. use of ASTs, senior teachers,
- Role and scope of G&T coordinator
- Policy documentation and shaping of policy Funding and utilization of specific G&T Resource and funding issues around G&T
- How school infrastructure supports provision for G&T
- Whole curriculum planning
- Identification of G&T students
- Reporting to students, parents
- Interest, support of governing body
- School learning environment
- School ethos/climate

**Data Strand Two: Meeting the needs of G&T students: programmes, pedagogy and practice**
- Observation of any G&T activity including; extension classes, acceleration (early entrance for examinations), extra-curricular subjects, special e-learning facilities and support, class-based differentiation, peer mentoring, staff mentoring
- Ordinary Class based work across range of curriculum subjects
- Teaching strategies
- Teaching materials/resources
- Challenge and differentiation
- Pupil perceptions (G&T students)
Data Strand Three: Pupil Perceptions, Performance and Progress

- Tracking systems for pupil performance and progress
- Individual target-setting and monitoring
- Existing data on standard performance measures e.g. SATs, mock examinations, GCSEs etc. compared with rest of student population, work trail of sample of G&T cohort pupils
- Pupil perceptions

Various data collection instruments were developed from these headings, copies of which can be found in the appendix. These included informal semi-structured interview schedules for senior management, the G&T coordinator, students identified as gifted, students not identified as gifted, a representative of the governing body; observation schedules for describing school climate, a G&T coordinator questionnaire. These were used across the case studies. Interviews were sometimes recorded and transcribed and sometimes just noted, depending on whether consent was given. In addition, a series of informal researcher notes on classroom observations, non-public documentary materials, observation schedules or documentary analysis schedules were produced during the case study visits. All of the schools involved in the case studies were willing to be involved in the project and the purpose and outline of the project was described in detail when access was being negotiated. With a significant part of the data set being taken from students themselves, the researchers were careful to explain the purposes of the research. A draft version of the report was sent to all schools for comments and modification in advance of the report being finalised.
Section 3: Outline of the Report

The individual case studies of each school follow. The structure of each follows the same common pattern. Section 4 provides a descriptive report of each case study school presented under the following headings, however given the whole school approach that is being taken, there is not always a clear delineation between areas;

- a summary of the school’s contextual information
- their G&T policy
- the role of the school’s G&T coordinator
- the SMT stance and commitment
- the Governing Body stance and commitment
- the school’s environment, ethos and culture
- the students’ perceptions and their experience of the school culture, values and ethos
- classroom practice and pedagogy
- curriculum planning and development

Section 5 then provides a discussion of the three case study schools raising the strengths and distinctive aspects of each school’s G&T practice. The report is concluded in section 6 with the key findings from the case studies and recommendations for areas that could be further developed.
Section 4: Case Studies

4.1 Case Study 1

4.1.1 Summary of School Contextual Information

CS1 is situated on the edge of an industrial town in the East Midlands. The building was completed in 1991. The college has independent status and is comprehensive. It has 1250 students on roll aged 11 – 18 (250 in the Sixth Form), and is therefore larger than most other secondary colleges, and there are more boys than girls. The school is very popular and there are more applicants than places. The college partly selects students at age 11 as directed by the DfES, for their aptitude in science and technology, but otherwise abilities should be in proportion with the national average, and each year this is monitored by NFER.

The college was amongst the first cohort of Leading Edge Schools announced in 2002 and has established an online resource and training centre to assist local teachers in developing their practice. The DfES has invited the school to create a prototype of an online service for teachers with video footage of excellent classroom practice in conjunction with six other schools. In 1998 the college was chosen by the DfES to be a Masterclass provider for local G&T students, for which demand is high. It is also one of the few schools to have been awarded the ISO EN 9002 Quality Assurance Standard and it has the Investors in People award, which was reconfirmed in 2002. It received a School Achievement Award from the DfES in 2003. The school has a strong link with the local community and this includes the students.

A few students have English as an additional language and 2% of students come from ethnic minority backgrounds. The percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals is in line with the national average at 10%. Fewer students than is average have SEN or have statements to indicate their needs.

The college received a very favourable OFSTED report in November 2001 citing outstanding student achievement by age 16 and excellent leadership and management. GCSE standards are amongst the best in the country with the percentage of 15 year olds achieving 5 A* - C grades consistently placing the College in the top five state mixed comprehensive schools in national league tables. In 2004 100% of students achieved 5 A* - C grades and there is a very low gender gap. As a result boys significantly outperform the standards attained by boys nationally.

Although the college is well staffed overall, it has a very high staff turnover each year, mainly because of promotion to jobs elsewhere.

4.1.2 School Gifted and Talented Policy

The College Policy on G&T has a Statement of Intention as follows;

‘The G&T provision … will ensure that our high ability students become high achievers. All students should be motivated by recognition of their strengths in an atmosphere where their educational, social and emotional needs are met. It is the responsibility of all teaching staff as well as HoDs and SMT to ensure that the needs of these students are met.’

It is only in the last 18 months that G&T has been highlighted in the school and the Policy formulated and disseminated. A draft policy was initially taken to departments for consultation, but it is also that case that the policy has emerged organically from
curriculum development work on the KS 3 strategy particularly. Students are now identified biannually, and their progress monitored through the year by the G&T coordinator. Identification is via teacher observation, parent nomination, peer nomination, self nomination; departmental student audits using subject specific checklists, SAT results, NFER tests and other performance data. Staff pass completed departmental referral forms to their HoD which will then be passed on to the G&T coordinator.

CS1 has provided its own set of key characteristics which are used to think about identification, in addition to individual department specific indicators. Their website is also a repository of some of the key areas of research and theory in G&T education and as a result, it is a very useful resource in its own right. However the identification system and school register are still evolving and a number of key personnel in the school acknowledge that it is very early days for the concept of identification in the school – not to mention ‘talent’ identification which is still a confused issue. It also appears to be the case that the website is not accessed or used to any significant degree by the staff at CS1.

Once identified and on the school’s register, each pupil will meet with the G&T coordinator who will develop an ILP to support the students’ needs, which may include acceleration/ withdrawal groups/ staff mentoring/ other schemes of work. It then falls to the HoDs to ensure that provision is available in the right subject areas. CS1 has a particularly broad and detailed list of what these expectations are, ranging from the creation of an effective learning environment via resources, creating an appropriate ethos, the celebration of achievement, enrichment and extension activities, teaching higher order skills, and providing for emotional, social and intellectual development.

Students’ ILPs will be reviewed biannually in conjunction with the G&T coordinator and departments and the overall review process will take place as part of the whole college review of its provision. The policy makes clear that ‘G&T provision and identification is the responsibility of all teaching staff. Each department will appoint a G&T liaison who will meet with the G&T coordinator when necessary.’ Furthermore it also falls to HoDs to ensure that G&T college policy is being met via their own departmental reviews.

There are consequently a number of monitoring points and designated individuals responsible for ensuring that the precise and detailed G&T policy is being followed throughout the school, although at the time of meeting with members of the staff it was clear that there was still a perception that CS1 was in the early stages of developing its G&T provision. The Deputy Head interviewed stated that he hopes it is to evolve in the way that SEN practice has and that there will be a complete register, with students and their parents being informed, but more discreetly.

4.1.3 Role of School Gifted and Talented Coordinator

The school’s G&T coordinator has received two days of external training which she considered to be excellent, and is a member of national bodies and contributes to the Oxford Brookes programme. She still feels that there is a need to raise awareness of the particular needs of G&T within the school as it can get lost amidst the many other initiatives and at present is very low key. She also states that the use of identification sheets within individual subject areas has yet to become common practice. She views the school’s strengths in G&T provision to be the advanced level provision in all lessons which she says has raised the school’s achievement levels overall as more students aim for advanced level work. However, there is an acknowledgement that this has served the needs of lower achievers more than truly stretched the most
able achievers and that this system is not the same thing as catering for the needs of the G&T. In addition a system where the student is able to choose his/her level of work (in collaboration with the teacher) could be open to abuse where there is not in addition a desire to excel across the school, explaining why there is such a necessity to create an ethos where students are highly motivated.

The G&T coordinator does however receive a comprehensive set of tracking information on each student via the student management system covering attendance, behaviour, test results and comments from teaching staff, which is used to inform her termly meetings with all the students on the G&T register. However unlike in other schools it is not the G&T coordinator who controls or distributes G&T funding, but rather the SMT, as it all comes out of the curriculum development initiative.

4.1.4 Senior Management Stance and Commitment

The SMT is characterised both by its strong drive and vision, but also by its lack of top-down imposition. The OFSTED report called the SMT ‘excellent – very effective and innovatory’. The SMT encourages dialogue and attempts to draw on and recognise the individual strengths of all its staff members. The way in which staff and the college as a whole works in a very democratic manner is essential to supporting the school’s organic curriculum, in which subjects are linked to each other and knowledge is integrated. In addition, this democratic approach has been found to re-energise staff and offer them more responsibility. This in turn re-energises HoDs who have a lot of autonomy within the structure and have to manage staff differently. The SMT believe that what happens in the curriculum has to mirror what takes place in the school and vice versa, thus the process of reviewing the KS 3 curriculum became part of the process of leadership and management within the school; ‘curriculum building becomes a management tool at the same time as being a learning tool’.

Campbell and Kerry’s paper on the school states that;

‘…CS1 has a unique philosophy, and it is that philosophy (rather than the government, external forces or individual whims of managers) which drives change…part of that philosophy is about empowerment: staff and pupils do not accept the ‘givens’ of government control as axioms’.

The SMT coordinate an annual Institutional Review which comprises a year-long programme of lesson observation, an evaluation of departments’ performance, and an evaluation by peers against clearly defined targets. In addition the college’s longer-term planning is, according to OFSTED, ‘exceptionally thorough’.

Members of the SMT also take on a mentoring role, working closely with students who are identified as underachieving in Year 11, becoming their ‘special friends’, providing close guidance and support for them to manage their work. This has resulted in improved standards of the students involved. The Deputy Head however reinforced the fact that students buy in to the overall notion of the challenges of the college;

‘it’s a consistently challenging environment.. the students who come here, from the moment they come here, are told about their obligation to try and do their best because, they’re here and three other people who applied aren’t here…if you buy into it, you will be challenged consistently not just in terms of whether the work that’s offered to you is challenging, but what we expect of you in terms of your mind’.
4.1.5 Governing Body Stance and Commitment

The OFSTED report gave the work of the school governors a glowing endorsement;

‘Excellent. Governors determine priorities with senior management, monitor performance very closely and support well-planned, worthwhile innovation vigorously.’

The Governing Body is mostly made up of local people with a genuine feel for the local community’s needs. Three Parent Governors are elected for a period of three years. The Foundation Governors are nominated by the Sponsors and the Community Governors are elected because of their particular interest in local education matters. It is the Governing Body which aims to encourage the students to be as actively involved as possible with the local community through a variety of means. It is apparent from the school’s public information that the Governing Body has a considerable impact on the school and it is recognised that they contribute a lot of time to helping decide the college’s future, including through residential weekends.

However with specific reference to G&T provision, the governors have a more hands-off approach and have invested more of their concern in the area of less well performing students, although they have received a training session on G&T.

4.1.6 School Environment/ Ethos/ Culture

What is most distinctive about CS1 is its innovative and highly professional culture, but one where the interests of the students genuinely come first. Its website states that ‘excellent student care, innovative practice and very high expectations all contribute to outstanding results’. The school’s last OFSTED report endorsed this statement and also focused on the unique and innovative culture of CS1;

‘In this environment, no student is average. As students step through the turnstiles and register their attendance with their smart cards at the beginning of the long working day, they enter a different and challenging environment that demands that they have the highest aspirations of themselves. All students are regarded as individuals and are expected to aim high to use their talents and potential for learning to the full.’

As a result of this innovative culture and the high levels of success, CS1 offers visitor seminars to accommodate the number of requests they receive for visits.

The college has a much longer working day than most secondary schools, from 7.30am to 6.00pm and students are also present for breakfast. Formal classes start at 8.35am and after 4.00pm there are extra-curricular activities and students can stay on to complete their homework. Students have seven hours more time in lessons each week than students in most schools over a five-term academic year. The environment consists of very modern, light, purpose-built facilities which are smart and clean and can be described as more corporate than school-like, appearing to exude confidence. There is a lot of activity with children moving freely around the building and working in various kinds of study area.

A key feature contributing to the school’s unique ethos is that students of all ages and members of staff share facilities on an equal basis and to this end, there is, for instance, no staff room and there are no bells at the end of lessons. Students spend a lot more time with staff than they do in many other schools, taking two meals a day and two breaks a day with staff present and adult expectations largely determine standards of behaviour. Students can use the facilities after school and in the
holidays freely and open study access areas are available with IT access and a wireless network. This is workable as registration of students is recorded electronically through the use of a smart card, which also functions as a coach pass, library card and payment for college meals. The open access policy is rarely abused, which testifies to the cohesive and integrated nature of the school, but furthermore, as described in the school prospectus;

‘This open access philosophy is central to the belief that students, in charge of their own learning, are capable of achieving above normal expectations.’

The school’s OFSTED report endorses this belief;

‘Relationships are very good. Students are expected to act sensibly and maturely – and do so...Attendance is much higher than average. There is no unauthorised absence’.

The school’s library is modern and well resourced with a state of the art IT facilities including the short term loan of wireless laptops to the students. The school also possesses an editing suite with industry standard equipment; an advanced electronic music studio, DJ technology suite and individual practice rooms; a multi-purpose theatre for dance and drama productions; a business centre including a lecture theatre and conference rooms; and flood-lit all weather sports pitches.

Each student has a personal tutor to act as an advocate on their behalf and the school also encourages a home/College partnership. The school has a good standard of behaviour which they maintain is attributable to their belief that students and staff need to live together in a well ordered society with respect for each other. The school prospectus also states that;

‘The College places great emphasis upon caring for the individual student in every lesson throughout the day, ensuring equality of opportunity and entitlement. In this way we believe our students are best able to realise their true potential and to make a responsible contribution to their own learning.’

Communication between the school and its students takes place via e-mail (each student has their own account) and a series of television monitors around the school. Routine information is passed to students during the tutor period and is reinforced during assemblies. ’Assemblies place emphasis on high aspirations and expectations of students morally, socially and intellectually.’ (OFSTED report). CS1 also has a comprehensive website with access to curriculum material and online courses.

CS1 defines the learning culture around a set of values that privilege individuality and autonomous learning, openness to new initiatives, seeing connections across subjects, linking learning to wider applications, using a wide variety of resources and working in a wide range of settings, and encouraging self-reflexive learning. Their website goes on to highlight ways in which staff can encourage this kind of culture via creating a learning culture, through providing questions and challenge, and carefully considering their planning and resources. There is also a detailed discussion on the website about what constitutes differentiation.

4.1.7 Student Perceptions/ Experience of School Culture, Values and Ethos

Students were aware of the exceptional resources that they had access to, one saying that ‘the facilities at the school are as good as you can get’. The IT facilities were particularly praised by the students who clearly recognized that this was not a universal feature of all schools;
‘I know other schools usually lock them up or something, because they don’t trust students but they really trust us…nothing ever gets damaged or anything, it’s really good, you feel safe here’.

But along with this the students stated that there came an expectation for very high standards of presentation, which they recognised was providing them with useful skills. The students also said that the staff were very IT literate and IT problems did not impede lessons.

They stated that teachers gave freely of their time and were happy to stay after lessons and provide extra help. The close working relationship between staff and pupils was endorsed by students interviewed. They all mentioned their Personal Tutors, with whom they have contact time every day, as a source of support and provided examples of how they acted as advocates on their behalf; ‘my tutor would be the first person who I’d ever go and see about a problem, because I feel like I can just tell him anything.’

The students feel very supported and motivated by their teachers, and clearly work hard, but in an environment which does not have a strong individual reward system. The students do feel praised if they do well and state that they have clear feedback; ‘our reports are being changed …so now you get your level, a target level and whether you’re on target’. However this is not a main focus of the school’s displays or assemblies for instance. In fact the students demonstrated a very mature and balanced attitude to achievement, once again endorsing the school’s aims and demonstrating that high achievement can go hand in hand with students feeling in control of their workloads. The culture of hard work that was observed on visits was also endorsed by the student interviewees; ‘It’s virtually a business place and we get down and work.’ The students also endorsed the fact that discipline was not a problem; ‘you always get the person that tries to muck around and stuff, but they get sorted out within a few minutes’. The notion of challenge is embedded into the whole school ethos and reflected in the way the students speak about their work.

The students were all very clear about the different levels at which they could work and demonstrated that the system was both easy to fit into and work with. Each lesson commences with around 20 minutes of teaching time on core material to students working at all levels. Students are then given a lot of freedom to make their own choices about which level to work at. They did state that they were helped in their choices by their teachers, but it did not appear to be the case that there was a problem with students regularly pitching themselves below or above their capabilities.

‘..people don’t all want to do advanced work.. they want to like do the work that they know they can do and not struggle to try and beat somebody who’s better than them.’

They explained that they received detailed feedback from teachers with a marking scheme that reflected the levels they could work at, which helped students to be clear about whether they were working well at their chosen level, but also whether they were being provided with enough challenge. Students taking accelerated courses were not isolated but worked with peers, which they seemed to appreciate. Students also spoke about a supportive working environment where students working at higher levels than peers in their group would offer support to those working at lower levels, although it should be remembered that this is not always in the interests of the G&T students. The students interviewed feel that there is a flexible curriculum and talked about a positive school culture of achievement without pressure or the adverse treatment of gifted pupils.
The students spoke freely about how they both felt challenged by the ethos of the school and that they also challenged themselves, one student stating that a member of staff had told him that not doing well in an A-level he was taking early would not be a problem as he was doing it to be challenged. There is an interesting relationship between achieving well in examinations which the students interviewed frequently referred to as a driver and the school celebrating this in terms of its standing in the national league tables, and the notion of work that should be relevant to each individual and inherently challenging regardless of external validation.

A group interview with sixth form students produced a more contradictory picture, students stating that they would have wanted more extra-curricular activities and that at times they felt carried away with the school’s policies or practices on accelerated examinations for instance, which were not always what they would have chosen for themselves. They stated that they did feel under a lot of pressure – for instance asking for more break times - and that there was competition between students. They also wanted students who were more ‘middle-ranking’ to be recognised.

4.1.8 Classroom Practice and Pedagogy

Lessons are 75 minutes in length with an emphasis upon practical experience in all subjects. There is also a strong emphasis on ICT as the prospectus demonstrates;

‘CS1 can justifiably claim to be one of the most advanced of any state school in the use of technology. Wireless laptops, multimedia software packages and interactive whiteboards are regular features of classroom practice as tools for students and teachers alike.’

A key element of the CS1 curriculum is that students can work at one of four levels; Basic (minimum acceptable for age), Standard (average performance for age), Extended (above average performance for age), Advanced (at least one year in advance of average for age). The website states that ‘Advanced Level must be where students are supported in the metamorphoses from high ability into high achievers better known as G&T’.

Students are taught ‘core’ work for the first 20 minutes of a lesson, and often then continue to work at their level in mixed ability groups, which is something which may not suit all gifted students all of the time. Group work does often take place within the same level however and there is a lot of evidence of desks arranged in groups rather than rows. In practice it appears that work is sometimes differentiated into two levels, basic-standard and extended-advanced and is also less differentiated in the sixth form, largely due to the demands of covering the specific syllabus. The Vice-Principal said that the objective criterion for Advanced Level work being one year above the NC level means that in practice it is unlikely that this exact correlation will be found across the curriculum. In addition the Deputy Head said that it would be desirable for more G&T material to be written in-house to fit the specific way in which the CS1 curriculum has developed – with consideration of writing a ‘fifth level’ to truly provide for G&T pupils. There are also examples of one or two students in the school who have completely individualised timetables.

The school’s most recent OFSTED report states that; ‘Teaching is good and much is very good, enabling students to make excellent progress and achieve remarkably well.’ There is a strong emphasis not only on teaching but ensuring that learning has taken place; ‘At CS1 no lesson is designed for passive learning’. (Prospectus). Exemplar lesson plans and professional support for teachers is also available online.

Specific examples of excellent classroom practice which were observed are detailed here:
• Core work is followed at the start of the lesson which is then differentiated into higher ability levels across all subjects
• Lesson planning is a particularly strong feature and for instance underpins the success of 'showcase lessons' where two teachers of different subjects combine their subjects to provide an original learning experience for students
• Very effective use of visual displays and ICT were observed in lessons which was popular with students
• Effective group work was observed in both mixed ability and ability based groups
• Lessons employ real-life problem-solving and broader thinking skills, not just mechanistic learning, for example thinking practically about themes in ways that transcended individual subject lessons
• A variety of techniques were employed which were regularly changed to maintain engagement throughout lessons.

There is an issue in the school with high staff turnover as a result of teachers leaving to gain promotion elsewhere and less experienced teachers coming in to fill their shoes, but this does not appear to have had a negative impact upon standards largely due to the support that new teachers receive. One way that this is facilitated is through the regular practice of two teachers working together to teach a double class where newly appointed and inexperienced teachers can extend their skills.

The overall high standards that the school has achieved for students up to age 16 is not matched fully in all subjects in the sixth form. The Deputy Head interviewed said that possible reasons for this were the open entry policy into the Sixth Form where pupils were allowed to pursue any subjects, regardless of ability, or that students over-perform at GCSE as a result of the particular support and structures in place at CS1, and the value added component cannot be carried on beyond a certain point. However the post-school destination of students is mainly into HE, with many students achieving their first choice of institution.

4.1.9 Curriculum Planning and Development

CS1’s curriculum is referred to in-house as the ‘Advanced Curriculum’. The college mission statement highlights the following attributes:

• Designing a curriculum to promote a full range of learning, thinking and life skills;
• Providing a broad, balanced and relevant curriculum with emphasis on science, mathematics and technology and learning the importance of doing and understanding;
• Devising flexible and responsive learning styles, particularly those which take into account the impact of technology on learning itself.

However, its main strength could be said to be that it offers differentiation throughout the curriculum and the Deputy Head stated that he genuinely believe that they are moving more towards looking at the individual and less at the timetable. All lessons at KS 3 are organised to accommodate students’ differing abilities and in addition the KS 3 curriculum is completed by the end of Year 8, allowing for ‘a richer and more flexible approach to their KS 4 and Post-16 studies.’ (Prospectus) The quality of what is offered therefore depends largely on the individual teacher as well as the HoD, but this is also a weakness of the system.
The College carries out an annual review which is a central feature of the College's quality assurance framework and this provided the impetus to reduce the KS 3 curriculum to 2 years. A reconsideration of the classroom climate led in addition to 'the CELTIC curriculum'; Creative, Energetic, Learning by doing, Thematic, Independent learning, Cross-curricular. Each term's work is planned across subjects under an umbrella theme. The thematic nature of the content delivery includes both core skills planning and an element called 'Enterprise Skills' to better equip students for today's enterprise culture. A software package known as the 'Learning Library' has been used to underpin the planning and development of resources for the curriculum and is currently used in a more targeted manner to develop specific materials such as those for G&T students. The curriculum will be monitored and evaluated for quality via the following means; departmental internal evaluation, SMT working alongside students, book trawls of students' work, targeted lesson observation, audits of the curriculum for the most able, and use of assessment data to track progress over a year.

At KS 4 and Post-16 students are taught either in mixed ability groups or in sets and work is still made available at four levels. The aim of the school at this stage is to provide a flexible and broad curriculum driven by student choice and KS 4 begins with a carefully planned induction programme. To recognise the high levels of competence achieved in IT, most of the students pursue a GNVQ or diploma in IT. In the Sixth Form students are required to take a minimum of four A-levels or their equivalent.

There is a high level of sophistication with regards to data management. Assessment and target setting data have now been integrated and all staff have received bespoke training with regards to data analysis techniques to assist them in interpreting the performance of students. Student performance is recorded and reported to parents and students every term (i.e. eight weeks). Termly grading is given for effort, homework, coursework (good, satisfactory or cause for concern) and overall at college level. Students also receive a target level for each subject and a progress statement about whether they are on target. A live account of performance is being trialled with the sixth form which will provide all examination results and predictions in a read-only document. But the strength of the system lies in the way that it is used by students and teachers for target-setting. The curriculum in years 9 to 11 for instance is supported by encouraging students to develop self-awareness and providing them with skills in reviewing and target setting.

Extra-Curricular Activities

At the end of the formal teaching day at 4.00pm extra-curricular activities are available and many students also stay on until 6.00pm to do their homework. Many curricular and non-curricular trips are organised and there is a Year 7 residential. Years 8 – 13 take part in a whole College Residential programme. Music lessons are subsidised, but not free, and students are advised to purchase their own instruments. The provision of extension opportunities is an area that the G&T coordinator has highlighted for development since none of the activities on offer are designed specifically for G&T students. At present the whole college enrichment programme is under review, however one concern expressed by the Vice-Principal was the expansion of extra-curricular activities so that a culture evolved of the same cohort of pupils attending events specifically created to meet the needs of the G&T, which would then crystallize into a culture of an elite group who would always work in this more exclusive way. Whilst stating that this may be right in some school environments, he felt that it was not the best situation for CS1.
Saturday Masterclasses are offered to local G&T students in English, science, mathematics, ICT and design technology and are well attended. The College believes that ‘raising educational standards in the locality and contributing to the development of the education service nationally is seen as a normal part of our work’. (Development Plan).
4.2 Case Study 2

4.2.1 Summary of School Contextual Information

CS2 was founded in 1699 which makes it one of the oldest girls’ schools in the country. In 1928 the School moved to its present home in South West London. The catchment is the LEA of Lambeth which is improving at a rapid rate and is in the top four local authorities in the country for ‘value added’ results. It is an EiC area. CS2 is a fully comprehensive Church of England Voluntary Aided High School and Technology College status was awarded in 1996. The school has been awarded Sportsmark and Investor in People status. It is also a Lead Practitioner School for Equality and Inclusion. It opened a sixth form in 2003. There are 759 pupils on roll, which makes the school smaller than other secondary schools nationally.

Entry requirements state that 60% of pupils must come from practising Christian families with the other 40% of places being open to pupils from the local area. Attainment on entry is broadly average but the socio-economic background of pupils is overall well below average with 25% of pupils on free school meals, which is above the national average of 16%. Almost 90% of the pupils are of Caribbean or African heritage, with a significant proportion (23%) speaking English as an additional language, which is high. A high percentage of pupils have lone parents. The number of pupils with SEN is 87 (11% of the total) and this is slightly lower than the national average (although the number of pupils with statements of SEN is higher than the national average).

The percentage of 15 year olds achieving 5 or more A* - C grades in 2005 was 73%. Standards have improved consistently over past years. GCSE results were below the Lambeth average in 1994 (an LEA which itself had results well below the national average) but have climbed steadily and since 1997 have always been above the LEA average. By 2001 results rose above the national average and have been there ever since. Standards are now very high compared with those of pupils in similar schools and are in the top 5% nationally.

The school is oversubscribed and received a very favourable OFSTED report in November 2002, being identified as a very good school with no significant areas of weakness. The school has recruited staff from overseas.

4.2.2 School Gifted and Talented Policy

The School’s Policy for the More Able was first delivered to staff in 1999 after a working party of 5 – 6 staff developed it over a period of a year. It embeds the whole school ethos into a wide range of provision for all students, not only those identified as more able, which aims to recognize potential wherever it exists;

‘Support of the more able is in line with the school’s commitment to the pursuit of excellence in a caring environment where each individual is encouraged to meet her full potential... All staff should take every opportunity to declare high expectations in terms of appearance, manners and commitment to achievement.' (Policy for the More Able).

The school’s Policy for the More Able states that ability in Yr 7 pupils is initially identified on the basis of KS 2 and NFER test results and thereafter on continued high performance in tests, potential to excel and determination to succeed, and pupil attitude, including the ability to work independently. A tracking group of 10% of pupils in each year group is identified three times a year using a variety of data including from the Fischer Family Trust, and details of these are submitted annually to the
DfES. CS2’s inclusive approach does not direct provision exclusively at this tracking group but rather enables many of its pupils to take up the extra activities on offer, resulting in more like 20% participation. Students are not explicitly told if they are on the gifted register, but it does become apparent from the setting.

Pupils are banded in KS 3 and provided with differentiated work at four levels. Setting takes place at KS 4 for core curriculum subjects, with mixed ability teaching taking place in option subjects. Early entry GCSE is available in a number of subjects including Maths which is popular with students. The Staff Handbook states that,

‘A degree of banding should enable every pupil to be given more appropriate challenges and tasks to develop her own confidence and self-esteem. We have high expectations of all pupils and ensure we use data and teacher assessment in order to set appropriate yet challenging targets.’

The identification system is a flexible one where students on the gifted register are reassessed on a yearly basis and other students can be added when appropriate.

The Policy states that the delivery of the curriculum for the more able is based on a departmental approach, with each department being responsible for implementing appropriate teaching strategies and identifying pupils with high subject specific ability. This is underpinned by a whole curriculum approach managed by the G&T coordinator with the assistance of a designated member of each department to give a more unified teaching programme. The gifted policy and provision are reviewed and evaluated annually by each department and for the whole school, but overall it is the G&T coordinator and the SMT who are responsible for developing policy. New staff are inducted in policy and practice with a one hour training session, but in addition they receive specific INSET on G&T education.

Until two years ago parents were informed if their daughter was on the register but beyond this they were not involved in school-wide policy and provision in order to try to maintain a non-elitist system. However since then the decision was taken not to notify parents any longer, and it is not always the case that students are informed about whether they have been identified or not as the school is trying to avoid issues around other children being resentful of special treatment of a few. The school prospectus outlines details of a clear ‘Home School Agreement’.

### 4.2.3 Role of School Gifted and Talented Coordinator

The school's G&T coordinator is overall responsible for delivering the school’s G&T policy and provides INSET opportunities and other appropriate training and support to staff. She has been closely involved with the South Lambeth Schools Partnership having regular meetings with the coordinators of the other schools in the cluster where good practice can be disseminated. The G&T coordinator is responsible for monitoring the progress of all the students on the gifted register, being provided with assessment and tracking information by HoDs. However she demonstrated some concern about where the cut-off point with regards to identification should be, highlighting the ongoing need for discussion of the issues to refine the school’s approach. She does believe however that the identified cohort are not at risk of underachieving, all getting and on target for A* grades. A weakness here could be that since none of the girls are exceeding their targets, they could initially have been set too high.

The G&T coordinator has been in post since the Policy for the More Able was written in 1999 and she sees this consistency in post as an advantage. She is very dedicated and committed and uses a lot of her own time to do the job, finding that
there are peak periods when extra work becomes more of a demand. She has set up a wide range of activities as detailed below together with the Aim Higher Coordinator who has been in post for two years.

**Funding**

The SMT have control over the amount of funding allocated for G&T activity (which comes largely from the EiC Standards Fund) and the G&T coordinator is unusual in having sole responsibility for managing these funds which she allocates to the following areas;

- Enrichment Activities funded partly from EiC funds and partly from departmental allowances. Technology College funding is used to provide additional revision and homework sessions in key areas. The Walcott Foundation provides funding to cover the other subject areas now that the Out of Hours School Funding has ended.
- Special Projects (Internal and External).
- Mentoring which is funded by EiC funds supplemented by the EAGLE Project (Encouraging Ambition, Generating Learning Experience) based at St John’s College, Cambridge.

The G&T Coordinator feels that she has sufficient funds to meet the requests that come to her from staff. In January 2005 a G&T inspector came to the school to provide INSET and NACE’s Teaching / Thinking magazine is available to staff. Partnership Projects (with the South Lambeth Cluster of schools) are funded by internal CS2 funds, Network G&T Funds and sometimes also by parental contribution.

It is clear from the G&T coordinator that the external funding streams are critical, as without these much of CS2’s additional provision would not exist. The OFSTED report states that,

‘The school makes very good use of funding available from the Excellence in Cities programme, supporting enrichment activities for pupils who have particular talents or who are high achievers.’

CS2 is lucky to have external G&T Strand Funds and is therefore unusual in stating that they have sufficient funding to meet their needs with regards to provision for G&T activities. However, they are not complacent and actively target further funding sources to supplement this. Equally they do not seek to invest in provision or resources which do not also impact on whole curriculum delivery.

**4.2.4 Senior Management Stance and Commitment**

Inclusivity is a central part of the ethos of CS2 and the author of the ‘Raising Aspirations’ report about CS2 says that what has driven forward the initiatives detailed below is the commitment of the SMT to inclusion;

‘The headteacher and senior staff provide excellent leadership and strong management so that there is a clear direction for the work of the school…The ethos and organization of the school meet the needs of individuals and groups of pupils very well…Pupils’ personal development is very good and they develop self-esteem, self-discipline and strong community values.’

The school’s management demonstrates its strong belief in the gifts and talents of all its students by heavily subsidizing a vast range of extra-curricular activities for them,
which are available to all students therein promoting the school's agenda of inclusivity. The Headteacher is clearly highly committed and demonstrates a strong knowledge of the students, whom she knows well and by name. She is a strong believer in developing the infrastructure of the school in terms of environment, systems and ethos and even through subliminal messages posted on the three digital screens which overtly celebrate and reward achievement. Her agenda has been to provide a 'safe haven' within the school and to boost girls' self-esteem, especially when taking into account the particular situations that they may confront outside of school. There is a real sense that the SMT know the girls and value them as individuals, through valuing all their achievements, not necessarily only academic achievement. However a potential weakness of staff – student relationships being so critical is that a dependency culture can develop on the part of the girls, which was acknowledged. This in turn could also lead to a problem with the students not being able to work as independent learners.

4.2.5 Governing Body Stance and Commitment

The Vice-Chair of Governors believes that it is the duty of the school to bring out the talents of all the students via the collective culture and the shared view of the whole school, which was again emphasized by her. The active involvement of the school governors in the school is clearly a factor which contributes to the strong and visionary leadership that it has been praised for in its most recent OFSTED report and which is evidenced by the sharp upward turn in the school's results. A member of the governing body is responsible for the progress of the G&T initiative and it is supported by the fact that they actively exploit contacts for extra funding to ensure the continuation of these activities.

The Teacher Governor reconfirmed the fact that the positive school ethos promotes values which mean that

'the child will come away from this school feeling very positive about themselves, feeling confident and with aspirations...I would say that, it obviously comes from the Head down.'

He stated that it was important in the school context to be aware of barriers to learning both within, but also outside of the school. The Vice-Chair of governors also stressed however that whilst it was very important to raise aspirations and reward success, this should be done realistically. Both the SMT and governors demonstrated sensitivity to the particular contextual situation of the school's pupils and this is clearly central to creating an environment that will meet all their needs and foster their talents. However there was not a particularly strong recognition of girls' career destinations and a sensitivity to fostering realistic expectations need not affect a school's responsibility with respect to supporting progression.

4.2.6 School Environment/ Ethos/ Culture

School Environment

A plasma screen in the reception area welcomes students and visitors with messages that reinforce the positive school environment. Laminated posters in the classrooms also reinforce the key school messages with regards to high expectations, collaborative learning, anti-bullying and expected behaviour, often by using motivational quotations from famous people to encourage self-esteem. There are many superb wall displays and photographs around the school and there is evidence of work from most subjects and key stages, including performance data of SATs and GCSEs. In the science department individual girls who had achieved top
scores were named. The building is old and potentially could look shabby, but instead it is cheerful and the overall impression is that learning is fun. The school uniform is carefully policed.

There is an interactive whiteboard in every classroom and all teachers have a laptop. The computer suites which the students can book into from 8am – 5.30pm are very popular with students and are commonly used for both coursework and homework. There are plans to continue to develop the school environment, for instance the library, which is heavily over-subscribed and caters for a broad ability / interest spectrum, including running a readers’ group for G&T students.

**School Ethos/ Culture**

A good starting point from which to uncover the whole school ethos with respect to G&T pupils is the statement by the Headteacher in the school prospectus. Here she says that ‘we believe all our pupils have gifts and talents hence our huge range of extra curricular activities.’. This is echoed on the G&T pages of the website which state that;

> ‘As a Christian school we constantly remind our students that they all have God-given gifts and talents and we celebrate these every day in our teaching, our events and in the day-to-day life of the school.’

The school takes many opportunities to celebrate achievement publicly with prize evenings and end of term achievement assemblies. The staff handbook states that;

> ‘there .. must be a clearly defined and understood system of rewards….Honours Day, Achievement assemblies, NRA day and daily assemblies will also be used to affirm girls in their achievements…Prizes will be given annually at the school Prize Giving for attainment and effort for all year groups…The rewarding of attainment or effort within subject areas is to be encouraged…’

Assembly is an important time not only for the school to praise girls individually and collectively, but for the school to come together as a community and share in collective worship. It is a very affirming whole school event which is quiet and dignified and challenges stereotypes, urging girls to be proud. This act symbolizes much that is important for the school and which helps to create its collective ethos. The sense of community is underpinned by the school’s support for individual pupils’ physical and emotional wellbeing, which in turn is ‘closely linked to their ability to learn.’ (Staff handbook).

Another key focus of the school appears is enhancing and affirming pupils’ self-esteem as a means of enabling them to reach their full potential;

> ‘We seek every opportunity to affirm our pupils and enhance their self-esteem…There must be an ethos which emphasizes the importance of developing self discipline and promotes confidence, a feeling of self worth and respect for each other…..’ (Staff handbook).

The staff handbook goes on to raise on numerous occasions ways in which all staff are expected to have a role in continually setting the highest possible standards and expectations. CS2 sets great store on behaviour management and states that,

> ‘It is the right of each pupil to be educated in an atmosphere which enables her full potential whatever that may be, to be reached. It is essential therefore
that we set and accept only the highest standards of behaviour. Failure to do so will mean that we fail our pupils because they will not be working in an atmosphere conducive to learning.' (Staff handbook).

4.2.7 Student Perceptions/ Experience of School Culture, Values and Ethos

The pupil voice comes across very strongly in the school’s prospectus and the relationship between staff and students is close and respectful. The aspirations that the staff have with regards to supporting their students appear to be met;

‘Although Yr 11 is stressful because of all the exam pressure, the teachers keep you going. They’re continually reminding you to stay on track. Revision classes are offered every Saturday, so the teachers actively help us to take the pressure. They ease it by helping us to revise.’

‘When your teacher says well done, that’s it, that’s enough for me. The personal touch is important. You feel cared for as an individual...You’re someone to the teachers and you want to make sure you do your best.’ (Pupil quotes for School Prospectus).

Interviews with pupils showed that they felt supported within school by peers and staff who they could turn to. Girls did highlight the fact that they felt under pressure to produce good quality work, but this pressure did not appear to come from the staff. Since most girls do not come from a background of higher education take-up, if they were to go to University they would be breaking new ground and so their strong sense of ambition and self-belief was particularly impressive and although clearly fostered by the school, it appeared to also be very much self-driven. They were clearly thinking ahead, and displayed some awareness of issues around funding further education and family support. However, it is not clear that their long-term planning needs were as firmly supported by the school as they could be.

Pupils demonstrated a good knowledge of the awards system and showed that this was a motivational factor for them. Where they had received certificates, they kept these and showed them to their parents. They also appreciated the ICT available at the school, particularly open access computers and the use of interactive whiteboards. The interviewees appeared to make good use of the facilities on offer including the library, the new sports hall, and the lunchtime and after school clubs and the possibility of staying on site to do their homework. This positive response to activities on offer is largely due to the fact that the school listened to the requests of the pupils in an audit of need that was carried out during PSHE lessons;

‘Additional Saturday and Easter revision sessions were requested by KS 4 pupils; KS 3 pupils voiced their need for expanded access to the ICT facilities and structured support for home work assignments...’

All these and the other requests were enacted with the result that there was a very high take-up rate of the revision sessions. Every subject offers at least one homework club a week, some of which are drop in sessions, where individual queries are addressed as well as other more formalised supplementary lessons. The ‘Raising Achievement’ report states that,

‘All of the foregoing (enrichment and extension events) contributes towards raising self-esteem in very tangible ways. There is a real sense of ownership by the pupils, who feel that they can give their talents expression and are valued as individuals...many of the clubs and subject specific sessions were organised in response to requests, which engenders self-esteem and the
sense that pupils have a real stake in the school and are not only listened to, but their needs matter and are being met in practical ways.’

Pupils stated that;

'It is really good at recognising talent...This school is exceptionally good at motivating us.'

'Here the teachers genuinely care about your dreams and aspirations so your talents are nurtured. Everyone has opportunities that will encourage and prepare them for the future.'

'I've obviously been put in the top sets for a reason, you know, I should be able to do it. And then I started, you know, working really hard and that really brought my grades up.'

Pupils also seem to be aware of what specific skills activities provide them with; ‘The Senior Choir is not only about singing – it teaches us self-discipline too.’

However pupils in the extension groups did say that they would like to meet more frequently to do project work. One said that ‘you can only go as fast as the slowest person’ and there appeared to be a tension between who was responsible for the students’ learning, the learner or the teacher. This desire for further challenge and more clarity with respect to extension work suggests that, despite a very impressive range of extension provision, not all needs are being fully met.

4.2.8 Classroom Practice and Pedagogy

Heads of Department will deploy staff most suitable for teaching various ability groups, although there is limited use of teaching assistants. The targeting of EiC gifted funding into classroom resources as discussed above has led to better resourced departments overall. Lessons are 50 minutes long, so teachers divide this into three or four distinct sections and the change of activity helps students’ concentration.

The staff handbook states that the school aims to stimulate critical thinking by ensuring that pupils challenge accepted ideas as well as their own ideas, to recognise diverse learning styles, to motivate learners, and to allow for spontaneity and self expression. It goes on to say that lesson planning should reflect that there are a variety of intelligences and forms of learning and therefore should include a variety of learning strategies.
Specific examples of excellent classroom practice which were observed are detailed here;

- Observation of an accelerated Maths lesson demonstrated pace, challenge and motivating teaching methods with the teacher using a smart notebook. The lesson opener was two equations that the students worked on individually without calculators. The teacher set very clear objectives and challenged students to talk through their solutions. Questions were challenging and there was the expectation that students would get the answers right. Frequent reference to examination success was made. 25 minutes into the lesson, there was an activity change as a new topic was introduced from a text book. The teacher continued to ask students if they understood the concepts throughout the lesson. Pupils helped each other and were involved in marking their own homework. In spite of the size of the group all the pupils were on task. This displayed a strong and purposeful learning/thinking environment.

- Observation of a further Maths lesson demonstrated a very fast pace. There was a warm up exercise to encourage pupils into a maths mode of thinking. Questions in the lesson probed understanding and sought explanations and greater clarity from the pupils themselves. There was a strong sense of a personal relationship between the teacher, who clearly knew the pupils well and was constantly focusing them, and the students. There was evidence of extension work and challenge for the more able students with further work on the board while the teacher was checking individual’s work. Laminated posters around the classroom had quotes about aspirations, learning, and expected behaviour.

- Observation of a history lesson demonstrated very clear feedback with regards to grading and challenge. This revision lesson was focussed on ensuring that pupils were familiar with special terminology and exam technique. They were set the task of planning an essay. The classroom had superb visual displays of trips and projects, and again homilies and aspirational quotations from famous people.

- An English lesson, despite being marred by some behavioural issues, showed a very high level of conceptual understanding and a highly creative response to the task by girls involved.

- Observation of a Sociology lesson showed a very positive and engaged exchange between the teacher, who clearly had high expectations and set a challenging pace, and the pupils. A concept test at the start of the lesson probed meaning and understanding through a series of questions. The lesson was exam oriented and homework set was to renew and revise material. There was also input on essay writing skills.

- Lesson observations showed that there was mainly whole class teaching with pupils sitting in rows which is not ideal if over utilised, however a challenging pace, motivating teaching, mixed methods and an environment of praise and reward appeared to counter any potentially de-motivating aspects of this.

The most recent OFSTED report endorses the high quality teaching that was observed;

‘Teaching is very good. Staff have high expectations of what pupils can achieve, they provide challenge and encourage independent learning.’
'Pupils achieve particularly well in tests and examinations because of very good teaching and systematic, rigorous and comprehensive preparation and support.'

The school’s G&T coordinator believes that the emphasis on G&T has made an impact on classroom teaching more widely, as well as having influenced the KS 2 strategy.

### 4.2.9 Curriculum Planning and Development

The link between the individual departmental coordinators responsible for planning pedagogy within their subject areas and the G&T coordinator makes for an environment where ‘teaching and learning for all are more carefully considered, which leads to better teaching for all’ in the words of the G&T coordinator. Curriculum coordinators’ meetings, for instance, are an opportunity for staff to share information about the gifted learners. The OFSTED report states that,

‘The school has developed an extensive system for the collection, analysis and dissemination of information about pupils’ attainments and achievements. This helps teachers and pupils set targets and identify what needs to be done to improve.’

The school carries out a great amount of data-tracking and evaluation of results and the SMT target certain areas every year. Tracking and monitoring of the gifted cohort is therefore part of the whole school system and they receive feedback as and when other students do. Participation in extra-curricular activities is tracked throughout pupils’ careers and reported to parents.

‘Student planners are to be used to record a wide variety of targets and achievements and to facilitate constructive communication between home and school.’ (Staff handbook)

Student interviewees supported the fact that planning meetings held twice a year are about target setting by both the pupil and the teacher (usually their form tutor), which is then recorded in the student planners, in order that these can be reviewed at the next meeting. Target setting is done with specific information that the member of staff brings to the meeting. Pupils appeared to be motivated by their teachers and did not suggest that peer pressure prevented them from aspiring or achieving highly.

### Student Programmes

The School Development Plan emphasises the role of extra curricular activities in raising self-esteem and consolidating learning. CS2 prides itself on providing a wide range of extra-curricular activities. The recent OFSTED report states that

‘A particular strength of the curriculum is the richness and diversity of provision to meet the needs of all pupils. The school knows its pupils very well and promotes their individual welfare’.

These include enrichment activities which take place during lunch hours and after school. These

‘could be subject based in an environment for providing additional learning opportunities for pupils who are enthusiastic about a particular subject. Alternatively, they could centre around activities which would enhance
cognitive skills and reasoning ability in general to introduce pupils to new and challenging learning experiences.’ (Policy for the More Able)

These include;

- Latin, Japanese and Portuguese with early entry GCSEs. All of these activities are demonstrating good take-up and good examination results.
- Chess, Photography, Dance, Sports Clubs, a Gospel Choir.
- A range of special internal and external projects and participation in one-off projects such as London Talent 2004.

A number of partnership events have been organised with CS2 partnership schools including for example; Thinking Skills Conferences, Theatre visits, Music and Dance events. CS2 has seen a strong impact in the uptake of Drama GCSE by those pupils who attended the Drama Summer School.

It is an important part of the school’s belief in providing a wide range of enrichment activities that these are accessible to as many of their students as possible, as this fits with the school’s ethos discussed above. As a result opportunities are offered to top sets, but volunteers are also sought from amongst the rest of the school to join in the activities.

Extension activities include after school and weekend revision classes mainly for Yr 11 students. Again some students are targeted but the sessions are not exclusive. A programme of mentoring for G&T students has also taken place which included group review and motivational sessions with individual members of staff. These are supernumerary part-time members of staff who are nominated to mentor pupils.

‘The close mentoring and focus on targets means that pupils are clear about the aim of raising aspirations and the strategies they will need to employ to reach their goals.’ (Raising Aspirations).

The whole notion of G&T extra-curricular provision is so firmly embedded in the school that a range of staff are running activities, even new and part-time staff, and pupil uptake is good. CS2 is highly dependent on its external funding streams for G&T which have supported the provision of all their extra resources and activities. Being in an EiC area has meant that they have had a lot of support. But it is important therefore for the school not to be too complacent and to continue to explore ways of sourcing additional funds as they are currently doing, so that any change to external funding streams will not negatively impact on provision.
4.3 Case Study 3

4.3.1 Summary of School Contextual Information

CS3 opened in purpose built accommodation in 1978 and in 1982 became fully comprehensive. It is a mixed comprehensive school for pupils aged 11 – 16 years serving a city in Cornwall. It is oversubscribed every year and has a rising roll matching the city’s expansion. The school has been designated a Specialist Science College. It is a ‘Leading Edge’ school for innovative practice and has a Sportsmark award and a gold level award in Arts. It is also the Lead School for the Cornwall Secondary School Centred Initial Teacher Training (SCITT) scheme where the collaborative group graduates fifty student teachers every year. As a result CS3, along with its partners, has been designated a Training School.

There are 1192 students on the roll of whom only 5 are from ethnic minority backgrounds, none having English as an additional language. 14% of the school’s pupils have SEN, which is below average, of whom 4% have a Statement of Special Educational Need, which is above average. School standards are well above average. Examination results (KS 3 and 4) have risen steadily over the last five years resulting in it being named in the top 50 comprehensive schools in the country over the past two years. The gap between the achievement of boys and girls is narrower than nationally. 99% of pupils taking GCSEs in 2003 received 5 A* - C grades. Recently CS3 was awarded Investors in People (IIP) status with a report that described it as one of the best institutions assessed. An excellent OFSTED report in April 2002 stated that the school was ‘the best school we have inspected in nine and a half years’.

The school has a close working relationship with local Sixth Form Colleges and also works closely with two separate clusters. It is keen to share practice and open up discussion with local schools.

4.3.2 School Gifted and Talented Policy

CS3’s website provides a good overview of the G&T education at the school and states that;

‘After a long period of discussion, CS3 has interpreted ‘Gifted and Talented’ broadly. This has ensured that we seek and capture as many different ways in which students excel as possible.’

The approach adopted at CS3 is therefore inclusive and aims to be transparent. There is concern expressed, borne of lengthy discussion amongst staff prior to creating the school policy, to handle the identification and labelling of pupils as sensitively as possible. G&T provision really came into focus about three years ago, through a variety of initiatives including links with local schools, and providing students with access to specialist activities and national initiatives. Before this time the school did have a G&T policy but it was one that was developed by someone on secondment and was dominated by identification and terminology issues. Now, after the discussion phase, the Policy is defined by its concern with a holistic approach to individual development, not only with academic success, but also with transferable skills and the social development of the students as the social/ academic/ business leaders of the future.

The application of the Policy is monitored by Heads of Faculty and Heads of Year and able pupils themselves are also interviewed about their experience of the curriculum. Good practice with respect to G&T students is disseminated throughout
the school via twilight training sessions and school publications. Information on the School’s Able Pupil Policy forms part of an Induction day programme for new staff. As a result, the profile of G&T students is now much higher in the school and there have been three staff training sessions covering:

- Identification and Provision - attended by 12 teachers and teaching assistants including a representative from each Faculty for G&T
- Differentiation and Writing Workshops/ Resources – with exemplar material, producing a document of the top 10 tips for meeting the needs of G&T children
- Academic Target Setting/ Monitoring.

The School’s Able Pupil Policy states that identification is based on objective data and a checklist of characteristics which could be indicative of exceptional ability. The Policy also refers to a subject specific checklist. Each subject faculty at the school has a member of staff responsible for coordinating the process of identification and implementing policy within the faculty and teacher input into the identification process is considered to be very important. Pupils are identified within their first term using the identification process which has been adopted by NAGTY, or if not, within their first academic year, and all pupils are reassessed when new evidence becomes available. The school has said that they would not want to see any child removed from the register, and in line with this view, CS3 were seeking to implement a policy where pupils who are identified by feeder primary schools as G&T are automatically recognised as such after transfer to CS3, despite the fact that there was concern expressed by the Headteacher that identification of G&T pupils at Primary level was not always compatible with the CS3 view which is aligned to a comprehensive ideal (coordinated through the SPLaT group). The school also expressed concern about the DfES criteria for ‘talent’ and is at present working within a much broader conception. Analysis of Yr 11 GCSE data results and cross over in performance has provided evidence that CS3 needs to identify more children.

All pupils are aware of who has been identified as are all staff since the information appears on the school’s academic database. This software is home grown and feeds into the school’s reporting system. Student tracking and monitoring take places twice a year. Academic reviews, where form tutors assess background data, currently only happen in Years 10 and 11, but there are plans to timetable this for the whole school so that each pupil has half an hour every term in front of the academic database setting targets. The G&T coordinator had wanted a specialist G&T team to do this for the gifted register, but this has not happened, although the academic database does flag up which students are on the G&T register.

The school uses staff mentors to support the needs of G&T pupils, and an ITT Mentoring programme has been developed for new mentors. They help students to aim for and reach academic targets and carry out work reviews. Each student has a School Planner in which there are details of school work and home work, rewards, and other information such as useful websites. There is also a homework timetable. The Policy states that extension activities are to be included in all Schemes of Work and lesson plans. Where students are setted, work will be differentiated to ensure that gifted pupils receive additional challenge.

4.3.3 Role of School Gifted and Talented Coordinator

The Able Pupil Policy states that the G&T Coordinator will help to develop extension opportunities for pupils on the register and implement the Policy, described above. The school’s current G&T Coordinator is a long-serving member of staff at the school and is also an Advanced Skills Teacher, providing him with 20% non-contact time to
carry out his additional roles. He feels very well supported by the SMT and teaching colleagues and feels that the staff are very receptive to new teaching ideas, although he does mention that there could be improvements with respect to differentiation. Each Faculty also has a G&T contact to maintain the profile of G&T and the coordinator alerts these staff to forthcoming events and courses. The foregrounding of G&T work in this way ensures a medium for sharing good practice throughout the school. He is currently producing a small document on the top ten tips for meeting the needs of G&T students.

The G&T coordinator is responsible for disseminating internal funding earmarked for G&T activity along with the SMT and Subject Heads, but feels if is not sufficient to meet the needs of all the requests that are made for subsidising G&T additional out of hours activities. CS3’s G&T activity is self-funded or grown organically and not spurred on by outside funding. Despite this and the perceived concerns of under-funding, money has been well spent and has targeted a lot of additional support. The Ambassador School grant is being used in part to take a Humanities day off timetable and in conjunction with other local teachers, to look at the issue of identification, drawing up Faculty-based, subject specific criteria. It has also been used to purchase the NACE thinking skills materials and Barry Tier resources. Funding is targeted at ‘self-sustaining systems’ and not one-offs.

4.3.4 Senior Management Stance and Commitment

The last OFSTED report evaluated the leadership and management of the SMT as excellent;

‘The positive ethos of the school, with learning at its heart, stems from excellent leadership…the school has a clear vision of where it is going next.’

The SMT has a 3-year Development plan, the priority of which is to ‘promote a socially inclusive ethos, fully implementing policy into practice’. Lesson Planning was reviewed in order to ensure that lessons were clearly responsive to pupil diversity; the school has also been awarded the Inclusion Quality Mark. There are also plans to continue to develop CS3 as a Training School with Distance Education Courses, a Training School website, continued expansion of the ITT Programme, and development of INSET for staff (CS3 School Development Plan), and G&T activities will fall within these areas.

The Deputy Head recapped on how successful the SPLaT policy has been over its two and a half years with CS3 taking the lead, raising the profile of G&T in a transparent way. At school level, CS3’s identification as an Ambassador School by NAGTY has galvanised activity and made staff more aware of the need for extension and enrichment. However there is a sense in which the school as a whole is uncomfortable with the ‘gifted’ concept and the profile of G&T is therefore still not consistent across the school.

4.3.5 Governing Body Stance and Commitment

The school governors’ presence appeared to be fairly low-key in and around the school although their relationship with the school seems to be good and meetings are well-attended. The governors do not wish to be perceived as interfering but they remain a supportive and useful presence. There is agreement amongst the governors that it is important to nurture the G&T, but there was also an admission that this is left largely to the Headteacher and that the governors’ knowledge of G&T issues is not at the same level as it is for SEN for instance. The route for staff feedback reaching the governors is initially the weekly Faculty meeting, then the
Middle Management Meeting, and on to the SMT who speak directly with the governors.

One of the teacher Governors who was interviewed was very much of the view that what works well in classroom practice does so for all children, at both ends of the ability spectrum, and that any classroom policy or practice should in turn be based on a strong culture and ethos of respect for teaching staff. Equally the view was expressed that if pupils felt what they were doing was being valued, they would be more willing to go one step further; 'you have to build self-esteem'. However it was underlined that the school did a lot of chasing of students and there was a general sense of not letting poor work go; ‘everything needs to be followed up…it’s no good just leaving things because that’s when standards slip.’ Following on from this, the Governor stated that one-to-one time with a member of staff was very important to pupils and in this spirit they had started using mentoring in school and were also looking to carry out individual Academic Reviews with each student.

The governor interviewed also underlined the difficult discussions that took place within the school with respect to formulating the policy and creating a G&T register. He stated that one of the core values of the school was its fairness and that there were clear guidelines so that pupils would know what to expect and could feel secure, which are gently but firmly inculcated in the students from Year 7;

‘So your Head of Year and your pastoral system are constantly reinforcing through the tutors, then in to the tutor group that these are what we value. So it’s those teams working together…all giving the same sorts of messages.’

4.3.6 School Environment/ Ethos / Culture

The school's latest OFSTED report states that;

- ‘Pupils achieve well because of the school’s very good teaching, and because of the excellent relationships between all members of the school community.
- The pupils’ specific needs are met very well.
- The positive ethos of the school, with learning at its heart, stems from excellent leadership.’

These elements underpin much of what creates the school’s success. There is a particularly strong focus across the school on pupils as individuals with the school’s mission statement reading as follows;

‘To create and sustain a caring, learning school community of high quality where everyone is valued for who they are and for what they might become’.

Hence the inclusive and individual approach to G&T provision is stressed, as is the fact that it is also about raising the aspirations of all pupils. With respect to the school's environment, it states the following aims;

- ‘To provide a lively and enthusiastic atmosphere in which a love of learning and a questioning approach to life may be stimulated.
- To highlight and to develop those standards which society finds estimable, establishing an ethos in which they are modelled as well as taught’.

The school has very good facilities, comprising of large purpose built accommodation situated in 50 acres of landscaped grounds, a flood-lit all weather sports surface,
Sports Hall, Gymnasium and Climbing Wall as well as nine pitches for additional sports. There are also excellent music and drama facilities. However the school currently accommodates almost double the number of students that it was built for so space is a very real concern, especially at lunch time since the dining hall is inadequate. It is also in need of some updating and redecorating. The overall school environment feels informal but with a strong working culture nonetheless, evidenced by the use of the work areas and the purposeful atmosphere in teaching areas.

The entrance hall and corridors are welcoming with artwork and certificates celebrating school and individual achievement, and a plasma screen is positioned centrally. Students were observed looking at it as they came in, pleased to see themselves at the previous week’s Book Week. Faculty notice boards also contain a lot of student work. The Learning Portal is a standard shared area for staff and students which can now also be accessed remotely. Students can see their teachers’ PowerPoint presentations, slides or lesson notes. The computers are available for students’ supervised use during lunchtime and after school until 4.30pm (the last lesson ends at 3.05pm) but access is limited.

Pupils are placed in a tutor group when they start at CS3, in which they remain throughout their time at the school and each year group has a Head of Year who works closely with the SMT. The parents of pupils automatically become members of the Association of Parents and Friends of CS3. The school also has strong community links and makes its facilities available to the local community. There is a clear anti-bullying policy at the school and a Code of Behaviour with high expectations of its pupils’ behaviour which states that;

‘Children find pleasure in being esteemed and valued, especially by their parents and those whom they depend upon. These concepts are embedded in our school’s mission statement and rewards, as a part of our Behaviour Management Policy, and have a large part to play when it comes to regulating behaviour – either social or academic….Positive letters home form members of staff concerning merits gained, excellent interim reports and sustained good work are an example of this.’

The reward system is strong and works as follows; merits are recorded in the back of the students’ planners and certificates are presented to the pupils each time they receive 20 merit marks, followed by a badge when 60 are gained, and a book token when 120 are gained. In years 10 and 11 certificates are awarded for each commendation. In year 11 all pupils have the opportunity to be prefects. A record of achievement enables all pupils to record their successes when these are not evaluated by formal examinations and parents are informed about pupils’ progress termly. Each summer term there is an Annual Prize Day when subject prizes, Community Service and school-wide prizes are awarded. In addition the school celebrates achievement at year assemblies and Presentation assemblies and uses its House System, Library, plasma screen and entrance area to highlight achievement. However the culture is one of celebrating the success of an individual holistically, and is less focused on grades or league tables. There is a new initiative to enable parents and students to access the school website interface.

All these factors contribute to the creation of a secure school environment which, despite being over-full, creates a culture of aiming to recognise and support each individual in their entirety, which clearly contributes to an environment where G&T provision can be taken seriously. The importance of the culture of celebrating children’s achievements is evident.
4.3.7 Student Perceptions/ Experience of School Culture, Values and Ethos

The students interviewed at CS3 unanimously endorsed the school’s statements about the importance of their relaxed and supportive staff-student relationship;

‘there are lots of good things really I suppose, the way that the teachers don’t talk down to you, they try and talk to you on your level…”

They made it quite clear that teachers were readily available outside of lessons to support them by sparing extra time to review work or concentrate on areas of difficulty. They also endorsed the fact that they found lessons interesting and enjoyed the activities that were involved; ‘teachers make it better by having some sort of activity to do that’s not just writing and listening’. Teaching methods which involved visual displays or presentations were popular as were those that asked the students to teach their peers as a means of consolidating work.

Students generally spoke positively about a culture which encouraged them to try and achieve well but without excessive pressure and one in which success was generally a good thing amongst their peers. One pupil spoke about her pre-examination nerves and how a teacher had helped her with some relaxation techniques.

All the students were clear about the rewards system that they seemed to indicate was a fair one, not targeting the same people all the time as ‘the teachers tend to give them if you’ve gone to your highest standard, not to the highest standard’. It is also clear that when rewards are given out, all the teachers involved with that student know about it, as they are signed off in the students’ planners, and parents receive a letter telling them when their child should be recommended. Equally the students are clear about what their individual targets are;

‘every time my coursework is handed in and marked the teachers will tell you whether you’re working towards the grade or not’.

The students all stated that they valued the rewards system, particularly the certificates which they could take home and keep.

The students did not suggest that there was a particular shortage of equipment or facilities or that there were large queues for the library or the computers, endorsing the systems that the school has in place where prefects manage the computer facilities and the library is available to different year groups at different times of the day, examination groups having priority. They like the school’s intranet and recently improved IT network allowing them to access school information and their email accounts from home. They were also quick to praise some of the newer acquisitions the school has made, such as the Astroturf, and they were very keen on the electronic whiteboards.

It did appear to be the case however that one barrier to becoming involved in the school’s extracurricular activities is logistical as the school bus leaves after the last lesson each day and this is when most of the activities take place. Since the school has a large rural catchment with many pupils living some distance away, attendance at extracurricular events is dependent upon being able to get home.

Other concerns raised by students are the desire for smaller classes, but this is obviously an issue not unique to CS3, and homework, since despite having the homework timetable, students could find themselves overloaded some evenings. Of particular concern with respect to G&T students is access to the extra-curricular
activities and opportunities for accessing individual staff time given large class sizes. The latter of these issues does seem to be handled well by the school with teachers making themselves available to students.

4.3.8 Classroom Practice and Pedagogy

The school’s most recent OFSTED report states that;

‘The biggest factor in promoting effective learning is the excellent expectations that staff have of pupils. As a result, the pace of learning is very good, pupils show excellent effort in the classroom, and they acquire knowledge, understanding and skills at a very good rate.’

This strong relationship between staff and pupils was observed on a tour of the school. There was also a lot of use of the interactive whiteboards and powerpoint presentations and evidence of superb classroom practice. The teacher governor interviewed said that students were asked for their feedback about the quality of lessons in order to find out what was valued and perceived to be most useful. He also said that there was a long tradition of CS3 reflecting on its pedagogy and aiming to improve it.

A new initiative is the CS3 School Learning Team (PSLT) – all Advanced Skills Teachers (including the current G&T coordinator), four paid for by the LEA and three by the school – who work alongside Heads of Faculty. They all have an 80% teaching timetable in order to devote time to research development/ networking/ inreach and outreach work, but are particularly concerned with classroom practice;

‘The Learning Team will work alongside staff in an advisory capacity to help develop skills and expertise focused upon teaching and learning, primarily of teachers but also of Teacher Assistants. The PSLT will also develop and model strategies of effective teaching and learning for the whole age and ability range, probably by utilising a personalised learning approach’.

(School Learning Team Paper).

The team spent a day working together considering how they would drive forward new initiatives around Teaching and Learning; Behaviour for Learning; Coaching/ Mentoring/ Personal Development; and Community/ Partnerships and they are each leading a CPD session in school. One G&T Training session asked each member of staff to bring practical examples of who they would provide G&T material and teaching for in a particular lesson. This not only generated ideas, but raised awareness of G&T students in school and encouraged greater creativity.

Faculty Heads decide on the academic groupings in each year, the principal being to facilitate the most efficient learning and these groups will vary from subject to subject. However the school is committed to teaching in mixed ability sets in most subjects throughout KS 3 and KS 4, using other methods of differentiation in teaching, while students are setted in Maths and Science as part of the school’s Specialist Science status. Pupils are set into ability groups early in year 7. Teaching assistants are widely used throughout the school and a Learning Centre enhances the provision. The school day consists of five one hour periods starting at 8.40am and finishing at 3.05pm.
Specific examples of excellent classroom practice which were observed are detailed here;

- There is an eclectic approach to teaching and learning with no hard and fast rules outside of an acknowledgement of some basic examples of good practice such as engaging the students in active learning for some of the lesson – exemplar material is used to raise the level of work overall. Work is very much at individual lesson level utilizing mixed teaching styles.
- There was a lot of use of interactive whiteboards and Powerpoint presentations which brought lessons to life. Students could get further information from the visual multimedia, for instance returning to lesson plans or notes in their own time.
- An excellent Year 10 History lesson taught by a newly appointed AST was observed. The lesson was pedagogically excellent and was aimed high to challenge the top end of the class.
- An excellent Yr 7 science lesson was observed with a good technique for quickly assessing the understanding of the whole class at the start by asking for thumbs up/down and then asking why. A practical activity engaged students at different levels of ability because of an emphasis on thinking/problem solving. Pupils did not have to do lots of writing or copying – the emphasis was on doing. It was also easy to identify more able children who had moved away from the work sheet to construct their own more complex/sophisticated model of the experiment as the task was open-ended enabling students to move to whatever level they chose. Clear aims were presented to the whole class with instructions on the generic task and then the students were given the opportunity to move to different levels of difficulty. The aims were revisited in the plenary. Once again the teacher-pupil rapport was excellent with clear evidence that the teacher knew the pupils well.
- An express Maths group lesson was observed, where a small group were again working within a really challenging environment, with lots of problem-solving, thinking skills, working out, finding shortcuts. One highly able child in the group who also had physical disabilities was fully engaged and motivated.

The teacher governor spoke about the importance of knowing pupils well when working with mixed ability groups, since this enabled teachers to get the best from them and group them in ways that would support their learning within a lesson, depending not just on ability, but also on personality;

'I think sometimes you'll want maybe all the gifted children and the very able to work together or, sometimes you'll want a bit of a mix and match, and sometimes you'll want different personalities because sometimes gifted and able children are very quiet and very insecure about working in a group or team work.'

It appeared to be the case that group work was used well and imaginatively at CS3.

A lesson of variable quality was also observed highlighting the problem of differing levels of expertise across subject areas and between different teachers and the challenge of standardising good practice. It has been suggested that a portfolio of work completed by exceptionally able pupils should be developed by the school both to raise teachers’ awareness of levels outside the normal parameters and for pupils to be inspired by models of excellence – the emphasis being on core subjects.
4.3.9 Curriculum Planning and Development

CS3’s curriculum is not in itself very innovative, but it does offer breadth and is inclusive. Students found to be able in languages have an opportunity to take a second language in years 8 and 9. All students are able to enter for a GCSE if they have done the coursework regardless of their predicted result as the focus is not predominantly on grades achieved. The school is also considering an accelerated KS 3 curriculum over two years for some pupils. There is a focus on thinking skills and creativity in the curriculum which contributes to the strong teaching that was observed. Extension and enrichment activities are particularly good and off-site activity is used well to broaden the curriculum. There is a whole school commitment to international work which is reflected in the school’s curriculum. The school has links with a boys’ school in New Zealand and a South African Township School in Capetown.

Extension and enrichment Activities offered include:

- Masterclasses in Maths, Science and Modern Foreign Languages
- Accelerated Groups
- Breadth in the National Curriculum, such as through the provision of three sciences and a wider choice of subjects at GCSE level (including some off site such as Critical Thinking and Spanish at Truro College)
- Beginning AS Maths in Year 11
- Leadership initiative – the school is very keen to promote vocational training suited to local needs e.g. horticulture
- European Social Fund – the school are co-financing a business-based entrepreneurial project involving work-based learning, and they are looking for students to achieve accreditation as they go along, particularly those on the G&T register
- Extra-curricular activities including a wide range of clubs and societies
- Special Project in Art developing creative partnerships with artists in residence, which will be evaluated by students
- Peer Mentoring training for older students to provide mentoring for younger students

Depending on the activity, pupils who are not on the G&T register are sometimes offered the opportunity of participating. Details of these should be included in all Schemes of Work and lesson plans. CS3 has found that special projects and Masterclasses have helped to develop in non G&T students a greater interest in the subject area, in turn contributing to raised aspirations across the board. There has also been an increase in the number of students being entered for higher level papers in Maths, Science and English at CS3 which reflects the focus on raising aspirations and increased challenge.
Section 5: Discussion of Strengths and Distinctive Areas of Practice

5.1 Case Study 1

There is evidence of a clear strategy attached to G&T policy at CS1, as well as many monitoring points. CS1 has a particular focus on differentiation which is highly effective and consistent across the whole school. It is a constant theme that runs through all lesson planning and delivery and is a reminder that work must always be delivered at different levels. In addition CS1 has a high level knowledge of individual students' performance through its very successful tracking and monitoring systems. It also utilises close mentoring of students who are particularly at risk and this is crucial in the case of underachieving G&T students. CS1 therefore has the software and instigates the follow-up work with students to ensure that no-one falls through the net.

Since students are partly responsible for choosing their own work levels, it is vital that the school fosters an ethos of motivation and challenge. And this is one of CS1’s core strengths. It has a concentrated vision that everyone buys in to. As a result the organisation functions very strongly and this in part can be summed up by the way in which the curriculum is embedded into the whole school’s ethos;

‘Curriculum and ethos run in partnership. For example, to teach enterprise would be pointless unless the enterprise culture – time management, independence, initiative – was a living organism within the College for both staff and students….if pupils had choices in learning terms it was because the school has an ethos of respect for the individual’. (Campbell and Terry).

However, despite CS1 offering a high level of differentiation to its students at KS3, the annual review which promoted a revision of the KS3 curriculum noted that,

‘Despite the differentiation system and the good level of examination results, the NFER profiling undertaken by the College indicates that very many more students are capable of pursuing higher level work than is currently the case in most departments.’ (Campbell and Terry).

It is worth noting that the Advanced level curriculum that CS1 offers, despite being a significant contribution to providing differentiated pathways for students, is not necessarily a sufficient model for its highest achieving G&T students. For instance, CS1 has a student who it assessed as being in the top 2% of the cohort for whom Advanced level work was not sufficient in terms of depth or challenge and who consequently had to pursue self-directed work to a far greater extent than would be desirable. This demonstrates that differentiation per se will not necessarily meet the needs of the very brightest pupils and that care should be taken not to underestimate the number of pupils who are capable of working at the highest levels.

As in all the case study schools, there appeared to be some confusion amongst staff over the identification of gifted students, and particularly of talented students. Identification sheets in different subjects still need to become common practice. However a great amount of work had been carried out to embed policy and to model and describe best practice. Much of this is exemplary, but it needs to become firmly embedded throughout the school. CS1 has carried out extremely thorough reviews of its practice and recognises areas for development; around ensuring challenge to the most able, around celebrating achievement through public displays and better information about day to day events in and out of the school, since the current school newsletter is seen to be too infrequent; and around disseminating its innovative good
practice more widely via conferences, the press etc. To this end the College has decided to appoint a Press and Communications Officer.
5.2 Case Study 2

CS2 is particularly notable for its strong collective ethos which pervades much of what happens in the day to day life of the school. Its Christian values underpin the school ethos, which appears to confer on each girl a strong sense of belonging to a community with clear values and goals. This school culture has been fostered as a result of the context in which it operates, which is one where relative social disadvantage means that it cannot be taken for granted that education is prized and that expectations even for the able will involve higher education. A very clear and strong leadership team in the school therefore models the values and aspirations that it hopes to confer on its pupils. A key feature is their belief in building self-esteem which clears the pathway for effective learning for all girls, and this is supported by a strong culture of rewarding and celebrating achievement, which was certainly much in evidence.

The use of ASTs to model effective pedagogical practices at classroom level is a decisive move to improve teaching across the board, and lesson observations demonstrated aspects of good practice such as pace, challenge, and open-ended research-based tasks. The G&T Coordinator stated that the G&T agenda has raised achievement across the school and this is supported by the rapid rise in achievement levels of the pupils. CS2 is also clear that its provision for the gifted cohort should be open to all students so as not to be divisive and the G&T register is not made public. This approach is supported by the good take-up of the enrichment and extension activities by 20% of pupils, and fits with the school’s value system around a belief in the gifts and talents of all its pupils.

This approach would therefore appear to support the theory that raising the aspirations of the school through G&T provision, when done in a non-divisive way and supported and structured by a strong school leadership, raises the aspirations and therefore the achievement levels of the whole school.

As in all the schools visited, there is still a need to standardise the G&T practice across the whole school, since although there is a strong whole-school ethos, it is not clear that the specific G&T agenda is reaching all lessons and all staff. For instance, although there was some excellent teaching observed, students themselves stated that the pace in some lessons could be faster and that they would like more extension group-work in some subjects, again raising the issue of adequate challenge and stretch for the most able students across the board.

Although achievement levels have clearly been raised substantially and rapidly, there is still a need to ensure that the policy is effectively raising aspirations with respect to post-school destinations. However the new Sixth Form building is an important development in this respect and a source of great pride for the school. The G&T Coordinator said that monitoring and mentoring were also areas for improvement, yet despite not relying on sophisticated tracking procedures, it was clear that the staff knew the girls very well and this personal interest in each of them meant that no-one was simply left to coast.

CS2 is highly dependent on its external funding streams for G&T which have supported the provision of all their extra resources and activities. Being in an EiC area has meant that they have had a lot of support. It is important therefore that the school continues to explore ways of sourcing additional funds, as they are currently doing, so that any change to external funding streams will not negatively impact on provision.
5.3 Case Study 3

Work done on G&T education particularly over the past few years has changed attitudes towards G&T amongst most of the teachers, students and parents at CS3, and the inclusive approach has contributed to the explicit focus on ensuring breadth and depth in the curriculum for all students. Their broad definition of G&T has been an important factor in ensuring a sensitive approach and this appears to have been beneficial for students. The relationship between staff and pupils has to be one of the most positive aspects of CS3, and it is this that seems to provide the foundation for their inclusive ethos, which in turn is at the heart of their G&T work. This has certainly contributed to a non-competitive and supportive environment where academic success is prized, but alongside a holistic view of the individual.

CS3 has implemented a new team of ASTs and by introducing this important initiative and creating a middle level structure, they are raising the profile of teaching and learning across the school and modelling good practice. The G&T coordinator is also an AST. CS3 are working well to disseminate knowledge and expertise, as well as building strong relationships with local primary schools in order to share understandings of G&T. This is exemplary and demonstrates ways in which secondary and primary schools could work together to negotiate differences in approach to G&T students within their catchments.

The G&T coordinator states that there is scope for greater involvement for the students as the school council has voiced an interest in becoming more involved. The G&T coordinator hopes to provide further internal training activities for staff to build on the training that has already taken place, to explore ways of increasing pupil monitoring, in addition to holding ongoing discussions with parents about what it means to have a gifted or talented child and how the school is best able to support them. But much work has already been done with respect to G&T and CS3 has for instance worked hard on its tracking and monitoring procedures for all its students in a move towards personalization.

However, again there is a need for further clarification of the identification criteria within the school and particularly in the area of talent. Some teachers are still uncomfortable with the concept of identifying giftedness, and this needs to be worked through in order for there to be consistency across the school. A socially inclusive agenda is at the heart of CS3’s vision and it is important for the whole school to integrate the G&T agenda in such a way that it fits into this ethos, and this is what has begun to happen in a very creative way. CS3’s targeting of ear-marked funding for G&T at self-sustaining systems and their use of off-site activity to broaden the curriculum is developing G&T activity in ways that are sustainable and manageable in the longer term. However, it is also important that whilst espousing an inclusive approach to G&T, CS3 ensure that they provide enough differentiation and challenge to the most gifted individuals, as evidence in all the schools suggests that a focus on G&T is contributing to raising standards, but that this may still not reach the very brightest.
Section 6: Conclusions and Areas for Development

The findings of the case studies reveal a number of key issues and emerging areas for further work. Rutter et al. (1979) and Mortimore et al. (1988) raised the importance of a distinctive school ethos and this is clearly evident from these case studies. Common to all the schools is the fact that they are integrating G&T policy into their whole school practice in a way that resonates very clearly with the school ethos that already exists. They all, in various ways, want to support the whole individual, and to this end the schools are conscious of achieving an inclusive approach to G&T. They are also using the strategy in a way which benefits as many pupils as possible and feeds into wider school strategies of overall school improvement including raising achievement levels, identifying and supporting underachieving students, and improving classroom practice in line with the new agenda of ‘personalised learning’. The schools are clearly successful in this approach, but this also suggests that it is not always possible to disaggregate the impact of G&T specific practice and provision from other school initiatives. It is important to continue to monitor the way in which G&T policy and practice is implemented to ensure greater consistency across the whole school.

Key overall findings are detailed below under the three data strands originally outlined for the case studies; the whole school approach, meeting the students’ needs in terms of pedagogy and practice, and pupil perceptions, performance and progress.
6.1 Whole school approach: policy, ethos and learning environment

- Overall, the field is in a transitional state in schools, G&T policies having been drawn up relatively recent. Schools are on a steep learning curve.
- All the schools have very strong SMTs who are driving forward changes and raising awareness, both individually and in networks or clusters.
- There are philosophical concerns amongst staff about identification, the creation of a G&T register, and the possible creation of 'elite' groups who benefit from bespoke activities. The schools prioritise inclusivity and have very low key G&T registers. CS2 and CS3 particularly are keen not to create highly pressured and competitive environments, with it appears success, whilst still performing well overall.
- The schools are overt and proactive with respect to their rewards systems and the use of praise to motivate and foster a culture of achievement, not only in academic areas, therefore recognising the diversity of their pupils.
- There are practical concerns around the standardized implementation of identification procedures across phases, particularly from KS2 to KS3. It follows that it cannot be presumed that a gifted student will be the same across the three schools, and this has implications for a national register.
- There is a real confusion within schools about the whole area of talent.
- All the schools refer in some way to a culture where the adults ‘model’ good practice and demonstrate the values that are held in high regard. CS1 seems to take this one step further by actually creating a more adult-like environment. This must presumably link to academic achievement and it would be interesting to do further research on how this works in practice.
- Governors appeared to have a higher profile at CS1 and CS2 and the latter is the only one with a designated G&T member. It is worth exploring whether this is something that would be beneficial in all schools.
6.2 Meeting the needs of G+T students: programmes, pedagogy and practice

- All the schools let students take subjects they may not succeed well in, and articulate the fact that challenge is an end in itself, and not simply a means of securing high outcomes. This is laudable and demonstrates that this approach can still lead to success in the league tables.

- All the schools have a strong focus on pedagogy and modelling good practice, particularly through the use of systematic differentiation and ASTs and G&T policy has influenced INSET which impacts on whole school practice. Excellent pedagogy was observed which challenged the very able, provided effective differentiation, and maintained student interest and engagement.

- However, there is a lack of consistency across the schools in terms of teaching the most able. This reflects the issue of whether distinctive pedagogy exists for G&T pupils, or whether it is just excellent classroom practice. There are both theoretical and practical problems associated with knowing what truly constitutes ‘advanced’ level work across the curriculum and how this can be standardized. The schools, particularly CS1 and CS3, overtly state that good G&T teaching will also just be good teaching for all. This fits the model described by Eyre (2000), but should not cover up a lack of awareness or understanding of specific G&T issues.

- A theoretical understanding and articulation of pedagogic models associated with G&T education such as higher order thinking skills and multiple intelligences was certainly evident in the schools, however this will not on its own lead to successful classroom practice, although it does raise awareness of overarching teaching skills.

- It is important to be aware of barriers to accessing additional provision for students other than identification, such as logistical or cultural barriers.
## 6.3 Pupil Perceptions, Performance and Progress

- A culture of valuing the whole pupil, not just academic achievement, is interesting in three schools who have all achieved well academically. It is worth exploring whether a focus on the holistic needs of students and support for multiple aspects of success is an environment that also lends itself to better supporting G&T pupils.
- Pupil perceptions of their relationships with teachers are very positive and staff clearly have a good knowledge of pupils, although this is achieved by the schools in different ways; in CS1 through a more professional environment and in CS2, through a more pastoral environment. There is a sense in all the schools that pupils cannot ‘slip through the net’.
- Schools use sophisticated tracking and monitoring techniques and CS1 particularly is exemplary in this respect, providing evidence that is of benefit to gifted underachievers in particular. They also follow up this evidence with close mentoring or other forms of support.
- Students appeared to unite around the fact that being identified is a positive experience and the culture of challenge fostered in the schools is a positive one. This finding is of great importance and helps to counter the negative stereotypes that are still in existence.
- The students supported the findings of the lesson observations that practice varied from teacher to teacher, and subject to subject, and that there was still scope for increased challenge for the most able. It is also important to ensure value-added for exceptional students.
References


Appendix 1: Evidence Base

Documents for CS1, CS2 and CS3

Public Documents

School Prospectus
School Website
Most recent OFSTED Inspection Report
Most recent PANDA Report (CS2)
DfES Performance Tables and Absence Reports

Internal School Documents

G&T Policy
G&T Coordinator Survey
School Development Plan (CS1 and CS3)
Summary of Key Issues Pertinent to School Curriculum (CS1)
Information about School Curricula and Examples of Differentiated Work
Survival Guide for Staff (CS2)
Report to Governors by the G&T Coordinator on Provision (CS2)
School memoranda, proforma, and meeting minutes on the management of
G&T activity
G&T Inset Material

Interviews and Observation

Example of a pupil Interim Report (CS1)
Example of a pupil Individual Learning Plan (CS1)
Interview with G&T coordinator
Interview with Headteacher (CS2, CS3)
Interview with Deputy Head (CS1, CS3)
Interview with Vice Principal (CS1)
Interview with Head of Sixth Form (CS1)
Interview with Teacher Governor (CS2, CS3)
Interview with Vice-Chair of Governors (CS2)
Meeting with Heads of Faculty (CS3)
Lesson Observations
Pupil Interviews, individual and group (from both the gifted and the non-gifted
cohorts)

CS1  ‘Constructing a New KS3 Curriculum at Brooke Weston CTC: A Review and
Commentary’, Dr Andrew Campbell and Professor Trevor Kerry (Draft).

CS2  Raising Achievement: Fostering Self-Esteem – A Case Study on Inclusion at
St Martin’s 2004
Appendix 2: Ambassador Schools Programme

NAGTY has selected 18 Ambassador Schools whose work on G&T education has been endorsed by Ofsted. The objectives are:

- To share good practice in G&T education
- To develop innovative practice in mainstream teaching and learning and in enrichment programmes
- To better engage parents, governors, business and industry and the wider community in the support and development of gifted and talented education
- Support pupils who are NAGTY members and to promote NAGTY membership to others

In addition to selection criteria, the schools:

- Make very good provision for G&T pupils in all year groups, especially in everyday lessons
- Offer a range of enrichment opportunities in the school
- Have a strong record of using other providers to extend the learning opportunities for G&T pupils
- Have wide experience of training and sharing good practice within the school through a well-established programme of continuous professional development, and beyond its boundaries by sharing good practice with other institutions
- Have a body of pupils who are members of NAGTY and have established a good working relationship with the National Academy
- Have a very good record of examination success and added value especially when compared with schools in similar circumstances

Further details of the Ambassador Schools Programme including a list of the schools involved is available at
www.nagty.ac.uk/professional_academy/ambassador_schools/index.aspx
### Appendix 3: Data Collection Instruments

#### 3a. Building Expertise in G&T Education

*Protocols for School Visits*

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_N.B. Data Strand One: A whole school approach: policy, ethos and learning environment; Data Strand Two: Meeting the needs of G & T students: programmes, pedagogy and practice; Data Strand Three: Pupil perceptions, performance and progress._
3b. Overview of School Information

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Students receiving free-school meals

*N.B. Data for 2001/2 taken from Ofsted report. However, need to see DfES report in addition as this contains different figures.*

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*N.B. Data taken from DfES performance tables. However, Ofsted report for 2002 contains different figures.*

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<td>% 5 or more grades A*-G</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>% 1 or more grades A* - G</td>
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<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>% no passes</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average total point score per student</td>
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<tr>
<td>Average GCSE/GNVQ point score</td>
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<tr>
<td>Average number of GCSE/GNVQs taken</td>
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<tr>
<td>Stability indicator</td>
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<th>Post 16</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of eligible students</td>
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<tr>
<td>Number of A/AS level passes</td>
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</table>
## School performance improvement measure (compared to local LEA and England)

<table>
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<tr>
<th>School</th>
<th>2004/5</th>
<th>2003/4</th>
<th>2002/3</th>
<th>2001/2</th>
<th>2000/1</th>
<th>1999/00</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>% 5 or more grades A*-C (GCSE/GNVQ)</td>
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<tr>
<td>% no passes (GCSE/GNVQ)</td>
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<table>
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<th>2001/2</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>% 5 or more grades A*-C (GCSE/GNVQ)</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>4% no passes (GCSE/GNVQ)</td>
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</table>

<table>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>% 5 or more grades A*-C (GCSE/GNVQ)</td>
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<tr>
<td>% no passes (GCSE/GNVQ)</td>
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## School ranking for LEA and England

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>LEA Area (out of 11)</th>
<th>2004/5</th>
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<th>2002/3</th>
<th>2001/2</th>
<th>2000/1</th>
<th>1999/00</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>National (out of 3579)</td>
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<td>Comments</td>
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</table>
## Ethnic background of pupils

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Current year</th>
<th>Previous years</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2004/5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White – British</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White – Irish</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White – any other white background</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mixed – White and Black Caribbean</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mixed – White and Black African</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mixed – White and Asian</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mixed – any other mixed background</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian or Asian British - Indian</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian or Asian British - Pakistani</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian or Asian British - Bangladeshi</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black or Black British - Caribbean</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black or Black British – African</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black or Black British – any other Black background</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chinese</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Any other ethnic group</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>No ethnic group recorded</td>
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</table>

### Exclusions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Current year</th>
<th>Last year</th>
<th>Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2004/5</td>
<td>2003/4</td>
<td>Figures for 2004/5 are indicating exclusions to date, unless otherwise stated</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Date:
Figure: 2004/5 are indicating exclusions to date, unless otherwise stated

Date:

N.B. Table gives number of exclusions, which may be different from number of pupils excluded.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Current year</th>
<th>Previous years</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2004/5</td>
<td>2003/4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>F</td>
<td>P</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White – British</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White – Irish</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White – any other white background</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mixed – White and Black Caribbean</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mixed – White and Black African</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Mixed – White and Asian</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Mixed – any other mixed background</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Asian or Asian British - Indian</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Asian or Asian British - Pakistani</td>
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<tr>
<td>Asian or Asian British - Bangladeshi</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Black or Black British - Caribbean</td>
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<tr>
<td>Black or Black British – African</td>
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<tr>
<td>Black or Black British – any other Black background</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chinese</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Any other ethnic group</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No ethnic group recorded</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

N.B. F = fixed period exclusions, P = permanent exclusions
### Pupil Mobility

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Current year</th>
<th>Previous years</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2004/5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

### Pupil behaviour

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<tr>
<th>Behaviour</th>
<th>Comments</th>
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<td>Behaviour</td>
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</table>

### Pupil destinations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2003/04</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>2002/03</th>
<th>%</th>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>Part-time employment</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pupil entering Post-16 education</td>
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<tr>
<td>College pupils entering further education</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Work based training</td>
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<tr>
<td>Unemployed</td>
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<td>Unknown</td>
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<tr>
<td>Current year</td>
<td>Previous years</td>
<td>Comments</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------</td>
<td>----------------</td>
<td>----------</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004/5</td>
<td>2003/4</td>
<td>2002/3</td>
<td>2001/2</td>
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**Teaching staff: qualified teachers, recruitment, deployment, classes, average teaching class size**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
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<th>2002/3</th>
<th>2001/2</th>
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<tr>
<td>Qualified teachers (FTE)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pupils per qualified teacher</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AST's</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>LSA's</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education support staff</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Aggregate hours worked per week</td>
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<tr>
<td>% of time spent in contact with class</td>
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<tr>
<td>Average class size KS3</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Average class size KS4</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of teachers who left school</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Figure refers to during last two years</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of teachers appointed</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Figure refers to during the last two years</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of teacher vacancies (FTE)</td>
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<td>Please specify: Calculated as a total percentage of teaching establishment number (according to DfES description)</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract (&lt; one term)</td>
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<td>Temporary contract detailed by Ofsted of a term or more (FTE)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Number of unfilled or</td>
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<td>Temporary contract detailed by Ofsted of less than one term (FTE)</td>
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<tr>
<td>filled vacancies by teachers on temporary contract (&gt; one term)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Teacher sickness (days)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other staff numbers</td>
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<td>Senior Management staff</td>
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<td>Care staff</td>
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<td>Additional staff</td>
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### Financial information

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<td>Total income (£)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total expenditure (£)</td>
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<td>Expenditure per pupil (£)</td>
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<td>Budget received per student (£)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Balance brought forward from previous year</td>
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<td>Balance carried forward to next year</td>
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### Geographical data

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<td>School</td>
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<td>Local LEA</td>
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## Facilities and resources

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<td>School (internal)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Non-school (external)</td>
<td>Area:</td>
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<td>Other:</td>
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## Governing body

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<td>Responsibilities</td>
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### 3c. Learning Environment

School: ................................................................. Visit Date(s): .................................................................

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Comments</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Presentation of student work</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Classroom</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Around school</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Entrance and reception area</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students from G&amp;T cohort</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students from non G&amp;T cohort</td>
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<tr>
<td>Subject areas</td>
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<p>| <strong>Evidence of learning</strong> | |
| Individual learning | |</p>
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<tr>
<td>Cross-year collaboration</td>
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<tr>
<td>Real-world evidence</td>
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<tr>
<td>Formative assessments</td>
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<td>Summative assessments</td>
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<td>Levels of differentiation</td>
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<td>Class involvement for students</td>
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<tr>
<td>Facilities and resources</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>-------------------------</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Library</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Classroom resources</td>
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<tr>
<td>ICT facilities</td>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>External links and collaboration</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Business and community links</td>
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<td>Cross- and Inter-institution links</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Use of AST’s</td>
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<tr>
<td>Use of LST’s</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Pastoral care</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>-----------------------------------</td>
<td>---------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evidence of mentoring</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evidence of prefect system(s)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evidence of grouping students (i.e., house systems)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relationships between students</td>
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<tr>
<td>Relationships between staff and students</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Celebrating achievement</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reward systems</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Target setting / student planners</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Additional comments</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3d. Gifted and Talented Coordinator Questionnaire

Name: .............................................................. School: .........................................................

1. How many years have you been employed as a teacher? ...........................................(years)

2. How long have you been in service at your current school? .......................................(years)

3. When were you appointed as the school’s G&T coordinator? ......................................(month/year)

4. What are your other responsibilities within the school (e.g., form tutor, Head of Year, Subject leader): .................................................................

Training

5. Have you had any in-house training to carry out your role as a G&T coordinator?
   □ Yes □ No

6. If Yes, please specify duration of training: .................................................................(hours/days* delete as appropriate)

7. If Yes, briefly state what topics the training covered: .................................................
.................................................................

8. Have you had any external training to carry out your role as a G&T coordinator?
   □ Yes □ No

9. If Yes, please specify duration of training: .................................................................(hours/days* delete as appropriate)

10. If Yes, briefly state what topics the training covered: ..............................................
...........................................................................................................................

11. Have you any future training sessions identified?
    □ Yes □ No

Role as G&T coordinator

12. What does your role as G&T co-coordinator encompass on a daily basis? (i.e., contact with students, identification of G&T pupils, managing allocated budget): ....................
...........................................................................................................................

13. Who is your line manager that you’re responsible to regarding G&T matters?
...........................................................................................................................

14. How many hours a week do you have released from your normal duties for G&T work?
   □ none □ 1-3 □ 4-6 □ 7-10 □ > 10
15. How many hours a week do you typically spend engaged in G&T work?

-[] none
-[] 1-3
-[] 4-6
-[] 7-10
-[] >10

16. How many hours a week do you typically spend monitoring and tracking G&T pupils?

-[] none
-[] 1-3
-[] 4-6
-[] 7-10
-[] >10

17. How many hours a week do you typically spend planning and organising G&T activities?

-[] none
-[] 1-3
-[] 4-6
-[] 7-10
-[] >10

18. How many hours a week do you typically spend carrying out G&T related administration?

-[] none
-[] 1-3
-[] 4-6
-[] 7-10
-[] >10

19. How many hours a week do you typically spend engaged with staff on G&T matters (e.g., G&T related meetings, disseminating and observing good practice)?

-[] none
-[] 1-3
-[] 4-6
-[] 7-10
-[] >10

20. How well are you supported by managers and senior staff in carrying out your role as G&T coordinator?

-[] Very well
-[] Some support
-[] limited support
-[] very poorly

21. How well are you supported by your teaching colleagues in carrying out your role and G&T coordinator?

-[] Very well
-[] Some support
-[] limited support
-[] Very poorly

22. Please specify examples of support you have received (i.e., administration, time allocation for G&T matters, team support from additional staff)?

23. How are you, as the G&T coordinator, accountable to senior staff and / or governors about G&T matters?

24. Do you have any links with external organisations and schools which support your work with G&T learners?

-[] Yes
-[] No

25. If Yes, please specify.

26. Do you have links with LEA advisors to support your work with G&T learner?

-[] Yes
-[] No

Identification of G&T pupils

27. What method(s) does the school use to identify G&T pupils? (*please tick all boxes which apply)
28. How does the school distinguish between gifted and talented students? 

…………………………………………………………………………………………………..………… 

………………………………………… ………………………………………………………………....

29. Who is responsible for the identification of these pupils? (*please tick all boxes which apply)

- Senior management
- Heads of Year
- G&T coordinator
- Subject Heads
- Form tutors
- Teaching staff as a whole
- All school staff
- Parents and / or governing body

30. When are students identified as being gifted and / or talented?

- Prior to entering your school
- Within their first month
- Within their first week
- Within their first term
- Within their first academic year
- Later than their first academic year

31. After initial identification, when are students reassessed and as being gifted and / or talented?

- Within their first term
- Within their first academic year
- After their first academic year
- No formally fixed time
32. Which students are reassessed for being gifted and / or talented?

☐ All pupils  ☐ all G&T pupils  ☐ all non G&T pupils

**Extension opportunities**

33. What are some of the typical G&T extension activities that the school provides?

34. Where are these G&T extension activities carried out (i.e., on school site, off-site, local public facilities, further or higher education institutions)?

35. How are pupils selected to attend these extension activities?

36. Are students that are not members of the G&T cohort able to attend these extension activities?

☐ Yes  ☐ No  ☐ Depends on activity  ☐ Depends on pupil

**Enrichment opportunities**

37. What are some of the typical G&T enrichment activities that the school provides?

38. Where are these G&T enrichment activities carried out (i.e., on school site, off-site, local public facilities, further or higher education institutions)?

39. How are pupils selected to attend these enrichment activities?

40. Are students that are not members of the G&T cohort able to attend these enrichment activities?

☐ Yes  ☐ No  ☐ Depends on activity  ☐ Depends on pupil

**Monitoring and tracking of performance**

41. Are students involved in self-assessment and peer assessment?

☐ Yes  ☐ No
42. What systems does the school have in place for monitoring and tracking pupils’ performance?

43. How frequently are student’s progress / performance tracked? (*please tick all boxes which apply)

- Every lesson
- daily
- weekly
- fortnightly
- every term

44. What information is recorded to track student’s progress and performance? (*please tick all boxes which apply)

- Attendance
- Test results
- Behaviour
- Comments from teaching staff

45. Who is responsible for up-dating this system with student information? (*please tick all boxes which apply)

- Senior management
- Heads of Year
- G&T coordinator
- Subject Heads
- Form tutors
- Teaching staff as a whole

46. How effective are the school’s systems for tracking achievement?

- Very good
- good
- satisfactory
- unsatisfactory
- very unsatisfactory

47. How does the school celebrate achievement?

48. How motivating are the school’s G&T systems for celebrating achievement?

49. Are pupils aware of the school systems for tracking and monitoring?

- Yes
- No

50. Are parents aware of the school systems for tracking and monitoring?

- Yes
- No

51. How frequently are G&T learners informed about their progress? (*please tick all boxes which apply)

- Every lesson
- daily
- weekly
- fortnightly
- every term
52. How frequently are parents of G&T learners informed about pupils progress? (*please tick all boxes which apply)

- Every lesson
- daily
- weekly
- fortnightly
- every term

53. How frequently are learners not identified in the G&T cohort informed about their progress? (*please tick all boxes which apply)

- Every lesson
- daily
- weekly
- fortnightly
- every term

**Curriculum planning**

54. Does your school distinguish between gifted and talented students?

- Yes
- No

55. If yes, how?

56. What are the key strengths of the school’s G&T provision?

57. Where are the areas of the school’s G&T provision that could be improved?

58. What pastoral support is provided by the school to support the social and emotional needs of G&T learners?

59. Does the school use mentorship to support the pastoral needs of G&T learners?

- Yes
- No

60. If yes, please state who learners are mentored by:

- Peer learners within G&T cohort
- Peer learners across age range
- Members of staff
- External mentors

61. If yes, please state how mentorships are organised (i.e., learner choice, teacher directed)

62. If yes, please state whether training is provided for mentors

- Yes
- No
63. If Yes, please specify duration of mentor training available: ……………….(hours/days* delete as appropriate)

64. If Yes, briefly state what topics the mentor training covers…………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………

65. How is the school’s good G&T practice disseminated throughout the school?…………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………

66. How is the school’s good G&T practice disseminated externally?…………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………

67. How do the activities provided within school complement the existing G&T provision in the local area?…………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………

68. Has the schools G&T agenda raised achievement across the school (including among the non-G&T cohort)?

☐ Yes ☐ No

69. If yes, please specify in what areas…………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………

70. If yes, please specify how these achievements has been identified (i.e., teacher comments, evidence from tracking and monitoring)…………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………

71. If yes, please state how these achievements are rewarded…………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Facilities and resources</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>72. How are the needs of G&amp;T learners recognised in resourcing?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☐ Very well ☐ acceptably ☐ poorly ☐ very poorly ☐ not at all</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

73. How are the needs of G&T learners recognised in room allocation?

| ☐ Very well ☐ acceptably ☐ poorly ☐ very poorly ☐ not at all |

74. How are the needs of G&T learners recognised in timetabling?

| ☐ Very well ☐ acceptably ☐ poorly ☐ very poorly ☐ not at all |

75. How well is the schools G&T provision supported by ICT resources?

| ☐ Very well ☐ acceptably ☐ poorly ☐ very poorly ☐ not at all |
76. How well is the schools G&T provision supported by learning resources (i.e., books, CD-ROM)?

- [ ] Very well
- [ ] acceptably
- [ ] poorly
- [ ] very poorly
- [ ] not at all

**Funding**

77. Who has control over the amount of school funding allocated for G&T activities and provision? (*please tick all boxes which apply)

- [ ] Senior management
- [ ] Heads of Year
- [ ] G&T coordinator
- [ ] Subject Heads
- [ ] Form tutors
- [ ] Teaching staff as a whole

78. Who has control over the distribution of funding for G&T activities (i.e., funding for extension activities, resources, staff training in G&T matters)? (*please tick all boxes which apply)

- [ ] Senior management
- [ ] Heads of Year
- [ ] G&T coordinator
- [ ] Subject Heads
- [ ] Form tutors
- [ ] Teaching staff as a whole

79. What internal sources does the G&T budget come from?

………………………………………………………………………………………………………………..
………………………………………………………………………………………………………………..
………………………………………………………………………………………………………………..

80. What external sources does the G&T budget come from?

………………………………………………………………………………………………………………..
………………………………………………………………………………………………………………..
………………………………………………………………………………………………………………..

81. Is the funding sufficient to meets the needs of the schools G&T learners?

………………………………………………………………………………………………………………..
………………………………………………………………………………………………………………..
………………………………………………………………………………………………………………..

**Whole school involvement**

82. How effective is the school ethos in encouraging teachers to meet the needs of G&T learners?

- [ ] Very effective
- [ ] acceptable
- [ ] limited
- [ ] not at all

83. How effective do you, as the school G&T coordinator, perceive your colleagues to be in meeting the needs of G&T learners?

- [ ] Very effective
- [ ] acceptable
- [ ] limited
- [ ] not at all
84. How are staff enabled to share information about the G&T learners they teach? 

85. How is existing staff or school expertise deployed to enhance the provision of G&T learning? 

86. How are staff supported in seeking, and using, professional development opportunities to build their confidence in working with G&T learners? 

87. How effectively are teaching assistants used in supporting G&T education? 

88. How are parents of G&T learners involved in school-wide provision and policy? 

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Policy development</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>89. Which staff are responsible for developing the school-wide G&amp;T policy? (*please tick all boxes which apply)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ Senior management</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ G&amp;T coordinator</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ Form tutors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ All school staff</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

90. How effective is the school G&T policy and practice? 

91. How are the learners involved in shaping G&T policy and practice? 

92. How does the G&T policy ensure continuity and progression of learning? 

93. What guidance and support did the school receive to assist with institution-wide policy development? 

94. What guidance and support is available for teachers writing subject policies for G&T learners? 

95. How is policy development for G&T education supported at school level? 

96. How is the G&T policy communicated to parents? 

97. How is the G&T policy communicated to external agencies? 

98. How is the G&T policy communicated to teaching staff? 

99. How is the G&T policy communicated to learners? 

100. How are pupils involved in the development of their own education plan? 

101. How are pupils involved in their own learning and progress? 

102. How are pupils involved in the planning of their own education plan? 

103. How are pupils involved in the assessment of their own learning? 

104. How are pupils involved in the review of their own education plan? 

105. How is feedback from pupils used to inform the planning of future education plans? 

106. How is feedback from pupils used to inform the future learning and progress of other pupils? 

107. How is feedback from pupils used to inform future education planning? 

108. How is feedback from pupils used to inform future pupil support? 

109. How is feedback from pupils used to inform future individual learning plans? 

110. How is feedback from pupils used to inform future subject policies? 

111. How is feedback from pupils used to inform future curriculum development? 

112. How is feedback from pupils used to inform future school-wide provision? 

113. How is feedback from pupils used to inform future school-wide policy development? 

114. How is feedback from pupils used to inform future school-wide provision and policy development? 

115. How is feedback from pupils used to inform future school-wide provision and policy development? 

116. How is feedback from pupils used to inform future school-wide provision and policy development?
95. Are new members of staff inducted in policy and practice?

☐ Yes ☐ No

96. If Yes, please specify duration of training: ............................................. (hours/days* delete as appropriate)

97. If Yes, briefly state what topics the training covered.............................................

........................................................................................................................................................................

98. How are parents and carers involved in and / or informed about matters of policy?

☐ Yes ☐ No

99. If Yes, briefly state involvement..................................................................................

........................................................................................................................................................................

100. How does the school as a whole benefit from your G&T policy?..........................

........................................................................................................................................................................

101. What is the school’s disclosure policy to G&T learners and parents?......................

........................................................................................................................................................................

102. Are students aware whether they have been identified as gifted and talented?

☐ Yes ☐ No

103. Are parents aware whether their children have been identified as gifted and talented?

☐ Yes ☐ No

104. Are other pupils aware which children have been identified as gifted and talented?

☐ Yes ☐ No

**Future G&T education**

105. What are your future directions for G&T provision within your school?..................

........................................................................................................................................................................

106. How do you see your role as G&T coordinator developing?.................................

........................................................................................................................................................................