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To: Learning and Development Children Families and Education Policy Overview Committee

16<sup>th</sup> September 2010

Subject: **Gifted and Talented Education**

Classification: Unrestricted

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Summary: Kent is an active partner in both national and regional initiatives for gifted and talented education. 2009-10 was a very busy year in the training and development necessary to raise children's attainment. 2010-11 promises both challenge and appropriate change for all schools as they continue to strive for improvement in opportunity and achievement.

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At the time of writing there is no 2010 headline data showing attainment or progress of pupils registered as gifted and talented to compare with previous years.

## 1. **National Initiatives:**

### **(1) National Challenge Gifted and Talented (G&T) Pilot Programme**

**Background:** Kent has five National Challenge schools that are part of the programme, now renamed the National Challenge G&T Project: The Towers, The North, Sittingbourne Community College, Canterbury High School and Chaucer Technology School. The specific aim of the programme is to support students from disadvantaged backgrounds during Key Stage 4. Each school created a focus group of sixteen Year 10 students from the G&T Register who receive Free School Meals and/or have been identified as being from a disadvantaged background. They would receive additional support over the two years of Key Stage 4. An additional group from a wider background has also been part of the programme.

The central aim is to "Narrow the Gap" for these and other students and, therefore, build strategies to raise attainment across the school. At the end of the programme, strategies will be disseminated across the county and country. Very successful schools from the programme may become eligible for specialist status.

**Update:** The five schools have been supported by the Local Authority (LA), National Strategies (NS) and each other through a series of seasonal termly

meetings including NC Adviser and LA adviser's visits to the individual schools to review progress, talk with the students, observe lessons and agree future actions.

Some of the developments that have already emerged from the project are:

- establishing a programme of Sixth Form mentors to support effective learning in the classroom;
- using the Classroom Quality Standards (CQS) learning questionnaire, training advisers and setting up a programme of follow-up interviews;
- creating a professional development working party to develop and present case studies based on different aspects of learning, e.g. groupings, higher level questioning;
- having a dedicated evening for parents/carers of the target group students to outline the initiative and explain how the parents can play an active part in their child's education.
- Producing laminated "A-Team posters" in the staff room to show who are expected to get A and A\* at GCSE;
- generating "barriers to learning" posters for each student – this helped staff to look beyond the initial perception of the student, especially those who are underachieving;
- arranging for mentoring to look at students on the pilot as a priority (one to one mentoring, group mentoring, study skills and coursework catch-up). The mentoring has also helped to identify students who are not sure why they should try and achieve more than a C grade
- inviting students to attend residential summer schools;
- target sheets/ previous scores and soft data now being generated as a one page document for classroom teachers for their new sets
- raising the profile of displays by trying to encourage departments to put up exemplar work and add labels to explain how and why the work has a specific grade and what can be done to improve it;
- laptop trial - two students have been given laptops to work on - one to make work more legible, the other to improve work output.

**Impact:** Performance data to follow.

The early positive effects of the project that have been identified include:

- pupils report that effective improvement in teaching and learning is leading to improved outcomes, e.g. motivation, attitude and achievement;
- Additional lessons for the target group in English and mathematics are found to be particularly useful;
- whole-school 'excellence for all' strategies designed to benefit all pupils are developing effectively through use of the Classroom Quality Standards, as well as through pupil and parental voice activities;
- whole school G&T provision is being improved for more than the target group of pupils, based on use of the CQS (used as a benchmark and improvement tool to improve quality and consistency of practice);
- schools entering target group students for early entry have high expectations for their results in 2010 based on their work in the classroom.

The schools were asked recently which of their initiatives had made, in their opinion, the greatest impact. Their answers included:

- involving the parents/carers;
- greater use of data for analysis with colleagues and students;
- additional lessons in English and mathematics for targeted students;
- use of staff working parties to research and report on learning and teaching strategies;
- the shift in expectations and perceptions in staff and pupils with the G&T Lead reporting a change in the way that staff talk about their lessons and a shift towards reflective practitioners;
- use of the CQS pupil questionnaire (completed at the start of the project and repeated in June) indicated improvement in the level of challenge in lessons;
- teachers report more confidence in talking;
- pupil comments have changed from disinterest to it's "cool" to get an A/A\* and they are proud to be on the project;
- teachers transferring practice to other groups not part of the project;
- use of "Excellence for All" indicators adopted by colleagues, increasing their own confidence and greater awareness of staff and students of their potential to get higher grades.

The good practice established at our project schools has been recognised by National Strategies and three of the five schools have already given presentations to the National Challenge G&T Project (South) meetings outlining their work. One more school is due to present at the autumn meeting of the South group. Two of the schools gave presentations about their work at the Kent G&T conference this June.

Each school has now identified its second cohort for the project; both year groups in Key Stage 4 will now be part of the project, with schools reflecting on practice in 2009-10 and revising their practice for 2010-11.

Recent data has indicated that in the three years up to 2009, the gap between FSM and non-FSM students' end of Key Stage 4 results has widened. In 2011, the first of the target groups will complete Key Stage 4 and this will be an indication of whether strategies adopted by the schools in the project have been beneficial to students' learning and, therefore, worthy of even wider dissemination to other secondary schools in Kent.

## **(2). Gifted and Talented Specialist Status**

**Background:** Three Kent schools: Chatham House Grammar School for Boys, Dartford Grammar School and Invicta Grammar School had been accepted as Lead Schools for Gifted and Talented. These schools have been identified by the high attainment of their students. Their role is to work alongside the Local Authority in promoting Gifted and Talented initiatives and supporting colleagues by developing the role of the Leading Teachers, working collaboratively with staff and students from other schools and designing innovative ways to develop provision for gifted and talented students in all Key Stages. They are also expected to contribute to the National Schools Network, through sharing resources, case studies and ideas online and at conferences.

**Update:** The LA adviser met with the three Lead Schools to coordinate future actions. Each school was already offering outreach work through their original specialism. It was agreed that the three lead schools would host regional cross-phase meetings for Leading Teachers and school coordinators in February and March 2010. These meetings were held on the different dates with a common agenda. The Mid-Year Update meetings generated a lot of interest and overall attendance was 20% higher than at the one centrally-based meeting in 2009.

A fourth Kent school has been granted Lead School status – Castle Community – the first non-selective school in Kent to be awarded the status. The LA Adviser has visited the school to discuss their involvement in county developments.

Two of the four Lead Schools have applied for Academy Status.

**Impact:** This development is laying a foundation of school to school support which will be harnessed to the full in the future, building on the networking groups already established in most parts of the LA.

### **(3) National Strategies Local Authority Gifted and Talented Lead meetings**

**Background:** A LA officer represents Kent three times a year at meetings held in London to receive information and training from the National Strategies Gifted and Talented team. Key priorities for Kent are established and action planning for the dissemination and development of those priorities is completed at the meeting.

**Update:** Key priorities for all Local Authorities this year have included:

- G&T work in the Early Years of education;
- building capacity at regional and local level in readiness for the end of National Strategies in March 2011;
- targeted intervention; use of data; some national developments e.g. the Pupil and Parent Guarantees were discussed and planned for but these were not ratified prior to the General Election.

The existing developments prior to Spring 2010 have been maintained:

- Identifying gaps and supporting achievement of G&T pupils from vulnerable and under-represented groups;
- using Classroom Quality Standards to improve classroom provision for underachieving G&T pupils; developing local capacity to support G&T improvement;
- improving G&T education in LAs and schools through effective use of online support, resources and Continuous Professional Development;
- making effective use of Assessment for Learning to improve provision and outcomes for G&T learners;
- mainstreaming gifted and talented education to improve provision and outcomes for G&T learners and raise attainment at the higher levels;
- developing and supporting self-evaluation and improvement for G&T provision at LA and school level;

- supporting schools in continuing to develop the role and impact of Leading Teachers for G&T education;
- developing effective strategies for raising attainment of G&T pupils as part of the National Challenge Programme;
- developing whole-school 'excellence for all' strategies designed to support raising attainment of all pupils.

**Impact:** Schools are commenting that where they have made G&T a priority, there has been an increased awareness of appropriate provision with greater levels of challenge. At the time of writing, no data is available for 2010 to evaluate the impact of this contribution to the children's attainment.

The NC Regional Adviser has visited Kent regularly, working with the LA and the G&T project schools, and is pleased with the work we are doing and our good progress against Quality Standards.

#### (4) John Stannard – National Champion for Gifted and Talented

**Background:** John Stannard had indicated that he would like to visit Kent and see first hand some of the excellent good practice in our schools.

**Update:** John Stannard, the G&T National Champion, visited Kent on 8<sup>th</sup> February. A meeting was held at Sessions House, County Hall. The Kent G&T Adviser invited Lee Kane, from Brockhill, who leads the G&T collaborative work within Shepway, Tara McVey from The Towers, Ashford - one of Kent's five National Strategies G&T Pilot Project schools, Janette Lloyd, Invicta Grammar - one of Kent's three G&T Lead schools, and Alison O'Brien, Leading Teacher for Sevenoaks primary schools, so that they could describe the work that they are doing in their respective areas. Matthew Munro, the Senior Secondary Adviser working with the National Strategies Pilot Programme schools, Keith Ransom, the Principal Adviser - Primary and Diana Robinson, the Senior Adviser for Inclusion and Achievement were also present. Rosalind Turner, Managing Director for Children, Families and Education was able to join the discussion in the final hour of the meeting.

**Impact:** John was very complementary about Kent's varied provision for gifted and talented children and concluded the letter he sent to us following his visit:

*"AG&T is a clear priority for the NS putting quality first teaching at the heart of effective provision in the context of whole-school improvement, personalisation, addressing underachievement and excellence for all pupils. NS resources and materials provide useful advice and guidance as well as case studies of effective and developing practice in these areas.*

*The LA already has a number of exciting events that showcase and celebrate pupils' achievements. Recognising and rewarding achievement is another important dimension and worth exploiting and expanding. It can have a powerful impact on the aspirations of pupils, parents and teachers, providing a positive image of the welcome respite from some of the more pessimistic news that often dominates the education agenda.*

*Thanks again for a wide-ranging and candid discussion. I look forward to hearing about developments in Kent and wish you well in moving forward”.*

This was an excellent opportunity for key members of G&T work in the LA to inform government of Kent’s work; John Stannard’s comments on the day and in his letter show that he was impressed by the examples of good practice evident in the LA.

## **2. Regional Initiatives**

### **(1) South East Regional Partnership**

**Background:** Representatives from all Local Authorities in the South East meet three times a year as a “think tank” discussing policies and strategies based on national initiatives and local needs. Kent is represented at the meetings.

**Update:** Funding for the Regional Partnership work has been extended to March 2011. Some of the matters discussed in the first part of the academic year became redundant with the effects of the General Election when some key proposals were not maintained. The Targeted Support Programme funding has continued and the Partnership has a dedicated member who is liaising with each LA and the Partnership on the programme.

**Impact:** The Partnership organised residential summer schools for Key Stage 4/5 students and 12 students from eight different Kent secondary schools attended in 2010. During the year, many Kent students have taken advantage of the weekend and holiday courses coordinated by the Regional Partnership across the South East. Parents and students have been very positive about the experience. Between September 2009 and July 2010, 370 students from Kent schools attended Partnership courses - by far the highest number of attendees in the South-east. The LA adviser regularly receives emails and telephone calls from parents explaining how valuable the courses are for their children. The LA is still encouraging schools to act as host venues for these enrichment courses to enable more localised provision for the young people.

Some Kent parents attended the Regional Partnership’s Parents Conferences held in Brighton and Chatham. The Kent G&T adviser presented a workshop on Provision in the Classroom.

Although the funding to Higher Education Institutions (HEI) for G&T work has ended, many South-east HEIs have maintained their collaboration on a goodwill basis.

A Further Education/6<sup>th</sup> Form group now meets to discuss the G&T implications for post-16 students and their schools/colleges. This group refers back to the main Partnership body.

The South East Regional Partnership (SERP) offers Kent LA adviser the opportunity to meet and share ideas and concerns with colleagues from across the region. The Partnership’s role in coordinating G&T matters is invaluable as the LA would not have the capacity to cover all that the Partnership team provides. The collation, advertising and booking for all the courses provided across the region is a massive help to schools, pupils and parents in the LA. The information received via the Partnership from government and other agencies is invaluable to the LA adviser.

### 3. County initiatives

#### (1) Leading Teacher training sessions

**Background:** National training was provided through LAs in 2007-8 and has been maintained through seasonal opportunities for teachers.

**Update:** On October 7<sup>th</sup> 2009, there was a half-day training session for new to role Leading Teachers and school coordinators; the programme included:

- Overview of the role of Leading Teacher and School Coordinator;
- Working with Others;
- Identification and the G&T Register; Provision and Resources;
- National Quality Standards: a) Institutional Quality Standards (IQS) and b) Classroom Quality Standards (CQS) and a Q&A session.

In February and March 2010, three Mid-Year Update sessions were organised at three venues across the LA and Issues discussed at the meetings included:

- strategies to identify and support potential G&T pupils from disadvantaged and/or vulnerable groups;
- a workshop on G&T and the new Ofsted Framework linked to the use of the Institutional Quality Standards (IQS) to inform the revised Self Evaluation Form (SEF);
- brief feedback from schools on their progress with the Classroom Quality Standards (CQS);
- collaborative work: single and cross-phase opportunities. In June 2010, the Kent G&T conference was held and nearly 100 coordinators and Leading Teachers attended; details in section

**Impact:** Feedback from delegates indicated that the conference had been a success and was a valuable part of their own and their school's professional development, providing them with strategies to discuss/implement at their own schools and materials for use in the classroom.

#### (2) Partnership networking meetings for school coordinators

**Background:** Since being appointed, the LA adviser has encouraged partnership networking meetings of school coordinators in order to share good practice, develop collaborative activity and discuss national and regional issues.

**Update:** During the year the Partnerships with primary school Leading Teachers have had networking meetings at least once per seasonal term led by the Leading Teacher(s) with support as required by the LA. In partnerships without a primary school Leading Teacher, the LA adviser organised the networking meetings, recruiting and training new Leading Teachers during the year. In many partnerships, there has been a close liaison between the LA adviser and the Primary Excellence Project Headteachers.

The secondary school Leading Teachers have met in a number of partnerships and several cross-school events have taken place within partnerships. It is planned to ensure

that not only do all secondary Leading Teachers meet in Partnership or District groups during 2010-11 but that cross-phase meetings are built into networking planning.

About 40% of the primary Leading Teachers (LT) are unable to continue as LTs in 2010-11 mainly due to additional responsibilities at their own schools. The LA adviser will be recruiting new LTs during the autumn. Many partnership meetings will be held by Districts rather than Partnerships in 2010-11.

. **Impact:** The schools that have attended networking meetings have commented that they find them invaluable as they can share good practice, raise issues, take advice from colleagues and initiate activities for students from different schools to meet and work together. The Leading Teacher workforce will be an important part of school to school support in the future.

### (3) Quality Standards

**Background:** The Quality Standards offer a self-evaluation tool to support school in action planning.

**Update:** The LA adviser has continued to support school in their use of the **Institutional Quality Standards**; this whole-school self-evaluation tool enables the collation of evidence to support analysis and action planning. A workshop on its links to Ofsted requirements and the School Evaluation Form was included in the Mid-Year Updates. The **Classroom Quality Standards** give teachers the opportunity to evaluate their classroom practice and take part in professional development using the interactivity of the tool. Many more schools have requested training on this from the LA adviser this year.

Schools have been requested to complete a short analysis sheet reflecting the school strengths and areas for development in G&T provision based on their use of the Quality Standards. These are due to be returned to the LA adviser by the end of September.

**Impact:** The use of Quality Standards has helped schools to identify their strengths and areas for development. In the future this will enable clearer commissioning of support from schools and leading teachers.

### (4) Summer Schools

**Background:** For the last eight years, schools have been encouraged to apply for funding to organise G&T summer schools through the LA Standards Fund.

**Update:** Twenty six Kent secondary schools applied for and received funding to organise gifted and talented summer schools this year, some working in collaboration e.g. the Shepway Partnership offered a range of activities for over 1200 young people across five sites. Most schools included primary pupils in the programme and this has acted as a good transition exercise.

**Impact:** The range of subject content was excellent as was the degree of challenge for the students. A total of 2245 students will have attended the summer schools this year, experiencing opportunities to be stretched and challenged in many areas of the curriculum and beyond. Many of the programmes have built-in sustainability for curriculum and extra-curricular work during 2010-11.



## (5) Kent G&T Conference – 16<sup>th</sup> June

**Background:** The LA has organised a county conference on gifted and talented education for a number of years giving opportunity for colleagues to hear national speakers, county advisers and classroom practitioners discuss their practice.

**Update:** This year's conference had an international contribution as the one of the keynote speakers was Dr Dona Matthews who in 2008 received the Upton Sinclair Award, given annually by *Education News* to ten "heroes of American Education", in recognition for their outstanding contributions to the field of education. The second keynote speaker was Lyn Bull, National Strategies Regional Adviser, who spoke on working with parents of gifted and talented learners. There were fifteen workshops, some led by LA advisers but mainly by classroom practitioners on a range of provision strategies.

**Impact:** Many positive comments were received about the workshops being led by actual classroom practitioners. Feedback from delegates indicated that the conference had been a success and was a valuable part of their own and their school's professional development.

The National Strategies Regional Adviser (RA) commented that

*"The annual G&T LA-led conference reflected well the need to understand the significant impact that a focus on improving G&T provision and outcomes can have on achievement for all pupils. Effective practice workshops run by schools demonstrated the development of the leading teacher role in primary and in two G&T National Challenge project schools, with a focus on pupils from vulnerable and disadvantaged groups. The RA attended an inspiring workshop on critical thinking through art in a primary school, which enables all pupils to explore and develop their particular strengths, gifts and talents through day-to-day quality first teaching. This conference provided an excellent opportunity for schools to reflect on principles of G&T education, as well as hearing of good practice from schools across the county. The LA strategy for G&T enables the G&T Lead to know schools well and identify effective practice."*

## (6) Support for schools

**Background:** The LA adviser is available to provide support for individual schools or groups of schools to improve provision for gifted and talented children.

**Update:** The LA adviser has been brokered to support schools on a range of issues. The support has included training new to role coordinators, whole-staff training sessions, and discussions on strategies to raise attainment and support for specific exceptional children. In addition, training for individual governing bodies or local groups of governors has been provided on many occasions.

**Impact:** At the time of writing, no data is available for 2010 to evaluate the impact of this contribution to the children's attainment. Schools, however, have indicated that the training has enabled them to reconsider their provision for their potentially higher attaining students.

## **(6) New/Potential Activities:**

- In collaboration with the National Rural Network and London Gifted and Talented, the LA is working with a number of rural primary and secondary schools to develop materials for gifted and talented young people in Modern Foreign Languages. Good practice developed during the project will be cascaded regionally and nationally in 2011
- Funding has been applied for from the Regional Partnership for a group of twelve primary schools to take part in action research with the LA adviser investigating strategies to support potentially able children from disadvantaged backgrounds to raise attainment. There is urban, coastal and rural representation amongst the interested schools
- Widen out the offer of enrichment sessions in more Kent venues, in collaboration with the Regional Partnership

### **Recommendations**

Members of the Learning and Development Children Families and Education Policy Overview and Scrutiny Committee are asked to:

- Note the programme of activities which occur in Kent to support the provision for gifted and talented pupils

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*Background Documents: None*

*Other Useful Information: None*