

By: Gifted and Talented Adviser, Advisory Service Kent

To: CFE: Learning and Development Policy Overview and Scrutiny Committee - 5 November 2009

Subject: Gifted and Talented Education

Classification: Unrestricted

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

1. National Initiatives:

a) National Challenge Gifted and Talented (G&T) Pilot Programme

All schools in Kent have a commitment to support Gifted and Talented young people, and establish their own criteria for identifying their top 10% of students. Funding to support Gifted and Talented is delegated to schools as part of the Standards Fund Grant, falling within the 'personalisation' element of the grant. Allocation of this funding is a decision for individual Headteachers and their governing bodies.

Five National Challenge schools in Kent (Towers, North, Sittingbourne Community, Canterbury High and Chaucer) have been selected by their National Challenge Advisors to take part in a nationally funded pilot for Gifted and Talented pupils. (*National Challenge schools are ones who, prior to 2008, had not reached 30% of students achieving at 5 A*-C grades including English and mathematics.*) These five schools were identified against the following criteria:

- Capable leadership with capable leading teacher for Gifted and Talented provision
- At least 25% of pupils achieving 5 or more A* - C GCSEs including English and Maths with an improving trend of results
- Average or higher than average number of children eligible for Free School Meals
- A mixed intake in terms of ethnicity and socio-economic background
- Identified under-achievement of gifted and talented learners in terms of progression across Key Stages
- Potential to improve provision, strengthen and raise standards

The specific aim of the pilot is to support students from disadvantaged backgrounds during Key Stage 4, who would have fallen into the Gifted and Talented criteria if it were not for the circumstances that they face.

Each of the five schools involved in the pilot has created a focus group of sixteen current 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 will receive additional support over the two years of Key Stage 4. Each school is currently working with their National Challenge Advisers on specific strategies, for example personalised provision which could include 1:1 mentoring, specialist support in English and/or Mathematics, or aspirational talks/activities linked to Higher Education. All students will be tracked and monitored in six-weekly cycles.

An additional group from a wider background will also be part of the programme, as part of 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.

b) Gifted and Talented Specialist Status

Three Kent schools: Chatham House Grammar School for Boys, Dartford Grammar School and Invicta Grammar School have been accepted as Lead Schools for Gifted and Talented in cohort 2. 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.

A Local Authority (LA) officer is currently meeting each school's Leading Teacher to discuss the role of the school in its new designation. All three schools will meet in early December to plan and develop a coordinated support programme.

c) National Strategies Local Authority Gifted and Talented Lead meetings

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.

Key priorities for all Local Authorities this year include: 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; improve G&T education in LAs and schools through effective use of online support, resources and Continuous Professional Development; make effective use of Assessment for Learning to improve provision and outcomes for G&T learners; mainstream gifted and talented education to improve provision and outcomes for G&T learners and raise attainment at the higher levels; develop and support self-evaluation and improvement for G&T provision at LA and school level; support schools in continuing to develop the role and impact of leading teachers for G&T education; development of effective strategies for raising attainment of G&T pupils as part of the National Challenge Programme; development of whole-school 'excellence for all' strategies designed to support raising attainment of all pupils.

The Regional Adviser has visited Kent on three occasions in the last year and is pleased with the work we are doing and our good progress against Quality Standards.

d) Young Gifted and Talented

Young Gifted and Talented (YGT), the 4-19 Student Academy that replaced National Academy for Gifted and Talented Youth (NAGTY) in September 2007, will not have its contract renewed from April 2010. Some of the work will be transferred to National Strategies until April 2011. Much of the responsibility for G&T developments will be delegated to the Regional Partnerships and Local Authorities to work with the schools to ensure that appropriate provision is made available in the classroom of each school. This will place the schools and Local Authority as the central point of all gifted and talented planning and development answering directly to the DCSF.

e) White Paper

Many schools currently have issues regarding disclosure to students and parents of the membership of the Gifted and Talented register and the subsequent provision for those students. The Register comprises the students who have been identified as the potentially most able in their school. There is a guideline of identifying approximately 10% of students, who should then have appropriate provision to challenge and support them towards high attainment. The White Paper's comments on disclosure will have many implications for those schools and support will need to be built into training sessions. The Regional Partnership has already begun discussing generic support for the whole region to enable a consistency of approach that satisfies the key points of the White Paper.

f) New Ofsted Framework

In the new Ofsted Inspection arrangements, the section on the quality of learning and progress mentions that they will look at significant groups – Gifted and Talented is a significant group - and the LA has been advising school coordinators on good practice to ensure that appropriate tracking and monitoring of identified children is in place.

g) National Gifted and Talented E-Forum

Several Kent school coordinators/Leading Teachers attended the October 2009 launch and training session in London with an officer from the LA. Eventually a wider group of schools will be invited to join this on-line discussion group. The aim of the forum is for professionals to discuss current issues on a time-limited basis to share expertise, good practice and understanding.

h) John Stannard – National Champion for Gifted and Talented

John has indicated that he would like to visit Kent and see first hand some of the excellent good practice in our schools. As National Champion, he will initially meet the Director for CFE and discuss how Kent schools are working to raise attainment prior to visiting some schools that are good examples of exemplary practice. He has already heard of our successful work in schools and it will be a superb boost for those schools to be part of his visit to Kent and will enhance the reputation of the whole Local Authority.

2. Regional Initiatives

a) South East Regional Partnership

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

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. The LA is 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 Conference one Saturday earlier this year at Winchester University. Roger Silk presented a workshop on Provision in the Classroom. The Partnership organised a Professionals conference in Oxford in July and ten Kent teachers and Roger Silk attended. One Kent primary school teacher gave a presentation about some good practice at her school.

b) Professional Visits

The Regional Partnership coordinates opportunities for Leading Teachers and school coordinators to identify their school’s areas of strength and for development. Participating schools act both as hosts for colleagues who would like to see examples of good practice but are also given the opportunity to visit other schools to enable them to improve their own areas for development.

3. County initiatives

a) Leading Teacher training sessions

There was one training session per seasonal term during the last academic year. The autumn session concentrated on moderating the Institutional Quality Standards, a whole-school self-evaluation tool, and the multi-cultural aspects of gifted and talented education. There was also a workshop for new to role colleagues. The spring session included training in the new Classroom Quality Standards and sharing of good practice in key areas: use of data, working with colleagues in schools, communicating with parents/carers, enrichment and lesson observations. The summer session had input from the Kent Children’s University and the S.E. Regional Partnership followed by colleagues reviewing the progress of G&T work during 2008-9 and then planning for 2009-10.

On October 7th 2009, there was a half-day training session for 78 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.

b) Partnership networking meetings for school co-ordinators

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 at the start of the year, the LA organised the networking meetings, recruiting and training new Leading Teachers during the year. In many partnerships, there is close liaison between Roger Silk and the Primary Excellence Project Headteachers.

The secondary Leading Teachers meet 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 Local Learning Network groups during this year but that cross-phase meetings are built into partnership planning.

c) Quality Standards

All schools have had the opportunity to attend training in the use of the **Institutional Quality Standards**; this whole-school self-evaluation tool enables the collation of evidence to support analysis and action planning. The **Classroom Quality Standards** DVD-Rom was launched in Kent in February and is being developed in schools during this year. Training was initially offered to Leading Teachers and has been cascaded through local networking meetings to school coordinators. It gives teachers the opportunity to evaluate their classroom practice and take part in professional development using the interactivity of the tool.

d) Summer Schools

Twenty seven Kent secondary schools applied for and received funding to organise gifted and talented summer schools this year. Most included primary pupils in the programme and this has acted as a good transition exercise. The range of subject content has been excellent as has the degree of challenge for the students, who have covered a very diverse range of work from examining how to make the school a more eco-friendly place to performing arts productions with live music and from forensic science to a sports week opened by an Olympic medallist. Application forms for 2010 funding were sent to schools in the final week of Term 1.

e) Kent G&T Conference – 17th June

The conference was attended by 20% more delegates than in 2008. There were two keynote speakers and fifteen workshops, twelve of which were led by current practising classroom colleagues in Kent. Many positive comments were received about the workshops being led by actual classroom practitioners.

f) KAGGAT

The Kent Advisory Group for Gifted and Talented meets once per seasonal term. Membership has been extended to include more Leading Teachers, school coordinators and classroom practitioners as well as members of ASK. This group has reviewed and discussed national, regional and local developments and assisted in the planning of training sessions and the conference.

g) Support for schools

The LA nominated officer (Roger Silk) has been brokered to support schools on a range of issues. The support has included training new to role coordinators, whole-staff training sessions, 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.

h) World Conference

Kathryn Wright from Roseacre School and Roger Silk were both accepted to present papers at the World Conference for Gifted and Talented Education in Vancouver during August. Kathryn won the S.E. Partnership's gifted and talented competition writing a 4000 word paper; she spoke about Thinking Skills in Year 3 based on her action research project. Roger spoke about his role as an adviser in Kent and also co-delivered a paper about the work of the South East Regional Partnership with Sue Soan from Canterbury Christ Church University and Chair of the Partnership.

i) New/Potential Activities

- Collaborate with regional colleagues to consider inviting two of the American speakers from the World Conference to present to colleagues in the region
- Collaborate with the Early Years Team to discuss inviting Galina Doyla from the Vygotskian Developmental Educational Centre to work with Early Years, Key Stage 1 and Gifted and Talented colleagues. She is an expert on EYFS/KS1 work using Vygotsky's ideas about teaching and learning
- Development of Website materials
- Training for G&T Leading Teachers on key points from the World Conference
- Action Research in schools e.g. on the use of assessment material which will not disadvantage new arrivals and various SEN groups; strategies to support children from disadvantaged backgrounds – particularly at primary phase; working with parents groups
- Widen out offer of enrichment sessions in more venues in Kent in collaboration with the Regional Partnership

Recommendation

Members of the CFE: Learning and Development Policy Overview and Scrutiny Committee are asked to:

- Note the programme of activities which occur in Kent to support provision for Gifted and Talented pupils.

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Background Documents: None

Other Useful Information: None