



Gifted and Talented Policy

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Introduction: What is 'Gifted and Talented'?

There is little consensus on what constitutes 'giftedness' or 'talent.' Instead, there exists a wide range of competing definitions and models. Some of these focus on an individual's intelligence, as measured by standardized tests, relative to the population as a whole. Some include consideration of an individual's disposition and character, for example persistence and task commitment, as well as ability in academic or creative pursuits. There is even disagreement about what is understood by 'intelligence', with a narrower view of intelligence as mathematical, logical and verbal ability being challenged in recent years by a view of 'multiple intelligences' that includes musical, kinesthetic and interpersonal abilities. (Renzulli 2003; Sternberg 2004; Heller et al 2000; Gardner 1999)

This multitude of definitions can leave educators none the wiser. To cut through the confusion, the Department for Education offers a simple working definition that is clear enough to be useful while allowing schools the latitude to tailor their own approaches. The DfE defines this group as 'children and young people with one or more abilities developed to a level significantly ahead of their year group (or with the potential to develop these abilities.)' This emphasises that the definition encompasses potential, as well as realized achievement, and that the range of abilities includes artistic and sporting talent.

Current DfE guidance advises, 'Schools are responsible for deciding the size of their gifted and talented populations. Schools typically identify about 10% of their pupils. However, it is widely agreed that identifying gifted and talented students is not an exact science.'

At St John Fisher:

We employ the following definitions

Gifted: Students with the academic ability to reach the criteria set by exams boards with such success that it places them in the top 10% of students in their year group.

Talented: Students who show evidence of practical or spatio-temporal skills beyond that expected of their age, and beyond the level demonstrated by their peers.



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Why is identifying Gifted and Talented Students important?

A focus on gifted and talented students is justified by consideration of entitlement and inclusion. Educators have long recognized that 'one size does not fit all' either for students with learning difficulties or for those who are capable of increased pace, depth and challenge (Winstanly 2004). The rights of more able students to equality of appropriate provision have been articulated recently under the DfE personalisation agenda as one aspect of the wider rights of all students to provision suitable to their individual needs (DfE 2005). The 'English Model' of gifted and talented education emphasises integrating gifted and talented students with age peers in so far as possible and enabling teacher in ordinary classrooms to differentiate teaching to meet their need (Eyre 2004). In order to ensure accuracy and fairness in targeting provisions schools need to implement an informed and defensible system of identifying able, gifted and talented students.

At St. John Fisher:

The systems we employ are:

The compilation of a register of gifted and talented pupils based on the following information:

- *Primary School teacher assessment and data (where available)*
- *CAT tests*
- *KS3 and KS4 teacher assessment and observations*
- *GCSE scores*
- *Teacher recommendation*

Each individual department has a policy for identifying their Gifted and Talented students and contributes to the compilation of the registers. These are reviewed annually.

These systems are managed by:

- The School Co-ordinator for Gifted and Talented Provision
- The Head of Inclusion
- The Assistant Head teacher with responsibility for Gifted and Talented provision at KS4
- The KS3 Humanities Co-ordinator for Gifted and Talented
- The EPQ (Extended Project Qualification) Co-ordinator in Years 12 and 13
- A member of the governing body with a responsibility for Gifted and Talented provision



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How do we provide for Gifted and Talented Students?

Because identification is an inexact science, one strand of such a system involves offering students the opportunity to show what they can do by participating in challenging classroom activities. In this way a greater number of potentially gifted students can learn what is expected and how to operate at higher levels. Emerging research evidence and considerable anecdotal evidence from teacher indicate that including differentiation for able students in normal classroom practice tends to reveal more such students and can contribute to raising standards overall (Adey and Shayer 1994; Wilson and Mant 2005)

At St. John Fisher:

The whole school commitment to Assessment for Learning in our practice means that all students are given clear success criteria and work is clearly referenced against subject assessment criteria, with clear targets for progression. This enables all students, even the most able, to clearly see the steps to the next level of achievement in all Key Stages so that they can continue to advance at the pace and level suitable to them, regardless of age or year group. The school uses a process of setting from Year 7, as appropriate, in order to enhance learning.

Within Years 12 and 13 those students with a capped GCSE score of 428 or above in their top 8 GCSEs are identified as particularly gifted and are given access to further challenges, including the EPQ (Extended Project Qualification) and are offered the opportunity to join the Oxbridge Programme which supports students in the application process for these universities. The programme begins with the student's choice to visit one of the two universities for an open day and experience life in one of the colleges. The programme in Year 13 then ensures that gifted students are securely guided in the admissions procedure via talks from Admissions officers, talks centered on applications to colleges, workshops on personal statements and mock Oxbridge interviews. This programme is overseen by the Gifted and Talented co-ordinators of both schools.

Beyond the classroom a wide range of enrichment activities are offered, for both Gifted and Talented students. In addition, our students participate in regional and national experiences provided by the LA, various universities and national academic, sporting and artistic forums. Specific details of all the opportunities available are listed in the annex of this document and are available on the school website.