In May 2008 information packs for schools/colleges will be sent direct to headteachers.

Passwords will be sent separately to headteachers, who will need to encourage their Gifted and Talented Co-ordinator to register at the website, using their establishment's DCSF number as the user name and the password sent in the letter. The Co-ordinator will then be ready to validate learner registrations.

Following this YG&T membership packs for learners will be distributed to schools via local authorities. These should be handed out to all identified G&T learners. We expect all schools and colleges to ensure that children and young people who have been identified as gifted and talented, as well as their parents/carers, are aware of the opportunities offered by the Academy.

Schools/colleges are expected to monitor the engagement of members of their gifted and talented population with the Learner Academy and should ensure that this is reflected in individual learner reviews and plans.

Where can I find out more about identification?

The DCSF has provided a core guidance booklet 'Identifying gifted and talented learners: Getting Started'.
http://ygt.dcsf.gov.uk/Content.aspx?contentId=183&contentType=3

In addition, the following have sections on identification:

'Effective provision for gifted and talented children in Primary Education'
http://publications.teachernet.gov.uk/default.aspx?PageFunction=productdetails&PageMode=publications&ProductId=DFES-04072-2006&

'Effective Provision for Gifted and Talented Students in Secondary Education'
http://publications.teachernet.gov.uk/default.aspx?PageFunction=productdetails&PageMode=publications&ProductId=DCSF-00830-2007&

'Gifted and Talented education – Guidance on preventing underachievement: a focus on dual or multiple exceptionality (DME)'
http://publications.teachernet.gov.uk/default.aspx?PageFunction=productdetails&PageMode=publications&ProductId=DCSF-00052-2008

and

http://www.standards.dcsf.gov.uk/primary/publications/inclusion/pns_gift_talent_dme_0006107/

'Gifted and Talented Education: Helping to find and support children with dual or multiple exceptionalities'
http://publications.teachernet.gov.uk/default.aspx?PageFunction=productdetails&PageMode=publications&ProductId=DCSF-00052-2008

and

http://www.standards.dcsf.gov.uk/primary/publications/inclusion/gt_findsuportdme/

'Gifted and Talented Education – Guidance on preventing underachievement: a focus on children and young people in care'
http://www.standards.dcsf.gov.uk/primary/publications/inclusion/gt_children_in_care/

'Gifted and Talented Education – Guidance on preventing underachievement: a focus on exceptionally able pupils'
http://www.standards.dcsf.gov.uk/secondary/keystage3/all/respub/gt_prevent_udrachieve0006608

Institutional Quality Standards for Gifted and Talented Education (IQS) provides a framework to support schools and colleges in auditing and developing key elements of their provision, including identification
http://ygt.dcsf.gov.uk/Content.aspx?contentId=347&contentType=3

Classroom Quality Standards (CQS) is a tool for practitioners to support the development of effective teaching and learning in the classroom and other settings, including approaches which facilitate the demonstration of previously undiscovered ability
http://ygt.dcsf.gov.uk/Content.aspx?contentId=332&contentType=3

Leading Teachers for Gifted and Talented (in secondary schools and groups of primary schools) can provide help and advice. Leading teacher CPD resources include a module on identification which can be accessed by all teachers on the National Strategies CPD site at:
http://www.nationalstrategiescpd.org.uk/course/view.php?id=81

Many local authorities provide local policy guidance and support.

department for children, schools and families

CfBT Education Trust

CfBT Education Trust manages the Young, Gifted & Talented programme on behalf of the Department for Children, Schools and Families

YGT015

www.ygt.dcsf.gov.uk

Identifying Gifted and Talented Learners

YOUNG GIFTED & TALENTED

What does 'gifted and talented' mean?

There are no standard definitions of 'gifted and talented'. The Government defines gifted and talented learners 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 those abilities).'

Gifted describes learners who have the ability to excel academically in one or more subjects such as English, drama, technology;

Talented describes learners who have the ability to excel in practical skills such as sport, leadership, artistic performance, or in an area of vocational skill.

Why should schools/colleges provide for gifted and talented learners?

Providing for gifted and talented learners is a question of equity. As with all other children and young people, they have a right to an education that is suited to their particular needs and abilities.

Through personalised learning, the Government wants schools, colleges and settings to challenge and support all learners, including those who are gifted and talented. For various reasons, gifted and talented learners can go through school and college without being identified as such. Some gifted and talented learners are underachieving, including many from disadvantaged backgrounds.

What is the distinction between 'ability' and 'attainment/achievement'?

Many learners have the ability or potential to perform at a high level in one or more areas but this is not reflected in the standards they attain – i.e. they may be underachieving for a variety of reasons. Such learners need a range of tailored provision to fulfil their potential. We want schools and colleges to focus on identifying those who have ability, but may not yet demonstrate this through formal attainment measures, as well as those who are already high achievers in one or more areas.

Should schools identify low attainers as gifted and talented?

Yes, where they have clear evidence to support such identification. But other than in clearly defined circumstances (for example the learner has SEN or is a recent arrival with limited English) – we would typically expect identified gifted and talented learners in secondary schools to have achieved the expected levels at KS2, KS3 and KS4.

Are there gifted and talented learners in all schools and colleges?

Yes. Gifted and talented learners include those whose ability is developed to a level significantly ahead of their year group within the school or college (or who have the potential to develop such ability).

The Children's Plan includes a Government target of 100% of schools identifying their gifted and talented learners, and indicating this on their School Census returns by 2010. In summer 2007 91% of secondary schools and 65% of primary schools identified their gifted and talented learners. We would like to make rapid progress on identification in colleges too.

Completion of the School Census is a statutory requirement. School Improvement Partners would need to be convinced that any school not formally identifying its gifted and talented population was still providing sufficient challenge, opportunity and support.

What are the expectations of special schools?

We want special schools (those in both the maintained and non-maintained sectors) to identify and to provide appropriate challenge, opportunity and support for those learners who demonstrate a level of ability which would result in their inclusion in the gifted and talented population within a mainstream school/college. This should include ensuring that such gifted and talented learners are enrolled as members of the YG&T Learner Academy.

Currently, there is not an opportunity for special schools to flag any gifted and talented learners in the School Census. We are currently reviewing this with a view to ensuring that these learners are included on the National Register in the future.

Who should schools/colleges include in their gifted and talented populations?

We expect that all schools and colleges will identify:

- some learners who are gifted and/or talented relative to their peers in their own year group and school/college
- a range of abilities including talent in the arts and sport
- ability rather than achievement/attainment, so that underachievers are amongst those identified.

Primary schools are expected to identify learners who are gifted and talented relative to others in their year group in their school.

Continued overleaf…

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Secondary schools and post-16 colleges are expected to identify

- those learners who fall within the top 5% of the ability range nationally, according to the published eligibility criteria at http://ygt.dcsf.gov.uk/Content.aspx?contentId=312&contentType=3
- additional learners who are gifted and talented relative to their peers within their school/college.

In addition, each institution's gifted and talented population must be broadly representative of its whole learner population by gender, ethnic and socio-economic background.

Why should the gifted and talented population be representative of the whole school/college population?

Government policy starts from the premise that ability is evenly distributed across the population and urges every school/college to follow this through when identifying gifted and talented learners within their own populations.

That is **part** of the answer to tackling 'achievement gaps' between some groups of learners and others. We therefore ask schools/colleges to keep the extent to which their gifted and talented populations are representative under review, ensuring that their identification strategies are inclusive and do not disadvantage those groups that are more vulnerable to underachievement.

Are schools/colleges expected to identify a fixed percentage of gifted and talented learners?

Not by central Government. It is for each institution to determine the size of its gifted and talented population, taking account of any local policy.

So gifted and talented populations will be variable in terms of ability?

Yes, in relation to those identified relative to their year group in their school/college (though not in relation to the national top 5% at secondary level). This allows each school/college to take account of their local context and intake. The Government believes that there are gifted and talented learners in every institution.

So at transition points gifted and talented learners may drop out of the gifted and talented population?

Yes, this is possible; they may also be drawn in. We would strongly urge schools and colleges to consider evidence of a learner's abilities provided by a previous institution as part of their evidence base, but the test of comparison with other learners in the year group in the learner's new school or college still applies. The key issue is whether the learner should continue to be flagged as needing particular opportunity, challenge and support within the classroom and beyond.

Should schools have a published policy on identification?

This should be part of their overall policy on gifted and talented learners. It should be agreed by the governing body, following consultation with all stakeholders. It should be shared with the school/college community, including learners and parents/carers.

What does best practice in identifying gifted and talented learners look like?

Schools and colleges have flexibility to determine their approach within the framework set out in DCSF guidance. Identification is not an exact science; there is no effective single test of giftedness and talent nor is there an infallible methodology. We recommend that schools/colleges use a 'best-fit' approach, drawing on as wide a range of methods and sources of evidence as possible. A process should be designed to ensure that identification:

- is based on a mix of 'hard' data from tests and assessments – including cognitive ability tests where they are used – and 'softer' evidence, including teacher/staff recommendation based on examples of work and contributions in lessons and beyond the classroom
- is a continuous process rather than a 'one-off'
- is integrated with provision, with in-built opportunities to identify ability through structured learning opportunities.

Why are IQ tests not used to identify gifted and talented pupils?

IQ tests can be part of the evidence base but schools and colleges should not rely exclusively upon these, or on any other single measure. Use of a range of identification strategies which draw evidence from a variety of sources and contexts will help to ensure that all abilities are recognised, especially those which are not easily demonstrable through formal testing, for example creativity or leadership.

What approaches are most effective in identifying gifted and talented underachievers?

Standard assessment tests are of limited use in identifying these learners, whose current attainment may be hampered, for example, by cultural, linguistic or emotional factors.

Teachers and other adults need to be alert to indicators of ability in those they work with, and provide a challenging, motivating and supportive learning environment in which these may be demonstrated. Planning should ensure that all learners are given opportunities to develop learning behaviours associated with high ability.

Considered alongside other evidence of ability, cognitive ability tests, such as CATs or MIDYiS, can provide a means of uncovering potential ability, for example in learners who possess a high level of non-verbal skills but who find difficulty in standard assessment tests.

We are working on additional guidance and tools to improve the identification of underachievers.

What about the KS2 raw scores you release through Keys to Success?

Each year we confirm to schools which of their pupils have combined raw scores in the Key Stage 2 Tests in English and mathematics that are within the top 5% nationally. This is provided through the Keys to Success website. This is an indicator of high attainment that schools may wish to use when identifying those in the national top 5% by ability; it is one of several indicators included in the national eligibility criteria for the top 5%.

Do the criteria for the national top 5% produce a representative population?

No. We are currently reviewing them because they seem to generate a population that is unrepresentative, particularly by socio-economic background.

At what age is it appropriate to identify gifted and talented learners?

It is important to identify a learner's abilities and talents at every stage in their development in order to ensure that provision is appropriately challenging for them. Even if early evidence of ability is largely precocity, it should be catered for. In the Early Years identification will tend to consist of 'softer' measures – for instance, linked to indications of children's interests and enthusiasms. Identification will also be more provisional and fluid throughout the primary years, since it will need to reflect the differing and uneven rates at which children develop at this stage.

Should gifted and talented populations include those who display talent outside the school/college?

Yes. Many children and young people who excel, for example, in sport or artistic pursuits out of school or college, will benefit from a coherent and co-ordinated approach to talent development. Schools and colleges may be able to reflect this dimension in their identification strategies by asking learners and their parents/carers to provide information about interests and activities beyond the school.

Should parents/carers be informed if a school identifies a child as gifted and talented?

Yes. As with all aspects of their development, children benefit from the involvement of parents/carers in support for their learning. Some parents/carers may need help with knowing how best to support their gifted and talented child. Schools and colleges will need to decide how best to ensure that there is a shared and clear understanding of what being gifted and talented means, and of the support available both within and beyond the individual institution.

Should learners stay on the school/college register, once identified?

That decision is up to the individual school or college. Since relative ability changes over time – some children are precocious and some late developers – one would expect younger learners in particular to move off and on the register. However, the expectation is that gifted and talented populations will become more stable in secondary schools and colleges, particularly in the later years. The key point is that the register is a marker for those needing extra challenge and support; if a learner no longer needs such provision there is no case to retain him or her on the register.

Some schools/colleges have found it useful to identify and monitor a 'shadow' cohort, including in it learners for whom there is some evidence of ability, but where the institution feels that this is insufficient for that individual to be included in the 'official' register at present. This device can also be of use in ensuring that learners who come off the register continue to be monitored and to access provision appropriate to their abilities. Processes such as these can be useful in supporting a continuous and fluid approach to identification.

What is the National Register?

Phase 1 of the National Register draws together the School Census and Key Stage data, which allows us to identify the maintained sector population, throughout England, and to monitor progress. Once on the Register a record of an individual will be maintained until they reach age 19, providing the opportunity to monitor the retention or otherwise of the G&T flag.

Later phases of the project will address how G&T learners from the non-maintained sector or those who are not identified through the school, such as talented individuals who are identified through sports governing bodies, can be included in the National Register.

By analysing the composition of gifted and talented populations with reference to other data held on the National Pupil Database (NPD), we can provide information to inform identification, tracking and support for learners locally, regionally and nationally.

The School Census does not at present enable schools to differentiate between learners who are 'gifted' and those who are 'talented' (and those who possess both types of abilities). We are currently investigating the possibility of the inclusion of an additional census question which would enable schools, local authorities and ourselves to have access to more refined data.

So the National Register doesn't contain gifted and talented learners post-16 unless they are in the 6th Form of a secondary school?

At present, there is no field on the Individual Learner Record (ILR) available for colleges to flag if a learner is included in their gifted and talented population. This doesn't mean that the identification and tracking of this population is any less important during this phase. Colleges should ensure that they are working closely with their local schools to support coherent provision and progression for those learners who have previously been identified as gifted and talented. Although we expect the gifted and talented population to be more stable by this phase, colleges will need to have strategies in place to identify those gifted and talented learners whose abilities, for a variety of reasons, have not been identified earlier e.g. new arrivals, late developers.

We are currently exploring ways of tracking the national post-16 college gifted and talented population in the future.

What expectations does the Government have of schools in relation to the Young Gifted and Talented Learner Academy?

All learners aged 4–19 who have been identified as gifted and talented by their school or college are eligible to register as members of the online Learner Academy, where they can access a range of opportunities and support to complement school or college provision.

department for children, schools and families

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