

Classroom Quality Standards User Guide

Ensuring Effective Classroom Provision and Challenge for Gifted and Talented Pupils

1. What are the Classroom Quality Standards in Gifted & Talented?

The Classroom Quality Standards (CQS) relate directly to Element 2 (*Effective provision in the classroom*) in the Institutional Quality Standard (IQS).

The IQS are a management tool designed mainly for use by school leaders and managers. They provide a benchmark for auditing effective provision for Gifted & Talented learners at whole school/college level.

The CQS are a tool mainly for classroom teachers to focus directly on teaching and learning. They are an addition to the IQS, not a replacement for it.

The statements within the CQS aim to provide an objective and clear 'Standard' against which teachers (and teaching assistants) can self-evaluate their own and their learners' practice.

The CQS are not intended to duplicate the wide range of skills already established in many classrooms. These are accepted as an established part of the repertoire of the effective and competent class teacher.

2. CQS Features

The CQS is built around 7 key **Features** of effective teaching and learning. These Features are the starting point tool in the **First Layer** of the CQS.

The **Features** are designed to:

- specify the optimum conditions necessary to promote effective teaching and learning for Gifted & Talented
- assist an initial audit of classroom practice
- develop specific skills to improve challenge in teaching and learning for Gifted & Talented learners
- be used by teachers, support staff and learners
- build on competencies already highlighted by the TDA.

Each Feature is accompanied by **between two and four Prompts** which assist the process of self-evaluation and link directly with amplification at Layer 2. There are three Evidence columns next to the Prompts which enable practitioners to begin the process of self-evaluation.

The **7 Features** are:

- Conditions for Learning
- Development of Learning
- Knowledge of Subject and Themes
- Understanding Learners' Needs
- Planning
- Engagement with Learners and Learning
- Links Beyond the Classroom.

3. The Three Layers of the CQS

The CQS has been designed as a 3-Layer Model:

Layer 1 is a tool for undertaking an initial review across key features essential to providing challenge for all learners.

Layer 2 amplifies these features in relation to Gifted & Talented learners specifically.

Layer 3 will provide a resource pool to illustrate what good provision looks like in practice, together with the results of action research.

Layer 1 provides a starting point for teachers engaging with the CQS. It starts with generic practice because there is greater consensus on effective pedagogy for all learners than for Gifted & Talented learners.

Layer 1:

- identifies seven key **Features** of effective support and challenge in teaching and learning
- begins by asking classroom teachers to review their generic good practice for all learners.
- provides a set of **Prompts** for each Feature which give practitioners the opportunity to:
 - engage with the CQS
 - reflect critically on their practice
 - evaluate their levels of confidence.
- has been designed so that schools can use it as a tool to support wider personalisation of learning and to amplify the TDA professional standards.

After reviewing their generic practice, teachers are asked to apply their findings to their Gifted & Talented practice through completing the three Evidence columns:

1. Practice in relation to providing challenge for all learners
2. Evaluation of Practice in relation to providing challenge for G&T learners
3. Evidence to support self-evaluation of practice in relation to G&T learners.

The Evidence columns provide a bridge to Layer 2.

Layer 2 builds on Layer 1 to amplify understanding of good practice in teaching and learning for Gifted & Talented learners.

Layer 2:

- has three levels - **Entry, Developing, Exemplary** – to support progression, as in the IQS
- contains level descriptors which amplify the Features and Prompts in Layer 1, and which reflect current expectations of effective pedagogy for Gifted & Talented education
- offers scope for practitioners to record their own descriptors where they identify aspects of effective teaching and learning that add to the statements
- provides an opportunity to compare the initial self evaluation (Layer 1 Evidence columns) so beginning to identify areas for improvement.

Entry level at Layer 2 is:

- pitched to be within reach of the majority of practitioners, provided they have first engaged with Layer 1
- intended to align with OFSTED's 'adequate' rating.

The **Developing and Exemplary levels** are intended to align with OFSTED's 'good' and 'outstanding' ratings respectively.

Self-evaluation evaluation should be recorded on the **RAG form**.

Layer 3 will:

- provide illustrations of what the features and prompts look like at a particular self-evaluation level
- give the results of action research and reference to where good practice is emerging in schools
- offer a resource base designed to hold a comprehensive range of resources, tools, case studies, professional development materials, exemplification, evaluations etc. that practitioners use
- provide a growing database which schools can add to and thereby support the further development of the CQS.

4. Quick 'Get you started' guide

1. work in pairs and systematically explore the CQS, discussing your work as you go along
2. start with Layer 1. Complete the Evaluation/Evidence columns, moving from generic to Gifted & Talented. Any differences in evaluation outcomes between generic and G&T should be discussed.
3. Move onto Layer 2. Consider the results of Layer 1 evaluation and what the focus and priorities should be (e.g. Development of Learning or Planning etc). Review the Prompts in each level and begin to discover the *level* of provision in the classroom.
4. Choose one or more features in Layer 2.
 - a. Examine each feature, prompt and accompanying statement at each level remembering that each word has been carefully chosen to indicate what provision is required.
 - b. Briefly record evidence for each prompt. Say why you feel that provision in your classroom satisfies or does not satisfy the level statement. If you feel you are providing at Developing or Exemplary level, still complete the evidence sections at previous levels to make sure these are covered.
 - c. Traffic-light each level statement at Layer 2. Use the RAG form. Your determination of a level (Green) depends on all prompt statements at a particular level being satisfied.
 - d. Decide, and briefly record, "Next Steps" i.e. what is required to reach the next level (or to stay at Exemplary level).

5. Facilitating and mediating the CQS

Working through the CQS is a professional development experience. It is an aid to improving classroom practice and not an instrument of torture! Experience with the IQS has shown that *mediating* the self-evaluation process brings significant rewards. Leading Teachers have an important role to play here:

- Guiding teachers through Layers 1 and 2 features and prompts, acting as translator, explainer and facilitator
- Breaking questions and responses down into bite-sized chunks
- Drilling down through asking another question in addition to the CQS question i.e. 'how exactly does your planning support personalisation in your classroom?'
- Looking at different aspects e.g. underachievement, behaviours, compliance, engagement, achievement
- Acting as a spur to meet deadlines.

Small groups of teachers and teaching assistants can work together with Leading Teachers. For example, they can explore to what extent 'alternative ways of learning' are being developed (*Development of Learning, Developing Level, Criterion 1*). Comparing practice in this way is an ongoing, iterative process. Discussion around a CQS element can help achieve agreement about what good practice looks like. This can then be fed into the school's own Level 3 resources bank. The process requires 'quality time' but is a proven and sound way to ensure an uninterrupted and concentrated use of the CQS. The involvement of a local authority Adviser or Coordinator adds further value to the process.

The benefits of a self- evaluation dialogue are:

- Overcoming the risk of subjectivity
- Greater openness about strengths and weaknesses
- Tangible improvements in outcomes for children
- Improving quality through innovation
- Learning from others and greater confidence in applying new approaches
- Greater involvement and motivation of staff in bringing about change
- Improving performance measurement.

6. Links with National Strategies

The CQS is designed to link in with the TDA competency standards within a school improvement perspective and with the National Strategies which provide key messages for ensuring effective provision and challenge for Gifted & Talented learners, which should:

- be a whole-school issue
- be firmly rooted in the classroom
- promote inclusion and equality of opportunity
- focus on achievement, not just on attainment
- encourage independence and self-assessment
- offer extension in depth and enrichment in breadth
- be monitored effectively at school and departmental levels
- go beyond the school into the wider community
- celebrate the excitement of excellence.

The Tables below demonstrate linkage between the CQS and the National Strategies Four Domains of Pedagogy.

Table 1: Cross-referencing of National Strategies Four Domains of Pedagogy to the Classroom Quality Standards in Gifted & Talented Education: Layer 1

Domain 1 – Subject and curriculum knowledge (i – v)

Domain 2 – Teaching repertoire of skills and techniques (i – iii)

Domain 3 – Conditions for learning (i – iv)

Domain 4 – Teaching and learning models (i – iii)

The 4 domains mapped on to CQS features 1-7

	Features	Prompts	Evaluation			Evidence
			Not so well	Quite well	Very well	
1	Conditions for Learning D 3, 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How well do learning conditions ensure the five Every Child Matters outcomes are met? (3 i, ii, iii; 4 iii) How well are learners enabled to use, demonstrate and develop their talents? (3 i, ii, iii) 				
2	Development of Learning D 1, 2, 3, 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How well is knowledge of learning development applied and adapted to support the development of learning? (1 iv; 3 iii; 4 i, ii, iii) How well are learners enabled to take charge of their learning and become self-regulating? (1 iii; 2 i; 3 iii; 4 ii, iii) 				
3	Knowledge of Subjects and Themes D 1, 2, 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How well are subject knowledge and skills used to stimulate and challenge learners? (1 i, iii, iv; 2 iii) How well is learner proficiency developed through specific subject knowledge and skills? (1 i, iii, v) How well is the curriculum adapted to address the needs of different learners? (1 iii; 2 iii; 3 iii, iv) 				
4	Understanding Learners' Needs D 1, 2, 3, 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How well are the academic, emotional and social needs of the learner identified and addressed? (1 iii; 2 i; 3 iii, iv) How well are barriers to learning identified and removed? How well are learners stretched? (1 ii, iii; 2 i, iii; 3 iii, iv) How well is learners' progress assessed, monitored and evaluated to raise achievement? (1 ii, iii; 2 i, iii; 4 i, ii, iii) How well are the training and learning needs of adults identified and met as members of the learning community? 				
5	Planning D 1, 2, 3, 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How well does planning build on learners' prior knowledge and attainment? (1 iii, 2 i; 4 i, ii, iii) How well is planning used to improve outcomes for all learners? (1 iii, iv; 3 iii, iv; 4 i, ii, iii) How well are activities planned that are qualitatively different and ensure extension, enrichment and progression? (1 i, ii; 4 ii) 				
6	Engagement with Learners and Learning D 1, 2, 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How well are teaching and learning skills and resources deployed to extend, inspire and challenge learners? (1 iii, iv; 2 i, ii, iii; 4 i, ii, iii) 				
7	Links Beyond the Classroom D 2, 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How well are learning, and opportunities for learning, beyond the classroom encouraged, known about, built upon and celebrated? (2 iii, 3 iv) How well are parents and carers included in supporting and developing their children's learning? (3 iv) 				

Table 2: CQS features 1 to 7 mapped against the National Strategies 4 domains of pedagogy

