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GIFTED AND TALENTED EDUCATION: LETTER TO SCHOOL HEADTEACHERS

Dear Head teacher

16th September 2008

GIFTED AND TALENTED EDUCATION

School Census

As you know, the Government wants all primary and secondary schools to identify their gifted and talented learners and to confirm their identified gifted and talented population by answering the relevant question in the termly School Census.

The Children's Plan confirmed our target to secure 100% completion of the Census question by 2010 - and so achieve a national gifted and talented population of one million learners.

Currently some 6% of secondary schools and 24% of primary schools fail to complete this question. So, as the next Census approaches, I am writing to ask you to ensure that your School is doing so.

Later this term, we shall be providing local authorities with details of schools that are failing to respond and asking them to work with us to ensure that all do so as quickly as possible.

Identification

DCSF guidance about how to identify gifted and talented learners is at http://ygt.dcsf.gov.uk/FileLinks/894_new_guidance.pdf. It asks you to ensure that your gifted and talented population is broadly representative of your whole school population by gender, ethnic and socio-economic background.

Our data shows that many schools are not achieving this and that learners from disadvantaged backgrounds are often significantly under-represented. Please ask your Leading Teacher for gifted and talented to review identification processes if this is the case in your School.

We support identification in secondary schools by providing data to help them identify those pupils who fall within the national top 5% on the basis of their raw scores in Key Stage 2 English and mathematics tests.

From 20 September, this service will be available for the new Year 7 at <http://www.keytosuccess.dfes.gov.uk/schools>. You will need your School's username and password to access your School's account on this site. As stated on the login page, these are the same as those used to access the S2S (School to School) website.

You will need to select 'KS2 e results' from the menu at the top right of the page and then upload the UPNs of your new Year 7 pupils, either by copying and pasting from, for example, a spreadsheet, or by typing them into the space provided.

When downloaded the file will indicate which pupils were found in the data (some pupils' results may still be missing) and, of those, which are in the 'top 5%' group. The boundary marks for the group will be available, which will enable the addition of pupils with late results.

Young Gifted and Talented (YG&T) Learner Academy membership

You will also be aware that CfBT, our National Managing Contractor for gifted and talented education, has arranged for your School to receive membership packs for the YG&T Learner Academy, which provides learning opportunities and support for all gifted and talented learners.

We know that many schools have not yet distributed these packs to pupils and their parents. If this is true of your school, I urge you to rectify this as soon as possible. I am sure you will agree that it is unreasonable for a school to withhold from any of its pupils an entitlement to access additional educational opportunities.

Your school will also have received an information pack explaining the process for registering your Leading Teacher for gifted and talented (or their representative) and for validating learners as

members of the Learner Academy. If your packs have been mislaid or if you have too few, you can request more – free of charge – from enquiries@ygt-cfbt.com . If you experience any difficulty when registering, you can contact the YG&T helpline on 0845 602 7636.

To find out more about the Learner Academy please go to the YG&T portal at <http://ygt.dcsf.gov.uk/>. You may be particularly interested in the competition for pupils and draw for leading teachers launching this term. Details will be made available through the portal.

Leading Teachers

I have referred above to your Leading Teacher for gifted and talented. Most secondary schools have identified their leading teacher and most primary schools are sharing a leading teacher within a cluster if they do not have one of their own.

I ask those schools that have so far failed to appoint a leading Teacher to do so urgently, and all schools to ensure that their Leading Teacher is making full use of the National Strategies' training and support available through your Local Authority.

Each leading teacher should be driving improvement in this area through a whole-school plan built around our gifted and talented Quality Standards. I ask all head teachers to take a personal interest in progress in their schools.

We are continuing to improve the quality of education available to our gifted and talented learners, but we can make only limited progress without your direct support. Let us work together to meet their needs.

Best wishes

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Andrew Adonis". The signature is written in a cursive style and is underlined with a single horizontal stroke.

ANDREW ADONIS

Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Schools