

Lyneham Primary School Gifted and Talented Programming Policy

Status: Reviewed 2014

Purpose

This policy outlines how the School identifies and meets the needs of gifted and talented students. It meets and builds on the ACT Government's Gifted and Talented Students Policy (2008 & 2014) and provides a framework for planning and is a guide for resource needs.

Definitions

The definition of gifted and talented students used here is that used by the ACT Education Department's policy (2008) and based on Gagné's (2003) Differentiated Model of Giftedness and Talent:

***Gifted students** are those who have natural abilities or aptitudes at levels significantly beyond what might be expected for one's age, in one or more of the following domains: intellectual, creative, social and physical. The key to giftedness is outstanding potential rather than outstanding performance. Feldhusen (1993) identifies five levels of giftedness: mild, moderate, high, exceptional and profound (see Appendix 1).*

***Talented students** are those whose skills are outstanding and at a level significantly beyond what might be expected at a given age in one or more areas of human performance, such as such as technology, the arts, literacy, sport and mathematics. Talent emerges from giftedness as a consequence of the student's learning experiences.*

Rationale and vision

“Gifted and talented students, like all students, should learn something new every day.”
(McGrail, 2005)

Gifted and talented students learn faster and have often already mastered significant proportions of the curriculum for the year. They also need instruction that is conceptually more complex and abstract than most learners can handle (Feldhusen and Moon, 1992). When the learning needs of these students are not met, this can result in frustration, boredom, poor study skills, ‘tuning out’ and sometimes disruptive behaviour. By implementing gifted and talented programming, the school aims to provide an environment which encourages all students to maximise their potential.

“No standard pattern of talent exists among gifted individuals.”
(Neihart et al., 2002)

Gifted and talented students form a diverse group. They come from a variety of backgrounds and exhibit a wide range of personal characteristics that cause their gifts and talents to be expressed in many different ways. As a consequence they can have quite different needs. To cater for this variety and ensure that all students are provided with challenges that match their ability level and learning needs requires programming that includes multiple provisions and allows students to move in and out of gifted programming according to their interests, strengths, and needs. The vision for Lyneham Primary School is, therefore, an inclusive model in which gifted education is blended into the whole school program. Gifted programming will include properly planned curriculum differentiation, compaction, extension and enrichment provided both within the regular classroom and through separate small group instruction. This will be complemented by special interest enrichment groups in which topics are explored more in-depth. Students will also be encouraged to participate in a variety of competitions.

Identification

The aim of identification is to recognise students who need extra challenge and support, so that they can be provided with a program that matches their ability level and learning needs.
(Cathcart, 2005)

A variety of strategies will be used and a range of evidence considered (see Figure 1) to ensure that all gifted and talented students are identified, including those students that may be difficult to identify. For example, those who are underachieving, those with disabilities or with specific learning difficulties, and those from Aboriginal, Torres Strait Islander or non-English speaking backgrounds. The use of multiple criteria also ensures that all domains of giftedness and fields of talent are identified.

Parents and carers will be encouraged to provide input through parent/carers checklists, and discussions with the class room teacher. Identification is a dynamic and continuous process,

which can be initiated at any time. Points in time with a specific focus on identification are during Term 4 in preparation for the following year, towards the end of Term 1 as part of the process of identifying specific learning needs, and upon enrolment at the school. To assist with curriculum differentiation and extension, the specific domains of giftedness and learning styles of the students will also be identified. Identification outcomes will be discussed with the parents and carers of students in the context of identifying learning and social needs and planned provisions.

Student tracking

Upon identification and after that once a year in Term 4 the broad individual needs of gifted and talented students will be determined in preparation for gifted programming in the subsequent year.

Detailed individual learning plans (ILP) listing agreed personalised learning goals and strategies for a tailored educational program will be in place for students identified as exceptionally or profoundly gifted, as identified by Feldhusen (1993), and those being accelerated. Those gifted students who are underachieving, have disabilities or specific learning difficulties will also have an ILP (ACT Education Department policy, 2008).

Cluster grouping

The gifted and talented identification of students will be taken into account in classroom placements with the aim of forming clusters of gifted and talented students in otherwise mixed ability classes and providing optimum matches with individual teacher's strengths and special interests.

Flexible grouping strategies will be used within the mixed-ability classes, but having the gifted and talented students placed in clusters will allow them to undertake advanced work with peers on a regular basis.

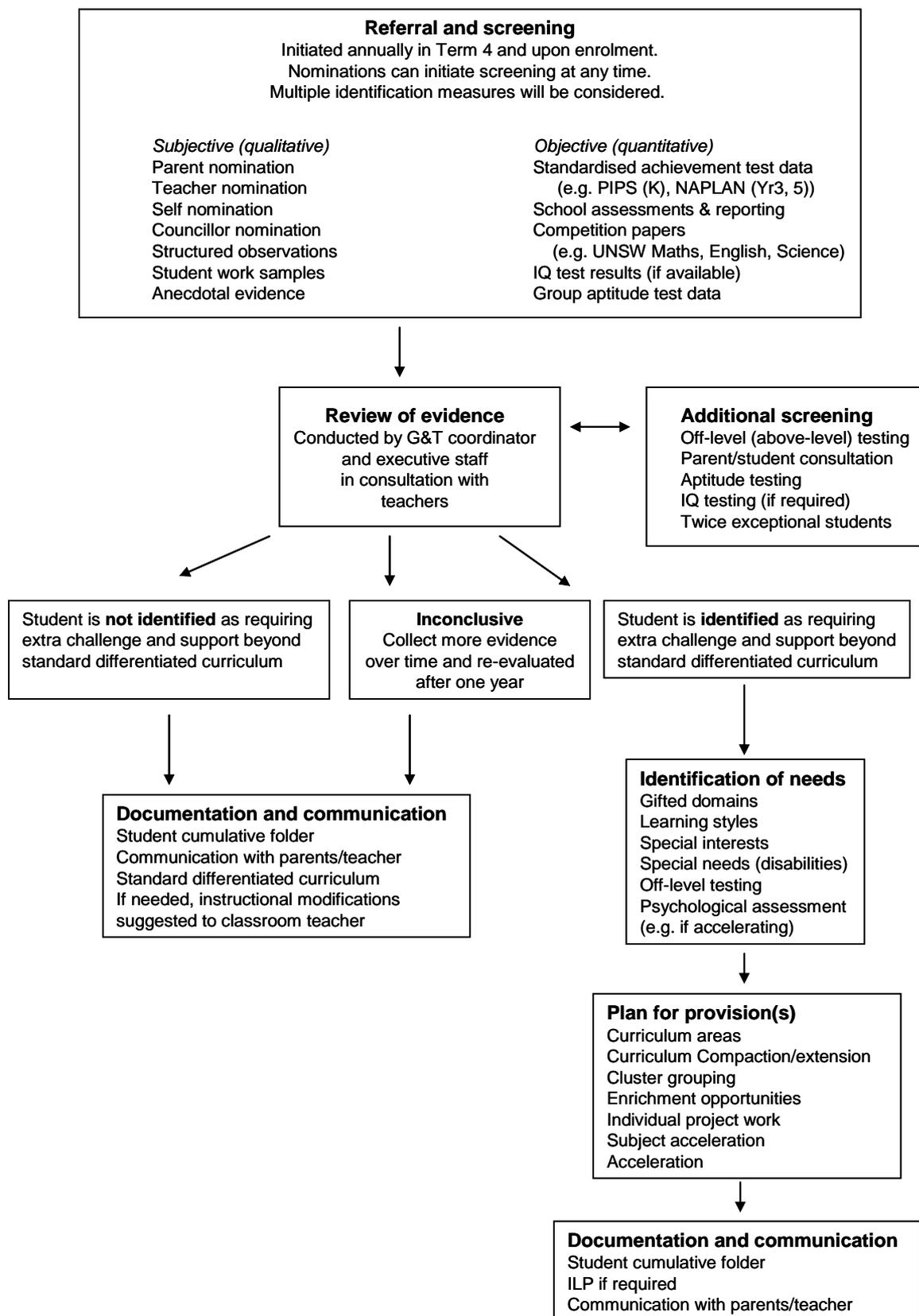


Figure 1: Identification process

Gifted and Talented Programming

“To successfully produce appropriate, quality education, all programs for gifted learners must provide differentiation, flexible grouping, continuous progress, intellectual peer interaction, continuity, and teachers with specialized education.”

(Clark 2002)

Gifted and talented programming will consist of a number of complementary provisions that fit within the School’s vision of an inclusive approach to education. The classroom teacher will have primary responsibility to ensure that each student reaches for his or her potential, but this will be done in partnership with other teachers, specialist teachers and other professionals or experts (including volunteers from the community). Flexible grouping will allow optimal management of classroom dynamics and will cater for the great variety within the group of gifted and talented students.

Classroom curriculum differentiation

Students do not ‘save’ their unique characteristics and needs for a single block of time that is often set aside for a gifted program. Their interests, characteristics, and concerns are relevant to their instructional needs all day long, every day

(Treffinger, 1986).

Classroom units of work will be differentiated through adjustments in content, processes, products and/or learning environment to take into account the different needs and abilities of students. For gifted and talented students this includes providing a compacted curriculum, extension and enrichment activities. These units will be planned using Bloom’s taxonomy or similar models with an emphasis on open ended tasks to foster higher order thinking skills.

Curriculum compacting will be offered when students have demonstrated mastery, e.g. through pre-testing or ‘hardest first’ methods. In the time ‘bought’ by curriculum compaction students are given extension (deepening) or enrichment (broadening) tasks to extend or deepen their knowledge and understanding and consider the content area at a higher degree of abstraction. Often this would be content outside the core curriculum rather than content from the next level or stage of learning. Tasks could include portfolios, projects or research questions.

Curriculum extension and enrichment will, where needed, be supported by small group tuition covering advanced topics and skills like problem solving.

Special interest enrichment groups, activities and competitions

The curriculum differentiation provisions will be complemented by enrichment groups and activities which build on or expand student’s interests and strengths. Enrichment groups will typically run for a number of weeks at a time, involve students selected from a year or stage level on the basis of talent, potential and interest, and cover a special topic more in-depth and with higher order thinking skills. Competitions may include small group preparation or training. For a list of examples see Appendix 2.

External gifted and talented programs

Participation in external gifted and talented programs, such as the G.A.T.E.Ways programs will be encouraged.

Special projects

Students will be encouraged to undertake projects in special interest areas and the school will endeavour to support this through guidance with information searches, teaching of research skills and finding a mentor for the project (which could be another teacher, member of the community or external expert).

Social and emotional support

The school counsellor is available to assist all students.

Program management**Gifted & Talented coordinator**

The Principal will appoint a teacher or executive staff member to be the Gifted & Talented coordinator at the commencement of each school year. The coordinator will be responsible for managing the identification process, ensure that progress of identified students is tracked (using ILP's where required), and assist staff with the development of appropriately differentiated curriculum.

Resources

Implementation of this policy will have resource implications for the School. The Board will take into account the resource needs of this policy in developing the annual school budget.

Professional development

Professional development for the teachers will focus on understanding giftedness, identification of gifted and talented students (including underachieving students and twice-exceptional students), and appropriate curriculum differentiation for gifted and talented students that includes curriculum compacting, extension and enrichment.

The School will endeavour to provide all teachers with gifted and talented students in their class adequate professional development to ensure that they are confident in delivering gifted and talented programming within their classroom.

Evaluation

This policy will be reviewed every two-three years. The evaluation will specifically look at how students have benefited, how well the identification process and related grouping of students works, and whether professional development for teachers has been effective in supporting the inclusive, but differentiated curriculum approach.

Annamaria Zuffo
Principal

Camille Carroll
Chair, School Board

DATED: 16/05/2014

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Appendix 1

Levels of giftedness (Feldhusen 1993)

Level of Giftedness	IQ Range	Prevalence
Mildly	115-129	> 1:40
Moderately	130-144	1:40 – 1:1000
Highly	145-159	1:1000 – 1:10 000
Exceptionally	160-179	1:10 000 – 1:1 million
Profoundly	180+	< 1:1 million

Appendix 3

Maths challenge groups at Lyneham Primary

The maths challenge groups provide challenging mathematics enrichment and extension to develop students' problem-solving strategies and extend their mathematical insight, ability and logical thought.

The groups are for mathematically talented students who typically:

- are capable of work that is academically two to three years ahead of their peers;
- are capable of processing double the volume of work;
- are original in their thinking;
- are able to work and concentrate for long periods;
- require less reinforcement, revision and concrete data;
- have an ability to quickly understand and grasp the essence of a problem;
- demonstrate a swiftness in reasoning, logical thought and argument;
- demonstrate the ability to formulate generalisations;
- are able to relate one problem to another;
- are prepared to use initiative in tackling something different;
- are self-confident in a new mathematical situation.

The program for the year 5/6 maths challenge group includes the Australian Mathematics Trust Challenge stage in Term 1 (all students) and the Enrichment stage (Newton and Dirichlet series) in Terms 2 and 3 (optional). Students are also encouraged to participate in the Australian Mathematics Competition (AMC) in Term 3. The program includes a range of topics such as number theory, clock arithmetic, binary numbers, exponential functions, the use of slide rules, Egyptian fractions, fractals, topology, network theory, and various curious paradoxes and conjectures.

These topics are taught through problem solving and mathematical investigations, with an emphasis on discussion of strategies and solutions. This format limits the group size to a maximum of around 12 students and necessitates that the students are exhibiting many of the characteristics listed above and enjoy mathematics.

Other year level challenge groups will be determined by needs basis year to year with the same selection procedures outlined below.

Selection of students will be based on student, parent and teacher nominations, standardised achievement test data, school assessments and a screening test developed by the Gifted and Talented Education team. The questions on this test have been sourced from existing screening tests for mathematically talented students and from resources used in the Challenge Group program. They test mathematical skills, insight, ability and logical thought as well as creativity.

Parents and students of successful and unsuccessful applications/nominations will be notified by letter within two weeks of final selection.

Appendix 2

Special interest enrichment groups and competitions grouped by Gardner's (1993) multiple intelligences these activities **may include***:

Verbal-linguistic intelligence

- Reading challenges
- Writing competitions, e.g. Dorothy McKellar poetry competition
- Rostrum public speaking
- Debating
- Tournament of minds
- UNSW competitions in writing, English and spelling
- Writer's festival

Logical-mathematical intelligence

- Problem solving groups
- UNSW competitions in science and maths
- Australian mathematics competition
- Mathematics challenge for young Australians
- Australasian problem solving mathematical olympiads
- Tournament of minds
- Crest science
- Science club
- Programming and robotics

Inter- and intrapersonal intelligence

- Rostrum public speaking
- Year 6 leadership teams
- Student Representative Council
- Sports leaders
- Student run assemblies

Bodily-kinesthetic intelligence

- A range of sporting clinics
- A range of school sporting teams

Visual-spatial intelligence

- Engineering games
- Tournament of minds
- Chess

Musical/creative arts intelligence

- Elective choirs and Lyneham Singers by audition
- Band program
- Individual or small group tuition in piano, violin, guitar and singing
- Assembly and concert performances, musical soirées
- Lyneham Idol
- Dance program
- Drama enrichment classes and after school drama program

Naturalistic intelligence-Gardening
